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# *The* ENCOURAGER

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

*Magazine of the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust*



**SPECIAL PHILIPPINES MINISTRY EDITION**

# THE BLUE PEARL

By Pauline Stansfield

When God said to the Apostle Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness,” (2 Cor 12,9) He was responding to Paul’s cry for healing. Three times Paul cried out to God. The great apostle, the man on whom God’s power rested for healing for so many, was a desperate man.

A day or two ago I spent a couple of very happy hours reading about the blue pearl

on the internet. I had noticed a couple of ads in the Air NZ flight magazine about them, and realized that was the gem that was in a very special ring belonging to my sister. I had noted its subtle colours and milky lustre, and wondered about it many times. I discovered that this lustrous and magnificent gem is cultivated within the body of the paua shellfish that live in the cool waters of the Chathams: the shellfish are captured, nucleated (a seed irritant is inserted below the fish’s mantle) and over a period of 3 years or so, layer upon layer of mother of pearl is laid down around the irritant. One shellfish in five will produce a good blue pearl, one in fifty a perfect pearl. There are so many irritants in the life of the disabled person.....I am wheelchair bound, and can testify to that. Over and above the obvious problems of the wheelchair life I suffer from severe bouts of nerve pain, inherited from my spinal injury 38 years ago. This is a major irritant to live with, and I have cried Paul’s prayer, “ Please heal me Lord” so many times. But instead of physical healing, I can testify to the grace that the Lord gives as I move forward in my Christian walk. The Lord has made clear to me that spiritual and emotional healing comes about through the forgiveness of sin, and this results in true joy. Three years ago I read the Bible right through, using the NIV Study Bible. It took a great deal of time, and there were many tears and much rejoicing as I made my way through it. I carefully noted the verses that refer to pain and suffering, and copied them out at the back of my Bible. Now, when pain keeps me awake at night (which it often does), I have a ready reference to guide my prayers.

The irritant that causes the paua shellfish to encapsulate it in layers of mother of pearl is a constant thing for the poor paua. We will never know if it has feelings of dismay as it sets about covering up the seed, and it may be uninterested in the joy that it gives to humans when a beautiful rare gem is found within its tissues. The paua has to die to deliver this fabulous jewel to us, and by faith I know I will be filled with joy if at the end, my Lord says to me “My strength has been displayed in your weakness, well done, My good and faithful servant”.



*Pauline is a nurse and music teacher. She became a paraplegic as a result of an accident in Russia many years ago.*

Hugh and Di Willis write:

## **WE COULDN'T BELIEVE THE TRANSFORMATION**

It is just on 12 years since we visited Hebron, the Children Bible Ministry's Home in the Philippines. We were full of admiration then for what they had achieved in converting an old disused hospital building into their headquarters. There had been huge problems to overcome, for the hospital had been heavily vandalized with almost every light and electrical fitting ripped out and every bit of equipment, tables, chairs, beds etc stolen. But they had stuck to the task, their disability outreach was growing, a physio room was being set up, and the SPED ministry had grown to 14 children.

Just 8 months after our visit fire almost completely destroyed the building. Although it was made of concrete the fire had burnt out all the linings, and the massive heat generated had made almost every part of the building unsafe, and had to be demolished. Virtually all their possessions had been lost, there was no insurance cover, their vehicles had been incinerated, and they only had the clothes they were wearing as they fled the inferno. Starting again might have appeared to some to be a hopeless task.

But their belief in God was strong, and His working in their lives and the magnitude of the resultant recovery brought them...

