

The encourager

The magazine of ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

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PLUS:

Inspiration

Information

and much more



**Joni & Friends
"Wheels for
the world"**



Anyone can count the stars God can count the apples

HIDDEN TREASURE *By: Margaret Thomson*

 *Isaiah 45:3*

"I will give you hidden treasures, riches stored in secret places, so that you may know that I am the LORD, the God of Israel, who summons you by name."

There are times when I need to get to grips with the reality of life, clear the fog of confusion of thoughts, and only then can I come to God in a way I never knew Him before. Only when experiencing the highs and lows of daily living do I reach the place of peace. A place, where out of darkness, will come the hidden treasures that Abba God has for His child.

Is there treasure to be found in the darkness? Yes, there is gleaming treasure. The immortal story, "Pilgrim's Progress" that John Bunyan wrote in prison, came from the darkness of a prison cell. Helen Keller who was deaf and blind, found treasures in these disabilities through her glowing spirit. I can look into a deep well and see the reflection of the stars in the sky. I know, even though the light behind isn't very clear, there is hidden treasure to be found there.

Paul must have inwardly chafed when he found himself confined to a prison cell for announcing the Good News of salvation but he found treasure in the darkness. He dipped his pen into the blood of his sufferings and wrote letters to the early Christian

churches. Paul didn't allow the darkness to hide the treasure of Jesus from His people. His ministry went beyond that prison cell into the wider community.

Within the depths of the darkest clouds, God will bury His richest treasures in the silver streaks of growth, and the sterling faith that hides His precious truths from the man-made world. Has the dense cloud of doubt and pain, loss or trouble, frustration and loneliness settled over me? Search out the darkness for treasures, hidden by the Father because my name is engraved on them in silver! Draw close to the light of His Kingdom.

Father, I step into a fresh year, not knowing what it will bring, but I am embraced in Your love. Hold me in Your nail-printed hands as we tread the uncharted walk-ways. In Your arms let me bury my head in those nail-scarred hands. Let your light break into the darkness, and reveal Your treasure.



Margaret Thomson

BUT THERE IS HOPE! *By: Joni Eareckson Tada*

Breast cancer is something that always happened to other women, not me. My attention was always focused on my quadriplegia – 45 years of living in a wheelchair saddled me with enough medical challenges, without thinking of cancer. God would never add that to the mix, I thought. And so, my last mammogram was nine years ago.

Everything changed one morning when I looked in the bathroom mirror. I called Ken and he confirmed my suspicion. "I feel a lump," he said, "... a large one." His words hit hard. Is cancer my next battle? I fretted. Before I knew it, I was in the hospital for a mastectomy for stage 3 breast cancer.

Last October was Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I have survived to say there is hope! (I was able

to remain hopeful through God's Word and your prayers!) My hope in God motivated me to share my struggle in the new Joni and Friends' TV episode called "Cancer – Joni's Journey." I recorded my journey on video because I wanted to pass on the amazing insights I learned through my struggle. It's powerful, honest and hopeful – so, if you are battling cancer or know a friend or family member who is, this video is for you!

Finally, friend, disabilities come in all shapes and sizes – and cancer is no exception. So thank you for helping me pass on hope to your loved ones, and bless you for giving the hope of Christ through your prayers and support of Joni and Friends!

seeds in an apple; but only les in a seed.

PRAISING GOD FOR THE LESSONS LEARNT ON LIFE'S JOURNEY *By: Fiona Thomas*

It has been a long time since I have written anything for the magazine, now known as The Encourager. Much in my life and the life of my family has changed. My life and involvement with Elevate started when it was CFFD ie Christian Fellowship for Disabled. I was a single woman who couldn't walk properly. That was over thirty years ago. I have since experienced God's

healing touch in my life and that of my family's. We have had an amazing journey, and have come to know God's healing touch in our lives and our children's.

My role as a slightly dependant

adult wife to Kevin has changed to being the able wife with a very dependant husband. One of our children has mild Asperger's, another is furiously independent but chose to move back home to help with the care of Kevin who has early onset Alzheimer's and vascular dementia. Our youngest son is involved with the youth at our church and is now working, but enjoyed popping into the Centre when he could. As a family we have grown up together with the CFFD always there. CFFD has been a part of our family. It is second nature to be involved at camp, or have someone from Elevate over. Kevin, his caregiver

Jill, and Amanda enjoy going into the Drop in Centre run by Elevate each week.

I praise God for the many lessons I have learnt along my life's journey.

They haven't all been easy, but in one way or another they have all been a blessing. I know without any doubt that fellowship is vital to keeping your head above water in the good times and the bad. Whether this is through Elevate or your local church, it is a must for Christian survival. Hebrews 11.6 reminds us to trust in God no matter what life contains.

Elevate has shown me 1 Thessalonians 5:11 for over thirty years, *Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.* My life isn't perfect, nor are my children, but I know with God we will be ok. We have a great Church fellowship that is very supportive of disabled folk. We have Elevate and the wonderful people there who support Kevin, Amanda and the others who attend. We are told through the media to push "play" to be healthy. I learnt from a dear friend who has since graduated to heaven it is far more important to push "pray".. Luke 18.1



Amanda, Fiona and Kevin with Mark Grantham

Are you coming to The Big Event?

