



AUGUST 2007 ISSUE 116

The ENCOURAGER

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

Magazine of the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust



Patricia Harder dancing with the Voice Group on Disability Awareness Sunday

AT THE RACES

Heather Major

In March I had a day at the races you could say. It was the last morning of my holiday in Whangamata, and as I went for my walk I came across a triathlon, part of the national series.

I cheered along with the crowd as the first triathletes approached the finish line. Although it's not a sport I follow, who could not admire and applaud their effort and the hours spent training? And yet to my surprise, the crowd dwindled quickly to the point that the only ones left applauding the finishers were me and their own families, if they were lucky to have them there.

That same day in the afternoon I was back in Hamilton. In stark contrast, the race was Relay for Life, a 22 hour event held annually to raise funds for the Cancer Society. My husband Glenn was in the Survivors Lap which started the relay. He was the last to finish the lap, but it did not matter at all. The huge crowd cheered as loudly for Glenn as they did for all the survivors, maybe even louder, a crescendo of cheering and clapping, whistle blowing and party horns blaring.

There were tears too in the crowd. Many for their own reasons, and maybe some because they knew Glenn and his eventful journey with cancer the past 10 years. An incredibly emotional time for everyone there. In the excitement, we on Glenn's team temporarily forgot the big seizure Glenn had had just four days before.

The spiritual race we are running is more like the Relay for Life isn't it? It's not about who comes first, but finishing. *"Everyone who competes in the games (including triathlons!) goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever"* (1 Corinthians 9:25). The race marked out for us is to keep our faith and our eyes fixed on Jesus when things are good, average, and even when the going gets tough. It's going to be a great day when we enter our heavenly home. The great cloud of witnesses cheering us on will destroy forever the tough times from our memory and make everything we have been through pale in significance to the fact we made it in the end. What matters is that in the end we made it! We finished the most important race of our lives.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Hebrews 12:1-3)

Let's keep our focus on Jesus. We will win in the end, and the crown will last forever. Be encouraged!

LABOUR WEEKEND CAMP

19th to 22nd October at Totara Springs, Matamata

"MOVING FORWARD"

Lisa came last year and says,

"I thought that those with disabilities needed me, but I realized that as much as they needed me to assist them, I needed them."

Now she's keen for all her Bible College students to get a taste of this camp

Registrations to: Allan Hamilton Tel 09-479-1794
499a Beach Rd,
Murrays Bay, Auckland
Email allan.hamilton@inglife.co.nz



COSTS

Adults \$120, but if before 1st Sept, helpers will be \$100, and pwd \$110, these being non-refundable.

13-15 yrs \$90 8-12 yrs \$80 4-7 yrs \$60
3 yrs and under free

Register soon to be sure to get in.

A ONE DAY SEMINAR

"How to get over your fear of helping a person with a disability"

In doing this you will become a **blessing**
And be **blessed greatly** yourself

When Sat 6th October
Time 9.45 to 2.30 pm
Where CMWDT Centre,
173 Mt Smart Rd,
Onehunga, Auckland
Cost \$10



Bring your own lunch, but morning and afternoon tea will be provided.

**This seminar is practical, fun, learning, encouraging,
and a wonderful help to new helpers at camp.**

A REAL EXAMPLE OF A DISABILITY-FRIENDLY CHURCH

Harbourside Church on the North Shore in Auckland have opened their hearts to people with disabilities. They have:

- Organised and paid for the taxis for several folk in wheelchairs to come every Sunday morning
- Organised a "Care Team" to help with those with disabilities on Sundays
- Provided people to run a Bible study at one of the Creative Ability homes
- Contacted the CMWDT for advice, and as a result made structural alterations to their loos
- Hosted and got very involved with the CFFD activities on the North Shore
- Provided the venue for the main Auckland Disability Awareness Service, and as a result of this, programmed the Wheelchair Dance and other items from that day to take place again at subsequent services.

On these two pages we feature items from the Awareness Service.

Encouraging reports have come in from Disability Awareness services around the country.

On these two pages we feature items from the Disability Awareness Service at Harbourside, and five of the six wheelchair dancers are shown in the photo below; Diana York, Mark Grantham, Kim Corkin, Gina Taka-Ardouin and Kim Sutherland.





*Immanuel Koks, whose testimony was featured in Issue 110 of *The Encourager*, gave the message.*



The Joy Ministries group acted out a drama, "Hot line to Heaven"—one of many that Jan Bridgeman has thought out.



*This is a group from the CMWDT Centre performing their "Chimes" item, with each member responsible for playing just one note, and after much practice they gave a good rendering of *Jesus Loves Me* and *Amazing Grace*.*



It was a spectacular sight as Gina & Kim Sutherland played their part in the very colourful ribbon dancing of the Voice Dance Group.

BIG CHANGES IN THE OPERATION OF THE TRUST BOARD

Very significant changes in the Trust's operation took place with the first meeting of the new Trust Board, one which no longer attempts to cover all the many facets of Trust activities, but rather the governance role of leading the Trust into the future. It draws up long-range plans, reviews and sets policy, and looks at the whole overall picture, rather than attending to the matters that arise on a day to day basis. This last function is the responsibility of the management team for all that happens under the Trust umbrella, and when it is fully formed, it will consist of a smaller group who can meet regularly, probably at the Centre, and be able to immediately deal with the issues that come up.

The governance team consists of people who have shown a great interest in the growth of the Trust. It includes some people who live outside Auckland, and will probably meet three or four times a year. For some time the Trustees have been aware of the need to appoint younger people who can give many years of service, and also people with expertise in different fields such as the business sector, and this is reflected in the four new appointees described on the next page. Debbie Mudgway (shown below), continues on the Trust, and Hugh and Di Willis will for a limited time be there to provide continuity until new prospective appointees can be found and made familiar with the systems that are at present operating. They along with Evan Clulee will initially form the management team. The four retiring trustees, Mike Pownall, Brian and Jean Ferguson, and Peter Townend, are shown in the other photo.