## **FROM THIS...**





**...TO THIS**



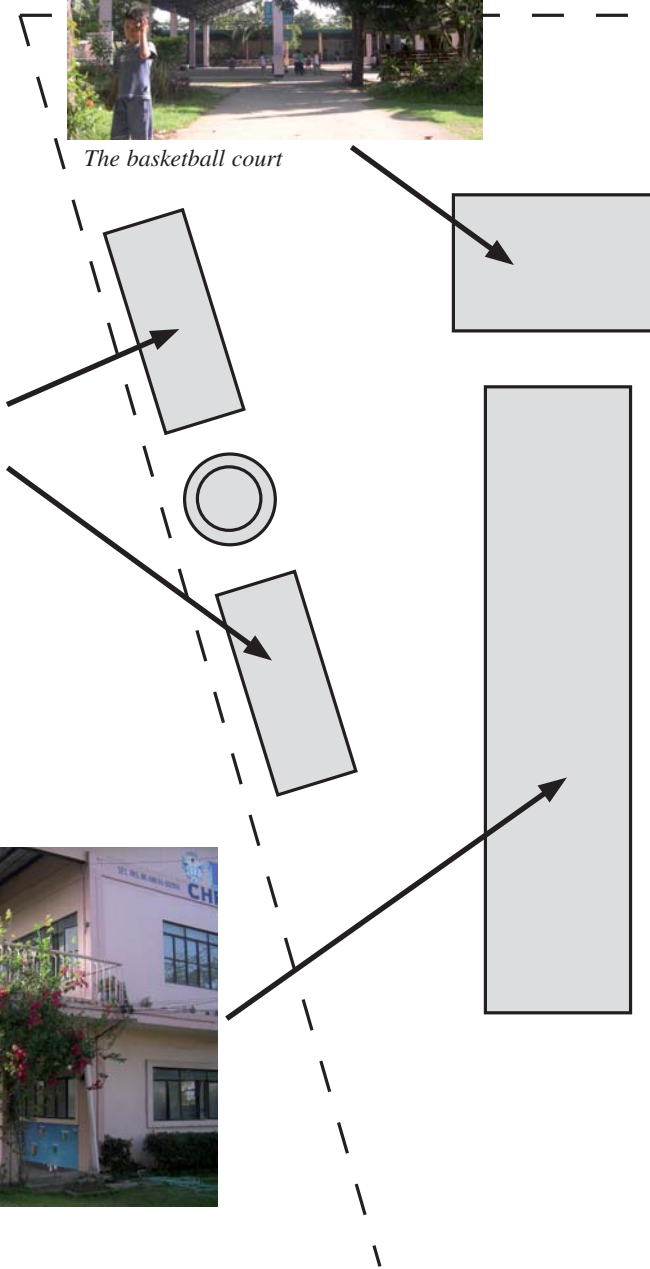
*The basketball court*



*Generator shed, garage and workshop*



*Hebron Christian College*





*Staff accommodation*



*Staff accommodation*



*The Children's Home*



*The PCFFD building*



*The McRae centre*

# RIISING FROM THE ASHES

Just 2 weeks after the fire Dianne Bayley wrote: "Suddenly in the afternoon of April 9, a fire swept through our corridors in just 30 minutes. Most of Hebron has been completely destroyed. Over 22 years here in the Philippines is now a memory. However, we were able to save all the people inside, including our orphan children, 4 old ladies and 4 babies. But most of us have lost all our belongings. On the night of the fire the Soroptomists brought us a sales tent with frilly edging which provided cover for a few days.



*The tent covering for the first few nights*

"We staff decided that we would stay here together, so we are living on the basketball court in a big marquee tent kindly lent by Frontline Evangelism. Some are living in



*Much more room under the big marquee*

the tool shed, poultry shed etc. We need to work quickly to build a temporary shelter, as the rainy season has started early. Like in 'Job', God has allowed this to happen. Like in 'Job', people ask us, 'Where is your God now?' and some maybe think it's a judgment on us. But, like in 'Job', we are standing, believing that God in fact has better things in store!

"The love and care shown by local people and church groups is wonderful. Daily, people visit us, bringing food, clothes etc. Some linger because they really love Hebron.

"One pastor said, 'It wasn't till Hebron burned that we realized how much Hebron's ministry means to us.' We have been encouraged by certain scriptures brought to us:

Habakkuk 3:17-19 'Though ..... yet will I rejoice in the Lord.'

Haggai 2:9 'The glory of the (new) house will be greater than the former house.'

Zechariah 9:12b '..... I will restore twice as much to you.'

Pray for us as we rise from the ashes!"

In their first post-fire newsletter a week or two later they wrote:

"We are like Job in that we lost all, and we are like Nehemiah – the men are building a shelter, while the ladies cook, wash, make the meriendas (snacks), and guard at night.



"On the day the rain came we were able to move from Home no 1 (the tent) to Home no 2, like a market with partitions (shown above). It rained heavily for 5 days, and Manila experienced its worst flooding in 10 years."

A 10 year old boy at the time drew a sketch of the aftermath of the fire and wrote under it:

"We have no more home

We have no more basketball (the favourite game in the Philippines)

But we have hope because we have Jesus!"





*Dianne Bayley and Di Willis with the PCFFD staff.*

## **SURPRISED BY THE DEAF MINISTRY**

We had heard often about the growth of the deaf outreach by the Philippines CFFD but were still surprised to find that as many as 68 of the 108 in the SPED group were deaf. There were also 20 who had intellectual disabilities and the other 20 were mainly autistic, cerebral palsy or down syndrome.

It was also fascinating to drop into the many classes run by Hebron and see the scope of their education programme. It was exam time when we were there, and again we were surprised to see that even in the preschool these students were sitting exams. Here you see one of these very young children answering an exam paper. What sort of questions would they be asked we wondered, and in the one we looked at the boy was given a map of the Philippines flag and was asked to fill in the correct colours. "How do they regard exams at that early age?" we asked. "They love them" we were told.





# THE CHILDREN'S HOME

It is always a great joy to visit the Children's Home. The children are so enthusiastic, so well illustrated in the photo on the right which shows the response when Dianne Bayley brought in a group of letters written at Christmas by the children in Lyn Spencer's Sunday school class at Aokautere. Dianne had asked who would like to have one of the Christmas cards. At the weekly Tuesday Prayer Meeting they listened attentively to Di as she talked, and then were ultra keen to take on the roles of the frogs and the bystanders in the skit that Di used to illustrate the effects of encouragement and discouragement.



The 2007 mid year edition of the CBM Philippines newsletter reported:

*The Children's Home rejoices that 7 of our 23 children last year were happily restored back to family or relatives which means they now have the capacity to feed them. These are wonderful answers to prayer – from you sponsors, we staff and the children themselves.*

*We now have 6 new little faces in the Home. Melany, our social worker, went to visit the family of one of these children. They are living in a makeshift little place like a pig-pen. Sometimes eating twice a day is even a miracle. The father is in and out of work. The mother earns a little as a housekeeper. Their relationship is not good. The mother came to the Home for help. Should the children suffer for the mistakes of their parents?*

This shows the wonderful effect brought about by the automatic payments of those of you who are sponsoring children in the Philippines.

## IT'S NOT EASY FOR THOSE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

*Hugh and Di report on the visitation programme that had been arranged for them.*

### Leslie

There have been two articles on Leslie in "The Encourager" and we didn't have to go far to meet her as she now has a position in the office of the PCFFD. She spends most of the day in a wheelchair, but this was no help to her when Briccio took us to visit her parents. She had to climb down into the gutter (or rather drain as you see here), and climb up the other side into her parents' home/shop.

Sadly, the footpaths in the Philippines are for the most part incredibly unsuitable for wheelchair use, being uneven, littered with holes, and sometimes the footpath disappears altogether. She is a very lovely young girl, and is kept very busy handling the bookwork associated with the operation of the SPED group, including the time sheets for the carers.