You should! It's all about us – You and Me. It also displays equipment, services and activities available to people with disabilities, there's even stuff to try! It's a great way to find out what is out there for you! Come along and see us at the Elevate stand and have a chat – and definitely invite your friends!

The venue is the ASB Showgrounds, Green Lane, Auckland

It's free – No Charge and it's all about You and Me, see you there!

5,6th
April

Cover Photo – Huge life size photos such as these are on the walls of the Joni and Friends headquarters in Los Angeles. We are thrilled that Kirsty Anderson, who travelled to the USA to gain disability experience with JAF, has accepted a position on the staff at Elevate 3 days a week.

Faith sees the invisible, be and receives the impossible.

EVERY DAY A MT EVEREST

By: Phil Thorn

Phil Thorn has faith to do the extraordinary. Blind, deaf and paralysed, Mr Thorn is in training to do the Lake Taupo Cycle Challenge in November. He will compete in a custom-built hand-propelled tandem. Event Director Kay Brake believes Mr Thorn will be the first deaf, blind and paralysed entry the race has received. While there were often a number of recumbent and blind entries, she can't recall a person ever entering the 160 kilometre race with all three impairments. But then, Mr Thorn is quite a remarkable man.

The 41-year-old was struck down with bacterial meningitis in 2008 while living in Queenstown and managing a Christian camp and conference centre. After awaking from a coma he faced the horror of being blind, deaf and paralysed down the left side of his body, as well as from the waist down.

"It was rather challenging to be in a dark, noisy (he had tinnitus), silent world with no use of your body from the waist down. My world had changed around me and the people I loved the most (wife Julia and children Brooke and Harrison), I could only hug them," he said.



Phil Thorn

happening to me. I would lie back, close my eyes, and hope when I opened them it had all gone away. Every day was a Mount Everest climb. I believed my future had been robbed from me, but I discovered as I journeyed along that God still did have a great plan for me.

"I realised it was the strength of physical ability that I wanted, but I needed inner strength and ability to dig deep and find my potential. So often we are sold a lie. We need to be in step with God and not be in front. When God directs, amazing stuff happens" said Mr Thorn. The turning point came when a friend with a disability from the Hutt Valley's Laura Fergusson Trust (LFT) centre, where Mr Thorn was now spending a lot of time, challenged him. "She gave me a kick in the butt, which was just what I needed," said Mr Thorn. The Thorn family now live in a new house near the LFT site, which has enabled them to stay together. A fundraising campaign for the home, called the Grace Project was spearheaded by Christian Camping New Zealand. Fast forward to the beginning of 2011, when Mr Thorn was at work in the LFT rehabilitation gym and had a dream that he would be healed and walking with his family. In the dream he sees his feet splashing and kicking through the waves. Mr Thorn said he believes God places desires like this in people. "As I became involved in LFT I knew I was going to walk again even though I was physically challenged." This belief that he would walk again prompted another goal. "I told myself I will walk again and that I wanted to do the Lake Taupo bike race, it was something I had wanted do in my previous life (before his illness). I mentioned it to the physios at the gym. They must have laughed their heads off. Back then I couldn't



Phil's Low-Rider

He recalled how in the beginning he was called the 'hollow man' because every muscle in this body had wasted away. He had no muscles to sit up, smile or even open his eyelids. He couldn't swallow, he couldn't talk and his cheeks sagged.

Initially the journey was a battle of the mind, and still is a daily renewing of the mind. "I started sowing good stuff by reading God's word and spending time with Him. I knew if I did this I would reap a harvest. I used to sit in a La-Z-Boy and pretend it wasn't

even turn the pedals on the machines with my feet. I needed help. But I kept believing. There were days when I wondered if the reality of it would happen, but I kept believing.

"As I journeyed along I realised I needed to set goals out in front of me to reach and to inspire others too. I totally believe God gave me back my life for a reason and a purpose that He has."

Mr Thorn began training for the race on the stationary hand-propelled YouBike last month. In the first four weeks he hand-propelled 660kms. He is also able to achieve one hour on a hill riding setting.

"This ride is about giving glory to my heavenly Father, exchanging my La-Z-Boy for a low rider. I know totally where my power supply is coming from. This race is a celebration of life."

Mr Thorn believes in healing and has faith that God will heal him fully. Healings have already taken place in that he has use of his speech again and the fact he is alive today.

Written by Sarah Tengvall for Challenge Weekly and abridged here with permission.

"God says when we are weak he makes us strong. It's totally about being dependent on Him. I have to rely totally on Him. I believe in God's timing. I believe I will be healed. I have faith to the end. Life on this planet is just a journey, but it is not our home. God is preparing an amazing place for us and we just have to help and encourage each other," he said.

Trust has been the biggest part of Mr Thorn's journey to date. "I want to totally trust God and have tenacious trust God will do more than I could ask for or need."

He plans one day to write a book about his journey and is already blogging and has a Facebook page.

He has written about climbing the mountain of rehabilitation.

