



AUGUST 2008 ISSUE 120

The ENCOURAGER

EVANGELISE EQUIP EDUCATE

Magazine of the Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust



Disability Awareness service at Harbourside

RESCUED!

On that warm and cloudy January day, when my wife and I set out for Piha Beach, we had no idea that the day would prove such a memorable one for us. To save ourselves being slammed by the

surging waves at Piha's main beach, Julia and I planned to wade around near the rocks at the south end of the beach and cross the narrow channel to a safer, sheltered spot, known as The Blue Pool, where we poor swimmers could swim safely. We'd

done it before several times, and knew that it was safe to do so only at low tide.

Thinking we'd judged the level correctly, we waded into the channel. On my back I carried our loaded pack. With one hand I held my white cane, and with the other I held Julia's hand as she guided me round the rocks. In her other hand Julia held 2 pairs of walking boots in case we had to take to the rocks after all. Seeing people ahead of us on the other side my beloved thought we could cross safely.

Without warning, the bottom disappeared, leaving us floundering in the current and floating out to sea!! Sensing the danger we were in, I called for help without hesitation. The LORD, who always can see ahead for us, had arranged that one of the few people on the other side of the channel was an off-duty lifeguard from Cook's Beach. This young lady, Karen, had come to Piha for relaxation. Lying contentedly on the warm sand, she was not expecting to be called to rescue swimmers who'd got themselves into strife. Her training and experience had made her aware, at all times, of the dangers facing unsuspecting swimmers. Even before I called for help, Karen was on her way to rescue us. She soon had me safely on the shore, and went back for Julia. Dozens have drowned at Piha over the years, and how grateful we are that Karen's presence and prompt action saved us from joining their number.

Those of us who have been saved from our sins have reason to be even more grateful to those our LORD Jesus sent to rescue us from a fate far worse than drowning. We have been saved from the kingdom of darkness, to tell people the good news of the Gospel of Christ. And our LORD expects that we, in our turn, will at all times be ready to play our part. In II Timothy 4:1-2 we are commanded "*Be urgent, in season and out of season...*" Are we? Are we ready to rescue those who are floundering in their sins, as we once were? Are we ready to rescue, even when taking what we might call "time out" from our regular ministry? Colossians 1:13-14 tells us, "*He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*" So let us always be ready to play our part in rescuing others from the kingdom of darkness for His Heavenly Kingdom.



Julia and Ken Brown

Ken and Julia Brown

An ideal preparation for National Camp
Our once-a-year **SEMINAR**

HOW TO HELP PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

When Saturday 4th October
Where "The Centre" 173 Mt Smart Rd,
Onehunga, Auckland
Time 9.30am – 3pm
Cost \$10
Content



It covers different types of disabilities through testimonies, skits, practical demonstrations, a time for questions. This will introduce you to the world of disability and will show you how you can help and encourage them to reach their full potential.

Contact the CMWDT Centre 09-636-4763

THE NATIONAL CAMP

24th – 27th October 2008, Totara Springs, Matamata
"REACHING THE GOAL TOGETHER"

*Do you want a challenge?
Do you want to be blessed?
Come to Camp!!
A great program and you'll
meet great people.
Get your forms in soon!*



Our speaker Jack Oppenhuizen

COSTS:

Adults \$135, but \$125 (not refundable) if paid in full before 1st Sept
13-15yrs \$100 **8-12yrs** \$80 **3-7yrs** \$60 **2yrs and under** free

Contact: Allan Hamilton
499a Browns Bay Rd, Murrays Bay, Auckland
phone 09-479-1794

Or contact: your local Branch or Ministry
Or download from our website: www.cmwdt.org.nz

Pastor David Burge, a CMWDT Trustee, brought the main message



Olivia Shivas playing the violin along with May Clulee

DISABILITY AWARENESS SERVICE



Heather Vincent told about her family as her son David's photo was projected on the big screen



Wheelchairs to the fore in the front row



Ruth Spencer signs along with the men's choir

AT AUCKLAND'S HARBOURSIDE CHURCH



*Two who sang with voices both strong and beautiful:
Brian Vincent (centre right) and Anita Gillbanks (above)*



Di Willis interviews Michael Bridgeman

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY

AROUND THE COUNTRY

In Matamata Margaret Hansen brought this word to her church:

Today I want to pay tribute to all the beloved carers in the world. Truly, if it were not for my beloved carer, I would not be here in Church today at all, let alone leading worship. No, I would still be lying in bed! Pete has been caring for me now for 44 years, knowing at the beginning of our marriage that I had juvenile arthritis which, short of a miracle, would progressively worsen over the years.

Together we raised two children, one of whom had a disability also, as we discovered when he was four. John has Asperger's Syndrome, a type of Autism. Through Pete's love I have seen modelled Jesus teaching of "*Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave His life for it.*" "*Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend*". He has encouraged me in my walk with Jesus and supported me all the way, so I have been able to serve the Lord in many ways in Aglow and Church, and grow in my giftings. Through my time of caring for John and teaching him to read, count, talk and eventually communicate with us, I learned a little about how unconditional God's love is for us, constantly loving when He gets no acknowledgement from us whatsoever. Together we have learned to be patient, faithful, humble, kind and grateful, and that we needed a sense of humour! Multiply our little family by thousands who care for loved ones from babies through to elderly parents at home, or in rest homes, hospitals and community living centres. An army of unsung heroes and heroines. But our Father sees. He knows everything, and He is the ultimate Carer and rewarder. So blessings to all carers today. You are loved indeed!

