



NOVEMBER 2007 ISSUE 117

# *The* ENCOURAGER

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

*Magazine of the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust*



*Sharing the Word of God at National Camp*

# Evangelise Equip Educate

by David Green

Have you been able to visit the Centre in Auckland? If you have and you met with Di Willis I am sure it would not be very long before you were encouraged to follow our mission statement. This is to **Evangelise** to **Equip** and to **Educate**.

I wonder if you have thought of this as a personal mission statement as well. Let's turn this around and consider how to **Equip** and to **Educate** ourselves so we can **Evangelise** effectively when an opportunity arises.

As Peter says in 1 Peter 3 15b - *"Be ready at all times to answer anyone who asks you to explain the hope you have in you."*



We also have an instruction from our Lord to do this as well! It is recorded in Mark 16:15. *Then Jesus said, "Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all"*

Do you have your testimony ready so if anyone asks about your Christian faith you can give a good answer straight away? If you do not have a short statement prepared I suggest you spend some time to prepare one. It does not have to be full of big or smart words – it just needs to be your honest account of how God is working in your life now and what He has done before. It is good to include how you came to know Jesus. This is not a written account to keep with you – although if that helps you may want to do that – it is more something you have ready in your mind so you can introduce it into a conversation when appropriate.

You may wish to have back copies of this magazine handy to give out as well.

We have an excellent example of a testimony in the book of Acts. Here is Paul's testimony in Acts 22 from The Message.

*"I am a good Jew, born in Tarsus in the province of Cilicia, but educated here in Jerusalem under the exacting eye of Rabbi Gamaliel, thoroughly instructed in our religious traditions. And I've always been passionately on God's side, just as you are right now. "I went after anyone connected with this 'Way,' went at them hammer and tongs, ready to kill for God. I rounded up men and women right and left and*

*had them thrown in prison. You can ask the Chief Priest or anyone in the High Council to verify this; they all knew me well. Then I went off to our brothers in Damascus, armed with official documents authorizing me to hunt down the Christians there, arrest them, and bring them back to Jerusalem for sentencing. "As I arrived on the outskirts of Damascus about noon, a blinding light blazed out of the skies! I fell to the ground, dazed. I heard a voice: 'Saul, Saul, why are you out to get me?'"Who are you, Master?' I asked. My companions saw the light, but they didn't hear the conversation. "Then I said, 'What do I do now, Master?' And so we entered Damascus, but nothing like the entrance I had planned - I was blind as a bat and my companions had to lead me in by the hand."And that's when I met Ananias, a man with a sterling reputation in observing our laws - the Jewish community in Damascus is unanimous on that score.came and put his arm on my shoulder. 'Look up,' he said. I looked, and found myself looking right into his eyes - I could see again!"Then he said, 'The God of our ancestors has handpicked you to be briefed on his plan of action. You've actually seen the Righteous Innocent and heard him speak. You are to be a key witness to everyone you meet of what you've seen and heard. So what are you waiting for? Get up and get yourself baptized, scrubbed clean of those sins and personally acquainted with God.'*

So I encourage you to **Equip** and to **Educate** yourself so you can **Evangelise** effectively when an opportunity arises.

You may be a person who God speaks to through music. If so; here are a couple of choruses from The Salvation Army Song Book which you may wish to meditate on. Number 335 may encourage you to prepare your testimony.

*I want to tell you what the Lord has done,  
What the Lord has done for me;  
He lifted me from the miry clay;  
O what a happy day!  
I want to tell you what the Lord can do,  
What the Lord can do for you:  
He can take your life as he did mine,  
And make it anew.*

Number 396 may remind you of what God has done in your life.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
Count your blessings, see what God has done.  
Count your blessings, name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*



## STUNNING GRAHAM BRADDOCK PAINTING FOR DISABILITY MINISTRY

For many years Di Willis held a strong impression that she needed to commission Graham Braddock, the foremost Christian artist in New Zealand, to paint a beautiful bush and lake scene in our country, that would show Jesus with a group of people with disabilities. When she did contact him he was excited by the idea, and added the thought that he show in the reflection those same people after they had received a healing touch from the Lord.

Above is a photo of his finished painting

These **prints** (size A3) are available at \$15 per print. To have them sent through the post, please include a further \$5 for post and packaging within New Zealand, or \$10 to an overseas address.

Also available are the very popular all-purpose **cards** that have this painting on the front cover, as well as an enlargement on the back cover of the group with Jesus. The cards are blank inside.

There are 10 to a pack and can be purchased at \$10 for one pack or three packs for \$25. Please add just \$1 for postage regardless of the number of packs ordered.

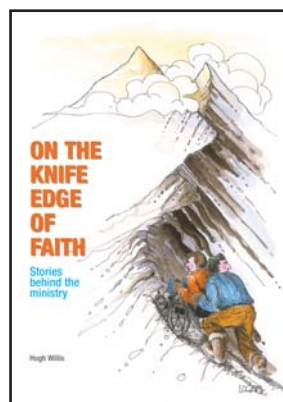




Invert this page to see the effect of a healing touch from Jesus

## LET'S SPREAD THE MESSAGE OF OUR MINISTRY FAR AND WIDE

Giving away a copy of "The Encourager" is a great way to do this. Another very effective way would be to give the book, **"On the Knife Edge of Faith"** to someone you know, as a present this Christmas. Because it consists of a series of short articles rarely more than a couple of pages in length, it is very easy to read, so people can browse through and read one of the articles when they have just a few minutes to spare, and then come back to it again and again. Some however have written to us and told how once they started on the book they couldn't put it down until they had finished!