Mr Thorn acknowledges the love of his 'amazing' wife Julia. "It is incredible, the love of a family. It is a huge motivational thing for me, just knowing I can go home every night to my family. I'll give it everything I can to keep the wheels on my family."

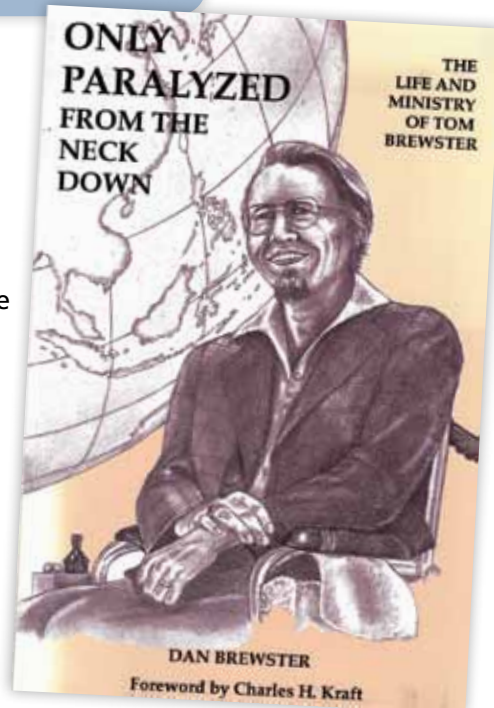
ONLY PARALYSED FROM THE NECK DOWN

When 18 year old Tom Brewster careened too fast down the new waterslide at a YMCA camp, his neck was broken. It seemed his father's prayers that Tom would be a missionary in some foreign land were wasted. Tetraplegic and totally dependent, how could Tom have a meaningful future?

But Tom knew that God was in control of his life and he was thankful to be alive. He found comfort in Hannah Hurnard's poem In "Acceptance Lieth Peace" Instead of asking "Why me", he daily and hourly chose to create meaning in his life by accepting God's sovereignty.

Tom faced his recovery with passion for the poor and lost. He was determined to communicate God's message of hope to a lost world, and empower others to do so effectively. The Lord led Tom & wife Betty Sue into an exhausting life of travel to cover 80 countries. Through study & teaching with Fuller Seminary, Campus Crusade for Christ, Wycliffe and others, they pioneered new language teaching techniques useful to missionaries and Bible translators worldwide. Their programme, Language Acquisition Made Practical (LAMP), made language learning accessible to many who struggled with existing methods. "Learn a little and use it a lot" was Tom's mantra.

Tom died in 1985 having been paralysed for 27 years, his legacy a transformed understanding of translation techniques. His life and remarkable attitude were a miracle of God's amazing grace. As one man said, "Tom's mind and heart were never paralysed, he was only paralysed from the neck down."



The above was a review that Lois Farrow from our Christchurch branch submitted to the Christian Writers Guild competition, and she won first prize for her review. The book was first published in 1997.

Gratitude is the attitude that

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 30 YEARS OF WELLINGTON CFFD



1982 Inaugural meeting at Chris and Prue's with Don Miller



1989 Guests of the Governor General at Government House



1991 Branch meeting at St James Presbyterian Church



2002 Visit to the Southward Car Museum



2003 A team contest at Regional Camp



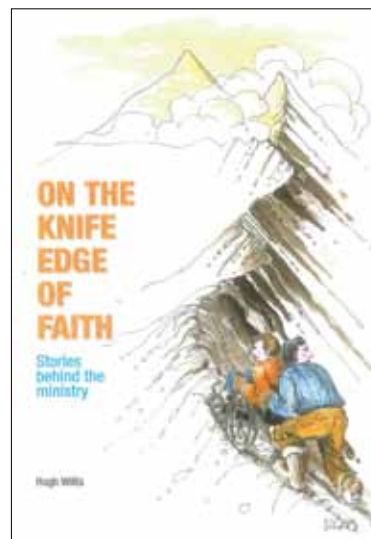
2007 Christmas Dinner at Life Point

QUALITY PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE TRUST

1 Prints of the painting by Graham Braddock who was specially commissioned to paint Jesus, in the midst of superb mountain scenery, talking to a group of people with disabilities, and the reflections show each one receiving healing from the Lord. \$15 postage \$5

2 A packet of 10 cards costing \$10 that have the above painting on the cover and at the back an enlargement of part of the painting showing Jesus and the group. Postage \$2

3 Hugh Willis's book "On the Knife Edge of Faith" - 190 pages, now available for \$10 Postage \$2





1992 Visit to Siverstream



1997 Craft work at CFFD meeting



2002 Making posters of
"Fruit of the Spirit"



2009 Horse riding at Regional Camp



2010 Part of the Wellington group at National
Camp. 2011 saw the biggest contingent - 30



2012 The Hawkins and the Lusks at
the 30th Birthday Celebrations

Van Driver's Perspective:

Bob and Spenceley write,

We have been working in the area of mobility transport for eight years and have found it to be the most satisfying work we have ever undertaken. It has been compared to a ministry, and at times it does seem that way. Over the years we have become friends, family, counsellors and advisors as we have got to know our many clients who are so inspirational.