THE FOUR NEW TRUSTEES

David Senior, the new Chairman, is blind, and along with his wife Phillipa has had a long association with the Trust right from the very early days. He was earlier on the National CFFD Board, before moving to Kaitaia, where he is involved in leadership in a number of groups that work in the sector of disabilities.



39 year old David Burge met his wife Tarnya through CFFD. They have been married for almost 15 years and home school their seven children. Among other things, David, who was born with cerebral palsy, currently serves as Pastor of the Takanini Church of Christ.



James Arkwright, who works at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute in Tauranga, is originally from a farming background, but his career changed as a result of a spinal cord accident, and for the last fifteen years he has been involved in counselling and counsellor education. He is married to Sherilene, and they have two young children.



Nick Abplanalp is an owner and director of one of New Zealand's largest privately-owned I.T. companies. He first attended our National Camp back in 1999, and was immediately "sold" on our ministry. Nick is married to Mary Anne, and they have one daughter, Amelia, who is a student at Auckland University.



IGNITE your POTENTIAL. PLUG
into the POWER of your GOD given
DREAM

*Success is not
measured by what YOU
have DONE,
it's measured by what
YOU have BECOME*

Start believing in a better
tomorrow, today.



BLESSED are those who are
shaped by their **HOPES** not their
HURTS

Quotes
from
Robert
Schuller



When **GOD**
sees a breach,
He **BUILDS** a
BRIDGE

Persistence puts power into prayer

MY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP CAMP

I've always found God to have an unusual sense of humour and a great sense of timing, so when I thought I heard Him say 'you're going to Leadership Camp this year', I just did the usual and obeyed. Before I knew it I had a sponsor, and a further invitation from the leadership to try and make it. So confirmations came thick and fast, and I later found out there were about five reasons that the Lord wanted me up North - but that's another story! The highlights of the Camp for me were the messages by Pastor John Shipman, the small group discussions where one of the new Governance trustee's wife was an inspiration, and the small groups on the last day when we prayed for one another. My faith was enlarged when I found out that what I prayed for one of the group was a 'word', so that was a bonus for me personally. It was fun sharing a cabin with others and we seemed to 'fit' together O.K. I felt really comfortable with the 'gels'. I've decided I don't care how much it costs, I'll be making a return trip. The other highlight was buying a Graham Braddock print and zillions of his cards.



I had totally forgotten that Jean and Brian had visited Dunedin, so it was nice to see them again and to be a part of honouring them for their dedication, devotion, faithfulness and honest to goodness hard work over so many years.

Patsy Appleby-Morrison

ON THE TRUST WEB PAGE

THE LAST 10 MAGAZINES AND BRANCH SUPPLEMENTS BACK TO 2004

Did you realise that you can now call up on the Trust web page any of the branch supplements to the Encourager, not just for this latest issue, but for almost all the supplements from 2004 onwards.

To call these up:

Go to the home page of cmwdt.org.nz

UP TO DATE should appear.

At the bottom under **FEATURES** click on **NEWS**

Then click on **ARCHIVES** for all the previous issues

Scrolling further down will bring up the Branch newsletters

The magazines can be called up by clicking on the arm labelled **magazines** radiating out from the centre on the Trust logo.

JOY GREGORY HAS DIED, BUT HER SPIRIT LIVES ON

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Joy Gregory who has played such a huge part in the development of the Joy Fellowship in Canada, but we give thanks to Jesus for the gift of this unique woman of God to us and those in Canada for these very special years. Her pain and suffering is no more. Only "Joy" for evermore in God's presence. The following is part of the tribute we sent to Canada.

We in New Zealand feel for you in your grief at the passing of Joy – the loss of such a wonderful friend to all whoever had the privilege of knowing and sharing their lives with Joy. We grieve too – she so enriched all those she met on her four visits to New Zealand. But grief is only a part of the story, for we give thanks to God for the way in which Joy lived her life to the full in serving her Lord and Master.

What an amazing woman of God.

She was

An Encourager,

An Inspirer,

An Exhorter,

A Teacher, and

A Challenger

She had such vision and humility

She had time for everyone

She never considered her own needs

She had such a tremendous sense of humour and was always fun to be with

She was innovative and creative

She had compassion and love, but along with these she never neglected discipline.

All who knew her have rich and enduring memories of how she impacted our lives. We will never forget the first meeting with Joy in a taxi at Joni's first ever congress for the church and disability. We were instant friends for life. We treasure the memories of the four visits to New Zealand. How she loved our country. Nothing could ever take her away from her beloved friends in Canada, but she would love to have lived here in our country. And that in spite of the difficulties she had to overcome on her first visit here – huddling with her team on the floor in Hawaii as a hurricane ripped through the island state, having to drive on the opposite side of the road and being delivered (contrary to her order) with a manual vehicle, and she had only ever driven automatic vehicles.

We know your ministry got its name, Joy Fellowship, before Joy even appeared on the scene, but it is particularly appropriate that Joy has the same name. This fellowship will have great increase. God will take Joy's input and raise up great men and women to take on the baton. 'Except a grain of wheat dies and falls into the ground.....'



THREE TRIBUTES FROM PEOPLE IN CANADA

Her love of God's people—her desire for all of us to be our best no matter what our disabilities, her desire to share experiences, to walk beside, to share a meal, to listen, to challenge, to put photos on her fridge...Her love of God—her lively relationship with Jesus, her Lord, Saviour and Friend, filtered through all areas of her life; there was a natural rhythm, a comfortable ongoing conversation with God that was wonderfully inviting as well as challenging. Joy's love of God permeated our friendships, and we were given a taste of God's love...

When Joy and I first met, we meshed together about as well as peanut butter and salsa. However, sometimes the greatest friendships have the roughest beginnings. As I got to know Joy, my respect, admiration, and affection grew. I was awed at her passion for ministry, her commitment to Joy Fellowship and love for all the folks, a love I was able to share.

