



JUNE 2009 ISSUE 123

The ENCOURAGER

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

Magazine of the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust



A group from the Torch Camp walking by the Waikato River past the huge eucalyptus trees.

THE WHITE CANE

With this, Shirley Jamieson from Wellington, who is partially sighted, won a contest in the Christian Writers' Guild magazine for the best devotion, and it is included here with their permission.

If I asked you to shut your eyes and walk round your home unaided, could you do it? In familiar surroundings it should theoretically be an easy thing to do. Without relying on sight, though, it is far more difficult to make accurate judgments for pinpointing the direction you're going in, or determining the distance you have walked. I suspect you would soon bump into something or find you're in a different place from where you intended to be.



If you found it a challenging obstacle course in a well known environment, imagine trying the same experiment in an area you do not know at all. The future is like that. Only God knows for certain what's there ahead of us.

In Isaiah 42:16 God says, *"I will lead the blind in ways they have not known, along unfamiliar paths I will guide them; I will turn the darkness into light before them and make the rough places smooth. These are the things I will do; I will not forsake them."* (NIV)

This verse has a special significance for me. As I have a vision impairment, I use a white cane if I'm out walking in the evening. I need to keep a constant hold on my cane, swinging it from side to side in front of me across the footpath like a mine sweeper. It guides by sending continual messages back to me by vibration, movement and sound as the rolled tip runs over different surfaces, informing me of the conditions ahead. Alerted to holes in the footpath, unforeseen obstacles and the edge of the curbing, I have the information I need to react appropriately to situations so I don't fall in a heap, flat on my face.

I think having trust in God is like using a white cane. I need to continue on following the advice of the Orientation and Mobility instructor from the Foundation of the Blind. With experience over time I have learned I can rely on my cane; it gives me the confidence I need to walk ahead into the darkness.

In the same way, as we commit our lives to God, He has promised to guide us day by day in each situation we face. It is something solid to hold on to as we walk through life. We grow in trust by believing God's guidelines for living in the Bible and experiencing him working in our lives. In all our circumstances God has already gone before us, preparing us for what's ahead in the future. He's right there with us too, helping us to circumnavigate the obstacles we encounter. By reading God's Word every day, following him closely, not letting go, it will prevent us from stumbling into things that would otherwise harm us.

With God as our guide we can walk into the future with confidence.

CMWDT NATIONAL CAMP 2009

Totara Springs Matamata

23rd to 26th October 2009

- THEME -
“*BATTLE FOR THE HEART*
VICTORY FOR THE SOUL”

WHO CAN COME - Everybody! If you've been before you will want to come again. If not 'Give it a try! It is a never-to-be-forgotten weekend.



BUT we **MUST** have helpers. Otherwise the camp could not be held. It is a great experience to be in a servant role for the weekend, and many have found it a life-changing experience.

If you cannot come would you consider sponsoring someone struggling to afford the camp fee?

COSTS:

Adults	\$135.00, but \$125.00 if paid in full before 1st Sept
11 - 14	\$100.00
5 - 10	\$ 70.00
Under 5	Free

To register contact:

Peter Townend
30 Kittiwake Drive, Albany,
NSMC 0632.
Email townendpeter@gmail.com

CMWDT NATIONAL CAMP COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU... *especially if you have a disability!*

Have you thought about helping to prepare for National Camp?
Do you have skills we don't know about?
Email your details and skills to:

Hamish Muir - hamish@slingshot.co.nz



MANY AND VARIED ACTIVITIES



A walk by the Waikato river



Three in one! The camp speaker read Braille, played and sang.



Discussion in the morning groups



Ten wonderful student helpers from Capernwray



A pampering session

AT TORCH NATIONAL CAMP



Croquet



Stories of naughty dog behaviour in the concert



Praise and worship



Foot-washing in the Communion service



Animated group discussion in the quiz

PAIN

taken from one of Edith Morris's messages at the Auckland CFFD Camp, she had polio and now post-polio.

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Fixing means focusing. Focusing our eyes on Jesus. What better example is there than Jesus. He is our role model on how to stay focused. Notice the word joy. How many of us would be full of joy at the idea of torture, pain, suffering and crucifixion. Not me. I all too quickly lose my peace at the slightest headache or any pain. I become very focused on my pain and how to get rid of it - a hot-water bottle, an aspro, a call on the doctor, a massage, anything to get rid of pain.



Rick Warren, who wrote "A Purpose Driven Life", discovered that God is more interested in our character than our comfort. God is more interested in making our life holy than in making it happy. In life we can focus on our purpose or our problem. If we focus on our problem we go into self-centredness – my problem, my pain, my, my, my. But one of the easiest ways to be free of pain is to get our focus off ourselves and onto God and others, to be God-centred. Self-focus makes pain worse, but God-focus helps us to be a little bit freer of pain.

Recently I was talking about this with my neighbour. He has terrible pain, and sometimes when he sits in his armchair to relax his pain it gets worse until he can't bear it anymore. So what does he do? He goes and visits his neighbours, and talks to them. He puts his own pain aside and listens to them. He comes home again and his pain is better. It hasn't gone away, but it is freer.

Think of Jesus. He knew the pain He faced was unbearable. But for the joy He embraced it. God didn't say He would take away the pain. He could have done that, but NO, Jesus endured the cross. He showed us the way.

One of my friends lives with a lot of pain. She told me that pain actually brings her life into focus. It's like she has a different pair of lens on, and she becomes more focused on Jesus than when she has no pain, whereas when she is feeling free of pain she gets busy, goes out and isn't so focused.