In Auckland Charles Hewlett tells of attending the service at Harbourside:

I glanced down my row to see my wife deeply worshipping God, tears streaming down her cheeks. I knew why. It was because we were worshipping together for the first time as a family for years. My 14-year-old severely intellectually disabled son was with us, yelling out in excitement at the top of his voice, but it didn't matter. And I knew why it didn't matter. Because we were in a place of acceptance, a place of love, a place where disability and difference was embraced, not treated with embarrassment. We didn't feel like we were the odd ones out – we all (including our son) were a legitimate part of God's body, along with dozens of other disabled people. Our son had a place, even in his limited way, and wasn't just tolerated but welcomed. He wasn't stared at, or avoided, or pitied; he was talked to, sat with, and respected, as a 14-year-old should be.

Charles Hewlett, a lecturer at Carey Bible College, writes about
THE UNCONDITIONAL LOVE OF A FATHER

Over the past fifteen years my life as a father has been dominated by disability, sickness, hospitals, worry, death and grief. In 1992 my 5 month old daughter was diagnosed with a massive, inoperable brain tumour and only given 3 months to live. Although she survived till the age of 13 she lived with extreme physical and intellectual disabilities, and times of significant pain. In 1994 my son was born with severe intellectual disabilities. Today he is 14 with the cognitive ability of a 6 month baby. He is dependant upon us for all his needs.



I would like to share with you two events, one that occurred to James, and then one that occurred to Janelle. These events have given me a tremendous insight into God's unconditional love for me as one of his children.

James

Because of our son's special needs we have to know what he is doing all the time. You can't really let him out of your sight, he'll just takes off, and he particularly loves open doors. One afternoon, I thought Joanne (my wife) was watching James, and Joanne thought I was watching him, and the front door was open. It didn't take long to notice he was gone! We live in a short dead end street. One end has a walkway with a stream, the other end has a very busy road. I quickly ran to the road end to make sure he hadn't wandered down there. While I waited there Joanne, with the rest of the people in the street, hunted by the creek and in their sections. There was no sign of him. Just as we were about to call the police I saw a lady carrying James in her arms. To cut a long story short, he had run out onto the busy road, a truck managed to stop, and the driver took him into a nearby house.

Janelle

I also remember a few years ago when Janelle went completely off her food and drink. When this happens she quickly becomes dehydrated. She ended up in hospital, very weak and extremely thin. One day Joanne and I got called into the doctor's room to discuss Janelle's condition and they suggested to us that if we didn't intervene, either nasogastrically or in some way, Janelle would surely die. To our surprise they suggested that starving her to death was a sensible option. They saw Janelle, lying there in the

bed, unable to walk, unable to talk, mentally and physically disabled, not wanting to eat and fading away. They saw her quality of life as not good and were giving all of us a way out - no more struggling for either Janelle or ourselves. I can remember Joanne and I almost laughing at each other as this suggestion was made to us. We felt Janelle still had life in her and we wanted her kept alive.



Charles and James



Janelle and Charles

My children can do nothing for themselves. They can't talk, they're unable to dress, they both wear nappies, neither of them come to us when we call them, they can't hold a spoon to feed themselves - in fact they give very little. Yet here I am standing at the edge of a busy road holding my son as tight as I can, thankful he is alive. Here I am at my daughter's hospital bed telling the doctors we want her kept alive. Why? Why do I love my children? I love Janelle and James because they are my children! They don't have to do anything to make me love them. I love them unconditionally.

God's love

My mind goes to those well known Bible verses in 1 John 4, *"This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins...we love because He first loved us."* The Bible tells us that God is love. Love is rooted firmly in His personal character - it is in His nature to love. Therefore, God's love for us isn't conditional upon how He feels on a certain day. It isn't affected by such things as the weather or His health. It isn't conditioned by what we do for Him. It is not an occasional thing that He does every once in a while. Again, it is in His nature to love. He never stops loving us, no matter what we do. Even though we may fail Him and suffer the consequences of our disobedience, God still loves us. God is a God of unconditional love.

I remember one evening when I was particularly angry with God and wondered where He was. Janelle was on the floor covered in blood from a gash to her head. As we had been taking her to bed she had fallen out of her hoist and hit her head on the frame and required stitches to her head. I thought God would be the closest to us in times of trouble, yet it seemed the complete opposite. *“God You have given us a daughter with cancer, You have given us a severely handicapped son. God, my Dad has just been diagnosed with cancer. Joanne’s Mum is in a Hospice suffering with cancer!”* Everyone we knew was praying for us, people we didn’t know were praying for us, yet things were going from worse to worse. I like the way CS Lewis put it after his wife died, that God *“seemed to have His eyes shut, His ears stopped with wax.”* God, where are You? Why are You so silent? Why aren’t You helping?

I believe it is in these times we can draw on the fact of our heavenly Father’s steadfast love. When we feel so alone in trying to bring up the rebellious teenager, we can be sure that God will be faithful to His promise that He will *“never leave us or forsake us.”* When we are standing by our child’s hospital bed, we can be sure God will be faithful to His promise that *“in all things God works together for the good of those who love Him.”* When we feel God has deserted us we can be sure He will be faithful to His promise that *“nothing in creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus.”*

And despite the situation of our children, God loves them unconditionally also.