Please send me

..... Copies of "On the Knife Edge of Faith" at \$21 a copy, (includes postage)

Total amount enclosed \$.....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

# THE 2007 NATIONAL CAMP

## IT IMPACTED PEOPLE IN SO MANY DIFFERENT WAYS

### **Dave Wilson, a student at Life Leadership College**

The words “we will be your hands, we will be your feet” have really become a reality to me, and I am sure to all the other students at Life Leadership College. I had an incredible opportunity to get to know Josh Perry, a little legend, who has cerebral palsy. If there is one thing that I have learnt from this weekend it is how amazing the gift of life really is. Despite having every reason to be sad, Josh has such a pure joy that nothing or no one can take away. He has taught me that it is not about what we do in life, but it is all about our heart behind what we do. I could go on forever. Thanks to all those who took the weekend off to serve and make the three days absolutely amazing for the campers.

### **Nicole, a member of the Totara Springs staff**

Wow, what an amazing camp! The people, the music, the dancing, the meetings and even the dishes that were part of my task at camp have all changed my life for the better. Deuteronomy 6:5 says, “Love the Lord with all your heart, all your soul and all



*Volunteer members of the Totara Springs staff enthusiastically joining in the praise and worship at National Camp.*

your strength". The incredible people at the camp showed me what this verse truly means. They never let a day go by without living it to its fullest potential. They all just ROCKED! The passion that they showed me that they have for God blew me away. It brought tears to my eyes, but only tears of joy. They motivated me in ways no one else could ever motivate me. They caused me to smile so much that my mouth started to hurt, allowed me to sing and dance without a care in the world. God bless you all, and never forget to smile. Because a smile can make a difference in someone's life ... it did in mine.

### **Rev Leo Te Kira (Cerebral Palsy)**



Wow! Like was that a camp or was that a camp !!! Emotionally fulfilling, spiritually life-giving and life-changing. The weekend was openly charismatic in its Christian expression. Hence it was my first ever opportunity as a mainstream-raised Anglican to eat, sleep and breathe in a charismatic setting. It was a profound privilege.

I suppose I can best describe my feelings by equating it to the experience many non-Maori describe to me when they come away from their first ever marae weekend. Many tell me of their weekend on the marae as opening their minds to a different way of life; as enriching their experience by time spent in a "live-in" culture not their own; and as

broadening their outlook on their own attitudes. Like people raised by Western culture who have spent a few days on a marae, I too ultimately will never be leaving the mainstream Christian culture my parents raised me in. Nevertheless I too now have had my mind opened to a different way of life, and my experience and perceptions enriched by opportunities to listen to some inspiring pastors out of the charismatic experience that even convicted me to get further into the Scriptures; watching seven adults be baptised by total immersion; watching people be led by an altar call to commit themselves to the Holy Spirit; and simply by sharing time to give glory to our Creator through two half-hour per day slots of songs of praise.

I've never been in a weekend or conference where the Saturday night has been so noisy without alcohol or anything else, and although not my choice of music, I so enjoyed watching the teenagers have fun on Saturday night. I've never been in a conference where the fellowship of Christians has been so deep and so meaningful, and the worship so deep. The teaching wasn't speaking to us as half or three quarter people; the teaching on the stage, in the seminars or in cabin time talked to us as we all are – perfect creations of God, and nothing less.

## WHAT A FINALE TO THE EVENING!



*A surprise was in store for the campers as the Saturday evening neared its end when everyone was grouped together in the form of a cross and given a glow stick.*



*Then when the lights were turned out hundreds of little lights formed a beautiful glowing image of the cross to light up the dark.*



Pastor Geoff Wiklund, a Spiritual Advisor to the Trust, spoke throughout the weekend on lessons we can learn from the life of Abraham. Here is one small excerpt from one of these, and in the following six pages we will include parts of what another three speakers shared with the campers.

## FROM THE PLACE OF VICTORY

Sometimes we get a word from God and we wonder what to do with it. We've got to get beyond our past to the place that God is taking us. If I can share just a word of testimony. I went in June to Kenya and Mozambique, and before I went a voice spoke to me and said, "If you go to Africa, you will die!" I was hoping that was the devil and not God, and because of that word I checked with God and said, "Is this your call? Am I meant to go?" and I felt I heard the Lord say "Yes." I realized in my obedience I mightn't come back.

I didn't share it with my wife because I didn't think while I was away for six weeks that she would like living with a possible sentence of death over me. But I shared it with one of my elders. I put everything in place in case, but what happened was that on the very last day in

Mozambique I got malaria, although I didn't know that I had it. There are several different strains of malaria. One is cerebral malaria which can kill you, and there is one other strain that also kills you. It wipes out all of your internal organs, and unbeknown to me I was now a recipient of that strain.

On the Wednesday after my return I thought I had the flu. I hadn't been to the doctor in years except for examinations when going overseas. Now, for the first time in a long time, I was feeling sick. On the Thursday I became very sick, and at midnight I knew I was dying. I knew I was in a bad way, I was hallucinating, and at one point I just came out of hallucinating long enough to say to my wife, "You need to get me to the hospital **now**."

Isn't God very good the way he organizes things. Because our local hospitals know nothing about malaria as a rule, when I presented myself with a high fever, sweating, aches and shakes, the nurse said, "I really do not know what to do with you, so I need to go and talk with someone else." Fortunately another nurse came along and greeted me in Swahili. I answered in Swahili, and it turned out she had spent two years working in Tanzania and had malaria twice, so she recognized the symptoms. She took me by the arm, past all the red tape and said, "There is one doctor in this hospital who is the one who needs to see you, and she came back with this girl,



probably not even five feet tall, who had just spent six months in the Kebala slums in Kenya where I had just been.. She knew how to prepare a slide for malaria, and confirmed that I had the disease, although still not certain what strain it was. As a result they were able to start treatment at once which probably saved my life. I spent a week in hospital in the infectious diseases department before being released to be nursed at home, as my temperature and blood pressure had come down.

Now I come to this verse, *“You are a new creation. Old things are passed away. Everything has become new.”*

In effect I had died. When I came out of hospital I was very weak. One other man returning from Mozambique had to spend four months in hospital recovering. I thank God for the prayers of my church. Miraculously I recovered very quickly.