Now I'm not only talking about physical pain, but also emotional hurt, heart pain and spiritual pain. The pain that is in our body, and the inner pain. That verse is a key. The joy that is set before us. Our pain is a shared pain. It is shared with Jesus. He endured with joy. Joy can sharpen our focus as we walk the journey of life with Jesus at our side. It is a mystery how pain and joy go together. No wonder that Palm Sunday is called the passion of Christ. Jesus was passionate about making the way of salvation for us all. How thankful we must be for that!

Paul Underwood from Dargaville has been involved with our ministry from its very early days. He has a very close walk with the Lord day by day, loves His Word, waits on Him, and greatly enjoys fellowship with other Christians.

PAUL UNDERWOOD'S TESTIMONY

This is my story of what the Lord has done for me. I was born with cerebral palsy, but my parents believed in the healing power of Jesus Christ, and had me prayed for before I knew anything about it. The doctor had said to them to put me in a home and forget about me, but they said, "He is our child and we are not going to do that." I had five other members of the family who all got behind mum and dad and were willing to help, and have done so ever since.

At the age of eight my uncle was adding onto our house and I remember going up to him and asking him to tie up something for me and he said to me "In Jesus's name, walk out to your mum." She was in the wash house and I did so. That was the first time I had walked, and I have never looked back.

I was 10 years old, was getting seizures at night, but was over them in the morning and could go to school. We had church in our home, and one night after I had gone to bed I had another seizure. My uncle who was a pastor came up and prayed for me, and the Lord healed me. I have never had a seizure since then.

I left school at 18 and stayed at home on the farm. Dad did not make me work, but I wanted to, and was determined to help in whatever I could cleaning up. Many times Dad would say it's too wet, but that didn't stop me getting into my gumboots and rain coat leggings, and off I would go. After Dad died I started getting around on a Treadwell motor bike. It was an open three wheeler, and I would go out in all weathers. Now I have the luxury of driving around on a closed-in 4 wheeler farm bike (called a Mule), and I am still working and enjoying the Lord. I would love to be completely healed, but after crying out to the Lord a number of times, "Why am I not healed?" I have found a place of quiet rest near to the heart of God.

One day I will be healed when I go to be with the Lord and have put off this mortal earthly body. That is not to say that I may not still be healed here in this life. He gave this gift to the church, and we are to use it along with all the other gifts. I know that the Lord is good, even when we go through hard times, and I have experienced this over and over again. Being involved with CFFD and later the Trust has greatly added to my Christian faith, and has given me opportunities to speak in CFFD services locally and further afield.





SUCH A BEAUTIFUL SPECTACLE

At many of our recent National Camps our program has been greatly enriched by the attendance of dancers from the Voice Dance Group and their presentation of a series of seemingly flawless dances. It wasn't long before they invited some of our folk with disabilities to join them on the stage in one or two of their dances.

This year the group's leader, Eileen Dalrymple, decided to take this one stage further and have a full evening performance with an equal participation by their dancers and some of our folk, and this is shown in the two photos on the opposite page.

Nancy McRae's comments were typical of many, "Amazing! It was so beautiful. I was very moved."

Those who took part were Gina Taka Ardouin, Diana York, Kim Corkin, Jo Edwards, Michael Bridgman, Kim Sutherland, Trish Harder, Mark Grantham and Lara McColl, and they relished the chance to take part in their beautiful satin dresses.

Eileen had their dancers and ours all practicing from 11am through to almost 7.30pm when the concert started. It was a fascinating interplay between their dancers and our folk in their wheelchairs.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY

What is special about Sunday 21st June?

Just once a year it is the time to bring to the attention of congregations all around New Zealand that...

People with disabilities are part of the Body of Christ.

Ask your ministers if they or you can do something.

You can get all sorts of ideas from the Trust booklet

"Ideas for Disability Sunday" (ring or write to the "Centre").

If this Sunday is already fully booked, it could be any other suitable Sunday.

*Falling down doesn't make you a failure,
but staying down does*

ATTITUDES

Giving a sermon these days is very draining for Margie Willers (cerebral palsy), co-founder of CFFD and CMWDT, and as a result she very rarely speaks in public, just three times a year in her Brethren church, so Di and Hugh were very blessed when they attended a service there, and Margie was the speaker. This is the first of two articles bringing some of what she shared:

As I reflect upon this subject, a story of great inspiration to me is about a man named Nicolo Paganini. Paganini was a brilliant violinist. History records this outstanding musician playing to a packed audience one day when one violin string suddenly snapped. Paganini looked at the instrument, but didn't appear to be at all perturbed by what had happened. He just kept playing on the violin's three strings. Some 30 seconds later another snap – a second string had broken. People in the concert hall sat spell-bound as he continued playing on just two strings. They couldn't believe what they were seeing and hearing. Then believe it or not, a third string broke. Still he continued playing. When he finished the entire piece of music the crowd went delirious. Pandemonium broke loose. People were in awe of this man's outstanding performance. How in the world could a person play a complicated piece of music with just one string?



Surely in such a situation there couldn't possibly be an encore, but to the audience's amazement Paganini motioned to the conductor to start playing again, and he played his final piece on one string. At the conclusion he lifted the violin high above his head and triumphantly proclaimed, "Paganini – and one string!" Or would Paganini and the right attitude have been more appropriate?

Another person of admirable character was Victor Frankl. He was a notable Jewish doctor who lived in Germany. In Nazi concentration camps Frankl suffered years of humiliation and indignity. Firstly they stripped him from his family, then his home, his possessions, his watch and his wedding ring. They also shaved off his hair and stripped him of his clothing. While standing naked before his inquisitors underneath glaring lights Victor Frankl made a decision. They might be able to take all his possessions, everything including his dignity, but there's one thing he'd never allow them to take from him, and that was his attitude. In the weeks and months that followed, no matter what brutality his interrogators inflicted upon him, he resolved to remain in absolute control over his reactions and his responses to those who meted out mistreatment to him.