ALAN PACE IS OUR NEW TRUSTEE

We are pleased to welcome Alan Pace onto the Trust Board. Here Alan tells about himself:

“I studied science at university. During this time I joined a Christian group and became personally involved in evangelism and discipleship. My Christian life began to blossom, and eternal priorities so gripped my heart that I spent five years full time with this group.

Just as I was finishing my studies a friend introduced me to CFFD. That year, I popped into the Drop-In Centre each week and attended my first National Camp.

As people shared their stories I saw how their trials had refined life to its core elements and faith in Christ had come shining through.

I met my wife Kathie through CFFD and we got married in 1997. We have two children, Elizabeth and Caleb.

I have spent the last ten years in the corporate world gaining experience in a mixture of analytical roles and businesses.”

“LIVING” WITH EPILEPSY

One of my earliest memories as a child is having an epileptic seizure while blowing up a balloon on our lounge room floor. This was some time after I had fallen off my tricycle at the ripe old age of about 2 ½ while racing my neighbour down the hill we lived on, another incident I remember well. I had always believed the two were connected but was informed many years later that my epilepsy was not post-traumatic but idiopathic grand mal.



Jenny Pearson

I was a very active child as you have probably already guessed, and for people to say you can't do this or that or the other because you have epilepsy led me to be a very strong willed and independent child and adult. There was no way I was going to let something stand in the way of me doing what I wanted.

All the tests had been done and I had been on medications for a few years between about 4Y.O. and 7Y.O, but it didn't seem to be controlling my seizures, so my parents opted to cease the medication. Apart from that first one my seizures always came as I was awakening in the morning, so I wasn't aware of them, but always knew when I'd had one as I had wet the bed and had the most dreadful headache. I would be allowed to stay home for the day.

I was very bright at school and this didn't impact on my school performance even when I "faked" headaches to get a day off because I used to get so bored at school. My parents always saw me as sickly and allowed these frequent days off. I would help them in their business after a suitable time of resting to ensure the headache had gone first! Then just on 12Y.O. I had a seizure triggered by flashing lights (travelling through a forested section of highway). That was the last seizure I had despite puberty and the usual sleep deprivation, strobe lights and hyperventilation that goes with growing up and going to university.

I did a double degree in Medicine and Surgery and became a doctor. I worked long hard hours and had two children and none of this triggered any more seizures. I didn't really think about my epilepsy, just went about living life, a non-Christian life.

At the age of 38 I had a sudden impulse to attend church. For the first 3 or 4 months I would go along haphazardly when I felt like it and when there was "nothing better to do". I was invited to an Alpha dinner which I enjoyed - got to meet a few more people. Then I signed up for the course and **the weekend I did that I had my first seizure in 26 years.** It was totally unlike any I had as a child, apart from the headache. I didn't

have an aura, there were no aggravating factors, and I wasn't incontinent. My doctor did all the tests again and sent me to the neurologist for an opinion just in case there was something sinister such as a tumour causing it rather than epilepsy, but the end result was he felt it was just my childhood epilepsy. He said we could wait and see, that we didn't have to start medication straight away, so that's what I did.

Then I had another (the same day I decided to get baptised) and another (the same day I set the date of my baptism), so I was commenced on medication that had the most horrific side effects. I don't remember any of them when I took the same drug as a child, but I felt I couldn't persist even on the lowest of low doses they had placed me on, so I ceased them.

I prayed to God for healing, but told Him that if it would be helpful for others then I would accept this "thorn in the side". Unfortunately the seizures persisted, and oddly (?) enough **they were always on a Sunday** apart from one that was early in the morning while I was waiting to catch an early morning flight to Australia. I commenced another drug and had many people praying for me, and even had hands laid on, and the seizures seemed to cease. However I started to have what I would call aura which I had never had before - flashing coloured lights in the left hand portion of my vision. **These also usually came on a Sunday**, but because I recognised them for what they were (spiritual attack) I was able to pray through them and they would go away. That is until a car load of us were going to a children's ministry conference one Saturday morning and I was driving. One of these aura began, so I pulled to the side of the road and parked and asked everyone to pray for me. They weren't quite sure what was happening, so they were praying in their heads. Meanwhile I was praying, but Satan was saying, "See they don't care, they're not going to help you". My insecurity got the better of me and I was unable to continue praying the Lord's protection over me, and I slipped into a seizure. It was only brief, and once over they walked me around the car and someone else did the driving.

After that I was advised that I would not be able to drive for 12 months. My medication was increased gradually until the seizures were controlled, God's way of healing me. I initially thought I would have to give up my work (rurally) and get work elsewhere (in town). However, within two days God had shown me what His plan was for me - not to run, but to learn to humble oneself, wait on others, slow down and spend time with others (including Him).

I only had one more seizure after that original one in the car, and that was after listening to Ian McCormack's story of how the evil spirits returned to claim him back after he had died (from jellyfish stings) and come back to life. **This also was on a Sunday night**. This extended the period of time I was off driving, and in total it was

about 20 months, but in that time I was totally blown away and blessed by the offers of assistance. About six months before I would be able to drive again I started my weekly fasts again (which I had ceased just in case). After the first one I had an aura and I had to consider whether to trust in the Lord and continue or to take the precaution and stop again. I trusted the Lord, and He has protected me ever since. I have been able to share these things with my neurologist who tells me he is a Christian, but I think he will be reading his Bible and thinking about things in a new light now! Praise be to God and all honour and glory and power to Him who guides and directs our paths! Amen.