From our rather tumultuous beginning, Joy became one of my closest friends. In difficult times, it was Joy I contacted to express my grief. Joy was a significant presence in my life. I will miss Joy. I will miss our conversations, our times together. I will miss her example of faith and devotion. But I will hold onto the memories, and look forward to our reunion in Heaven

Summer of 1994, I was a student at Regent, licking my wounds from a catastrophic experience teaching in a one-room school on a remote Indian reserve near the Yukon border. Something new began to emerge as I studied the Bible at Regent. As the summer drew to a close, Joy called one day to ask if I would consider joining Joy Fellowship as a pastor. I had never thought of such a thing. My heart was on working overseas, but I had been involved as a volunteer for many years, and knew and loved many of the people of Joy Fellowship.

Within days I knew that this was an invitation from God to rebuild the broken pieces of my life in His service. A huge step in my life, and one which I think must have been difficult for Joy - she had been working with women for many years, and the dynamics involved in working with me were going to be very much more complicated. I think she knew it would be hard at times, but she also knew that God was in this, and that I had something to offer that Joy Fellowship needed. A courageous and wise and impressive decision, I think.

In the last month of her life, Joy sent me a card in which she made a lovely comment, "perhaps one of the shepherds going ahead will be an encouragement to our flock. I will be waiting behind Jesus to hug each one who comes home. You send them home, and I'll welcome them."

Two different and very impressive moments, both typical of her.
David Hayward Jr.

Debbie Kennedy, an Intern with Joy Fellowship in 1994, writes on

JOY'S JOURNEY WITH JESUS

As I began to think about Joy and who she was as a person, something she said when she knew her time on earth was coming to an end sums up her life. "I am on a journey with Jesus. That's what I want people to say when I die. Not, 'she lost the battle with cancer', but, 'she was on a journey with Jesus.'"

In Joy's journey with Jesus, God allowed her to see potential and treasure in people's lives that wasn't easily seen. "A little digging" to find the gold was required. Joy has touched many people's lives. Joshua, my eldest son, was one of these – the bond was so close that my husband John just knew I had to make a trip with Josh to say our goodbyes, or rather, "Till we meet again." God's hand was very evident in our planning, and everything fell into place at short notice.

When I visited her, Joy mentioned how relieved she was when she received an email earlier from Josh. It had said, "I hope God could do you a favour that He always does, and heal you. He may not heal you. Probably because He wants to see you enjoying yourself in heaven."

Previously Joy had been concerned how Josh's faith would have been affected when she wasn't physically healed. Wasn't that so typical of her – during a time of intense pain and illness Joy was still thinking of other people. She died just two months after we saw her. I found out later that she determined that she would spend quality time with her friends in those closing weeks, and as with us, she hid the pain when she made the great effort to go out with each of these people.

I know that the influence of Joy's journey here on earth will live on. Thank You Lord for the privilege of knowing Joy, and may You teach us also, to find hidden treasure in hard-to-find places.



At a special commemorative service for Joy at our Centre, Josh leads a procession outside and releases a balloon into the night sky

FINDING OUR WAY IN THE DARK

by Patricia Muir

Everything I had been building and putting in place in my life wasn't there. Health was gone. Marriage exploded into bits. Comfortable home, lovely surroundings, possessions, garden, pets, my family, all I had loved and worked for - gone. Now I was in the dark. I couldn't see anything familiar or otherwise. Shock. But, just like a power cut in your own house, you know that certain things you need and enjoy are there, but you can't see them or how to get to them. You know there is a bed, a chair, a tap, a toilet, fridge, cups etc. In a strange place you just hope these things will be there, but in your own home you know they're there, but, how to find them!

When plunged into sudden darkness in my life I remembered God's Word told me there was comfort for the broken hearted. He would bind up my wounds. But I was still bleeding terribly and in great pain. But God's word has become familiar to me over the years, and although I couldn't see them I knew His promises were out there somewhere. I just had to find them.

First step – acknowledging I can't see anywhere to put my foot, but believing that God has put into place all things I would need. The Hebrew verse, "Do not throw away your confidence", helped me stand strong, although in complete dark. Then there were His promises: He would lead me, He would guide me. Never leave me. Watch over me. He loved me. He would comfort. He would heal. He would provide. "He" was my provider - don't look to anyone else. "Ask me." Matthew 6:25-33. He provided friends who took me in, loved and supported me. Provided a lovely little house with pleasant outlook, Landlord redecorated it - I got to choose everything to my taste. Felt safe. Free counselling for a year. A wonderful friend was in charge of the church foodbank and would help me out anytime I needed.

With my first step I bumped into a wall. Ps 37:23 & 24. My first thought - I can't do this - but you don't give up because those things you need haven't moved. They are still there, waiting for you to find them. Tentative steps - hands out wondering where you are going or what you will find. You take a couple of steps, it's starting to work - you find nothing -where am I, what am I doing here? But those things you need are still in place. One by one, by reaching out and searching, you find one thing after another, the things you need. Ps 119:105 says, "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Seek and you shall find."

The cruelty and abuse of others in the past still continues to hurt us, even many years after. It's like being stuck in a thorny bush on the slope of a steep cliff. The thorns still get stuck into our clothes, and flesh continues to hurt us, but also we hold onto that bush that hurts us, because if we don't we will fall down the steep cliff into the unknown. Jesus says, "Break free from the bush with its thorns and I will catch you. Give your hurtful memories to me. I will bind up your wounds and lead you to a spacious, prosperous place."

We all struggle with pain. The following article by George B Liederman should be helpful. In it, in the first of two parts, he writes,

I DETERMINED TO CONQUER PAIN

For many years I have had an intimate companionship with pain. It began one wintry night in the Allengheny Mountains when the train in which I was traveling jumped the tracks, rolled down a deep embankment, and consigned its human cargo to torture and death.

My upper berth snapped shut and crushed my legs. For many hours I hung upside down. There followed a long struggle for survival and recovery, an experience that stretched into many years and brought me face-to-face with continual pain.

The initial onrush of pain, I recall, was almost completely submerged by an overpowering concern for my wife, Sylvia, in the berth below. I kept calling her name. But I could not hear her voice. I thought she was no longer alive.