We had never previously been involved with people with disabilities, so it opened up a whole new world to us. Now we love going to exhibitions and buying some of their paintings which now adorn our walls.

Changes to the Trust Board

John Hawkins, the wellington CFFD Chairman and Dean Brennan, who does the Trust web page, have come on the Trust Board, replacing David Green and Debbie Mudgway who resigned last year after much valuable input.



"Live vibrantly, Learn continuously,

A Flashback to the early days.

I longed to be happy like they were

Late last year we were saddened by the news of the death of Margaret Hansen who played a large part in the ministry over the years, and we are including here her testimony which appeared back in this Magazine - Edition 24.

My father moved out on the family when I was nine. Five years later I started getting pain in my feet which rapidly spread to all my joints. The diagnosis – Rheumatoid Arthritis. Over the next two years I spent many weeks in hospital. At 21 I married and had two lovely children, but life was very difficult, and my health deteriorated. I seemed to be taking more and more pills, smoked a lot and even drank heavily to make me feel better

able to cope. Ulcers developed on my ankles, and because of the drugs they wouldn't heal. After a move to a farm 300 miles from where we had been living my health further worsened and I spent 6 months in hospital.

But God had it all in hand. Dear people in our valley started praying for me and I was surrounded by Christian nurses. They didn't preach at me but

cared for me with such compassion I started melting. After I came home I had two wonderful Christian home aids whose faces were aglow with love, and I longed to be happy like they were. The whole community seemed to be full of loving, caring Christians who took us into their hearts. I was now confined to a wheelchair all the time due to the ulcers and long stay in hospital.

One day, I was lying on my bed in great pain, the huge ulcer on my ankle showing no sign of healing, and in deep despair, I just cried out "God, if You are there please help me. Please come in and take over my life and make me the woman you want me to be".

Suddenly the room was filled with a love and peace I cannot describe. It just enveloped me, and I was filled with joy. The pain was still there but it didn't matter anymore somehow. I knew God loved me and was there with me. I was given a beautiful release-forgiven, cleansed, washed clean and filled with the Holy Spirit. Step by step, line upon line, precept upon precept, Jesus led me out of deep darkness into a wide free place with the Holy Spirit as my teacher, comforter and guide. I have studied the Bible, listened to reliable teaching tapes and read many Christian books, and learned to obey Jesus' commands in everything. He set me free from drugs, smoking and drinking wine. He guided my diet to the right foods and drink, and my ulcers healed completely. He sent me to Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Rotorua where He continued setting me free to exercise and swim and become whole again. The wonderful staff gave me an electric wheel chair, and my whole world opened up. He restored our marriage, brought our children to Himself, healed our dear son of autism through prayer and love and wonderful Christian teachers. He led me into prayer and Intercession, a tape ministry for Women's Aglow with its wonderful Fellowship, a beautiful Bible Study with other Christian friends, and to the Christian Fellowship for Disabled. I was baptized in water in my home by a Pastor, surrounded by my family and dear members of the Body of Christ. I love Jesus with all my heart, and will follow Him wherever He leads me to help set others free from the deep darkness I was in!

"If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed".



WILL THE CHURCHES RESPOND TO THIS OPPORTUNITY?

Hugh and Di Willis write:

Last year we were in England at the time of the Special Olympics held there. We were amazed at the number of pages given to the events in the newspapers, the extensive TV coverage, and the tremendous interest that people in the street were taking in the achievements of the athletes as they followed the races. The heart-warming stories grabbed the attention of the people in Britain who had their eyes opened to what these athletes were accomplishing, they were seen very much as "people" just like you and me, which often has not been the case in the past, but capable of achieving so much. Are the churches following suit, using those with disabilities to enter fully into the life of the church? In 1981 it was the holding of the International Year of Disabled which suddenly brought awareness of those with disabilities and catapulted our fledgling ministry forward with many invitations for services coming in from churches. It would be tremendous if churches generally in the UK and here will rise to this opportunity.

We have on the next two pages a very challenging article from the Salvation Army's magazine "The War Cry", and have described below a book that would be of immense value to pastors - The Lost Mandate

(Father's Press), by author and clergyman Dan'l Markham that challenges Christians and churches, and ministry leaders to do more for those marginalized by society--"the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind"--as called for in Luke 14:12-24. Markham, former Managing Director at Joni and Friends International Disability Centre, says it is a central call to action in the Bible and one that is too often lost in the rush of daily lives by many in the Christian community. "Wonderfully engaging, deeply challenging. An important read for anyone who desires to walk more fully in Christ's commands" wrote Bill Myers. Father's Press said, "The Lost Mandate is a clarion call to the Church for Christ-followers to man the battle stations to carry out this specific yet neglected commission of Christ as recorded in Luke 14." The book will help you join Christ in fulfilling The Lost Mandate in reaching the world's 1 billion people and their families who are affected by disability, the largest under-reached grouping of people in the world."

The book is available in e-book and paperback through Father's Press, Amazon and other outlets.

ARE YOU RETIRED? CAN YOU HELP?

We are looking for some help from people who have skills and experience in fundraising, data base, communication or marketing.