Di Willis writes,

THE LORD WILL MAKE A WAY

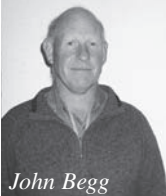
We've known about Fred Creba for some time – a former world paralympic medal holder, and were thrilled when he started sending an automatic payment for the work of the Trust. One time I rang to thank him for this and I said, "Fred. You need to come to National Camp."

"I'd love to," he said, "but I couldn't possibly afford it."

"Fred", I said, "if the Lord wants a person to come, then money has never ever been a hindrance to that happening. Why don't you see if your church will sponsor you?"

A week later a very excited Fred rang back. His pastor had just got back to him, not just with the answer yes, but in his hand he had a round trip air ticket to Hamilton, fully paid!

John Begg the pastor says, "The good thing about our church is it is small enough to be a family. Fred is part of that family. It was a privilege to send him to camp, so we bought him the tickets. We meet in different people's homes as we love one another on our journey together and we are also supporting a young man with Fragile X Syndrome.



If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to:
CMWDT P.O.Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland

I wish to give \$ *for the magazine*
 \$ *for general running costs*

Name.....

Address.....

THE STORY OF THE USELESS WHEELCHAIR

A self-propelling wheelchair arrived at the distribution centre at Tema, in Ghana, without tyres for its front castors. As such it was no use to anyone; however it was still loaded on to the lorry and taken to a distribution centre with the other chairs. After the chair had sat useless for a few days, the team arrived at a centre where many wheelchairs were brought for repairs.



Technicians working on a wheelchair in Ghana

One technician was trying to repair a chair which needed a new seat canvas and looked around for something suitable to use. He saw the “useless” chair; the canvas just happened to be the right size, so he removed it and fixed it to the chair he was repairing. The other technician was looking for armrests; strangely those on the formerly useless chair were just right and were quickly put to use.

The chair looked even worse now. The next day a backrest was needed; surprise, surprise, the backrest on our chair was removed and fitted to the needy chair. At the end of the day a man was seen in need of a self-propelling chair; alas there were none left. However, there was a modular chair there which was the right size for him but had small wheels. Would you believe it; the large wheels on the remains of the chair were the right size and, with a lot of effort, were fitted to the modular chair.

This so-called useless chair had now helped the team to issue complete chairs to four people; but its usefulness was not yet ended. A child’s chair had no front castors at all, so the whole fitting was removed from the chair, (remember this had been the problem in the first place). The castors without tyres were removed from the fitting; new, complete castors were fitted and the whole used to complete the child’s chair. All that now remained were strips of metal fixed together with nuts and bolts. The nuts and bolts were removed to be used as needed and finally, the remaining metal was sold as scrap!

If such use can be made of a chair which apparently was no use at all, what role is there for those of us who feel for whatever reason that we have no role to play in society?

Taken from “Vital Link”, the newsletter of “Through the Roof” in the U.K.

Liz Harkness, who attends the Torch group meetings, writes

NOT JUST BLIND FAITH – A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Jesus said,

“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet who have believed”. (John 20:29)”

I have been vision impaired since birth. For most of my life I have been able to read with the help of low vision aids, so had access to most forms of the printed word. I was born again in 2004 and, since receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour, my life has been totally transformed. This is not a testimony of how I came to believe that Jesus is, indeed, the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is rather a testimony of the outworking of what I consider to have been the most important choice I have ever made. It is my desire that you, who hear and read this, will be encouraged to walk more closely with the Lord if you already know Him, and if you do not already know Him, to choose to know Him.



I work in a contact centre. If you do not know what a contact centre is, to put it simply, it is a large office full of people on phones, usually using computers as well. There are two types of contact centre operators – those who ring you up to sell you things and those who provide information, as a service. The contact centre I work in is part of the New Zealand Department of Labour, and our job is to provide information to the general public on employment rights and obligations, including health and safety, under New Zealand employment legislation.

At the time I came to know the Lord Jesus I was working as an information Officer on the phones, and also responding to email enquiries in the contact centre. I had been doing this job for two years. About 16 months ago, through a series of very bizarre circumstances, I became an Acting Team Leader in the same contact centre, covering for a Team Leader who had been seconded to a project. I was given access to more computer systems and management systems, and a whole new world of staff management opened up before me.

Through a further series of even more bizarre circumstances, I was appointed to the permanent position of Team Leader in June 2007, and that is where I am now.,

I have a team of 9 staff assigned to me for reporting and coaching purposes, but, on a daily basis I am required to supervise a floor of 30 staff, plus some additional

remote staff in regional offices throughout New Zealand. Supervision of staff in a contact centre is primarily by means of a colour visual computer display which is a real time indication of activity on the phones. From the different colours on the display one can see who is on a call, who is waiting for a call, who is doing some clerical work as the result of a call – and even who should be logged on but is not! However, to really do the job properly, one does need to be able to locate people within the office...

By now, you may be asking, “So what?”