He resolved that his attitude would not be one of bitterness but of forgiveness.

His attitude would not be to give up but to go on.

His attitude would not be one of hatred but one of hope.

His attitude would be a determination to continue living despite the overwhelming circumstances that engulfed him.

No self pity, no pity party but a decision to maintain a right attitude.

In short, Victor Frankl and one string!

Through life's journeys we will encounter unforeseen happenings, things beyond our control, but how will we respond?

Your attitude can **fuel your fire** or it can **hobble your hopes**.

I'm convinced that when our attitude is right there's no hurdle too high and no valley that's too deep.

Nor is there any challenge too great for those who will maintain a right attitude.

From my observation a majority of people spend far too much time focusing on their "broken strings.

Why do people focus so much attention on situations they cannot change? After all, life isn't all headaches, heartaches, accusation and frustration. Let's focus on the "bonuses", the enjoyments in life.

Has our negative attitude towards rising house prices kept the prices down?

Has a negative attitude towards the violence in our society helped to stop it?

Has all our complaining about the weather brought rain when we wanted it dry, or dry when we wanted rain?

I challenge you to think about an occasion or a situation that you've changed by having a negative attitude towards it – and that attitude developed you into a better person.

People are concerned about wasting natural resources such as water, timber and soil, and rightly so, but the greatest waste of any natural resource is people using the energy and the gifts they've been given to fight the inevitables of life, and then becoming bitter and miserable in the process. It's like running down to the ocean waves with a garden rake and trying to stop the tide coming in. What a ridiculous waste of energy. 24 hours later the tide will still wash upon the shore. When confronted with life's inevitables, with our attitude we can either choose to ride a submarine and go under! Or we can choose a surf board and rise above the situation. Take your pick. The choice is yours.

Only doers make mistakes

AM I A FIREMAN YET??

In Phoenix, Arizona, a 26-year-old mother stared down at her 6 year old son, who was dying of terminal leukaemia. Although her heart was filled with sadness, she also had a strong feeling of determination. Like any parent, she wanted her son to grow up & fulfil all his dreams.

Now that was no longer possible.

The leukaemia would see to that. But she still wanted her son's dream to come true.

She took her son's hand and asked, 'Billy, did you ever think about what you wanted to be once you grew up? Did you ever dream and wish what you would do with your life?'

Mommy, 'I always wanted to be a fireman when I grew up.'

Mom smiled back and said, 'Let's see if we can make your wish come true.'

Later that day she went to her local fire Department in Phoenix, Arizona, where she met Fireman Bob, who had a heart as big as Phoenix. She explained her son's final wish and asked if it might be possible to give her 6 year-old son a ride around the block on a fire engine.

Fireman Bob said, 'Look, we can do better than that. If you'll have your son ready at seven o'clock Wednesday morning, we'll make him an honorary Fireman for the whole day. He can come down to the fire station, eat with us, go out on all the fire calls, the whole nine yards! And if you'll give us his sizes, we'll get a real fire uniform for him, with a real fire hat - not a toy - one with the emblem of the Phoenix Fire Department on it, a yellow slicker like we wear, and rubber boots.'

'They're all manufactured right here in Phoenix, so we can get them fast.'

Three days later Fireman Bob picked up Billy, dressed him in his uniform and escorted him from his hospital bed to the waiting hook and ladder truck.

Billy got to sit on the back of the truck and help steer it back to the fire station. He was in heaven. There were three fire calls in Phoenix that day and Billy got to go out on all three calls.

He rode in the different fire engines, the paramedic's van, and even the fire chief's car. He was also video-taped for the local news program.



Having his dream come true, with all the love and attention that was lavished upon him so deeply, so touched Billy that he lived three months longer than any doctor thought possible.

One night all of his vital signs began to drop dramatically and the head nurse, who believed in the hospice concept that no one should die alone, began to call the family members to the hospital.

Then she remembered the day Billy had spent as a fireman, so she called the Fire Chief and asked if it would be possible to send a fireman in uniform to the hospital to be with Billy as he made his transition.

The chief replied, 'We can do better than that. We'll be there in five minutes. Will you please do me a favour? When you hear the sirens screaming and see the lights flashing, will you announce over the PA system that there is not a fire?'

'It's the department coming to see one of its finest members one more time. And will you open the window to his room?'

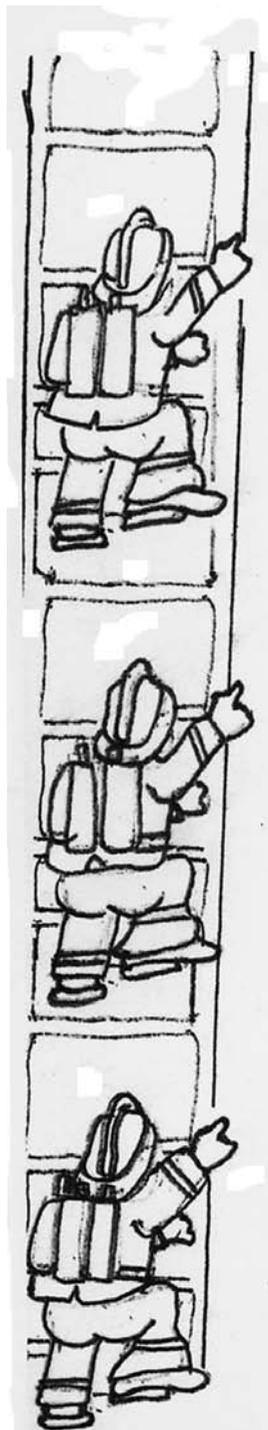
About five minutes later a hook and ladder truck arrived at the hospital and extended its ladder up to Billy's third floor open window... 16 fire-fighters climbed up the ladder into Billy's room.