1-3 July '13 Conference

"Theology, Disability and the People of God"

Held at Carey Baptist College. More information later.

Keynote speakers:

Professor Amos Yong - Regent University

Professor John Swinton - University of Aberdeen

PRAYER WARRIORS

We are calling for prayer warriors throughout New Zealand to pray for people with disabilities and this ministry. If the Holy Spirit speaks to you about this, please let us know, and we will let your branch or ministry know.

ATTENTION all those who have e-mail addresses:

Can you please let us know:

1. What that address is.
2. Whenever you change your e-mail address.

"The greatest mistake we make that we will make one."

LET THEM HEAR – LET THEM SEE *Condensed with permission from 'The War Cry'*

Disabled people are part of our community, so why don't we see more of them at church? Ingrid Barratt in this article talks to sign language interpreter Jeremy



Jeremy Borland

Borland, who burst onto our screens during the Christchurch earthquakes, and visually-impaired Salvation Army officer Major Edwina Herring how we can be the eyes and ears of Jesus to the "differently-abled". If you're trying to place the familiar face of Jeremy Borland, think back to the Christchurch earthquakes of February last year. Jeremy could be seen next to Christchurch Mayor Bob Parker and Prime Minister

John Key interpreting their words into NZ sign language – our third official language along with English and Maori. Seeing sign language on TV was such a novelty that it captured our collective imagination. A Facebook page dedicated to "Jeremy the sign language guy" gained a staggering 25,000 fans.

Jeremy says, "As an interpreter, success is when a Deaf person has been able to be heard, without people remembering much about the interpreter. So having the complete opposite experience, where everyone was focused on the interpreter, was so against everything within me".

For Jeremy, the oldest of five children, sign language has been a natural part of his life after his younger sister Talitha was born Deaf. As a typical teen, he got frustrated trying to communicate with her and lost interest. But during a gap year between high school and university, Jeremy got a job interpreting for Talitha at high school. It began as an easy way to make money, and ended up changing the course of his life. "It was quite a profound experience because I realised that I didn't know my sister very well," he

recalls. "Interpreting for her five hours a day, it was amazing to discover her personality – and she'd been there my whole life!"

Although Jeremy grew up in a Christian family, he says it was about this time that he also 'started to get to know God' for himself. At the end of his gap year, instead of his original plan to attend Canterbury University, Jeremy spent two years in Auckland training as a sign language interpreter. It's a vocation he's now worked in for 10 years.

"The reason I love interpreting is that when a Deaf person has been isolated and not able to have a say – for example, in the workplace – they can assert themselves through an interpreter, and be on the same footing as a hearing person," says Jeremy. "Sometimes Deaf people are treated as people that need healing and we should pray for, but not as someone that we would talk to and get to know. Deaf people need to be treated with dignity and respect, not just as 'deaf'. There is a very strong sense of belonging in the Deaf community, and such a rich culture. A lot of Deaf people don't see themselves as disabled."

Again, a turning point in his thinking came from Jeremy's close relationship with his sister: "There was a time that my sister was prayed for, and she wasn't healed, but I remember she had this amazing look on her face. She felt that God had done something in her heart. Here we are praying for the physical, but she can commune with God and be touched by God as a spiritual person too."

"The greatest joy of being a corps officer is seeing people reach their full potential," says Edwina.

"The church is in the prime position to be the most unbiased place of welcome, because we welcome people with the love of Jesus. He didn't discriminate and He wasn't prejudiced in any way. It's the hands and heart and mouth of Jesus that we work with". Edwina agrees with Jeremy, that we need to see people beyond the labels: "First of all, you're a person; not a blind person. People with disabilities are no different from anyone else – they can be cranky or boring, or sporty, or nerdy and into learning like me. A disability shouldn't define you."

Edwina is honest that the issue of healing has been a personal struggle. When she first became an officer, she was completely blind and used the assistance of a guide dog. But with prayer and with operations, Edwina now has partial sight. "Healing can come

straight from God, or God can use medicine as a conduit. You can have healing of your disability, or healing of your attitude toward your disability," says Edwina. "God heals where and when and how He chooses."

She adds that everyone has disabilities – and everyone needs healing. Some people wear their disabilities on the outside, while others wear their disabilities inside. "Everyone has issues, passions, likes and dislikes; some people have anger or grief issues – everybody has got something to deal with, and you can either let it be a disability or not."

Rather than seeing her partial sight as a disability, Edwina says it has enriched her officership. In her preaching and teaching, she often uses props like Braille to provide a different perspective. "It's fascinating to be differently-abled," she says. "God doesn't differentiate – we are all God's children, and in Christ we all have the ability to be whole."

At the last census 17 per cent of our population reported a disability. People with disabilities are in the community, and there should be people with disabilities in every church. If they're not in church we need to ask why."

Margaret Gay says, "People with disabilities, both physical and psychological, often feel discriminated against because of physical or attitudinal barriers. Our attitude should be welcoming in every sense of the word – accepting, making access easy and inconspicuous. People don't want attention drawn to them as being different."