Here’s the answer. About two years ago, my remaining sight started to deteriorate rather rapidly. Today I cannot access the printed word any longer, nor can I read handwriting. Today, all my communication is via the computer, with the aid of speech/magnifier software. Speech software works by converting text into spoken word. By its very nature, speech software cannot interpret visual displays, especially when looking at different colours. So, this aspect of my work is wholly visual, as is physically locating staff in the office.

Sounds impossible? Not when the Lord is involved. He is able and He has given me all the resources He knows I need to carry out this aspect of my job.

God has been with me every step of the way. At every obstacle He has cleared a way forward. Over the last 16 months I have learned to totally depend on Jesus for all my needs. He told the apostle Paul, and I believe this is true for me also, “My grace is sufficient for you”. Indeed, His grace is all-sufficient. He is all sufficient. He completed His work on the cross at Calvary that we might live and have life abundantly. I can honestly say that, since coming to know Jesus, these have been undoubtedly the best years of my life.

Be encouraged brothers and sisters. We may have a disability and say, “Woe is me, for I am not able”. But, let us not forget that God is able. Put your trust completely in the Lord Jesus Christ. Build your life and your faith on the Rock that is Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. I guarantee it will not be easy – but, oh, what a blessing to walk by faith in Him and to claim the victory He has already won for us.

*Life’s problems are no laughing matter,
yet laughter puts sanity back into our living.*

REMEMBER

The next time you feel
God cannot use you, remember:

Noah was a drunk
Abraham was influenced by his wife
Jacob was a cheat
Joseph was a dreamer
Moses was a stutterer
Gideon was full of fear
Samson was a womanizer
Rahab was a prostitute
Jeremiah was a child
David was an adulterer and a murderer
Elijah was suicidal
Jonah ran from God
Naomi was a widow in grief
Job was wealthy
Peter denied Christ
Disciples slept while Jesus prayed
Martha was over-anxious
Mary Magdalene was demonized
The Samaritan woman lived with 5 men
Zacheus was very small
Leah was unattractive
Lazarus was 'DEAD'

No more excuses!

RONALDO'S MOURNING IS TURNED INTO JOY

At 49 years old, Ronaldo has tuberculosis that traveled to his brain, instantly turning him into a non-verbal quadriplegic. He has spent the last six months of his life in bed. As Wheels for the World trainer and expert mechanic Dana Croxton approached Ronaldo at the Wheels for the World distribution in Lima, Peru, he realized Ronaldo was broken as deeply on the inside as he was on the outside. "He was literally sobbing. Here, the vibrant head of his family has suddenly become totally and completely dependent, unable to even communicate with his wife. In Peru, such a man is considered totally useless."



As Dana began to speak with Ronaldo man-to-man, the communication between them was clear and Ronaldo instantly stopped crying. "Don't waste your time, he cannot understand you," said Ronaldo's sister, voicing a misconception every bit as devastating as the disability itself; a darkness born in ignorance that can be broken with the light of truth. "Ronaldo is a man worthy of dignity and respect," replied Dana. "His disease has not robbed him of his ability to think and reason. We are equal brothers."

That day Ronaldo received a wheelchair that will enable him to once again sit at the table as the man of his house, to look his wife in the eye, to be afforded the dignity that the Creator intends for each precious human being. But his family received something critically important as well: the understanding that Ronaldo is still valuable in the sight of God, still worthy of honour and respect, still fully human.

"This is a profound ignorance seen all over the world, causing parents to assume their child with cerebral palsy cannot walk or talk, so there is no sense in even trying," says Dana. "Every human being is made in the image of God and has the capacity to respond if someone will simply take the time. The Church of Jesus Christ has no option but to address this – to whom much is given, much is required."

Taken from "Joni and Friends" newsletter Feb 2008

Loren Nolan, seriously hurt in a car accident 17 years ago, concludes here his account of the struggles in his life as he learnt about

WALKING WITH GOD THROUGH THE UNKNOWN AND UNCOMFORTABLE

I met Anita (now my dear wife), and it didn't take long to discover that this woman was a rare gem. Her beauty, grace and practical ability had me hooked. My careful analysis said that this was definitely looking like the one. Unfortunately it took some time and all the boldness and courage I could muster to express my feelings to her and to ask if she would see more of me.



Anita

Guess what she said. No! I was levelled again. I complained to God. What are You doing? The next few months were unsettling to say the least. I was more attracted to her each day but also painfully aware of the possibility of rejection. However I respected her position, and my trust in God allowed me to continue the friendship.

I learned then to passionately talk with God from my heart. I had a huge amount of anxiety, and I chose to 'cast it on Him'. He had proven faithful so far, so I was willing to try it again. It was time for me to go on an adventure, and take some risks that could hurt! I got pretty loud and emotional at times in those prayers, but God understands anxiety and loves it when we pour out our heart to Him even if we are upset. He can handle it.

I finished my studies, and went to America for 3 months for my sister's wedding and to visit family. I patiently continued my friendship with Anita, our regular letters bringing us closer and closer. Finally on 4th. January 1997 we were married. Things worked out well and I have 11 years of marriage and two wonderful children to show for it. There have been times when I questioned God for putting us together (I'm sure that happens to all couples at some stage). We couldn't have made it without Him, but with God in the relationship we have done well.