With his mother's permission, they hugged him and held him and told him how much they LOVED him. With his dying breath, Billy looked up at the fire chief and said, 'Chief, am I really a fireman now?'

'Billy, you are, and the Head Chief, Jesus, is holding your hand.'

With those words, Billy smiled and said, 'I know, He's been holding my hand all day, and the angels have been singing.'

He closed his eyes one last time.



YOU TOO CAN PLAY A KEY PART

Many have known Wayne Roberts, the large very good natured Maori in the wheelchair who had spastic quadriplegia. He has been involved with our ministry for 30 years and has been to numerous national camps. Sadly, he died a few weeks ago. His funeral was deeply moving, and especially so when Brian Vincent played a tape taken some fifteen years ago at the church he and Wayne attended. Here is what Brian said on the tape:



I want to tell you a story about a friend of mine. A number of years ago he was 19. He felt rejected. He felt very lonely. He desperately wanted friends, to be accepted. He thought, "I'll join the Hell's Angels gang," and he became a member. He was involved with all their activities – motorbikes, drugs, sex, sometimes violence, and he loved the comradeship, but one night he and a bunch of his mates were apprehended by the police. They ended up in jail. While he was in jail this young man accidentally overdosed on drugs. These drugs didn't kill him, just parts of him. He became what we now call a head injury, spastic quadriplegic. That simply means that 3 out of 4 of his limbs no longer functioned correctly, and the 4th one didn't have a lot of activity either. He was in hospital for a very long time, and he sat all day in a wheelchair. Gone were the days when he could ride around on a motorbike. He was so lonely and desperate,



At a CFFD camp at Hunua in 1984.

lying in hospital. The only visitors were his parents when they could come. For months he lay in hospital – lonely, rejected.

One day he said to his father, “Dad, I want you to put an ad in the paper. I want you to advertise for someone to come and visit me. I am so lonely.”

A lady with a disability was reading the paper and she happened to see the advertisement. She rang up Di Willis. Di and Hugh went to visit this young man in hospital. As they sat with him they began to communicate with him. They realized that he needed a lot more than they could give, so they contacted Brian Muirhead and asked him if he would be prepared to visit this man regularly. Straight away he said yes, he would be glad to do that, and for two years he visited him in the different hospitals he was moved to as part of his rehabilitation. He gave him his time, encouragement and love. As he continued to visit him in the different homes he moved to, Brian became a true friend, he prayed for him and he shared the love of Jesus Christ. He took him to CFFD fellowship meetings and to the CMWDT national camps at Totara Springs. Eventually he led him to the Lord. He brought the young man to this church, and being a Pentecostal church he was confronted with the situation of healing. The young man began to reach out to God for his healing. But God didn't come through. It wasn't his time, but he came to a place of accepting his disability. Eventually Brian had to move to Wellington, but there were others who took up the challenge of bringing him. Today he doesn't come alone. There are others now who come regularly as the people in this church reach out to them too. He has a regular booking with a taxi company and he has now been coming for over 10 years.



Wayne on a visit to Kawerau in 1981 with a CFFD team.

This man is Wayne Roberts, sitting here up the front – a man in whom God has done a great work in his life, but God has only been able to do this because people have been faithful to what God has called them to do, because Brian responded to that first call. Wayne once told me that he praises God that he had that accident. If it wasn't for that accident he wouldn't be here with that big smile we all know so well. He'd be dead. He'd be in hell.

And then Wayne spoke on the tape. It was an electrifying moment in the service as his voice filled the room. He spoke on his relationship with Jesus. When asked what did Jesus mean to him he answered "Everything!" Would he like to be on a motorbike again? "Surely not!" he said. "Now I have accepted Jesus as my personal Saviour, and I want to share the love of the Lord."

The photo on the right shows Wayne at the wedding of Caleb Taylor. Caleb first came to know Wayne when he used to bring Wayne into the Centre, part of his job as the driver of the Centre's van. A great friendship developed and Caleb out of the Centre hours took Wayne to church and many other activities. This culminated in Caleb asking Wayne to be the best man at his wedding and Wayne is seen here dressed for the big occasion.



It is our prayer that there will be people reading this now who will respond to the call to help others like Wayne. It might be just to come and help at the Centre. We still have such a need there, just as we mentioned in "The Encourager" in June last year. A dentist read that article. He felt the call of God in it. Although he has to travel 50 kms each way to the Centre he determined to help. He has one day off a week from his practice, and he gave even that up to come to Mt Smart Rd on a Tuesday. He came every day for the rest of the year! He still comes to help when he can! On his day off! If you feel God speaking to you as to how you can help in some way, we would love to hear from you.

Ring 09 636-4763

LIFE PILOT

by John King



Our lives are naturally divided into three eras. The first 30 years are our learning years. The next 30 are our practical years and the last 30 are the years in which we minister... we give back all the wisdom that we have gained through experience in the first 60.

In my earlier years, I saw God as an observer, my judge. He kept track of the things I did wrong so He'd know whether I merited heaven or hell when I die. He was out there somewhere, sort of like an instructor. I recognized His picture when I saw it, but I really didn't know Him.

But later on when I met Jesus, it seemed as though life was rather like an aeroplane flight. I was aware that He was in the copilot seat helping me to navigate. I don't know just when it was that He suggested that He do some flying, but life has not been the same since.

When I had control, I concentrated on where I was going. The journey was rather boring, but predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the stick, He knew delightful long cuts, around mountains, and through canyons ... at breakneck speeds ... it was all I could do to hang on! Even though the route looked like madness, He'd chuckle and say, "Tighten your seatbelt!" I'd get a knot in my stomach. I would get worried and even anxious and ask, "Where are you taking me?" He'd laugh and not answer. I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and began to enter into the adventure. And when I'd scream, "I'm scared," He'd reach over, touch my hand, and encourage me to follow Him on the controls.