### Raymond

We were very keen to meet up with Raymond who came to the last PCFFD camp two years ago. As a result of his mother taking thalidomide he was born with his arms and legs all shortened, and he has great difficulty getting around. Pastor Dong met him at that camp and was impressed by his potential. He saw him being changed inside in the few days of camp and invited him to join his ministry in Isabella province, some 8 hours away. "Do you want to change your life?" he challenged him, and Raymond said "Yes." As with the other seven in his ministry, Pastor Dong taught Raymond to deny himself and to make God the highest priority in his life.

We heard that Raymond had returned to have an operation and we drove out to his parents' home.



Soon all the houses were left behind and the road rapidly deteriorated. We had to leave the car and continue on foot. It was necessary to cross a gully on the bamboo bridge seen in the cover photo. Briccio was not deterred even though the pieces of bamboo were only intermittent, and we were left to wonder at the difficulties Raymond and his parents would have had as he grew up. Sadly he was not there, and our efforts to meet him in Manila were unsuccessful.

## Henry



Since including the above photo in "The Encourager" four years ago we had looked forward to meeting Henry. This is how he gets about, and at that PCFFD camp he was on his way to have his first ever swim. He was at work when we caught up with him, chopping up vegetables in a shop in the market place.

## NOT JUST ONE BUT TWO INTERPRETERS NEEDED

When Di was speaking to the parents of SPED students at Hebron a large group of high school deaf pupils joined the gathering. As a result, as shown in this photo, a sign language interpreter as well as a Tagalog interpreter were needed.



# RIO'S TESTIMONY

I came from a poor family. I am the youngest, with a sister and two brothers. I was 6 years old when my father died, and my mom did a lot of washing clothes for the middle class people so as to support us and be able to eat and live. We lived in the squatter area, a place where most of the poor people live. My family belonged to this lower class of people. My two brothers helped my mother by working in different constructions as labourers, but most of the time no work was available for them. No work meant no food.



Because of our situation I was forced to go to the street to wash cars, and became a beggar. I was even begging people to give me just a few centavos or their left over food so that I could eat and live. Most of the time I was not at home because there was no food in the house. If I was home I mainly slept, because of my lack of sleep on the streets. Sometimes I got involved with petty crimes just to support my hungry stomach and my family. I still remember one time I was invited by my bad friends who planned to stab a man who had punched and wounded the father of one of them. He wanted us to avenge his father, and I found I couldn't say no or yes. What happened – I went with my friends and attacked the man. The man was very lucky because he was able to escape. He went to the authorities and reported us for attempting to kill him. The police ran after us and I went into hiding, and couldn't go back to our home. While I was hiding a young fellow who was a former buddy in our group came to me and invited me to attend a Christian youth camp. He told me that through this camp he had found the love of Jesus, and accepted Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He even told me that I wouldn't need to pay anything because the camp was free. I told him, "Yes, you can write my name on your list. I would like to go."

Sure enough I also found God's love in that youth camp, that Jesus is not dead but that He could change my crooked life. I was in the chapel in the evening service, and when the pastor challenged us to come forward and publicly say we would surrender our lives to Jesus, I stood up and went forward.

It was May 1 1974. That day I was born again into the kingdom of God and decided to live with the New Zealand missionaries, Charlie and Beryl McRae. Now, I am serving the Lord through the children's mission that they and the Morleys started in the Philippines. How the work has grown under the leadership of Dianne Bayley. Praise God for changing my life and calling me to serve Him in children's ministry.



Albert, one of the caregivers, writes:

## **“GOD HEALED MY PAIN!”**

I was seven when my father died. My brother was five years older than me. We needed to help our mother earn money for our daily needs and schooling, and we made bundles of bamboo stick and sold it in the market. We also helped farmers planting rice in the field and during harvest in exchange for some pesos, but it was so hard to meet all our needs. Our father had raised us as a Christian attending a Baptist church and that was a great inheritance from him.

My mother got sick and was often hospitalized for almost six months, and I was the one who stopped attending school to take care of her, and at the same time looked for financial support to sustain her life. Suddenly, she died and we then lived with our different relatives and had to work and help them. My brother has his own family now, but I became a loner, suffered from self-pity and built up bitterness regarding the trials and problems within my life. I needed to work to support myself and was unhappy and so exhausted. I regretted that I had been the one who had to take care of my mother when she got sick, I didn't enjoy my life, and I found myself getting mad and very irritable at other children, even my cousins and other relatives. Oftentimes I hurt them.

Time passed. I became aware of my wrong doings and hatred feelings. I found myself dying in a pit of anger and needed to be restored and revived. I remembered that I was a Christian, started attending church again, and seeking God day by day.

My big dream was to become a nurse, but lacking finance I knew it was not possible. I became a drugstore delivery man during weekends, until somebody encouraged me to take a six months course as a caregiver, and told me it would be a great help to work abroad. But I had a fear now of taking care of older people again and I was afraid that I might hurt children again because of my temper. I challenged myself that this might be the time to face those fears.

When I started taking the caregiver course I slowly became friendly with the children. What a great feeling it was when they wanted me to be around with them. I had one whole week at a home for the aged and found it so hard treating the elderly, but I found myself becoming more patient as I realised God put me in this work to take care of them, and I determined to release my bitterness and hatred to both my parents.

My two weeks time at PCFFD SPED was very memorable. Those precious children opened my eyes to what the love of God really means. Yes, I was deprived of many things, but I am whole and complete, whereas those little children have physical deficiencies, yet can show you love. I was very touched when Vincent, Paul, and John Michael (all CP children) and others showed happiness for the time and care I spent with them. The little deaf children run to me and want to be cared. Finally, by God's grace and mercy, I have been transformed and revived.

# WHAT AN AMAZING LADY!

How would you feel if you had gone out on the mission field as a young twenty year old, and after working there for a number of years both the leaders died, (one of them murdered by an intruder who broke into their quarters), and you were thrust into the leadership.