But my elders would not let me stay in the church past 1 pm. The requirements of my job had not become any less, so I had to delegate more things. And I had to let some things go that I just couldn't do. I became aware that there were things in my life that I was doing because I enjoyed doing, but someone else should have been doing them. God really brought me to a new place, so in effect I did have a death. I died to those things I should be delegating, not doing them myself.

*So many people  
come from the  
place of victim  
when the Bible  
says you come  
from the place  
of victory.*

And I put it to you too. You are a new creation. The old things have passed away. So if you have an abusive past or any of those things, you are dead to that past. You are starting from a place of victory. So many people come from the place of victim when the Bible says you come from the place of victory. You are a new creation.

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Pastor Bruce McDonald on the Sunday evening bought this message on  
**FOUR KEYS TO MOVING INTO GOD'S PROMISES**

There are a lot of beautiful promises in the Word of God, and if we look at what happened in Abraham's life we get a wonderful guide to help each one of us to move forward into realizing those promises. What was it that Abraham did that unlocked those promises? As we read the Scriptures we see that Abraham did four things, and I have a feeling that if you will sow these things into your mind and put them into your heart and establish them in your life, you're going to find that some of the promises that you've received are going to be suddenly unlocked in this year ahead.

### **1. We look at ourselves**

We read, *"Abraham did not consider (look at) his body now dead."* One of the things that becomes a problem for us in unlocking these promises is that we look at ourselves. At 14 years of age I was a total failure at school. I didn't seem to be able to do too much of anything. I went there to eat my lunch and play rugby. I was going to leave school, get a job on my father's farm because I didn't think I could do anything. I was a little blond cross-eyed boy with an eye impediment, but I had a youth leader who said to me every time, "Bruce, God wants the best out of you." He used to irritate the life out of me because he would never stop saying that. But the long term effect was that I started to believe it. I found that if you look at yourself, that's always the way you feel. As we look at ourselves what we often see is the inability to do what God is telling us we can do.

### **2. We must stop looking at the circumstances**

The Bible relates, *"Neither did he look at the deadness of Sarah's womb."* At the time she was 90 – well past the age of conceiving children. Abraham was just on 100. Doesn't this tell us that we must stop looking at the circumstances, because sometimes the circumstances will give us all the wrong messages. Sometimes your circumstances "don't look right", but if you trust in your circumstances then nothing really of significance happens, but when you put your confidence in God's Word something good begins to happen. Your circumstances are not God's messages to you. God's Word is God's message to you.

### **3. Don't doubt the great promises of God**

*"Neither did Abraham stagger at the promises of God."* Don't doubt the great promises of God. We musn't get concerned that those promises don't seem to match up with what we can see with our natural eyes and mind. In the Bible there are 8000 promises for you and me. We could spend a lifetime discovering what they are. If God has given you a promise, hold onto it, because there is something good that God is going to bring about. It's amazing what God can do. In the Bible, Abraham is described as the "Father of Faith". How do you think you would get a title like that?

### **4. He gave the glory to God.**

It didn't matter what was happening in Abraham's world. From the time that God promised him a son it was 25 years before the promise was realized, but all that time he kept on praising God. For myself, I'm going to praise him uphill and down dale. Every time there's an opportunity I'm going to let Him know that He is God. It was such fun to be with you tonight, to be part of your wonderful worship. I knew I was in the right place tonight. It was such a privilege to be able to give glory to God along with you. Not just tonight, but at all times, you need to lift up your head, heart and voice to give glory to God. Don't look for the answer to your problem, but seek Jesus.

*Leon Prenter (cerebral palsy) is very proficient at typing, and uses the great advance in the technology of the voice in a voice synthesiser so that his messages can be heard. This was how he presented his message at camp, and it was very warmly received.*

## MOVING FORWARD

Hi, I'm Leon Prenter, and I have had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home and have known and loved the Lord since I was a young child. Over the years I have had several occasions on which God has helped me to move on from what have been difficult or uncertain (or both) situations. I would like to describe what has been the most recent of these.

Three years ago I completed a BA (Computing). One of my last papers I did was called Information Systems Design, and I found this paper a real challenge. One day I was talking to a friend, and she reminded me that God is the ultimate designer, and if I asked Him to help He would. So, I gave this a go and it became fun, as with every challenge I faced I thanked Him for helping me and for showing me how to do what I needed to learn. It felt good when, after telling God it was too hard and I needed His help to get through, I received a 'B+' for this paper.



Completing the study for my degree was, for me, a major achievement. However, it also brought uncertainty. For what was really the first time in my life I didn't know what lay ahead of me – when I left school I had gone straight to university, and because my degree took longer than the standard three years I was used to thinking “I'll still be at Massey next year”, but now I didn't have this. If you're now in a situation where you're uncertain over the future, I'd like to encourage you to trust in God as He holds your future. In Jeremiah 29:11 we read, *“For I know the thoughts and plans I have for you”, says the Lord, “thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome”.*

It wasn't as easy as I thought to get a job after completing my degree, and it was nearly nine months between driving out at the end of my last exam to my first day working as a Junior IT Systems Developer through a Mainstream Placement. This job was ideal, as it was in the city I grew up in, it utilised and expanded upon the skills I gained during my degree, and the organisation has a wheelchair repair service on site.

The Mainstream Placement was for two years, ending in March this year. Not knowing whether or not I would be kept on was a bit of a nerve-racking time.



However, I knew that if I was to be let go, God would have something better for me. As some will be aware, God often leaves it to the last minute to show us the direction ahead. By the time I got to the weekend before what may have been my last day, I was fast coming to the conclusion that if there was going to be ongoing work for me, I would have known by that point.

However, the firm decided to keep me on in the position of Junior Developer until they sorted something out, and in late June a door opened and I became an Information Consultant, with my main focus being on the websites the organization are responsible for. There was humour in this as, due to the uncertainty earlier in the year, in addition to my job I was doing a Massey paper on web design. My place of employment did not know about this and I didn't know the new position was coming until just before my exam!