He took me to exotic places to meet people with gifts that I needed: gifts of healing, acceptance, and joy. They gave me gifts to take on our flight, my Lord's and mine, and we would be off again. He'd say, "Give the gifts away, they're extra cargo, too much weight." So I did, to more people that we met, and I found that in giving I received, and my adventure multiplied.

I did not trust Him at first to be in control of my flight. I thought He'd wreck it. But He knows flying secrets. He knows how to use the wind and air currents; knows how to manipulate ground effect to clear obstacles; knows how to navigate to shorten scary passages. He's even shown me the golden brilliance of sunshine beyond the boiling, towering thunderheads.

And I am learning to shut up and relax in the strangest places. I'm beginning to enjoy the thrill. And my stomach is starting to anticipate the exhilarating manoeuvres with my delightful, constant, companion, Jesus Christ.

And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore, He just smiles and says.... "Hang on."

MIRACLES DO HAPPEN

by Helen Rackley from Dunedin

These days miracles do happen, just as in Jesus' time. My story is about three of God's miracles, and I praise Him with all of my being.

I am a twin and was born 63 years ago, six weeks premature. I was the first born of two girls. Weighing just under three pounds, this caused dyslexia and auditory processing disorder. This is a disorder that affects the sound between the ear and the brain, causing the sound to be distorted. It happened about ten percent of the time, causing communication to be a real problem, and without communication life is very lonely and difficult. Reading was a problem too. I could only understand one word at a time, and what I read previously I never remembered. Three years ago I went to my sister's café. It was there I suddenly realized that I had a very big problem. People would come to the café and ask for food. The words would dance in front of my eyes.



I was sent to two neurologists, was given tests, and was told it was due to lack of oxygen at birth, and nothing could be done. Through my school years it was very difficult. Dunces came up many times. It took 60 years before I knew what was wrong with me. When I found out it affected me greatly. I wondered how I was going to live with this disability for the rest of my life. I had no friends, was very shy, and was introverted because of my communication problems.

During May 2006 I was at the lowest point in my life. I cried out to God, "I don't want to be like this for the rest of my life." On the 28th May at St Matthews Church, Dunedin, during the sermon, the Holy Spirit spoke to me in an audible voice. He told me to repent of my sins, and instantly I was filled with the Holy Spirit.

During the next week the Holy Spirit spoke again and said I was to give my testimony at church, and this I did. I now believe God was seeing if I would be obedient to Him so that He could carry out His plans for me.

The testimony I gave was just before the sermon. During the sermon I started sobbing which disturbed people in the church. I didn't know then, but that sobbing was to change my life forever. When I got home the Holy Spirit told me to open up my Bible. What a shock I got, for the first time in 60 years I could understand what I was reading. I read 30 books that first month, which was very exciting. I just couldn't put

the books down. I found I could understand what people were saying, and the sound system in the church was also clear. But God still hadn't finished with His miracles.

God spoke to me again the week after that miracle. I was sitting at a café reading the book "God Can Do It Again" by Kathryn Kuhlman. On the cover it said she was the author of "I Believe In Miracles". I knew it was a very old book, and it would be difficult to obtain a copy, but I longed to read it. Five minutes later God spoke two words to me – "Library top". I went straight into the Christian section in the library, got a stool and climbed up. There straight ahead in front of my eyes was the book. That too was one of God's miracles.

Before my healing God was something distant. That special day was when I really came to know Jesus Christ, not only as my personal Saviour but also as the Great Physician. I praise God that the happenings in the Scriptures still happen today through the Holy Spirit. God is so mighty and powerful!

At the age of thirteen I had been very ill with rheumatic fever which left me with a damaged heart. It caused a lot of health problems. At the age of 47 I had a mild coronary, and had an angioplasty done. Several years later I had another angiogram and echo. They found it was stress related. God knew that having those tests would later show His wonderful healing of my rheumatic heart. When you have such a heart it is for life and there is no cure. The awful feeling of heaviness in my heart is gone now.

My doctor was amazed when I came to have a check up. He told me I was in excellent health. My answer back to him was, "God is the Healer." He sat down in shock and had tears in his eyes.

It is great to know the age of God's miracles is not past. The wonder of it continues to grow and grow - that God in His concern for us could care so much as to send His healing power from Heaven to meet our needs!

It is now three years since God's healings. I am a different person, the introverted person has gone. I now have Christian friends, and have understood everything that is spoken. I am so thankful for the wonderful things that happen each day in my life.

I would like to finish with the words of my favourite song:

*He touched me – Oh He touched me,
And oh the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened, and now I know,
He touched me – and made me whole.*

WHAT A TRANSFORMATION IN MY THINKING!

Hamish Muir writes;

One of my biggest fears as a kid was disabled people, especially those with intellectual disabilities. They scared the living daylights out of me. Especially was this so when I was at intermediate where our school was right next to the IHC one. One day my tennis ball rolled into their grounds, so I jumped the fence, went down the retaining wall and threw it back. All I then had to do was jump up the wall, climb the fence and I would be safe again. But do you think I could climb that wall?



I tried and tried, and just did not have the strength to do it. Next thing I knew my worst nightmare started to unfold, a tall long-faced Chinese girl came around the corner drooling and crying out, "I'm going to get you." Well, I thought it was all on. Here I was, trapped, about to be attacked by this Down Syndrome girl. I hadn't got the strength to jump the wall, and I was about to be poked to death for all I knew by this mad, crazed, dribbling girl with the long boney fingers. I was up and over that wall faster than someone dodging a bull at Pamplona!