And seven years later came a devastating fire that swept through the building that housed the ministry and left it almost completely destroyed. All 94 had survived the fire, but all possessions were lost, there was no insurance cover, nowhere to house this large group of people, mostly children, and no funds to start again for the basic necessities of food and shelter.

These were two of the experiences in the life of Dianne Bayley, Director of the Philippines CBM. One can imagine the thoughts that must have gone through her mind as the group assembled outside the inferno. "Where can all these people bed down for the night . There's no money to purchase accommodation. All our possessions have been lost." If she was understandably downcast she couldn't show it. She had to be positive and encouraging, and how well she carried that out that day and in the weeks and months and succeeding years is borne out by the remarkable resurgence of the ministry that followed, shown on pages 4 and 5.

She first came to the Philippines in 1976. She recalls how it came about:

"As I was driving back to Children's Camp at Raglan the verse card from 2 Chron 29:11 on the dashboard of my little old VW said, 'Go, for I have chosen you to serve Me' I idly thought, 'Is this what You want me to do?' and the thought came into my mind, 'Philippines!'

'But Lord, if You want me to go there, please make it very clear!' The next day was Sunday, and at the Raglan P.O. Box 6 there was a letter for me from the Philippines! It was an invitation from Uncle Charlie and Aunty Beryl McRae to join CBM there!"

She has been there ever since, and will this year celebrate 34 years in the country. She is a lady of great faith. None of the buildings that have been built were started with all the money in the bank, but her belief was strong that each one was in God's will, and that He through people's giving would meet the needs. And He has!

We salute Dianne, shown here in her early years in the Philippines, for her outstanding leadership.



## **THIS MINISTRY NEEDS OUR SUPPORT**

If there had never been a Children's Bible Ministry in the Philippines our branch of the CFFD would never have been started. It was CBM that first formulated the idea of hosting a disability ministry by sending Briccio to New Zealand. After the fire the first building they built was the one to house the Philippines CFFD—amazing, as they had such huge needs of their own. Now that they are in the final stage of finishing the McRae Centre, the last of their building programme, to cover all their costs they need another NZ\$24,000 plus a further \$80,000 to pay back what they have borrowed. We would encourage supporters of our ministry to give generously to help them with this need.

## **WE WERE SO IMPRESSED BY WHAT PCFFD IS ACHIEVING**

Hugh and Di write:

We came 12 years ago and the SPED group had just 14 students. Now it has 108. Not just that but classes are being run for those who are deaf, even at high school level bringing in pupils from 9 different towns as there is nowhere else to go locally for these deaf children. The livelihood ministry has grown to 13 sewing machines when before there had been none. They now have a fully set up physio room and students come to observe and get practice themselves. The child sponsorship has grown and now there are 27 children and 13 staff receiving sponsorship.

This has been great growth, but with it comes greater financial needs, and we as a Trust are the ones who have an especial responsibility to support them. Because of NZ tax laws the only money that can be sent across is what is given specifically for this purpose.

At present the CMWDT is sending over \$275 a month for general running expenses, but this is not nearly enough, and only 2 supporters are giving towards this. The remainder comes from a large donation given many years ago, but now almost all used up. There is an urgent need for others to contribute towards this through monthly automatic payments.

## **STAFF SUPPORT NEEDED FOR THIS COUPLE**



It was a huge plus when Larry and Rhida Miemban joined the staff, both trained teachers of deaf students, but they still need people to support them at \$50 a month each, and Ruth Beale is looking for four people to sponsor children in her child sponsorship programme.

*Margie Willers concludes a 2 part study on:*

# DISCOURAGEMENT

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

### ***1 We may be tempted to run away***

Elijah was one of these. After Mount Carmel he ran away to a cave — and behold, the word of the Lord came, “What are you doing here Elijah?”

The biggest danger when running from a situation is to run outside the will of God. Life is too short to live outside the will of God. When we run from our responsibilities, God is unable to develop perseverance, which is one of the greatest qualities we can learn. It is the backbone necessary for our Christian walk. When the going gets tough, God wants people with backbone and character. Paul wrote: “We rejoice in our suffering, knowing that suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character hope.” And God answers our hope.

### ***2 We lose our perspective on things***

Elijah cried, “I’m the only man left who has remained faithful to You.” God replied, “Not quite, Elijah. I’ve seven thousand men who’ve not bowed the knee to Baal.” Elijah made out the situation to be far worse than it actually was. In reality, it proved seven thousand times better.

### ***3 Decisions should not be made when discouraged or depressed***

You don’t think too clearly. When the fog lifts and the storm clears, the insurmountable mountain has suddenly reduced to a molehill. And the most tragic thing we can do when discouraged is to give in. Giving in leads to despair, to loss of hope and vision. Without our hope we lose our passion and purpose for living. We become vulnerable to filling our void with substitutes outside God’s will.

## CURES FOR DISCOURAGEMENT.

### ***1 Don’t Go It Alone***

Elijah became discouraged when he discovered himself all alone. Scripture clearly exhorts us not to try and fight life’s battles on our own. Don’t fall into the trap of an independent spirit. It’s pride!

(“Two are better than one, for when they fall, the one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone.”) Even the disciples, who did mighty signs and wonders, were sent out by Jesus in twos.

It’s imperative we don’t go it alone. Certain people would rather suffer a breakdown and backslide into the world than own up to someone and say, “I’m struggling, will you pray with me?” The paths of Christian men and women are filled with gravesites of those who attempted walking alone. One of the most powerful ministries available to us must surely be encouragement: one of the saddest errors in ministry is Christians downing one another. When criticising, we actually become instruments of Satan’s greatest weapon.



## **2 Reach Out to Others**

One of the surest roads to spiritual and emotional health is helping others. A major cure to stop self pity is to get your focus on to other people and their needs. When Job began to pray for his friends, God restored everything he'd lost.