The difference between putting up a barrier and opening a door for people with disabilities is simply about making an effort. Edwina continues, "No two eyesight, hearing or mobility issues are the same. It's considerate to learn about a person's particular needs – just as it is considerate to learn about protocol if you're going to a marae, or to learn about a different culture you're visiting. On Sunday when I walked into church, the person welcoming me said, 'Hi Edwina, here is your newsletter' and she had an A3 copy. She just knew, and that to me is acceptance and knowledge and caring."

Grace Vineyard has about 25 deaf members, and Jeremy is one of their regular interpreters. He says it means a little more work for the preacher, who

"There should be people with disabilities in every church. If they're not in church we need to ask why"



Major Edwina Herring

provides the sermon beforehand so Jeremy can tackle any words that are difficult to interpret. It also means that music teams have to be organised, and provide their worship set beforehand. The congregation also

has their own Deaf pastor, Richard Townshend, who regularly prays in front of church using sign language and an interpreter. He says that music is a special part of the service for his Deaf congregation: "We love worship and singing, with the hearing through interpreters, feeling the music – especially drums, they're the best ones."

Richard gave his life to Christ in 1979, after discovering the good news of Jesus through sign language. This opened the door to a personal experience of God. "One night, I experienced the Holy Spirit at church when the pastor prayed for me, and that had a big impact on me. After that I had joy and more passion for the Word of God. English is the second language of most Deaf people, so it can be hard for them to read and understand the Bible." He oversees three Deaf home groups, contributing to a warm and loving community within the church, where Deaf people can learn about God. Jeremy says that when he appeared on prime-time TV for those few short weeks, it gave New Zealanders a glimpse of Deaf people as equal, valid and on the same footing as the hearing."

Indeed, in God's kingdom there is no difference between the abled and disabled, agrees Edwina, and the Church needs to start looking with Kingdom eyes: "If anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation. We're all His children, and I have never met any person who couldn't play a role in building up the Body of Christ."

"If you care at all, you'll get you'll get incredible results"

Pauline Stansfield often sends us spectacular videos and amazing articles, such as the following:

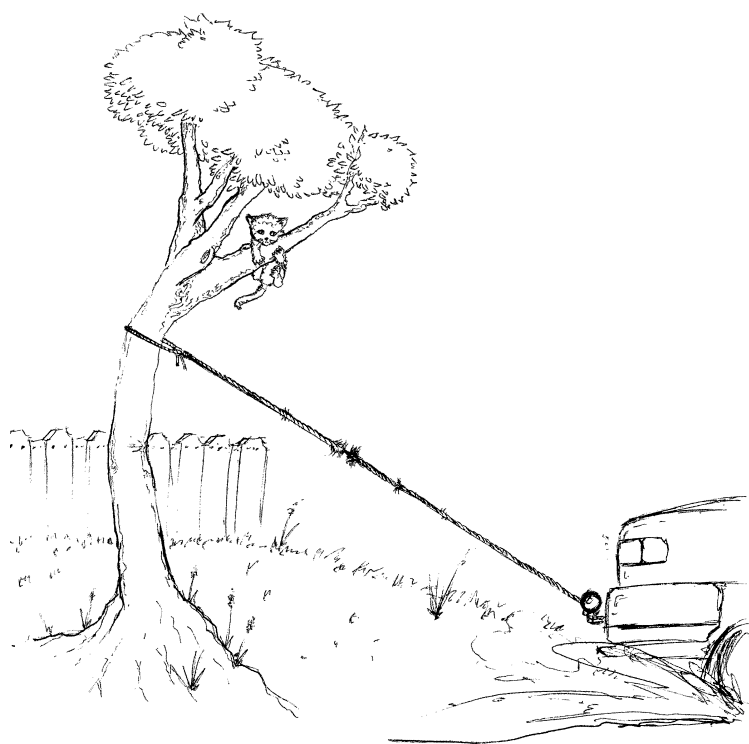
THE PASTOR'S CAT

Dwight Nelson recently told a true story about the pastor of his church. He had a kitten that climbed up a tree in his backyard, and then was afraid to come down. The pastor coaxed, offered warm milk, etc. The kitty would not come down. The tree was not sturdy enough to climb, so the pastor decided that if he tied a rope to his car and pulled it until the tree bent down, he could then reach up and get the kitten. That's what he did, all the while checking his progress in the car. He then figured if he went just a little bit farther, the tree would be bent sufficiently for him to reach the kitten. But as he moved the car a little farther forward, the rope broke. The tree went 'boing!' and the kitten instantly sailed through the air - out of sight.

The pastor felt terrible. He walked all over the neighbourhood asking people if they'd seen a little kitten. No, nobody had seen a stray kitten. So he prayed, 'Lord, I just commit this kitten to your keeping,' and went on about his business.

A few days later he was at the grocery store, and met one of his church members. He happened to look into her shopping cart and was amazed to see cat food. This woman was a cat hater and everyone knew it, so he asked her, 'Why are you buying cat food when you hate cats so much?'