What always impresses me about God's care and help is how freely He gives it. There are times I have complained, and have definitely had to learn more patience, but if I look back I have to say that things have worked out well in my life, and He has provided everything I have needed, plus many things that I just wanted.

I sometimes wonder if the more of God's faithful care I experience, the more trust He expects from me. If so, His grace is always one step ahead – looking past my impatience, pride, and ignorance and blessing me anyway. My efforts at trust can often be pretty weak, and mixed with questions and concerns – but He doesn't expect

any more than I have to offer.

Work is important to me. I believe that I was made to work, to enjoy work often and find it stimulating and rewarding. To do that I need to be in the right place, and God must be involved in finding that place. Finding work that is suitable for my disability has been a challenge at times – particularly with my level of training and experience. While looking for work I've knocked on many doors that did not open, but each time, out of the blue, an opportunity has come my way. I have to give God the credit, because each time it was just what I needed at the time and it was none of my idea. I did my bit looking and trying – and I trusted God to help with the rest. Because of those experiences, I am now confident that He is interested in what I do for work, and is active in helping me get into the right place of work when I work with Him and trust in Him.

I have had 4 stable full time jobs in 13 years. In each job I have worked hard, and been rewarded, with the exception of the last one. In my first 3 jobs, God was always faithful in moving me on at the right time by things outside of my control. When circumstances at my last job became unsuitable for me, I waited and waited for things to change – but they did not seem to. I began to experience the chaos of uncertainty once again. Months went by, my attitude became negative, and work troubles were consuming my personal and family times. Why did God bring me here?

I then remembered a time many years before when I was somewhat comfortable and bored at work. I needed to feel that my life was adding up to something worthwhile. Heading home in the car after a frustrating day I prayed “Lord, I want more out of my life, I want to mature and grow in Your ways, and I'm willing to take the hard road if that is the way to get there.”

I knew that God was answering this prayer in my current situation. Though the road was hard, I was getting business experience that would open my potential and outlook for the future. Thoughts like these were diamonds in the desert for me. They helped me trust Him, and I decided to stay on. I did everything I could to resolve things. I worked harder, and sometimes longer, giving more of myself than in any position before that. I focussed my mind on the many positive things happening, forgetting the negative. I prayed more. I waited patiently for a change to come.

Out of the blue I got a job offer from a friend. In the same week, a new General Manager was appointed at my workplace. After much careful thought and prayer, I decided that once again God wanted me to stay. 6 months later I was in a new but equally unsuitable position, and I was looking again for a door. What was God doing?

For months I was so exhausted that when I got home I could barely read my Bible or pray, except to complain. I began to leave the workplace at lunchtime to be alone. I would turn on Radio Rhema while having my lunch. Please don't think God abandoned me – in fact He provided a regular prayer partner for me at work and support from good friends and family. But I was in uncharted waters and needed to hear from God. I decided that perhaps He would speak to me through the Christian

radio. He did that so miraculously through songs and messages that I began anticipating the next opportunity to tune in. There were two significant messages for me in that time.

The first was the need for personal healing. The message I received was to love those who hurt me. I had been neglected and mistreated in the past, but I could not expect God's mercy and forgiveness if I did not extend it to others. I did my best and my attitude improved, although working conditions continued to worsen. I felt I needed to begin to fast.

About a week into that month I received what I believe was the second key message: there were fears that were holding me back. I am the bread winner of our family, I have two young children and support our home mum. Still, I needed to trust God with my family and my future and accept the freedom that comes with that.

I had failed to trust God through the fear of being a bad testimony and the fear of missing His will. Once I had given it all to God, the answer became clear. I sought the wise counsel of friends and family, then decided to resign from my job.

I am now unemployed, having taken on full-time study, a move I could not have considered while I was employed full time. I am at peace about that decision, and for the future am confident once again that it will work out. It looks like our backup plan to pay the bills will not be necessary, as things are already on track to work out much better for us. I am excited to see what will unfold.

In James 1:5-6 we read *"If you want to know what God wants you to do – ask Him, and He will gladly tell you. He will not resent your asking. But when you do ask Him, be sure that you really expect Him to answer, for a doubtful mind is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind."* It is important that we trust Him to answer. God won't give us something that is not going to help us. In James 4:3 we read *"And even when you do ask, you don't get it because your whole motive is wrong – you want only what will give you pleasure."* James goes on to talk about the wrong things that the people he is writing to are after. It is important that our heart is in the right place. I also ask for help with my motives, or my unbelief. God doesn't mind that either, and is faithful in helping me in those areas. It all comes back to His grace.

And finally, I find how often the very thing I really wanted was not exactly what I had in mind at all. God knows more about us than we do, including what our wants and needs are. That is why it can be so rewarding to trust Him completely with all our hopes and fears.

Remember - **God Cares**. He cares about our bodies when they are broken – He is the greatest physician. He cares about our heart and its feelings. He designed us and knows everything we need. He cares about what we do every day. He made you with your gifts and abilities and has a plan for you that is better than you can imagine.

Is there something holding you back, something that is causing you anxiety or fear, that you have not fully trusted to God? If something comes to mind, maybe something that you could relate to in my story, I encourage you to offer it to God.



Loren on his ride-on mower



The Nolan family

HELP! - WE NEED HELPERS

The Centre has an urgent need of helpers who can come in during term time on one or more of the days, on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.