Jesus is our role model. He came to serve, not to be served. For one week, take an exercise book and jot down how much time you minister to yourself: how much you serve others.



## **3 Prayer is a key**

Jerry Falwell was a leader of the Moral Majority USA. He was a notable speaker. When he commenced Bible College he asked his local Church if they would approve him taking a Sunday School class. He acquired the necessary material for teaching. He had only one student!

He taught for four weeks. One more student was added. The numbers did not increase. Time lapsed. As the months rolled on he became endlessly discouraged. Finally, enough was enough. He returned to the superintendent with the teaching materials and said, "See you later. I've had enough!"

The superintendent looked him straight in the eye and spat out these words. "You always looked a quitter."

"Wait a minute," Jerry said. "Show me a room for prayer."

The following two weeks he gave himself to praying for his class. He went out into the parks searching for every eleven-year-old child he could find. Within a few months the numbers swelled to fifty-six, mostly kids from non-Church backgrounds. Prayer turned the situation around.

Be humble. Seek wise and Godly counsel. As long as you struggle in the dark, Satan will continue his field day. He abhors the light. By exposing the problem to the light, the darts of the enemy will be broken. You can then continue your journey with God.

## **4 Realise that supernatural help is available**

In Scripture, the only time an angel visited a person and actually cooked him a meal was for a discouraged man. That happened for Elijah. God really cares. He's a God of immense compassion.

## **5 Praise is the final cure for overcoming discouragement**

Scripture tells us to put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Over the years numerous books have been published. Deeply moving stories about people who've overcome extreme difficulties. How putting praise into practice enabled them to move out from discouragement, depression and despair into a life that had a passion and purpose for living.

My encouragement to you is — get enthusiastic about your life. The best is still ahead.

*Margie is athetoid cerebral palsy, and was one of the founders of our ministry. She has spoken extensively and written two books as well as many articles.*

Ruth Ware writes,

## TRAINING IN GOD'S PALACE

Not sure exactly when God started our training, but my husband Bruce and I remember looking back and thinking “so that was why this happened”. Our background to working with the unloved, uncared for and the forgotten people in our society started for both of us way back in our childhood. I came from a family that always had the most unusual people come home for lunch, or to stay. Myself, I wanted the popular and pretty people home for Sunday lunch, but we always welcomed those that no one else would have.

My husband's father contracted polio when he was two years old and he was in a wheelchair for life. But did that stop him? No, he may have been restricted, but he never said no to a challenge. So we both started in totally different environments, not ever knowing what a wonderful openness we had been given to appreciate a person for who they are inside and not for what they look like. I pray that we may have installed in our children the same respect we inherited from our parents. We ran into Di and Hugh visiting our church at Bethlehem Baptist, and Di encouraged, or should I say, bullied me into writing a bit of our history.

Our first encounter with CFFD was at Walters Rd Church of Christ in Auckland when a group came and took the service. Bruce was overwhelmed by the message written by Grant Allely. Like a lot of people, we had lumped physically and intellectually disabled people together and written them off. Even though we had been in contact with lots of people with disabilities over the years, it never really hit home that we too had issues to deal with. Since then God has taught us to overlook the outside appearance and look at the heart. That was 30 years ago, and my training is still going on. Bruce became involved with CFFD in Mt Roskill in Auckland where Keith Lornie used to ring him up looking for a driver once a month, and off he would go. They also tried to get me involved, but I had too much on, and was uncomfortable and unsure of what to do or how to handle it all. I like my “t's crossed and my “i's dotted, and was scared that I wouldn't cope.

Bruce and I worked in youth camps, and one of these was at Carey Park where one of the first CFFD regional camps was held. What I remember most was the joy and happiness that oozed from the campers and their helpers as they threw themselves into having the most fun they could possibly have. The thing that stuck out most was the disco dancing on the Saturday night. I had never seen wheelchair dancing before, or such enthusiasm displayed by so many people. Water fights and practical jokes were rampant. God taught me more than I could have ever learnt by myself by throwing me into situations that were foreign to me. God stretches the tent poles just enough so we can learn at the right speed. I always cling to the verse, “I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me” in so many areas of my

life, but I didn't have any idea that God was going to use us to work with Christian people with disabilities.

We have learnt that the broken, the unloved, the ones people turn aside from are the most precious in God's sight. God doesn't want the pure and perfect, rather He wants the unwanted because He knows that all glory and all power will be reflected in their lives, and that they will love Him with the most loving hearts of all.

We left Auckland and moved to Tauranga, but your CFFD network found us again! The funny thing is we are now working in our home church with a monthly service for disabled folk. I'm in the kitchen where I find myself very comfortable, with food being one of my passions, and God has enabled me to use a passion and a talent for His glory.

What I want most to see in Christian circles is that we all will see people for what they are inside and not from the outside appearance. Some of us need to be challenged beyond our comfort zones. God knows what is best for each one of us. When trials come I just say, God knows best because I don't. I do know that He will never let us be tried more than we are able to do with His strength. Just let God do His thing in your life. In your own strength it is too hard, it takes too much time and it doesn't work.

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## **EARLY REMINDER OF THE THIRD SUNDAY IN JUNE**

Yes, Disability Awareness Sunday is coming up again.

Ask your pastor now if your church could do something different on that Sunday, even perhaps having a special service. Lots of good tips can be obtained by writing to the Trust for an excellent booklet, "Ideas for Disability Awareness Sunday" that your pastor might like to see.

The Auckland main service will be at Harbourside Church at 2.15pm on June 15th.

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## **KEN AND JULIA BROWN HAVE MOVED TO RAGLAN**

Ken and Julia are hoping to start a church in Raglan. Julia has been our Supervisor Librarian over the tape, book, braille and big print libraries, and will be sorely missed. Is there anyone with librarian experience or some expert in Christian literature who could come in to the Centre one day a week to take over from Julia? We are grateful for Linda Heron who continues to be our librarian.