She replied, 'You won't believe this', and then told



him how her little girl had been begging her for a cat, but she kept refusing. Then a few days before, the child had begged again, so the Mum finally told her little girl, 'Well, if God gives you a cat, I'll let you keep it.' She told the pastor, 'I watched my child go out in the yard, get on her knees, and ask God for a cat. And really, Pastor, you won't believe this, but I saw it with my own eyes. A kitten suddenly came flying out of the blue sky, with its paws outspread, and landed right in front of her.'

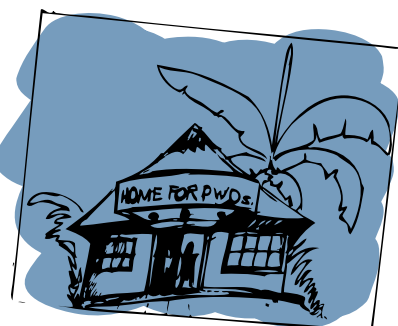
Never underestimate the Power of God released through prayer, and His unique sense of humour!

PHILIPPINES NEWS

Recently, the architect and contractor presented the completed plan to the Board for the Home for children with disabilities. It will be the only home in our province offering opportunity to children with physical disabilities.

The Department of Education now requires all schools nationwide to prepare for 2 more years of high school. At present students finish high school at 15-16 years old, so we need to build a second storey with 2 classrooms, move the deaf students there, and so provide the extra 2 class rooms that will be needed.

Great news! Three of the deaf students have passed the entrance to De La Salle University, and we can be proud of this.



Prayer is needed for PCFFD representative in NZ, Ruth Beale. She has had an operation on her spine (cancer), is now recovering, and has other health issues. She has just moved to rehab, and could be off work for six months.

some results. If you care enough,

~ Jim Rohn

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

By: Joe Mazzella

The rain poured down on the car stopped by the side of the road. I had made my wife pull over a few minutes earlier when her tears had made it impossible for her to drive. My own heart ached with pain and my eyes were wet with tears too. It was the worst moment of our lives. I held her in my arms for a long time while the Heavens seemed to cry with us.

We had just come from a specialist office in a big hospital. We had taken our firstborn son there to be tested. He was nearing three years old and hadn't started to talk yet. He also had displayed behaviours that weren't normal. After a long wait and longer tests the Doctor told us that there was definitely something wrong although he couldn't say what it was. He recommended more tests. We drove away in silence. I could see the hurt in my wife's eyes as she tried to hold back the coming tears. All she had wanted was a "normal" little boy. Finally as the rain began to fall outside the car our tears began to fall inside it.

We sat there for the longest time crying and feeling powerless and unsure of what to do next. After a while the clouds parted and the sun began to shine again. We looked back at our son in his car seat and he smiled happily at us. We knew then that we had to go on, no matter what the road ahead of us may hold.

Our boy was later diagnosed with Autism and mental retardation. He was five years old before he finally began to speak in sentences. Although he learned to talk and read we still knew that he would have to be looked after for the rest of his life. As the years went on, though, I realized that my boy was not only "special" mentally, but also "special" spiritually. Even with all the limitations and frustrations his handicap gave him, he still managed to give his kindness, love, and enthusiasm to everyone around him. He remembered people he met and called them by name. He gave out hugs as easily as the rest of us gave out "hi's". He went through his days with a ready smile and a simple joy that were contagious.

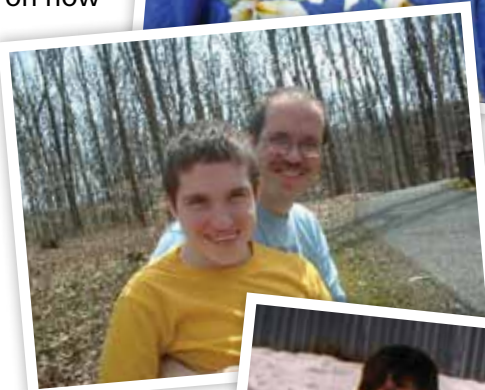
He gave up the role of "eldest child" to his younger "normal" sister, but still helped to look after his

younger brother who had been born with an even more severe form of Autism. He became more than just my son. He became my friend. He became my helper. He became my teacher in how to live and in how to give. He became my inspiration on how to love and be happy in that love. He and his brother both became beautiful blessings in disguise.

As I look back on the years my boys and I have spent together and look forward to the times that lie ahead of us, I once again thank God for giving them to me. My first born son and his younger brother have both done

what every one of us longs to do: they have made this world a better and more beautiful place just by being in it. They have touched countless hearts with their love, laughter and joy, and they will undoubtedly touch countless more.

Many people look upon the intellectually disabled as something less than human. I now see them as something more. They have inside of them a deeper love, joy, and connection to God than the rest of us. And while we take care of them we should also take the time to learn from them as well. They truly are all blessings in disguise, and while they sometimes bring us tears of sadness, they more often bring us tears of joy.



"We knew then that we had to go on, no matter what the road ahead of us may hold."

Wise people aren't necessarily their life, but those with the mos

I REALIZED I HAD MORE GOING FOR ME THAN I THOUGHT

Editor's Note - In my file I have this excellent article but cannot find the source. The only clues I have are the page numbers 140 and 141. I would be grateful for any info regarding this. It is likely the beginning of the article is missing, but the article is so helpful and inspiring, I am including it here.