For those who are retired this would give you an absorbing and so worthwhile interest in helping others. I speak from experience, in the 14 years since I retired. Besides providing care in the Drop-In Centre, we need help in the kitchen, library and with driving the van occasionally.

But it's not just older folk that we need. 19 year old Gavin de Wit says, *"At first I was quite nervous about going to the centre, but after spending some time there I realized it was a place of great fun, and I looked forward to going back each day."*

If you can help, please ring Joy Pollock at the Centre, 636-4763.

Hugh Willis

UNBELIEVABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

If you were to drop in on a major triathlon in the USA there's quite a chance you might see one of the runners pushing a wheelchair in which is seated another man who can't walk, talk or stand unsupported.



Now this sight may not seem too surprising, until one realizes that a triathlon requires a cycling and a swimming section. Even though these two people are just two amongst 300 million in the United States, almost anyone would be able to give you their names – Dick and Rick Hoyt. Dick has adapted a bike to carry his son Rick in the front, and in the water as he swims he tows him in a small but firmly stabilized boat. Together they've competed in over 200 triathlons, but that's not all, for the list of races they've entered totals just on 1000, and this includes 81 half marathons and 65 full marathons, with a marathon involving running 21.2 miles. However, even these feats are dwarfed by the six Ironmans they've completed, for in them the marathon is just part of the whole, made up by a further 112 miles of bicycling and 2.4 miles of swimming!

At birth, 44 years ago, the umbilical cord coiled round Rick's neck, cutting off the oxygen to his brain. He was completely unable to control his limbs, and Dick and his wife, Judy, were told there would be no hope for their son's development, that he would be a vegetable for the rest of his life.

The Hoyts wouldn't accept this, noticing the way Rick's eyes followed them around the room. When Rick was 11 they took him to the engineering department at Tufts University and asked if there was anything to help the boy communicate. Their initial response was completely negative, but when Rick asked them to tell a joke, Rick just cracked up. That altered their initial assessment, and they built a \$5,000 computer that allowed Rick to write out his thoughts using the slight head movements he could make. At last Rick was able to communicate. His parents had already spent many hours teaching him the alphabet and he immediately started typing out a number of words.

After a high school classmate was paralyzed in an accident and the school organized a charity run for him, Rick pecked out, "Dad, I want to do that."

Now Rick had never run more than a mile in his life, but he was willing to try. "Then it was me who was handicapped," Dick says. "I was sore for two weeks."

That day changed Rick's life, especially the words Dick typed, "Dad, when we were

running, it felt like I wasn't disabled anymore!" Dick became obsessed with giving Rick that feeling as often as he could, so much so that by 1979 he and Rick were ready to try the Boston Marathon. The officials weren't interested, stating they neither came in the category of a single runner, nor of a wheelchair competitor.

For a few years they just joined the massive field and ran anyway, but later were able to get in the race officially, and by 1984 they had run a marathon within the qualifying time. When someone suggested a triathlon, Dick was very interested, despite the fact he hadn't ridden a bike since he was six, and the triathlon soon became their number one race.

Now they've completed 212 triathlons, including four gruelling 15-hour Ironmans in Hawaii. Last year, aged 65 and 43, Dick and Rick finished their 24th Boston Marathon, in 5,083rd place out of more than 20,000 starters. Their best time ever is two hours, 40 minutes in 1992--only 35 minutes off the world record by an able-bodied athlete! No question about it," Rick types. "My dad is the Father of the Century."

And Dick got something else out of all this too. Two years ago he had a mild heart attack during a race. Doctors found that one of his arteries was 95% clogged. "If you hadn't been in such great shape," one doctor told him, "you probably would've died 15 years ago."

So, in a way, Dick and Rick saved each other's life.

And what is the thing that Rick would most like in the world? Rick types, "That my dad would sit in the chair and I would push him once."

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW JESUS?

Bob Weiland who walked across the United States on his hands, described how he led many people to receive Jesus on his "walk" across that vast continent.

The steps he gave are these:

1. Acknowledge you are a sinner.
2. Repent of your sin.
3. Confess your sins to God.
4. Forsake your own ways and determine to follow God's ways.
5. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God.
6. Receive His great salvation that He won for you by dying on the cross.
7. Thank Him that He died for you, and ask Him to take over your life.

If you'd like to know more, write to us at our Centre, PO Box 13332 Onehunga

BIBLICAL HUMOUR

Q What kind of man was Boaz before he married Ruth?

A Ruthless

Q Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A Noah, He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q What kind of motor vehicles are in the Bible?

A Jehovah drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden in a Fury.

David's Triumph was heard throughout the land.

Also, probably a Honda, because the apostles were all in one Accord.

Q. Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?

A Samson, He brought the house down.

Q What excuse did Adam give to his children as to why he no longer lived in Eden?

A Your mother ate us out of house and home.

Q Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?

A Moses. He broke all ten commandments at once.

Q Which area of Palestine was especially wealthy?

A The area around Jordan. The banks were always overflowing.

Q Which Bible character had no parents?

A Joshua, son of Nun.

Q Who is the greatest babysitter mentioned in the Bible?

A David. He rocked Goliath to a very deep sleep.

Q What do they call pastors in Germany?

A German Shepherds.

PS Did you know it's a sin for a woman to make coffee?