Anguish completely overwhelmed me and the bodily torture seemed nonexistent, at least for a short while. "One of us must live. There is our baby, Lynn, at home...." Then I grew conscious of pain again. It was agonizing, but it meant that I was alive.

When some of the passengers learned that I was a clergyman, they requested that I lead them in prayer. While praying for others and with others during that long and bleak night, my own supplications were answered. In identifying myself with these people's fears, my own fears vanished. In my eagerness to relieve their suffering, my own pain diminished.

After rescuers arrived, Sylvia was found hurt but safe. I was taken to a different hospital, where my long adventure with pain began.

As the weeks glided on and lengthened into months and years of anxiety and disability, I realized that I must do something to save myself from deterioration of the spirit, impatience and despair.

It was bad enough to fight the constant pain, but even worse was the feeling that I would have to give up on the ministry. The nights were particularly bad. In the dark, when loneliness overcomes one and strength is at its lowest ebb, pain steals in and takes over.

During such nights I found consolation in recalling the days when I dashed to appointments, when I climbed the temple steps two or three at a time, when I played soccer in my boyhood days in Europe, when I took long walks. But it soon dawned on me that I was drawing too much on memories and consolations of the past. If I did not stop this gloomy looking backward, the pain would conquer me. I determined to conquer pain.

There are two ways to conquer pain: either we can try to escape it, or we can try to make it useful.

I remember the day I learned that, simply by reading, I could take the centre of my mind off my troubles. But there was one difficulty, my injury was such that the slightest bodily movement created pain. Thus I had to bother the nurse to turn a page every few minutes. Finally I hit on a very simple solution. I asked for the Book of Psalms and for a volume of Robert Browning's poems. I began to memorize them, taking hours for each page.

Another relief I discovered was to personalize pain. I began to talk to it as though it was a living creature. It was a war of nerves, a game of wits. "All right, pain, let's see who can win this time.... Pain, you are my foe. Can I ever make you my friend?"

After each encounter with pain I became more and more convinced that pain has a way of exhausting itself. So I would wait for it to wear itself out. Invariably it did. It paid to hold on, to endure, to pray and to wait, to wait and to pray.

There were times when the pain was unbearable, when the pages blurred, when the simplest poem seemed beyond comprehension. I could find nothing creative in the experience of pain. What then? If not creative and comforting, I would make it useful. Pain is a cruel master. But can it not be a teacher?

Yes. The first lesson it teaches is faith, religious faith. Of course, there are moments of rebellion when it seems easier to reject, to denounce – and to shake the fist against Heaven. But in the midst of despair and helplessness, the feeling that we can still lift our voices to a Power beyond ourselves, that we can still communicate our torment and our triumph to the Unseen Friend and retain a light, however dim – that is faith.

My training and philosophy helped me to cling to my faith. Even during the most desolate and devastating moments of my experience, I never recall doubting the existence of God, or changing my views on the spiritual meaning of life. On the contrary, the companionship of pain brought to me the steady and steadfast companionship of God.

More than ever do I believe now that suffering and misfortune are God's way of dramatizing the adventure of life. I associated God not with my calamity and affliction, but with the spirit that gave me the determination to find release from calamity, to push on with the affliction toward the brighter horizon ahead.

I associated pain with what I like to call the cycle of human eternity; where there is life there is pain, for there can be no life without pain. Where there is pain, there is love. Where there is love, there is healing. Where there is healing, there is hope; and where there is hope, there is life. Much of our earthly career is enveloped by this cycle.

Taken from Guideposts magazine.

The second and final part, "The Promise of Pain" will be included in a later "Encourager".

Jane Watson tells how

"I LEFT GOD, BUT HE NEVER LEFT ME"

Before I was born mum very nearly miscarried me. I felt I was not the perfect little girl she wanted. I felt I never reached the expectations she had for me.

Dad loved me, and I felt mum was jealous of the time he spent with me. Later dad had to choose between us. I was a slow learner. I felt I was never expected to amount to anything. I was abused emotionally, and physically. I grew up feeling any problem was my fault.

I felt love was totally conditional based on what I did or did not do. A diagnosis was not obtained. Mum told people I wanted attention. Years later I was diagnosed with neuro muscular skeletal syndrome. The more I move any muscle, the tighter the muscle becomes. I have suffered several strokes which affect my ability to think. At times I suffer functional blindness. The doctors say my body internally is that of an 85 - 90 year old person. I went to church regularly until I was about 24 years old when I left the church and God.



I asked Christians around me if the teachings of Christ were actually possible, and why did churches teach what they could not exhibit within their church communities. To be told to trust God and not His people was too easy.

I thought unconditional love was just another way to get people to do what the church wanted them to do.

Every now and then I felt I needed to go to church, usually I went for a few months each time. I found that no church is the perfect church; some are better dealing with difference than others.

Although I left God, God never left me. The scriptures which say "I will never leave or forsake you" became real in my life. I got my self-worth, valued unconditional love from God. Jesus' life showed me God accepted difference. He truly understood that life was not all good.

Paul showed me how, although I did not get what I wanted in life, I was to make the very most of my circumstances. I prayed a prayer through my late teens and onwards that I would not become bitter and twisted.

I now go to St Cuthbert's Presbyterian Church in Browns Bay, Auckland. They allow me and others with disabilities to be who we are, to be respected and included as a part of the congregation, and for our voice to be heard. And now, praise God, He is gradually bringing me healing.

WHAT A WEEK-LONG CAMP CAN ACHIEVE

Wouldn't it be wonderful if our 3 day CMWDT National Camp could continue for seven days! In the USA they have camps of this duration, called "Family Retreats". run by Joni and Friends. The Joni and Friends newsletter tells us about these camps:

It's a week that can change the lives of a family living with disability. Especially for kids with disabilities, Retreat is a week to connect with other kids who understand exactly what you're going through. And that's not something that kids who are "different" get very often.