This moment in time set me up with a prejudice I harboured for about twenty-five years, and was one I could not seem to shake off. What made it even more difficult was the fact that the one of the founders of the Christian Ministry with Disabled went to my church, and for about five years Di Willis would always ask me around this time of year if I would like to be a helper at the National Camp in October. I managed to always say no and offer some sort of excuse as to why I couldn't go, and Di would just say "Oh well, maybe next year." After five years of asking I finally had to confess to her that it just was not my thing - that I was afraid. I knew within myself that I could not cope with having to look after a disabled person. It just was not in me, so please don't ask me again.

Believe it or not, it worked. Di did not ask me again for a whole year. Then seven years ago Di came up to me and asked, "Would you please come down to camp and help your good friend Norm with security. You won't have to look after anyone, just make sure everyone stays safe." Of course I had to say yes because I could not come up with any excuse fast enough to say why I could not attend. I hate it when that happens and I have no reason why not, so I had to say yes.

So off to camp I went, and of course I was determined not to show my fear and prejudice and be as friendly and welcoming as I could be. But what a show!

My brain struggled to interpret what I was seeing. All these people in wheel chairs with withered limbs and twisted hands. Others were walking knock-kneed, and lurching forward with every step, dribbling and drooling uncontrollably, slurring their speech and generally showing every sign I was scared of. Another friend from church was there for the first time, and his expression summed it all up for me. He just stared, he looked completely lost, drowning in fear, with his eyes about to burst out of his head. Of course I had to look cooler than he was, so that was what helped break my fear. I just approached every one of them as if they were normal people, and guess what, found they were. You see, believe it or not, they are actually human beings. It's just that they function in a different way to you and I.

Like everyone else that I know, our perceived ideas about people with disabilities is that they have been transformed out of the human race, but after spending an amazing three days with these people you go home wondering who the disabled person is, having seen the joy that they experienced by coming to camp, meeting up with old friends, making new ones and having the best time possible. They played games, prayed with friends, danced and sung their hearts out and gave themselves totally to God for the weekend.

How pathetic our world is. We worry and complain because our coffee is bitter, that we have to wait 15 minutes in traffic, that someone never returned our email, and our phone has just died, and that's the whole day gone. Horrific isn't it! We take weeks to get over it as we plan to get that person back because they cut us off in the queue for the third time this week. Have you ever thought what it is like to have to ask someone to wipe your bottom, to feed you when five years ago you used to be able to feed your self but now you can no longer control your hands let alone hold onto anything? How frustrating to have complete cognitive thought, but be unable to utter a single word. Can you imagine on a beautiful hot day not being able to go for a swim just because no one is around to help you into the pool and stay with you. To be unable to get to about 80 % of the shops because they have poor access for your wheelchair, or just to be sick of being pushed around by the crowd who are too ignorant to move out of your way or to help. Can you imagine not being able to go out today because your helper has not turned up, no doubt for some very valid reason, and so no one can help you get out of bed? It makes that 15 minute traffic queue seem pretty short, doesn't it?

One of the most amazing things I have ever had to do at camp was to dance with a girl. She was reliant on her wheelchair for mobility due to her disability. About five years ago she could walk, but rather slowly due to muscle deterioration. She can't walk much now, and asked me if I would dance with her. Dancing is great fun with people in wheelchairs because you can spin them around, rock them up onto two



Mark Grantham with two friends joins in the dancing.



Colin Head always has a smile on his face.

wheels and boogie away. I started to push her wheelchair, but she said no. Would I pick her up and dance with her, for she felt I was one of the few ones strong enough to lift her up and dance with her? Fortunately it was a rock and roll tune, so I helped her up and we danced. At the end of the song I sat her down again in her chair and noticed she was crying. I thought I had hurt her, but no she was just so happy because she had danced like a normal girl at a dance and her disability had disappeared for a short time.

I have made so many amazing friends from camp. One of my favourites is Colin. He has cerebral palsy, and has no speech, but he is one of the happiest people I know. He always has a smile on his face and a great giggle, and when you see him and say hello it is a most frightening thing. Why is that? Because I always think he is going to bounce out of his chair because he is so happy to see you, and he bounces and twists in all directions. It is amazing!

What a lot of people don't realize is that for many of the campers who come to camp, this is the only time they get to even leave their homes. For some it is the only time they and their caregivers can ever have a break from one another.

The wonderful thing about camp is that the campers, for three days, get to have what could be described as normal life. The camp at Totara Springs is run just like any other camp held there. They sleep in the cabins, have to share the showers, eat in the food hall, have meetings in the gymnasium, go for swims, play sports, ride on the train

and the go karts, play on the trampolines, dress up for the dance, sit in the sun and sometimes do nothing except talk with friends. They get growled at for being too noisy and not going to sleep. In every way they are treated as normal people.

The biggest thing I have learnt from camp is that we are all normal people. We are all God's children, His adopted sons and daughters, and He loves us just how we are. It is not for us to judge who is better than another. We all have problems, disappointments and failings, but we are also all able to laugh smile and communicate with each other the love of God. And of course, just because you are disabled, doesn't mean you are not human. This has never been better illustrated to me than by a guy I met in Torbay. A group of us were going out for dinner, and as we were standing there I noticed him sitting in a wheelchair. I went up and said hello. It was Anzac Day, and I asked him if he had been to the dawn parade that morning. His reaction was funny at first. He was a bit standoffish, and didn't really want to talk to me. There was distrust in his face. It was if he was thinking, "You are not genuine, you don't care about me." But when I asked where he lived, and pointed out that friends of mine used to live in the house over the road from where we were, and asked if he lived there as well, he realized that I was genuinely asking him about his life. His whole countenance changed. He started smiling, we chatted about things, and then parted just like acquaintances who might never meet again.