The position was for six months, so it currently officially ends early next year, but I have had word that I am about to have my position made "permanent". While this is just verbal at the moment, I am confident that it will be made official in the not-too-distant future. And, I know that if for any reason it falls over, God has something even better for me, and as I move forward in Him this will be revealed.



*Elective*



*Games*



*Voice Dancers*



*Worship*

Edith Morris (polio / post polio)

## MAKING A BREAKTHROUGH IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIVES



What can stir us along to a new level of breakthrough in the Lord? What will push us along to another level of passion and spiritual development.

*Gal 5 v7 says, "You were running the race well. Who or what hindered you?"*

There are many things that can cause a lack of spiritual energy, but the one I want to focus on is **not living in the past**. If we live in the past that's where our thoughts and energy go. We need to live fully in the now.

*Phil 3 v13 says, "One thing I do. Forgetting what lies behind, and pressing on to what lies ahead."*

I believe the Lord wants to stir and urge us along a little bit more.

There are different things that can cause us to move on to a deeper level—answers to prayer, more vision and so on, but one of the keys is thinking, "What's done is done. The past is behind. We're living in the now. There's no other time in history, no other time in your life, as right now.

Let me illustrate from my own life.

Eight years ago when we returned from Japan where we had been missionaries for 25 years. I could have said, "OK Lord. I've done my bit for Your kingdom. I can ease off now, Can't I?"

**NO.** The Lord says, "Forget what lies behind and reach forward to what lies ahead. I had no idea what lay ahead after those many years overseas. But today it's no use me talking about Japan. My friends don't want to know about that. I'm living here in NZ now. That's what they want to hear about. Where you are now is where your spiritual energy needs to go, not in the past. Don't dribble it away.

When we empty our hearts from the past we are empty and ready for the Lord to use us. When we hold onto the past there's no empty space where the Lord can do a new thing.

Some will say, "I'm too old" or "I'm too young", but it's not what energy you might have that counts, it's what the Lord is going to impart in you. It's what He has already imparted in you to do what He wants you to do. One and a half years ago I started broadcasting on "Community Radio, Hamilton." It's a half hour program called, "Taking Up Disability". I absolutely love it. I can talk, and talk and talk!! Talking is my God-given gift!

What is your God-given gift? Don't wait to develop it any more. Use it now!

Here I am at my age in a new part of my life learning all sorts of technical things I never thought I would ever learn, but the Lord is a Person of new beginnings. He's always doing new things. He doesn't want you to stay back there. God releases new energy, new purpose, new life in a new breakthrough. The old is laid behind, but it doesn't mean everything is forgotten.

When I was young and newly married Noel and I had a little child. When at nine months he died. I completely fell apart. It took me years and years to get over the shock. I was full of self-pity and destroying behaviour. When someone said to me, "Don't worry. You'll get over it when you have another child." "I don't want another child" I screamed. "I want **that** child." I was so selfish. I couldn't move on. I stayed stuck.

And I'm asking you today, "What is keeping you stuck?"

I was wounded, and I'm still scarred by that experience. It's not forgotten, but when you leave the thing behind and move on and release the bundle that's holding you down like a heavy load, then the Lord can use you for His purposes.

Later I had a baby girl and today I have two of the handsomest grandchildren that anyone could ever imagine. They are a new generation for a new day. See how the Lord has restored what I was trying to hold onto. Two new healthy grandsons.

*Isaiah 43 v18 says, "Do not call to mind the former things.or ponder the things of the past. Behold, I will do something new. Now it will spring forth. Will you not be aware of it?"*

And that's what I'm asking today. Will you lock into this very moment of history? Will you go forward and embrace the new breakthrough the Lord has for you?



*Dance*



*Baptism*



*Conga*



*Motel Time*

# DISCOURAGEMENT

by Margie Willers

One day Satan decided to sell up. He put up for sale all his weapons that he'd used against the people of God. Most were wedging instruments, both sharp and jagged, that he had on display. He'd used them for driving people apart. Each implement had a price tag and a label — envy, hatred, jealousy, fear, pride. However, when he thought about it, the tool that was most used and most highly priced was discouragement. This had proved Satan's most effective weapon in hindering people's Christian lives and service for God.



There are times when every Christian experiences serious and deep discouragement. The Word of God reveals with amazing transparency every character whom God has used. God openly displays their strengths as well as their weaknesses to encourage us to know that man is only human.

We find in Scripture many of God's great men experiencing discouragement — Elijah after his great victory on Mount Carmel; Jonah after his revival at Ninevah; David after his crushing blow of Ziglag where all was lost; Jeremiah whom the people despised, ridiculing the prophecies; Peter, after he denied the Lord. And the list could go on...

There are two major situations when we can expect discouragement:

(1) after a great victory; (2) after a time of tremendous blessing.

Elijah reached his lowest point — he actually begged God to take his life — after he'd challenged a nation. Remember the scene? Elijah stood boldly before the prophets of Baal. "Come on," he urged. "You go first. And the God who answers by fire, He is the sovereign Lord."

Gallons of water. The prophets of Baal prayed all day. They cut their wrists. And nothing happened.

Then Elijah stood before the nation and called on God. Fire flashed down and the prophets bowed their faces to the ground shouting, "Jehovah is God!" Elijah is at the pinnacle of his ministry, yet soon after we find him wallowing in the depths of despair — "He took a day's journey into the wilderness and sat under a juniper tree: "It is enough O Lord, take away my life."

The lesson? We are vulnerable to attack and to discouragement after a time of real blessing. Noteworthy is the military tactic—after a victory, set up a hasty defence.



## ***Causes for Discouragement?***

The list is endless. Here are five:

### **(1) Unanswered prayer.**

Maybe you've persisted in prayer for weeks, months, even years. You've pulled every spiritual lever, pushed all the right buttons. Yet an answer hasn't come.

Maybe you've battled a chronic illness, or a difficult marriage, business setbacks or false accusations. Abuse. You've reached the end of your rope, your faith's taken a battering. You're baffled as to why there's been no breakthrough. Discouragement sets in.