Family Retreat helps give these children and their families a place to belong, to realize their value to the One who created each of them in His beautiful image. Family Retreat gives them somewhere to renew their world-weary bodies and souls...and for families, it's a welcome retreat with each other and God.

Angelica and her family came to a Family Retreat at Camp Allen in Texas. She shares about how special that week was to her:

"Before I was born, the doctors advised my mom to have an abortion, telling her I would be a vegetable. Today I am 15, and I speak three languages. At Family Retreat, I've learned that I am loved and valued by God, that I have meaning and a very special purpose to my life. It's a place where I have learned to become Angelica... exactly as He made me.

"As a teen with a disability, I feel invisible to most people in the world. At school, able-bodied kids don't mingle with kids like me...they don't have lunch or hang out with us. They do not want to be my friend because I am different. That hurts me inside.

"At Family Retreat so many people love me for who I am. Here I can go anywhere, make friends with anyone. Having able-bodied friends here makes me feel normal, like I fit in with everyone, like I am worth something. Being treated as an equal boosts my self-confidence and makes me feel accepted. I feel more freedom than I do anywhere else. Oftentimes in the "real" world I feel I must make myself something different to make others happy. Here, though, I can be my real self. Here I am Angelica. This is what God wants me to be...and what He wants everyone else to be, too —FREE!"



MUM AND ME

by May Clulee

It was April 1993, and my mother had just had a massive stroke. Minutes before, she and I had been laughing and joking about something, we were having fun playing Ten Pin Bowling at the time. All of a sudden her face changed and she said she couldn't feel her arm. She collapsed, and everything was a blur after that. I remember phoning my sister in tears, and waiting for the ambulance to come.

Mum had a brain haemorrhage. We didn't know if she would live or die at that stage. All we knew was that we had to take it one day at a time. My sister and brother in law are doctors, and they ensured mum had the best care possible at the hospital. She underwent 3 operations: to reduce fluid in her skull, to insert a temporary trachea so she could breathe and finally to insert a permanent shunt to prevent more fluid build up in her brain.



After 20 days, mum came out of the coma and her outlook improved gradually day by day. She eventually got transferred out of the intensive care unit to a general ward. Thankfully her swallowing had not been affected, and she also gradually regained her speech. She was in hospital for about 3 months.

While these things were happening to her physically, something else was going on spiritually as well.

Many people in comas are often aware of what is going on, even if they can't or don't seem to respond. Throughout her time in the ICU, many people had visited her to pray for her, sing to her and talk to her. I also often read the Bible to her and prayed aloud for her. One of the elders from my church who had been a regular visitor during those times later came to see mum when she was out of intensive care. At the right time, he shared the Gospel with her, and she readily received it. I was overjoyed to hear this. Mum had always been antagonistic about Jesus and although she went to church with me sometimes, she did not see the need for God. To know

that she was so open and ready to receive Christ was a miracle to me! I believe that God revealed Himself to her when she was in a coma, through our prayers, reading the Bible and directly through the Holy Spirit. I find this a very powerful testimony. Mum had gone to a Christian school, but she was brought up to believe in other religions, and never had a personal relationship with Christ. Yet it was Jesus and not any other god that had come to rescue her at her time of greatest need. Knowing that God had given her a second chance strengthened my faith.

I was very involved in mum's rehabilitation, and would visit her in hospital everyday before going to work, often helping the nurses to get her up, changed and have breakfast, so she wouldn't have to wait so long. It was a profound experience for me, as the roles were reversed now, and I was looking after her. I also discovered at this time a gifting and heart for helping people. Mum was to be my inspiration to study Music Therapy a few years later.

Mum was baptised in 2000 at home. She has a simple but profound faith. She reads her Bible faithfully everyday together with the Daily Bread, and shares a brief but powerful testimony with people. She often says to us: "I thank God I am alive. If not for God I wouldn't be here. Thank you Jesus." I can see the power of God working in her life. She has many frustrations and challenges, and she is very real and open about her feelings when she has a bad day. Yet deep down she has this inner strength and peace that we know comes from having had an encounter with Jesus, and having a personal relationship with Him.

HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AND FOLLOW HIM?

Have you decided to trust Jesus as your personal Saviour?

Do you desire a personal relationship with the One who created you and loves you no matter what? If so, tell Him in your own words, or use this prayer:

Heavenly Father.

I acknowledge that I am a sinner in need of Your forgiveness.

I believe that Jesus fully paid the penalty for all my sin by dying at Calvary, and that He rose from the dead.

Thank You for Your grace to save me even though I am undeserving.

Please show me how to start living for You.

Amen

If you pray this prayer, let us know and we can help you contact a local church.

WHAT THE CENTRE IS DOING FOR ME

A talk at the Centre by Lily Lee, a Korean student from Carey Bible College

Before I came to the Drop in Centre last July, I asked God "How can I help them", because I have had no experience with people who have disabilities. I was worried that I might hurt you because I did not understand your needs well. I also assumed you to be very vulnerable. I thought it might be hard to make friends with you. It was my prejudice because of my culture and being afraid.

Now I have been with you for one year I would like to share how I have been changed. I realize how much I have been blessed by all of you, clients, helpers, and staff. One day my friends said to me, "you are doing a good job to help the needs of disabled people". I thought for a while, "Do I really help them?" No, I have received and have learned from their lives a lot.

First of all I receive big and warm hugs and smiles when I get to the Centre in the morning. You like me, not because I have big abilities. You also do not see my failures or lack in me. You like me just as I am. I feel deeply that I am very supported and loved by you all. As I am with you, I forget my anxieties, worries, and assignments and just enjoy being happy with you. It is miraculous. With the smiles and hugs you give me, healing take place in me. Your smiles lift me up. You are faithful ministers for God. Thanks so much. I love you too.

Secondly, I see the love and passion that you have for God, and your faces shine God's love toward people. I especially like you when you pray. Frankly I do not understand what you are praying, but I see the love and passion which you have for His people, and your desire to be with Him and know Him more with your sincere heart. It is the most beautiful thing that I see. Your prayers build up God's Kingdom. Thanks so much. I especially remember Wayne's prayer – "You are everything to me Lord".