We must always remember that we can't judge a book by its cover. Just because society says shun these people, that we should. I know that some of the people at camp are far more intelligent and stronger in spirit and mind than I am. Just because I can run, jump, laugh and sing, that doesn't make me better than them.

We don't know why these things happen to us, but they do, and it is up to us to start now to break down the prejudices the world has built up. So please, if someone comes up to you and asks can you help at camp, please don't try and come up with an excuse. Rather, stop, think about it, and then say yes. Say yes to one of the most amazing experiences you will ever have. It will be hard, but by the end you will wonder who are the normal people.

*Don't be afraid of pressure.
Remember that pressure is what turns
a lump of coal into a diamond.*

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Have you lost your sparkle? Have you lost your glow?
Have you lost your fervour, but dare not let it show?
Even when the sun's out, do your days seem grey?
Do you find it difficult to sit and really pray?
Do you feel despondent, feeling low and glum,
Maybe think that God loves you a little less than some?
Do not try to hide it, He knows where you are at.
He has watched, since time began, and knows your ways off pat.
Don't forget He made you, moulded every part,
He sees each deed and hears each word, and sees into your heart.

Sometimes when you're feeling that your faith is running dry
And all you do goes upside down – however hard you try –
Well God is watching over you, a caring Father's eye.
He looks down with a heavy heart and gives a little sigh.
He understands you've got it tough and knows just what you need –
It's Him you ought to talk to; your gloom would then recede.
Just tell Him that you need Him, and shed those pent up tears,
Only He can help restore and cancel out your fears.
Release to Him what burdens you, the thoughts that cause you pain.
Open up yourself to Him, receptive once again.

Surrender what you cling to and be renewed, refreshed.
Read your Bible, prayerfully, praise with new found zest.
Stir embers that have dwindled, back to a roaring flame –
Once more the Lord your focus, rejoice and praise His name!
For knowing God is priceless, a treasure free to all,
It matters not to Him if you feel weak or frail and small.
Remember promises He's kept, His care, His love so true,
The faithful way He answers prayers, uttered by just a few.
So come now, smile, lift up your face and once again be free.
Display the JOY of knowing God and shine for all to see.

Written by Ann Elsworth of Dorset, England for the English Carers Christian Fellowship magazine.

GAMES WERE A SPECIAL FEATURE OF THE WELLINGTON CAMP



IN A WHEELCHAIR, BUT SHE'S RAISED \$4,000



A bunch of orphans in Kenya has transformed the life of a West Auckland wheelchair user. More accurately, the response of Diana York to the needs of these young children has changed her focus dramatically. Diana has had cerebral palsy since birth and has limited motor skills.

She became a Christian about ten years ago and admits she was an angry person before she met her Lord. Significant help in her conversion came from David Green, the most injured survivor from the Ansett air crash near Palmerston North.

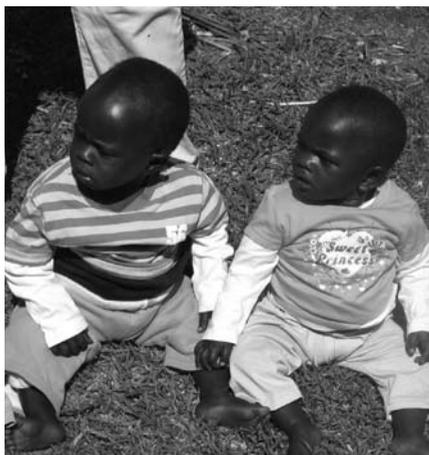
He and Diana both lived for a time at the Laura Fergusson Trust For Disabled Persons. But Diana also

acknowledges that up until a couple of years ago, she was very self-focused. The change began at Auckland's special service on the third Sunday of June to celebrate the annual Disability Awareness Sunday. Mark Grantham, who has severe cerebral palsy, told how he personally sponsors five children through World Vision. He is taken to the Newmarket shopping centre each week to sell chocolates from his chair.

Diana told the Lord she wanted to do something for Him with cards and the Lord replied "Sell the cards for Me and the orphans." She had first heard about Hope Homes from Geoff Wiklund, her minister at Eden Assembly of God. For many years, Pastor Geoff has been a much-appreciated spiritual adviser to C.M.W.D.T. and, since 1986, he has made numerous missions trips to Africa.

Over two years ago he met a couple in Eldoret, who live not far from the church in which over a hundred people were burned alive during the tumultuous time prior to the last Kenyan elections. William Thompson from Christchurch and his American wife, Moira, had been part of a Youth With A Mission base there, which had to be dissolved. Rather than see children go back on the streets, the couple adopted eight of them.

These include precious twins, Jennifer and Peter, who had been abandoned at the nearby



refugee camp. At fifteen months they each weighed only six kilos, but are already growing and improving in health.

And Diana's skill in producing cards has also improved markedly. She realised her original drawings wouldn't sell very well, but has developed a skill in taking parts of used cards to make something special. This has snowballed so that she regularly raises over a hundred dollars a week. Her best week provided \$270 for Hope Homes in Eldoret. Diana is well known at St Margarets' Rest Home and Hospital in Te Atatu where she lives, and visitors, residents and staff all help purchase items. These now include baby clothes, bric-a-brac and other new and second hand goods donated by many people. Every day she manages to sell something, and loves to show her "customers" pictures of the twins.

After each Sunday service the tray on Diana's wheelchair becomes part of a makeshift stall for any of the congregation to contribute to the fund-raising. Eden A.O.G. has committed to sending \$600 a month to the orphans in Eldoret, and in April Diana raised this entire amount herself.