### **(2) A feeling of failure.**

Whether it be the bad or the ugly, allow me to assure you, failure is not defeat.

Failure is only failure if you never rise to try again. Remember, there are no hopeless situations; only people who've grown hopeless about them. Like the Apostle Paul, we need to forget those things behind us and progress forward in our spiritual journey.

Our God is the God of the second chance; the God of new beginnings. He is the resurrection and the *life*. How many times do we read in Scripture — *“And the Word of the Lord came a second time”*? He can begin new things for you. He's the Master at turning our failure into success.

Peter failed. Moses failed. Timothy seems to have failed. But the Word of the Lord came a second time. Jesus Christ never gives up on you. Never!

### **(3) Perfectionism of Standards.**

Most people set standards they can never attain. Even the preaching of the Word can present standards which are totally unrealistic. “If you seek to know God more intimately, then you need to discipline yourself to prayer — at least three hours a day.” People say, “If it takes that, then I quit now.” Others challenge us: “If you're a real Christian, you'll live in victory all the time.” That just isn't true. It doesn't happen that way. They are unobtainable goals.

### **(4) A Wrong Focus.**

We read in Nehemiah where the children of Israel became discouraged — “The strength of the burden bearers is falling and there's much rubbish and we are not able to build.” Their focus had turned to all the things that were going wrong, and they lost sight of the fact that a great wall was being built to protect Jerusalem.

### **(5) Self Pity.**

Some would claim this as the major cause. It is being self-centred. Call it the negativitis syndrome. Woe is me. People who constantly focus on everything that's gone wrong in their life. Who wouldn't get discouraged? The Bible encourages us to rejoice in the Lord always. In everything give thanks.

*to be concluded in the next “Encourager”*

# A TRULY AWESOME STORY !!!!!

My name is Nick Vujicic and I give God the Glory for how He has used my testimony to touch thousands of hearts around the world! I was born without limbs, and doctors have no medical explanation for this birth “defect”. As you can imagine, I was faced with many challenges and obstacles.

*“Consider it pure joy, my Brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds.”*



To count our hurt, pain and struggle as nothing but pure joy? As my parents were Christians, and my Dad even a Pastor of our church, they knew that verse very well. However, on the morning of the 4th of December 1982 in Melbourne(Australia), the last two words on the minds of my parents were “Praise God!”. Their firstborn son had been born without limbs! There were no warnings or time to prepare themselves for it. The doctors were shocked and had no answers at all! There is still no medical reason why this had happened, and Nick now has a brother and sister who were born just like any other baby.

The whole church mourned over my birth and my parents were absolutely devastated. Everyone asked, “If God is a God of Love, then why would God let something this bad happen to not just anyone, but dedicated Christians?” My Dad thought I wouldn’t survive for very long, but tests proved that I was a healthy baby boy, just with a few limbs missing.

*“And we know that in all things God works for the best for those who love Him.”* That verse spoke to my heart and convicted me to the point where I know that there is no such thing as luck, chance or coincidence that these “bad” things happen in our life.



I had complete peace knowing that God won’t let anything happen to us in our life unless He has a good purpose for it all. I completely gave my life to Christ at the age of fifteen after reading John 9. Jesus said that the reason the man was born blind was “so that the works of God may be revealed through Him.” I truly believed that God would heal me so I could be a great testimony of His Awesome Power.

Later on I was given the wisdom to understand that if we pray for something, if it's God's will, it'll happen in His time. If it's not God's will for it to happen, then I know that He has something better.

I now see that Glory revealed, as He is using me just the way I am and in ways others can't be used. I am now twenty-three years old and have completed a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Financial Planning and Accounting. I am also a motivational speaker and love to go out and share my story and testimony wherever opportunities become available. I have developed talks to relate to and encourage students through topics that challenge today's teenagers. I am also a speaker in the corporate sector.



I have a passion for reaching out to youth and keep myself available for whatever God wants me to do, and wherever He leads, I follow.

I have many dreams and goals that I have set to achieve in my life. I want to become the best witness I can be of God's Love and Hope, to become an international inspirational speaker, and be used as a vessel in both Christian and non-Christian venues. I want to become financially independent by the age of 25, through real estate investments, to modify a car for me to drive, and to be interviewed and share my story on the "Oprah Winfrey Show". Writing several best-selling books has been one of my dreams and I hope to finish writing my first by the end of the year. It will be called "No Arms, No Legs, No Worries!"

I believe that if you have the desire and passion to do something, and if it's God's will, you will achieve it in good time. As humans, we continually put limits on ourselves for no reason at all! What's worse is putting limits on God who can do all things. We put God in a "box". The awesome thing about the Power of God is that if we want to do something for God, instead of focusing on our capability, concentrate on our availability, for we know that it is God through us and we can't do anything without Him. Once we make ourselves available for God's work, guess whose capabilities we rely on? God's!

May the Lord bless you  
In Christ,  
Nick Vujicic

*In the last Encourager Geoge B Liederman described how, after surviving a horrific train crash, he hung upside down for many hours with his legs badly crushed. As the weeks and months and years went by he realized he must do something to save himself from deterioration of spirit, impatience and despair. The first part was entitled "I Determined to Conquer Pain", and this second one, another part of the article in "Guideposts", is titled*

## WHAT PAIN CAN TEACH US

Pain teaches us patience and acceptance of our lot, but perhaps an even bigger lesson pain teaches us is humility. Take my back scratcher. When you are encased in plaster up to your shoulders, your skin perspires and begins to itch horribly. In hot weather, you literally feel like jumping out of your skin. The discomfort in the cast became to me a major irritation. I feared the consequences of this imprisonment and shared my foreboding with a remarkable nurse. She had a relative of hers make a back scratcher for me out of a section of Venetian blind. It was a simple gadget, but it became my most precious possession because it alone could slip beneath the plaster cast.