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## **THE CARERS GROUP NEEDS A NEW LEADER**

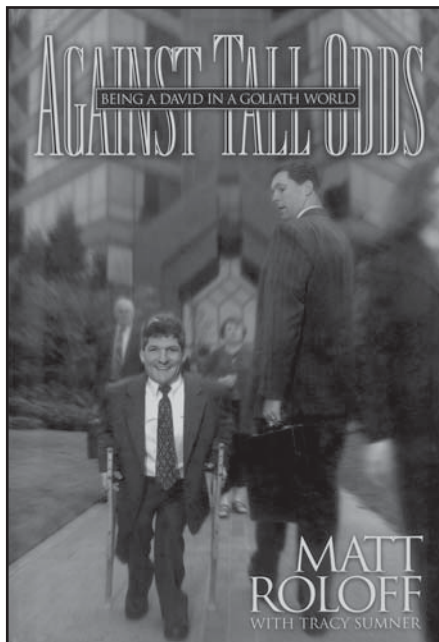
Trudy Smith, the leader for many years, is standing down. Is there anyone who can lead or help run this important ministry?

## Book Review

# AGAINST TALL ODDS

This book, written by Matt Roloff, is a most interesting account of a little person, who, like two of his brothers, had severe disabilities as well. But his attitude is so positive, he has achieved so much, he is incredibly innovative, as shown by the huge play complex he designed for his and other children, and he has a deep love of God. As you read the following short extracts from his book, they may whet your appetite to want to read more. His book is published by Multnomah Publishers. Here are a couple of extracts:

"I can't remember a time in my life when I thought of myself as an "accident" or as some kind of genetic fluke. Outside of a few short times when I was a kid, I never even wanted to be tall. I've never thought God goofed on me, or that something my mother or father did caused me to turn out the way I did.



I've always felt secure in the fact that I was made the way I was for a purpose. God knew the best way to make me the man he wanted me to be was to make me little. It was his intention for me, not an oversight. That sense of purpose helps give me an attitude of contentment and gratefulness when it comes to my physical stature and disabilities."

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"Life hasn't always been easy for me, but it's been great because I've had a positive, healthy attitude about who I am. I believe attitude goes a long way in getting you through the obstacles life is sure to put in your way. Attitude is something that comes from deep within you. It is shown in how you respond to the things that happen to you and people who come into your life. It defines who you are as a person.

But how do you go about developing the right attitude? I believe attitude is a manifestation of a person's level of comfort with God's plan in his or her life. There are three steps to that. First, there is the recognition that God has a plan for your life. Second, there is the acceptance of that plan. Third, there is the excitement and sense of adventure about the plan.



It cracks me up every time I remember God has already figured out the plan for my life. So really, I can look at the future and say, 'No worries.' I used to be afraid God wanted me to be a missionary in Africa. I wondered if I could handle it. But now I know I could if that were God's plan for me. More than that, if it were God's plan, I know it would be fun. God wants us not only to accept God's plan but to be jubilant about it.

I grew up hearing how I was put on this earth to glorify God and serve Him. My father used to tell us something that stuck with me, and we knew to expect to hear it when our family was going through a tough time. Dad would smile (even though he was hurting because of something difficult that was going on), raise his finger, and say, 'This is another opportunity to serve the Lord.'

Those words seemed to be a reminder to Dad to maintain a positive attitude when everything around him told him to complain. They seemed to help too, because my father is one of the most positive people I've known. To Dad, those words became a replacement for words another man might have said during trying times. Even in the most uncomfortable moments - for example, if he hit his thumb with a hammer - he'd grit his teeth, smile the best he could, raise his finger, and thank God for another opportunity to serve Him."

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"While I was developing in my mother's womb and my parents had no idea I would be totally handicapped, God was in control. So, too, when I was a little boy enduring dozens of surgeries and countless hours of rehabilitation. When I was in high school trying to show bigger guys I wasn't going to be bullied just because I was small. When I was working my way up in the computer business in Silicon Valley. Even when I was wallowing in my own stupidity when I was using drugs, God was in control. And when I met Amy, married her, and when she gave birth to four beautiful children, God was in control."

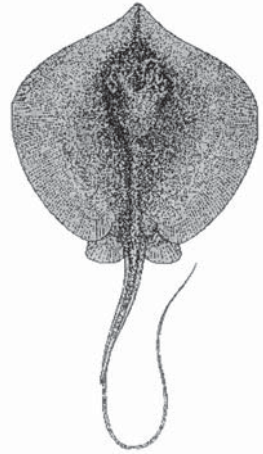
*On the right, the Roloff Tree House built with barn lumber and old telephone poles. There is also a pirate ship, a mine shaft going 70 feet under their huge barn, a Wild West town and over 300 feet of underground tunnels on their property.*



# ANIMALS UNDER THREAT

Have you ever studied the animal kingdom and watched them in action. Have you ever noticed that when an animal feels threatened, it can react in a variety of ways?

Take the stingray for example. We've all heard how Steve Irwin was killed by a stingray that felt threatened. Its way of dealing with the threat was to lash out and attack Steve. Steve actually meant the animal no harm, but it didn't know that, so it attacked.



Then there's the slater. You know the small critter that lives under the earth in your garden? When it gets dug up and feels threatened, it curls up into a ball and lies perfectly still. It's no good patting it and talking to it to tell it we mean no harm. No matter how much we coax and cajole it, it won't come out until it feels safe. It's hiding and using its tiny armour as protection from us.

My neighbour's dog barks at anyone who looks like a stranger. He makes a lot of noise and sounds dangerous, but is really quite friendly.