Thirdly, you show love and care for one another. Many people mean problems and gossips in a community. But I do not hear any gossiping or see any striving, rather I see you treating each other with respect and care. You do not put anyone down or discourage. Thanks for your mature attitude. I learn heaps.

You have given me so much love and encouragement. You have taught me how I should live. Your smiles are worth billions of dollars. They can not be measured with money. Your passionate prayer is to break the stronghold of the darkness, and bring peace and harmony to the world. Your love and care bring life to those who do not have hope.



COMPELLED TO GO

She sits in her wheelchair, white-haired and wizened, the cerebral palsy (CP) that twists her face and garbles her speech taking its final toll with the loss of her ability to walk more than a short distance.

Yet on this first morning of her latest Wheels for the World trip (she's been on about 30 trips!), Mary Jane Ponten is quivering with much more than CP as she prepares for the work ahead in Tianjin, China—work that only Mary Jane can accomplish.



"I say to each wheelchair recipient, 'Here's a book about Joni's life, here's another one about my life, would you like one?' When people get my book in Chinese and realize it's me sitting before them, they go home and read it and come back saying, 'This changed my life.' If others gave them the same book it would not have the same effect; my effectiveness is my uniqueness."

About to turn 77, Mary Jane is not slowing down anytime soon. "I am compelled [to go]," she says. "It's impossible not to go to Ghana, to China, to Mongolia. I'm driven by a vision to incorporate people with disabilities into the body of Christ—and not just in the back pew. If you look at me, you can't say the disabled can't serve. I'm here serving. I live alone in my own house, drive my own car, do all my own housework, plus run a Joni and Friends affiliate ministry. I'm not fishing for compliments; I'm an old, ugly person who, through Christ, is beautiful."

Mary Jane Ponten has blazed a trail in disability ministry that only gets wider, higher, and smoother each time she boldly defies every barrier constructed in the mind of man against the purposes of God for His children with disabilities. And as she does so, she clears the way for the rest of us—including you, as a Joni and Friends partner—who follow behind in amazed wonder at the handiwork of our miraculous God, displayed through a tiny, twisted face and body that, for all who know and love her, is the most beautiful of all His creations.

From Joni and Friends Newsletter

***To handle yourself use your head
To handle others use your heart.***

"THE ENCOURAGER"



Rosemary Platt writes:

As you read this very unique little magazine, have you considered the thousands of others who will be doing likewise? People from all races, beliefs and walks of life are touched in a multitude of ways by reading this quarterly "Encourager". The title rather says it all; as we all need to be encouraged and to encourage others.

My first introduction to the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust was through being given a copy of its Magazine in the early 1980's by Di Willis – who always has a magazine on hand to distribute to "whoever" wherever she goes; and has touched many lives in this way. Di is the ultimate example of an "Encourager"; and many of us have only become associated with this amazing ministry through her "persuasive encouragement" along the way.

Hugh Willis has faithfully produced the CMWDT Magazine (in recent times called "The Encourager") almost since its inception. Only he and God will truly know the sacrifices that have personally been involved; but as a result of the hard work, time involved and many challenges, what a blessing the result has been for countless people.

Personally, I've always looked forward to my quarterly edition from my first involvement – in fact, I normally like to sit down and read it cover to cover if I have time, as the contents are always so inspiring. I'm also privileged to receive additional copies of each printing, to give out to others as a witness to God and His ministry for people with disabilities – both here and overseas. My note always clarifies that "these folk are my special family in the Lord"; as that is how I regard the wonderful people I've met through the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust.

My mother had a dreadful medical history, including severe crippling from rheumatoid arthritis, which resulted in years of hospitalisation in South Australia. Before her death four years ago, she was always greatly encouraged by the uplifting articles/testimonies contained in the CMWDT Magazine, which she shared with others. In Magazine No. 49 – a Special Edition featuring Overseas Contacts – Hugh printed an article about my Mum (Mrs. Edna Carr), headed "Witness To So Many

People". Mum was always an amazing witness to her faith in God, with many people visiting her in hospital to be cheered up themselves. "Witness To So Many People" would also be a good summary of "The Encourager", as it is used by God as an incredible witness to people both far and near, with wide-ranging needs and challenges. Only God truly knows the extent and outcome of this outreach for Him.

These days I use "The Encourager" as one of God's special tools for my own witnessing. Learning from Di, I like to keep a few copies in the car for the "unexpected". There are some recipients who regularly look forward to receiving a copy from me – like those in a church-based ministry for mentally challenged folk. It is particularly inspiring for those who are depressed or going through a valley in their own lives; as so many of the testimonies encourage them to be thankful for what they have, and to be "better, not bitter". As I send heaps of snail-mail and cards around the world (in addition to e-mails); God often nudges me to forward an "Encourager" here and there, and even to put the odd one in work orders. The feedback is encouragement in itself, as everyone seems to be so touched by the contents – and quite often it has arrived just in God's perfect timing! Recently I sent a few helpful publications to a lady who had been suffering from severe depression – but it was "The Encourager" which made the most impact; and also reminded her how she'd like to give out to others who have difficult challenges in life.

Truly, "God works in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform!" We can do the possible (even by just passing on our Magazines); and let God do the impossible! May "The Encourager" continue to be used by God to touch thousands of lives for His Glory – and may each reader be encouraged to encourage others for God.

BROUGHT BACK FROM THE DEAD

Alfred Lopez, an ear, nose and throat physician in the Philippines, writes:

I am writing this letter to express my heartfelt thanks for the encouragement that I have received from reading your magazine, "The Encourager". I, too, am a person who has experienced some form of disability, but now would call it "a moulding process" for my Christian life. I first came to read this magazine last year when a dear friend from New Zealand (Pastor John Cochrain) gave me a copy. I was still on my recovery stage, since I had a Cerebellar Stroke last August and underwent a Ventriculo-Peritoneal Shunt (VP Shunt), a brain surgery where a silicone tube was placed in the 4th ventricle of my brain and connected to my peritoneum to drain the Cerebral fluid



that was accumulating inside my skull compressing my brain tissue, last August 17, 2006. I am carrying this tube in my body now and will be carrying it, maybe for as long as I live, or until such a time that the Lord Jesus will see it no longer beneficial for me and have it removed.