I recall once during the night when I reached for my lifesaving scratcher and it was gone. I became panicky until the nurse was summoned and found it under the bed. I immediately began to reflect on how pain had reduced me overnight from a man who was trying to make a place for himself in the world to a man who could grow alarmed over a lost back scratcher.

The following day a member of my congregation visited me and sought counsel about some changes in his will. He was loquacious about his wealth, but all through the conversation I clutched in my hands the back scratcher, a mere piece of wood. I wouldn't have exchanged it for his most valuable holdings.

I believe that pain leads us to an appreciation of simple blessings we have always taken for granted – like walking, for example, or the rosebush, or the bird's nest in our own backyard that we failed to notice before. As I was learning to walk again, to stand and to climb steps, I began to realize how closely walking was allied with things spiritual. Numberless are the references in the Bible to the act of walking. Noah walked with God, Abraham and his only son walked together in their hour of greatest trial, Micah uttered a divine challenge that it was required of us to "walk humbly with thy God." I knew that if ever I could walk again, I would find joy with each step. Pain taught me many other lessons. It taught me how to understand all others in pain and how to draw to them in kinship of spirit. I know what Schweitzer means by "the fellowship of those who bear the mark of pain." People who have known pain



ultimately can build an invisible bridge of compassion for one another, and without words make the crossing from heart to heart.

After I left the hospital, this revealed itself to me meaningfully on many occasions. Fellow rabbis, ministers and priests called on me to visit parishioners in pain. Doctors and nurses asked me to talk to patients who had lost the will to go on. "I wish you would see them. I don't seem to reach through pain the way you can."

In visiting other men in pain, it was not necessary for me to say much to them. We understood each other in the eloquence of silence. There was something that linked me with them.

What was it then? Was it that the process of pain purged the soul? Was it that we came closer to being our true selves and knew how to touch the soul of others? Was it that we were no longer quite so afraid? Was it that we had faced the unfaceable and had come through it? I believe all of these things were true.

Pain is more than a mere physical ordeal. It is a great mystic experience that links us, as no other bond, with all humanity. Pain is so closely intertwined with the basic reality of life and of death itself. Dare I say that to feel only fear of pain is truly to miss half of its real meaning? Often the presence of pain means life; its absence – death.

I can testify, for example, that one of the worst pains is when paralyzed tissue begins coming back to life. It has been known to drive people out of their minds. I used to compare it to a blacksmith, standing at his forge, making red his tongs and then plucking at the muscles with them. Each moment was torture, yet I used to pray for that pain, grow alarmed when it stopped, for the pain meant the restoration of dead limbs. It was a sign of returning life.

Next to my room in the hospital I could hear the groaning of a very sick woman. When she screamed and sobbed in torture, I knew that she was still alive. Then one night she grew silent. My neighbor would not be heard again. No more pain. No more outcries. No more life.

So upon its wings of destruction, pain carries a promise. And this is the great lesson it has taught me: The promise beyond pain is life.

*I used to pray  
for that pain,  
grow alarmed  
when it stopped.  
It was a sign of  
returning life.*

***Remember, silence is sometimes the best answer.***

# HOW MUCH AM I WORTH?

A poem by Yvonne Hammond

Although I think I'm worthless,  
I know that is not true,  
I know that in **Your** eyes, Lord,  
I'm worth everything to You.

I know I'm irreplaceable,  
There is no one just like me,  
I find it hard to understand -  
How can it really be?

And, yet, I know it's true, Lord, -  
The Bible tells me so,  
It says how much You love me -  
I've searched the pages through.

That I should mean "the world" to You,  
I'll never comprehend -  
That I am so much worth to You -  
My Saviour, Lord and friend.

I was the wandering sheep, Lord,  
The one that went astray,  
And yet You came and sought me  
And on Your shoulders laid.

You called me and I heard You,  
When You said "come to Me,"  
I heard Your voice and followed,  
How grateful I will be -  
That **You** should call **my** name.

*Happy moments - Praise God*  
*Difficult moments - Seek God*  
*Quiet moments - Worship God*  
*Painful moments - Trust God*  
*Every moment - Thank God*

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# Etim is unable to move from the neck down, but HE HAS A TRANSLATOR'S HEART

by Stephen Pattemore

Etim Pramongkit was on his way to church at his friend Dumin's house. that fine Sunday morning, riding his hand-propelled tricycle, when the call came in to the cell phone of his able-bodied companion, Pastor AhLin . "Dad! Get everyone out of the village! There's a big wave coming your way – its just wrecked all our boats here at Rawail!"

Convinced by the urgency in his daughter's voice, AhLin together with Etim set about alerting the villagers in Yuban, on Phuket's



eastern coastline, urging them to evacuate to high ground. Etim, a paraplegic for nearly 20 years at the time, needed others' help to push his tricycle along the uneven sandy roadway. They paused at the end of the village trying to look out to sea for the coming wave, before heading inland and uphill to the Buddhist temple which provided refuge. Dumin, host to the little church in the village and a double amputee, was unceremoniously picked up and bundled onto the last pickup truck to leave the village before the wave struck. Titnoi, another bends victim, was hauled onto the roof of his house by his son, as the wave now washing right through the village threatened to carry him away. As a result of that cell phone call, and the prompt action of AhLin and Etim, not a single life was lost in Yuban village in the Boxing Day 2004 tsunami. Not so fortunate was the computer on which Etim, the chief Bible translator for the Urak Lawoi' community, was working on Old Testament translation – it was baptized by immersion that day! (Amazingly, although the computer was a write-off, we were later able to recover all the data from the hard disk!) Had he made it to church that day, Etim would have been one of less than half a dozen gathered in Dumin's house, the two of them the only baptized Christians in the village.