I've been thinking lately about how much we act in similar ways when we feel threatened by people around us. Despite their best intentions, sometimes the people we live and work with do things or say things that just get to us. We feel threatened or hurt or misunderstood (or .... fill in the blank) and we react just like those animals. Some of us have the tendency to lash out in anger or to say hurtful things to people. Some of us put up barriers (maybe of silence or the cold shoulder) so that no one will be able to do that to us again. Some of us just run away and keep right away from those people. Some of us rely on making a lot of noise so that no one will come near us. Do you relate to any (or all) of those? Maybe you can think of a different animal that describes the way you react.

However we react, God has lots to say about better ways of dealing with people. He promises to be with us always (Isa 41:10), which means we're not alone. He promises to give us the armour (Eph 6:13-18) to fight any battles we may have to face, which gives us some resources to fight with confidence. He demonstrates the mysterious value of forgiveness, grace and mercy through Jesus. Ask Jesus how you can react better when you feel threatened by people around you. A wise friend can also help you to understand how to put Jesus' words into practise.

*Karen Blamey writing in the NSW Crossroads magazine*

# TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION FORGIVEN!

"I was a thief and a liar and involved in all sorts of bad things," said 15 year old Mateus Tangoni of Vilanculos in Mozambique. Finally, the adults of his community lost patience with him and administered their own form of justice. They beat him severely and held his hands in a fire until he lost his fingers. His ugly wounds are still healing. His family has deserted him and he now lives in the home of a local Christian minister. It was here he heard the Gospel for the first time through a solar-powered 'Talking Bible.'

"Every time I listen I hear something new," says Mateus. "I've heard how to live for the first time in my life. I listen every morning. Sometimes I get impatient waiting for the sun to come up so I can use the solar panel."



The Word of God has reached his heart in such a way that he now talks of forgiving the people who burned him. "I can now love my neighbour as myself as I learn to turn my cheek to what has been done to me," says Mateus.

*Taken from The Word at Work, a publication of the New Zealand Bible Society whose supporters helped finance the talking books that have helped change Mateus' life.*

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## JESUS GAVE HIS LIFE FOR YOU

That's what the Bible tells us in that beautiful verse in John 3:16.  
So what does He want you to do?

- |   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| • | Ask for forgiveness for your sins        | Acts 3:19  |
| • | He will forgive you                      | I John 1:7 |
| • | Ask Him into your life and be born again | John 3:3   |
| • | Receive everlasting life                 | John 3:16  |
| • | Tell another Christian                   |            |
| • | Find a Bible-believing church            |            |

Hugh and Di Willis write:

## **WE MEET UP WITH PASTOR DONG**

We had read about Pastor Dong from the account the Philippines CFFD sent us telling of the impact he made at the camp they held three years ago. As a result we included his testimony in “Encourager” 106. It told how Dong as a 3 year old, born with polio and scoliosis, had been taken by his father to a park in Manila one day, along with his brothers and sisters, and his father had then walked off and abandoned all of them. They lived on the streets, and Dong got by through begging, but years later he found the Lord and started a ministry with people with disabilities.



## **START OF THE MINISTRY**

In the years from 1989 to 1991 Ptr Dong felt a burden in his heart for people with disabilities. With a disability himself he could identify with what they were going through. The burning desire to help them grew stronger and stronger each day. In 2002 he received a strong confirmation about starting a special ministry, and two years later a pastor from Indonesia prophesied over him saying, “God is bringing forth a worship team in your midst, and all of them will be used by God to reach out to many souls for His kingdom.”



In September 2005 he started the ministry with two blind girls, Evelyn and Marilyn. A month later four others joined the ministry, and again all were blind. Shortly after Raymond, joined the group. He was not blind, but Ptr Dong had met him at the PCFFD retreat and invited him to join the “Mephibosheth Team” as they are called. They were given training and guidance, spiritual feeding and preparation for ministry. Within a short space of time most of their family members had come to the Lord. With all showing signs of musical gifting Ptr Dong was able to start a worship team, and they have become involved in a number of evangelistic crusades, concerts and outreaches with Ptr Dong around the Philippines and overseas. Ptr Dong is musically inclined and has composed songs, with four albums having been released.



## A WORLD WIDE MINISTRY

From small beginnings God is leading Pastor Dong into ministry well beyond the Philippines. He has spoken to large gatherings of 12,000 and 17,000 in Singapore and Malaysia, and is now invited back most times to help Dr William Vun with his "School of Impacting Pastors" in Malaysia. The first one attracted 41 pastors in 2006, and this grew to 280 for the second held four months later. We were fortunate to meet Pastors Dong and May as they were just about to leave for Malaysia for another of these conferences for pastors. May also speaks on many occasions, and they form a strong team together.



The Senior Pastor of an Alliance Christian church described the impact of one of his meetings in this way:

"The result of the concert was unprecedented. There was never a concert held in Santiago City of any kind compared to this grandiose one. It was jam-packed with people crying and dancing while the show was going on. Many were healed from emotional struggles, and many were released from spiritual bondage. To God be the glory!"

But through it all Dong remains a very humble man. His is a simple life style, and when he records a radio programme each week, as he sits on their bed, the room serves both as their bedroom and a recording studio.



# THE MEMBERS OF THE TEAM

*We had the opportunity to talk to members of the group, and Michelle, one of the blind girls, translated Di's talk into Tagalog and did a brilliant job as an interpreter. Here are what two of them shared with us:*

## Bert

Before I became a Christian I felt my life was lost. I was not born blind, as an 11 year old I was taking cigarettes and drinking, and at 15 started taking drugs. Then, two years later I became blind through glaucoma with the result that I was so depressed, stayed at home and really felt my limitations. I withdrew from my friends, even stopped talking to them, and hid from the outside world.