While reading the articles, I came to meet in my 'spirit', the 'spirits' of the physically handicapped and disabled brethren, who in spite of their seeming disabilities and difficulties were able to worship and praise, Then there was the picture on the front of that magazine issue; "Don't tell me I can't praise God, because I will" written on it. I asked myself, and then directed my question to the Lord, "Why me. Lord?" Why did I have to experience and suffer such an ordeal, to be operated on, to have actually died on the way to the hospital some 200 kms away, yet brought back to life again The ambulance I was in had to be pulled over by the side of the road to resuscitate me because I had no blood pressure, no pulse rate, no cardiac rate, no respiration, with cyanotic hands and feet, pale face! Literally I was dead! I have noted the joy and love for God in the lives of our brethren as they shared their testimonies of how great God is, **in spite** of!!! I came to the realization that I, too, have experienced what they have experienced! I know and now understand what they meant when they talk of pain, difficulties, hardships, emotional heartaches, the misunderstandings, and many others, because I have experienced them too!

When I died the Lord was so gracious in allowing me to experience things and let me know in my spirit, in my heart, in my life, His words, "**I LOVE YOU MY CHILD!**" Yes, He loves me! He loves all of us, as He has loved Jesus Christ our Saviour! He loves the whole world and everyone in this world! As in John 3:16" For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life". Yes, truly God loves us all. And we are to proclaim to the world that our God is the **God of LOVE!**

I do not want anyone else to experience these things, (sickness and disease), yet we are not in control of our lives. God is! God has given us His written word, the Bible, to read and obey for the success of our lives (Joshua 1:8). He has given us the Holy Spirit to guide and lead us. (John 14:16, 26; John 15: 26). He has allowed things to happen to us, (1) for His purpose; (Prov. 19:23); (2) to assure us of His presence; (Matt. 28:20); (3) to let us know we can do it by His strength; (Phil. 4:13); (4) the world is watching us, and our testimony about God. (2 Cor. 3:3).

God allowed me to experience these things to know Him more personally. I have experienced a very fast recovery since then. I was back in my clinic after a month, and walking on my own without a cane in three months. I am married with 3 children, and we are connected with and members of the Victory Christian Fellowship.



HOW GOD HAS USED A BROKEN NECK TO SPREAD HIS GOSPEL

By 2007 – 40 years after her diving accident – Joni Eareckson Tada had traveled to 42 countries (many several times) to fan the flames of Christ's love among people with disabilities and their families. Joni says, "Acts 20:24 keeps me going for **'I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me – the task of testifying to the gospel of God's grace,'**"

1967-1973

- In 1967, 17-year-old Joni takes a dive that will dramatically change her life.
- Struggling against despair, Joni questions the goodness of God. Through caring Christians, she begins to understand the importance of God's Word in the life of a person facing loss, and the sovereignty of God becomes a theme in her hardships.

- Learning to paint holding the brushes in her teeth, Joni discovered not only a hidden talent, but the dawning of a hopeful future.



1974-1977

- In 1974, Joni appears on The Today Show, opening a new door to national exposure.
- In 1976, the first edition of the Joni book rolls off the presses. It will eventually be translated into more than 45 languages resulting in over 4 million copies in print.
- In 1976, at the first of twelve appearances at Billy Graham Crusades, Joni shares, "God tells us in Romans 8:28 that 'all things fit together into a pattern for good.' My spinal cord injury may not be 'good,' but God is using it for a good purpose. And part of that purpose is to tell you tonight that I'd rather be in this wheelchair knowing Him, than on my feet without Him."

1978-1982

- In 1978, the Joni movie debuts. It's shown around the world and results in 250,000 decisions for Christ.
- In 1979, the Joni book and movie generate an outpouring of national and international response. Joni and Friends is established to address the needs of families affected by disability. Joni and a small but dedicated staff begin the work from a two-room office in Burbank, CA.
- In 1982, Joni marries Ken Tada.



1982

1983-2007

- In 1988, President Ronald Reagan appoints Joni to the National Council on Disability; she is re-appointed to the Council by President George H.W. Bush. Joni advocates for the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- In 1989, Joni travels to the Philippines to bring the needs in the disability community before the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization Congress attended by 10,000 Christian leaders. Joni and Friends also held its first distribution of over 100 wheelchairs.
- In 1992, Joni speaks at Billy Graham's Mission in Moscow, Russia; the movie Joni premieres inside the Kremlin.
- In 2006, Joni is asked to serve on the State Department's Disability Advisory Committee under Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice.
- In 2007, the Joni and Friends International Disability Center opens in Agoura Hills, CA.



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

CMWDT P.O.Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland

I wish to give \$ for the magazine

\$ for general running costs

Name.....

Address.....

Jenny Hook

POETRY HELPED ME DEAL WITH FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS

When I was born I nearly died from lack of oxygen. This caused a scar on my brain which led to epilepsy. I would zone out for a few seconds at times. Then when I was sixteen I had two Grand Mal seizures on a couple of days. After the second one I prayed to God for help and He led the doctor straight to the drug tegretol, and the fits are now under control.

Praise God I had become a Christian at the age of seven, for from eight through to the fifth form I was teased again and again at school. I kept to myself and didn't talk to others, building walls between myself and other people, but I held to God by remembering the words of Peter to Jesus, "You have the words of eternal life, where would we go?" God was the anchor of my life, and how I could have handled this time without Him I do not know. I was desperate for friends and was thrilled when two girls appeared to befriend me, only to soon discover they were laughing behind my back. A searing memory I have was of another two girls taking my bag and playing "piggy in the middle" while I kept running back and forth trying to get it back, but God came to my help, for when I stopped and prayed to Him, they dropped it and walked away.