The Urak Lawoi' are a minority tribal community living on the islands along the SW coast of Thailand. Of Malay origin, their language and culture is completely different from that of the surrounding Thai people. Their name means "Sea People" and the sea is their livelihood. The men are divers by profession, using crude compressed-air technology and risking their lives daily from the effects of the "bends" – decompression sickness or Caisson's disease. I first met Etim and Dumin in the poor ward of the government hospital on the same day in 1985. Both had suffered a serious case of the bends, and Etim was unable to move from the neck downwards. He was a strong, well-built man who had done well for himself, diving in very

dangerous conditions for a tin-dredging company. Although he regained the use of his upper-body and was able to return to his home in Yuban village, his paralysis and inability to work led to deep depression. Despite years of witness, Yuban had proved very hard ground for the gospel, and there was at that time only one Christian there. But over the course of the next 12 months, through frequent visits and practical care, Etim and Dumin both gave their hearts to the Lord and were baptized. A new church was born.

My wife Raewyn and I had only recently arrived in Thailand, sensing God's call to work alongside Raewyn's parents, David and Doreen Hogan, in reaching the Urak Lawoi' people with the good news of Christ. The man who taught me the Urak Lawoi' language was AhBing, another bends victim and paraplegic, whose chief virtue as a teacher, along with his cheerful nature, was that he was always at home! AhBing later died of kidney failure brought on by continual infected pressure sores and this was the expected fate of bends victims in the Urak Lawoi' villages. The fact that Etim and Dumin have now had over 20 years of active and productive life since their accidents is largely due to the faithful and loving care provided by their wives.

Another milestone in the lives of the Urak Lawoi' men paralyzed from the bends was in 1989 when Pauline Stansfield from New Zealand came out with two helpers, bringing with her "sand buggy" wheel chairs for three men, and teaching several of them to carve pictures in perspex to sell as a means of generating income. This was a wonderful help to Dumin and Adung from Rawai village, but Etim found he had too unsteady a hand for the work, and was not able to earn money from it.



When we first went to Thailand, David Hogan was part way through translating the New Testament, and as I became more comfortable with the language I gradually got more involved in the translation side of the work. By about 1990, when the Hogans were planning for retirement due to David's uncertain health, I had to assume responsibility for finishing the translation of the NT. Needing to find a native speaker of the language to be my co-translator, I asked Etim to look over the translation of the book of James, which had been done many years previously and needed updating and revision. A week later he presented me with an exercise book with the whole of James retranslated, written out in his handwriting. And I knew then that this was a man with a translator's heart! He became the key person in the final phases of the translation of the NT. When we ourselves left Thailand at the end of 1994, with the NT complete in draft form, I suggested that Etim might like to look at some Old Testament passages and translate them. He set to with an enthusiasm which was and continues to be amazing. When the NT was published in 1998, we had

sufficient funds to purchase a laptop computer for Etim, and begin training him to use it in his translation. He is now on his 3rd laptop, and has translated a first draft of: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Jonah, Haggai and Malachi. We hope that Psalms and Proverbs will be published by the Thailand Bible Society within the next 12 months.

Despite only having four years primary education, Etim has learned to use the computer competently, with translation software provided by the United Bible Societies. Lying on his bed, half-turned to one side, with his inert legs stretched out, he supports himself on his left elbow and both types and uses the mouse with his right hand. Progress is slow but careful, and the standard of his translation (he translates from Thai into Urak Lawoi) has improved steadily. For a number of years, until his eyesight got bad, Dumin assisted by reading and correcting draft translations. Dumin has since had both legs amputated due to infected pressure sores.

Since the tsunami, following rapid response by Christians to the needs of the villagers, there has been a very significant turning to Christ in almost all locations where the Urak Lawoi' live. In Etim's village there are now about 40 who meet every Sunday in Dumin's house, young and old, male and female, able-bodied along with at least half a dozen bends victims with limited or no mobility. When 25 people were baptized in the sea in April 2006, it was a special thrill that Etim and Dumin's wives both were part of that number. The meetings are characterized by lively singing – songs of worship and devotion both newly composed in Urak Lawoi' and translated from English or Thai, but adapted to Urak Lawoi' rhythms and accompanied by drums, tambourines and guitars. Pastor AhLin from Rawai village ministers the Word of God each week but the next stage will be the development of local leadership. Etim's intimate knowledge of the Scriptures will make him a capable teacher.

Although he has a small allowance for his translation work, Etim has a constant struggle with generating enough income. We were able to get him a fishing boat and equip it, so that, although he can no longer go to sea he can get the boat-owner's share of the income. Then last year the boat was confiscated by the



National Park authorities for taking shell-fish inside a marine park zone. Although the crew were all fined, the boat has never been released. We have had to find finance to get him another boat.

Etim continues to this day working steadily on the translation of the Old Testament into Urak Lawoi' and a testimony to the grace of God. He and the four or five other bends victims in the church at Yuban are a community of hope and challenge the faith of us all.



## THE McRAE CENTRE IS BEING PUT TO GREAT USE

Dianne Bayley and Ed Salonga write:

### 1. GOD IS SO GOOD

We have a lot of new students again in our SPED Program. Would you believe we now have a total of 108 students (70 of them are deaf and 38 have other disabilities).

In the new building, the McRae Center, we have 14 Grade III and IV students, 17 Grade V and VI students, and 22 deaf high schoolers. The high schoolers come from eight or nine towns and some are aged 19 and 20! They are so excited to be able to come to a high school, because there is none in this area, they don't want to go home! (At home there is no one to sign to, or talk with, and when you are of high school age that is a big problem!). The other more disabled students and small deaf children are in the PCFFD building with enlarged classrooms. We are not jammed up like before! **They still urgently need money to complete the McRae Center.**

### 2. GOD ANSWERED PRAYER

We asked you to pray for a high school teacher for the deaf, as such a qualified person is so hard to find! Well, God answered wonderfully! We now have Teacher Larry Miemban who loves the deaf. His brother who is deaf, studied at a College for the deaf, and so Larry understands the deaf culture, but he is a hearing person, and therefore it is so much easier for us to work with him. He recently got married, and his wife Rhida, a trained high school teacher, is at present a substitute teacher in our Grade III and IV deaf class. We are also very thankful for Mrs. Jessilyn Enrile, a mother of a deaf student, who is now a permanent teacher. You need a lot of love and patience when handling ten very lively little deaf pre-schoolers who enter with zero sign language! With normal children, if they don't look at you, they might be still listening, but with the deaf, if they don't look at you, they are not learning anything. Our staff now number 14, all voluntary, but we need a sponsor for Larry.