One of the staff from the Blind Institute visited me and offered me the chance of massage work. She said she would come back, and she did, but the offer had changed and this time it was the chance to go to Bible school. I decided I would go, and that's where I became a Christian. After 2 ½ years there the Blind Institute recommended me to Pastor Dong who came to see me. I've been here for 2 years now and have been completely transformed. I love being in the worship team, playing the guitar and drums and singing and dancing as well.



## Maricar

Before I came here I felt my life was hopeless and I had never really grown up. I was brought up by my grand parents, and it was not until I was 10 that they introduced me to my mother for the first time! In those years I just stayed at home and did the household chores, but when I was 22 I gave my life to Jesus when a cousin, a blind pastor, took me to church. Through coming to the Sound of Heaven ministry I have learnt to overcome all the things that had been hindering me, I have been transformed, and feel I have grown up spiritually. In the worship team I sing and play the guitar, am learning the violin and have made a number of trips overseas with the team.



## SOME OF THOSE IN THE COMMUNITY

Arman (on the right) is one of the helpers. He is seen here with his mother and 13 year old multi-handicapped brother. He lives full-time in the Home, and says, "I have been here two years, and am very happy and have learned many things. Before, I was afraid of people, but now I have the courage to face others." It is a great training ground and he has learnt how to preach himself. His mother said, "I thank God he was allowed to stay here, to be moulded, connected and trained. Also I thank God for Ps Dong and May who are his second parents."



The church is very supportive of parents with disabilities, and Monica Salonga, who came with us, is shown here talking to parents. Food is simple, cooking is done on this open fire, and at times 100 or more enjoy the main meal after the Sunday service.

God is good, working through people such as Peter and Marical (seen here), who are enthusiastic partakers in and supporters of the ministry. They run a bakery business and employ people to bake their own delicious cakes back where they live. They have a prime spot for the bakery on a main road, at the back they have a thriving hardware business as well as a grocery in a stall in the market, and are generous and radiant Christians.



# THE SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE

We have never been in such a service before. That first hour was so worshipful. There was no band accompanying the singing but they had what they needed with two playing guitars and later these two were joined by Pastor Dong before he preached (shown here). It was like an “open heaven.”



What was so beautiful was the singing, gently and so harmoniously led from the front by the blind singers. It is interesting to note that they get up each morning at 4 am and for 2 hours pray and worship the Lord together. Was it any wonder then that the Lord's anointing came down on that gathering following such a preparation.



The first photo shows the pastors' youngest daughter who spontaneously started dancing out the front. Later two much older young folk, one another of their daughters, came out and danced to the Lord a beautiful duet.





Monica caught hold of a tambourine and used it to good effect. There were 50 or 60 at first in the building, and their combined singing was so beautiful, and many more came in as the service progressed, swelling the numbers to over 150.

Di had been invited to share with an extended time limit. Wasn't that rather dangerous! But actually it was just as well, as everything she said had to be translated into Tagalog. It was a great opportunity to share, to encourage, to teach and to educate on so many aspects of disability ministry.



With so many blind members of the Mephibosheth Team ministry it was a great opportunity to teach the whole church about practical aspects that are often overlooked, and to act out the blind skits we have developed, plus more general ones that we also included. The gathering listened attentively, and laughed and laughed as the wrong way and then the right way were each shown. It seemed appropriate for Di to give her full testimony, and when she finally ended she had been at the front for 2 hours!

Was this the end of the service? No way! Pastor Dong came from the back and his message lasted a further 45 minutes. By the time the service ended after concluding praise and worship we were amazed when we looked at our watches. Surely it couldn't be true. The service had started 4 hours earlier, but it hadn't seemed that way – rather it had been a beautiful time in the presence of the Lord.





The testimony of Pastor Dong's wife, May:

## IT IS A MIRACLE

I was a typically ambitious woman who was raised up in the province of Isabela in the Philippines. I desired to be somebody someday. I graduated Bachelor of Science in Business Administration majoring in Accounting and found a good job with a stable income in a famous business centre in Makati City.

I had been a rebellious child, and hated my mother so much that hatred even manifested in me when I was in college.

I was under disciplinary action for five days, but I avenged myself by influencing and coercing my co-student against the Dean. I regarded myself highly as somebody very special. Modesty aside, I won a beauty contest in our school, became famous, and professional male admirers lined up to win my heart. I had the chance to choose somebody who I could use for my selfish gain. It could have been a stepping stone to achieve my goals in life. But no.... it was not according to what God had planned for me.

Just as I was greatly enjoying my career I received the unpleasant news that my mother was afflicted with a serious illness, malignant and incurable. Further, the doctor said that she would not live long. I turned to God and asked Him for a miracle. One day my cousin invited me to a Christian fellowship. There, the word of the pastor seemed so strong, and it penetrated into my heart. He said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honour your father and your mother that it may go well with you, and that you may have an everlasting life here on earth." Ephesians 6:1-3. The word respect hit me. I humbled myself before the Lord. I repented, asked His forgiveness, went back to my home town, visited my parents, brothers and sisters, and asked for their forgiveness. What joy filled my heart when the entire household received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. Hallelujah.

I went back to my working place, but my heart was not there. Rather, a burning desire to know more about Jesus and to serve Him. I resigned my job and joyfully went back home to serve my living Lord. That was when God healed my mother miraculously! It was the turning point in my life - to value God's mighty work in the ministry that He has entrusted me with.

I attended a Christian rally and met Ptr Dong Campoy for the first time. I was so touched and blessed by his dedication in serving God despite his disability. I prayed to God to send this man to my hometown, to use him as His vessel, so that many would receive salvation. That prayer was answered, but never in my wildest dreams did I foresee that he would one day become my future life's partner.



# DISABILITY MINISTRY IN THE PHILIPPINES

*(in clockwise order)*

*Caregivers with*

- Arlyn - slow learner
- Tracey - mild autistic
- Marsel - Down Syndrome
- Vincent - cerebral palsy

*The deaf high school class*



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