During my long hospitalization, somebody gave me a magazine article about a young man who lost his sight. He went through an incredibly bitter, depressive time. He wrote that he got so demoralized that a friend who cared enough about him to tell him the truth said, "You just need to get past this." I paused from reading and thought, Yes, that sounds like the way I was after my accident.

The article went on, however, to tell the practical instructions the blind man's friend gave him: I want you to make a list of all the stuff you can still do."

"Now what kind of a list would that be?" the angry blind man asked.

"Just do it for me. You can't write it, obviously, but you can get a tape recorder and dictate it. Just make a list of all the things you can still do. And I'm talking about simple things like 'I can still smell flowers.' Make the list as extensive as you can. When you're finished, I want to hear that list."

The blind man finally agreed and made the list. I don't know how much time passed, but when the friend returned, the blind man was smiling and peaceful.

"You seem like you're in a much better frame of mind than the last time I saw you," the friend said.

"I am. I really am, and that's because I've been working on my list."

"How many things are on your list?"

"About a thousand so far."

"That's fantastic."

"Some of them are very simple. None of them are big, but there are thousands of things I can still do."

The blind man had changed so radically that his friend asked, "Tell me what made you change."

"I've decided to do all the stuff I can. The more I thought about it, the fewer limitations I saw. There are thousands of things I can do – and I'm going to do them for the rest of my life"

After I read that article, I thought, That's exactly what I need – not mourning, pining and going back over the way things used to be, or what I used to have that I don't have any more. Instead, I need to discover what I have now, not only to celebrate but also to recognize I'm not helpless.

As I continued to ponder that idea, I realized I had more going for me than I thought. I had focused so heavily on my losses that I had forgotten what I had left. And I hadn't realized the opportunities

I might never have tried otherwise. In the article, the blind man said something like, "I'm not going to worry about what I can't do. I'm going to do what I can do well." Those words seemed simple.

I read that article at just the right time, and the words seemed incredibly profound. God had sent the message I needed when I needed it. It was one of those powerful moments that caused me to say, "I've got to get on with my life. Whatever I have, I'm going to use it and magnify it to the max."

I'm running out of time, I thought, but so is everyone else. I suppose I'm more conscious of time than some people are for two reasons: First, I lost a big chunk of my life because of the accident. Second, I know we don't get to stay long on this earth. As many of the old hymns say, we're really like strangers passing through. It's something we all know from reading the Bible and other books, but those realizations became a wake-up call for me.

"I'm not going to worry about what I can't do. I'm going to do what I can well."

If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to:

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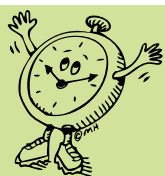
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those with the most years in t life in their years.



THE CLOCK OF LIFE

The clock of life is wound but once,
And no man has the power
To tell just where the hands will stop,
At late or early hour.

To lose one's wealth is sad indeed,
To lose one's health is more;
To lose one's soul is such a loss
That no one can restore.

The present only is our own
To seek to do God's will:
Tomorrow holds no promise, for
The CLOCK MAY THEN BE STILL."

So why not this very minute,
Prepare for your eternity
By trusting your soul to Jesus Christ
Who died at Calvary.

It only takes a sincere minute
To confess Who He really is
And then when the clock of your life
stops,
Your eternal peace will be.

Jesus loves you and God has a plan
for your life **Jeremiah 29:11**, and
If you want this assurance about
eternity this very minute, then pray
the following prayer, or you can use
your own words:

**Jesus, I believe You are truly the
Son of God. I confess that I have
sinned against You in thought,
word and deed. Please forgive all
my wrongdoing. I receive You as my
personal Saviour and Lord, accepting
the work You accomplished on my
behalf once and for all on the cross.
Thank You for saving me. Help me
to live a life that is pleasing to You.
Amen.**

**Please let us know if you prayed
this prayer.**

GOD ANSWERS ALL OUR PRAYERS

*I asked for strength and
God gave difficulties to make
me strong.*

*I asked for wisdom and
God gave me problems to solve.*

*I asked for prosperity and
God gave me brawn and brains
to work.*

*I asked for courage and God
gave me dangers to overcome.*

*I asked for patience and
God placed me in situations
where I was forced to wait.*

*I asked for love and
God gave me troubled people
to help.*

*I asked for favours and
God gave me opportunities.*

*I received nothing I wanted
I received everything I needed.*

*My prayers have all been
answered.*

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What is 33:3?



Many will immediately think of the well known passage from Jeremiah ch 33 verse 3 where it says,

"Call to Me and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know."

But it is also the name adopted by the new group that has started up in Te Puke for those with special needs. At their latest monthly meeting 57 attended, they meet monthly, and as the above photo shows, there was lots of action and dance at the latest gathering.



Leslie Schwass (centre photo) is the leader of the group, Di Willis brought the message, the Te Puke Baptist worship group regularly bring the music and many helpers form part of the outreach from the church.

Another group of 50 CFFD people from 4 centres – **Palmerston North, Hawkes Bay, Wellington and Wanganui** came together for the very popular combined meeting in **Aokautere**.