### 3. "IF THERE IS ACCESS, THERE IS SUCCESS"

This was the theme of the 29th National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week in the Philippines which was commemorated in July. A special program was held in our new Center, it was organized by provincial government personnel, and other disabled groups attended. This was actually the first program to be held in our new building. Our SPED children gave their delightful items, especially the presentation of our little Educable / Autistic children (photo on page 28). They sang and acted the song, "Open the Eyes of my Heart, Lord." Everyone was touched. One of the fathers sitting and watching said to me that he was so proud because his little boy had really practiced that song at home. The high schoolers gave an excellent

mime on the Good Samaritan, with their own additions. There were also games, food and gifts at the end of the program. The crowd numbered about 300.



#### **4. WHEELS FOR THE WORLD**

Next July 2008, “Wheels for the World” from Joni & Friends in the States will be giving 100 plus wheelchairs, walkers, and crutches here at Hebron. These will be given free with the service of fitting the wheelchairs, etc. for the recipients.

Our task is to find all the recipients – all the people needing these things, and fill out the forms properly. We have already begun promoting it and giving out flyers to churches and government organizations and to our own staff. We also hope to network with Operation Blessing, a Christian television medical aid group.

Please pray for this project. We also want to include an activity which will show the recipients that God loves them and has a plan for their lives too.

#### **5. THEIR FIRST VISIT IN 12 YEARS!**

We are looking forward to Hugh and Di Willis coming to see us in late January 2008! They last visited in 1996, and things have vastly changed since then! Pray for their visit.

#### **6. MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT**

In August 10 we came into an agreement with Bulacan State University Extension Services for them to conduct and facilitate different training and enhancement programs for our staff members, parents and students, as well as others in Bulacan. Our part is to organize the participants, and facilities, and to provide the needed expenses/materials, handouts and certificates of recognition.



*The high school students in front of the McRae Centre*



*The Educable Class taught by Teacher Rhemy*

## THEY LOVED THE CHANCE TO REALLY HELP SOMEONE OUT THERE

As soon as Ken and I entered the Wheels for the World restoration shop at Taft Prison, in California, I was struck with how quiet and orderly it was – yet the place was hummin'! Inmates were fixing wheels, polishing chrome, and repairing leather backings. I glanced at huge colorful murals on all the walls – several prisoners with artistic talent had hand-painted scenes of disabled children from different countries (they had used kids in our newsletter photos for models).

Ken and I meandered down each aisle, pausing occasionally to watch the men work. I asked one what he liked most about his job. He put down his wrench and WD-40 and said, “When I see the photographs of the disabled kids who receive my wheelchairs” – it’s funny he called them his chairs – “it makes me feel like I have a chance to pay back, to do something good, to really help somebody out there, somebody who has a lot less than me.” For me, the best part was when everybody moved into a large assembly hall and I had a chance to not only thank the inmates, but give the Gospel of Christ, “I’m confined in a different way than you,” I said, “and my wheelchair is my own set of bolts and bars. But although my disability is a life sentence, I am here to tell you Jesus Christ has given me liberty. And He can set you free, too.” I smiled when I saw so many of the men nodding in agreement!

It’s the same message that’s setting disabled people free around the world – like those prisoners, I thank you for being a part of the Wheels for the World team as you pray, give, and cheer us on. After all, it’s all about restoring lives for the sake of Christ one wheelchair at a time.

*Joni Eareckson-Tada*

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## DO YOU REMEMBER SEEING “THE ARK” AT NATIONAL CAMP?

John Robertson brought it several times, and it's now up for sale by Alison, his widow. This house bus is especially built with a wheelchair in mind, is self contained and set up for permanent living for four. Contact her on 03-381-5663



*Lord, give me the guidance to know when to hold on,  
and when to let go,  
and the grace to make the right choice with dignity.*

# JOY MINISTRIES IN CANADA AGAIN



In July a team of seven of us from Joy Ministries visited Vancouver, Canada. We were the guests of Joy Fellowship which is a church that ministers to people with intellectual disabilities. We had been planning this trip for over a year and all of a sudden it had become a reality. Vancouver didn't feel too different from home really, except they drove on the wrong side of the road, their light switches were upside down, they have cream in their tea and we saw at least one yellow fire engine – but we coped with all that. What we especially loved was the warmth of the hospitality, the genuine caring for us, the hugs and the acceptance of all of us into their fellowship.

Our visit coincided with their main holiday season, and while we could not go to any weekly home groups, we were kept very busy. On our first Sunday we left the house early to prepare for the morning service, and while we were dropped off at the church, the JF van then set off on its 'pick up' round. Our Joy Ministries team shared in the service, and we brought to our Canadian friends our NZ Maori version of 'How Great Thou Art' along with a very special song that had been written for us at our JM National Camp last year, before we knew anything about our trip. This song talks about 'rising with wings like eagles', how appropriate to take this as our gift to Canada as we saw many soaring eagles. We participated in a second service that afternoon in the neighbouring city of Richmond where Lachlan shared his experience of training for long distance running, and how similar that was in preparing to run the race of life and reach the ultimate goal in heaven.

We spoke at a Seniors Luncheon and shared with them how JM had developed in New Zealand after the return of Debbie Wall (now Kennedy) from her internship with Joy Fellowship 14 years ago. We then joined campers and other helpers on a four day camp where 'Heaven' was the theme. I am sure this was a help to all of us as we were very aware of the absence of our long time friend and for many, pastor, Joy Gregory. Camp was wonderful, worship, teaching, crafts, dancing, walks and so much more. Our Kiwi Night was well received as we presented our songs and



# PEOPLE ARE ALL IMPORTANT AT NATIONAL CAMP