The Thompsons are also very grateful for intermittent donations from other sources, which will go towards a second home and a borehole project. In less than two years Diana has personally raised over \$4,000 and shows no sign of stopping!

On a recent visit to Eldoret Geoff Wiklund was most impressed by what he saw. He says William and Moira and the children are very, very touched by Diana York's efforts and they are praying hopefully that they will be able to visit New Zealand in September and personally thank her.

Leila Corban

The Word

*did not become a theory or a concept
to be discussed, debated or pondered,
BUT the Word became a Person (Jesus),
to be followed, enjoyed and loved.*

EVAN CLULEE GRADUATES FROM CAREY BIBLE COLLEGE



This enthusiastic group of family, CFFD supporters and fellow members of the staff at the Centre turned out in force to support Evan as he graduated after six years of part time study, with his second degree, Bachelor of Applied Theology. Earlier he had completed a degree in Recreation Management from Lincoln University. The bonus was a complete surprise with Evan receiving the Brian Smith Award for excellence in the understanding and practice of mission, the cup in the photograph. Evan has made several overseas mission trips including helping in a Chinese orphanage for children with disabilities, as well as four visits to Hebron where the Philippines CFFD works closely with Children's Bible Ministries.

CORRECTION

Several people have written in regarding some major errors in the article "Use What You've Got" on page 27 of issue 122 of The Encourager - pointing out that Isaac Newton was not as stated the author of "Joy to the world" or "O God our help in ages past". We apologise for this, and also to "Word for Today" as we have been unable to determine if this magazine that has so many wonderful stories was in fact the source of the article.

SERVING GOD WITH ONE EYEBROW

*"The strong Spirit of a man will sustain him in bodily pain or trouble."
Proverbs 18:14 AMP*



David Rabin was a professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University. When he was 46 he was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's Disease. He knew what would happen. Stiffness in the legs, then weakness, paralysis of the lower limbs and then the upper. Eventually his body would no longer obey his commands. He could form words only with the greatest difficulty and eventually not at all. He lost his ability to treat patients and could no longer go to the hospital to work. He would have had a brilliant academic career, now he couldn't even turn the pages of a book. But there was one thing he would not surrender: his spirit!

One day he heard from a fellow physician who also had Lou Gehrig's Disease about a computer that could be operated by a single switch. That switch could be operated by anyone, however physically challenged, who retained the function of just one muscle group. David Rabin still had enough strength in one part of his body – his eyebrow. So for the next four years he used it to speak to his family, tell jokes, write papers and review manuscripts. He carried on a medical consulting practice. He taught medical students. He published a comprehensive text book on endocrinology and achieved a prestigious award for his work. And he did it with the only thing he could control – a single eyebrow.

The Bible says: *"The strong Spirit of a man will sustain him in bodily pain or trouble"* (Pr 18:124 AMP). David Rabin proved that's true. With a Spirit that refused to give up, and one eyebrow.

Taken from The Word for Today, Copyright 2008 Bob Gass Ministries published by Rhema Broadcasting Group Inc. A free copy of this devotional may be obtained from RBG New Zealand.

LIVING OR DYING?

Last night my wife and I were sitting in the living room, talking about life... In between, we talked about the idea of living or dying. I said to her: "Dear, never let me live in a vegetative state, totally dependent on machines and liquids from a bottle. If you see me in that state I want you to disconnect all the contraptions that keep me alive; I'd much rather die."

Then my wife got up from the sofa with this real look of admiration towards me and proceeded to disconnect the TV, the dish, the DVD, the computer, the cell phone, the iPod and the Xbox, and then went to the fridge and threw away all my beverage... I almost died!

from the Games Rangers of Africa

JOY MINISTRIES CONTINUES TO SPREAD THROUGHOUT NZ



Taupo is the latest centre to form a Joy Ministries Group, and this photo shows some of those who came together on 14 December for their first meeting. The Taupo Baptist Church oversee this group. Wendy Emslee, a member of their staff, sent in this report:

Like most births it involved lots of noise and a roller coaster ride of pain but mostly joy. Pain for me as I observed a young woman confined to a wheelchair, blind, unable to speak or use her hands... but... joy when her Down Syndrome friend made her a gift because she was unable to do so herself.



Great joy for me when this same woman came up to me and this huge hug that seemed to come from nowhere just burst out of her, a hug straight from her heart, a heart so willing to love and give, a heart that to me reflects the heart of God. In some ways I felt like I had been hugged by God!

I can't help but wonder if God has allowed this ministry to be birthed here not just so we can help those with disabilities connect with God in a context that is suited to them, but also that our own brokenness can be revealed to us, by them.

HAVE YOU BEEN MOVED BY THE TESTIMONIES?

The stories in this and other “Encouragers” tell about people from all walks of life who have developed a faith and trust in Jesus, and how this has transformed their lives.

Is that something you would love to have yourself? The steps are not difficult.

You need to be what is described in *John 3:3* as “born again”.

You need to realise you like all of us are a sinner. Read *Romans 3:23*

Ask Jesus into your life as Saviour.

Make Him Lord of your life.

Then walk daily with Him through:

Prayer

Studying the Bible

Fellowshipping with other Christians

There are many excellent Bible Study guides.

Attending a “live” church will help you grow.

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Joy Ministries - Diane Wall

Branches in Auckland (3 areas),

Whakatane, Hawkes Bay, Taupo,

Masterton, Blenheim

Torch -

Carers -



Large Hawkes Bay CFFD group visit the Takapau Abbey



*Left:
Jean Masters, who is deaf, graduates with a BA at the University of Waikato.*



*Right:
Manuele Teofilo cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Manukau City Baptist Church*



Torch Camp - these musicians loved playing together

If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to:
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I wish to give \$ for the magazine
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