At primary school I spent a week and two days at the Wilson Home for occupational and physio therapy, and for the first time I felt I belonged. In the sixth form I attended a transitional course at Takapuna Grammar. In the room were some people with disabilities and once again I felt I belonged. I went back to Wilson Home as a teacher aide for three years, and eventually found my way to the CMWDT Centre. Throughout this time I have been learning to speak to people, bringing down the walls I'd put up. It was slow going, rather like a turtle slowly emerging from its shell, but the Centre has been a great place for this, and I'm trying to ask questions of other people. As I get more and more involved with Bible in Schools, taking Sunday School classes, helping in a local primary school, joining a cell group and attending Auckland CFFD and CMWDT national camps, I'm making good progress in these areas.

It was in school that I first started writing poetry. I put down what I saw or felt, and found this a way of dealing with feelings of worthlessness. Interestingly, as a poem I was writing got longer and longer, I found I no longer felt that way anymore. The poetry has become a real interest for me, and I have now written three books, the last two being for children, based on stories in the old and new testaments. It took eleven years to put together the first one, and on the right you see the cover of the second one I designed on my computer, and below, one of the poems from it.

TWO BY TWO IN SINGLE FILE

Genesis 6:11 and 8:22 and 9:12-17

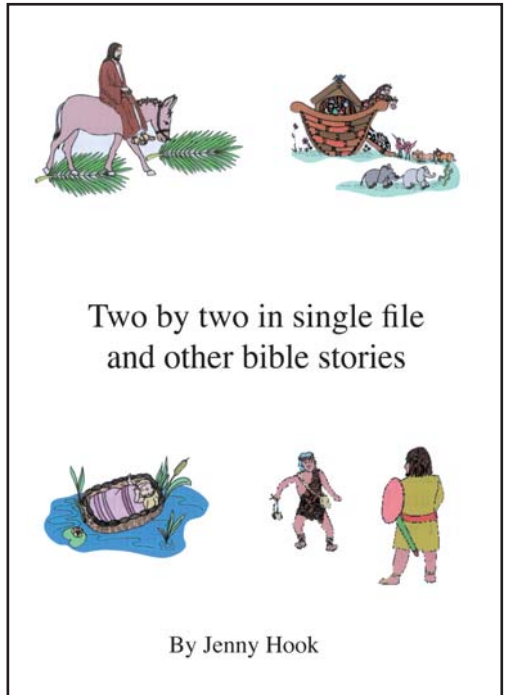
Hammer hammer, bang bang,
Noah's crazy the people say.
Hammer hammer, bang bang
The noise continues every day.

Silence, suddenly a boat to see,
A strange sight of animals marching
Two by two in single file
Up the ramp and into the Ark.

The door shuts with a crash,
Silence falls all around,

Drip drip, then a woosh,
Rain falling, nothing dry,
The Ark floating, the only thing in sight,
A year bobbing on the sea.

An olive branch, water going down,
Dry land once more,
And in the sky a rainbow to see,
God's promise never to flood the world again.



GOD-SENT LESSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP

My friend Hilda is an artist. Whether painting on wood or making chocolates or designing necklaces, she creates beautiful products that she sells to help pay the bills. But being elderly and on her own, she needs occasional encouragement. That's what took us to the artisan village one morning. Hilda needed to find more beads.

Shops were just opening as we walked along the dirt path to the bead shop. Suddenly Hilda bent down, picked something up, shoved it in her pocket, and continued on. It happened so fast I almost missed it. Curious, I asked what she had found. With more than a little hesitation, she pulled out a thick silver necklace. It was clear she wanted to keep the valuable find, but I told her someone would be very sad when they discovered the loss. Unable to convince her, I explained that we needed to do the correct thing before God. She still didn't budge.

It is one thing to meet with new believers and agree from God's Word what it means to follow Jesus. Real-life discipleship is not so easy. What should I do? Looking around, I noticed something. With the necklace now in my pocket, I walked over to a woman who was sitting near the spot of Hilda's find. She appeared to be a shop owner resting before customers arrived. I greeted her and asked if she had recently lost anything. Her "no" quickly changed when she looked down. "Oh, yes, my necklace!" After she described it perfectly, I gave it back. Her words of gratitude could have been heard far beyond the tree where Hilda stood watching.

Conversation was a bit sparse as Hilda and I entered the bead shop, but within minutes she leaned my way to say that I had done the right thing. By then, however, I didn't agree. I realized it would have been much wiser and gentler to persuade Hilda to return the necklace herself. As it was, the lesson had bruised us both.

A natural storyteller, Hilda soon began to share our recent experience with Enrique, the shop owner. Expecting him to agree that no Chilean would have returned the necklace, my friend was startled to receive a lecture about honesty being a matter of heart and conscience, not culture. Far from being offended, Hilda felt encouraged by his godly opinion. (So did I.)

After an animated conversation about God, we explained our errand to Enrique. Once again, his response startled Hilda. He offered to sell her necklaces in his shop. Dancing back to my car, Hilda couldn't stop talking about how kind the Lord had been. First He taught her a needed lesson, then He rewarded her for learning it. We both rejoiced that day because of our God-sent lessons in discipleship.

Written by Gail Pauls in Chile, and taken from the SIM Magazine.

DANCING WITH GOD

When I meditated on the word **Guidance** I kept seeing "**dance**" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. Two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes that, and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge to the back or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if two become one body, moving beautifully.



The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other. My eyes drew back to the word Guidance.

When I saw "**G**: I thought of **God**, followed by "**u**" and "**i**". "God, "u" and "i" dance." God, you, and I dance. As I lowered my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life. Once again, I became willing to let God lead.

taken from the English Carers Christian Fellowship newsletter

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QUALITY TIME at the THREE YEARLY LEADERSHIP RETREAT



A well-earned presentation to long-serving trustees Brian and Jean Ferguson



Patsy Appleby-Morrison from Dunedin serving communion to Nga from Hawkes Bay



Jean Griffiths was among the prize-winners for her part in the imaginative Auckland CFFD programmes



Rapt attention and involvement in this "ice-breaker" game