Yup, it's in the Bible. It says, 'He-brews'

Muriel Larsen writes about

AN AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITY

I suffer from the chronic fatigue of post polio syndrome but my life is interspersed with an awareness of opportunity. A day committed to the Lord is a transformed day. Our strength is sufficient through the planned and the unexpected -- even though now as I write this I'm tired. This is what happened to me today.



The day started well with my open Bible. In this reading Peter who denied his Lord is now a Spirit-filled courageous proclaimer of salvation.

Pat, my personal carer, and Geeta, who cleans for 2 hours, arrived at 8.30 a.m, and their work-sounds became the background to a deep conversation of pastoral issues with a visitor, a Chinese pastor, who greeted me with a hug and kiss plus a little gift honoring me as 'mother'. After prayer she left with an extra hug from me. I realised how lonely it must be for her just as it was often for me in India.

As the pastor left, a dear friend from church arrived to just help me, but this plan was overtaken by the results of my helping someone else. Together we sorted through some clothing. Yesterday I had said goodbye to a young guy traveling overseas to teach English. His family had come to New Zealand some years ago to escape the horrors of war. His father has since died and his mother, another friend of mine, has returned to their native land. Now he, one with a hidden disability, has had to pack up the whole house. He simply couldn't have done so without much help and advice from his friends (including many phone calls from me to encourage him along!). Who enjoys such a task while facing an unknown future? – "I'm scared and worried!" he admitted. Giving a hug, kiss and reassuring word, I had come away with 4-plus black bags of redundant clothing.

Four hours later the job was done. No wonder he found it so hard to leave them, for some of the clothes are in excellent condition. A few we culled but most will go to a city mission.

After lunch a nurse came to dress my burns. I had lifted a pot from the microwave to the arm of my chair but somehow the scalding water poured over my thighs. Aloe Vera gel usually worked but not this time, and we had to call the ambulance. A jab and morphine dulled the pain finally.

Then off to visit Indian friends to celebrate the birthday of their two-year-old. No relatives there to praise and enjoy this little boy, but his dad, lame from polio since infancy and wearing a full caliper, is so proud of his active, alert child. Because of disability and little opportunity for good schooling, this dad had got himself through university degree studies in English by listening to tapes over and over! Another baby will soon be in the home. They pray and declare "by the grace of the Lord we are managing".

As I come to the end of this day the thought comes to me: maybe our disabilities not only allow us to recognize others with hidden problems but give us entry to their hearts. "Lord, through days clouded with fatigue of various ills, please so transform me that my day, full or quiet, will glorify You."

A CALL TO PERSEVERE

Part of an address at the Philippines CFFD Retreat Camp given by the Camp Speaker, Pastor Tito Songco.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.”

Paul in his letter to the Hebrews and to us calls us to persevere in our present situation. Our disabilities are here with us because God wants us to see and feel His love. We can consider our infirmities as a privilege. 2Cor. 12:9 says *“But He said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*

I was stricken with polio when I was just eleven months old and both of my legs were paralyzed. During summer, boys of my age ran around playing with their kites. I never had the opportunity to do that because I can’t run! When I went to school during my elementary days, I crawled from classroom to classroom. I did not know that God was already on my side, but looking back I later realised He had given me a mother who was one of the teachers in that school where I finished my primary school. She protected me from ridicule from other children. In high school, when the principal saw me he immediately changed all the schedules of classes. He assigned a classroom for me on the ground floor. The Holy Spirit guided me during my school days.

This same privilege the Lord gave me during my college days. I took up Commerce in one of the colleges in our province. The Dean of Commerce made the stage of the school my classroom for my four years of college. During the changing of subjects I stayed put inside the enclosed stage and my teachers were the ones coming to conduct classes. I graduated from college with a major in Accounting. I persevered and God gave me the strength, the wisdom and the perseverance. He was preparing me for something good. I got married, my wife and I put up a garment factory. The Lord allowed us to progress in this business. We catered for exports, and during nine years in business, we worked hard to gain more and more profit. We even forced our sew-ers to work on Sundays. Money became our master. But God is a good God, He is a faithful God. He removed everything from us when Mount Pinatubo erupted. Everything we had



established was lost. God brought us back to zero. This was the time that He moved in our lives.

He gave us the privilege of undergoing a spiritual transformation, the new birth experience. We accepted Him as our personal Lord and Saviour. We began to submit ourselves to Him. He began to manage everything in us. He gave us a full time ministry in church. He called me to be a Pastor. He is truthful in His promise that He will not leave us nor forsake us. Now that we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, He gives everything, an abundant life. Our eldest daughter is a nurse in Singapore, and she sends Singaporean dollars, our daughter in London remits pounds and our youngest son, who is in the US sends us American dollars every month also. We serve a good God.

With the resources the Lord gives us through our children, I am able to be a full time Pastor serving God. With my wife and other Christians, we share the Word of God to persons with disability, with inmates in prison, and lead a Bible Study with indigent families in two barangays and sick people in the hospital.. *“Even so faith without works is dead.”*- Jas. 2:17 Let us all comply to the calls – a call to worship, a call to persevere and a call to fellowship. Let us all submit ourselves to God, accept Him as our personal Lord and Saviour.

LOOK WHAT OUR CAMP COLLECTIONS HAVE ACHIEVED

For the last two years participants at the CMWDT National Camps have given to a collection so that others in the Philippines could enjoy the same wonderful experience that they were enjoying at these so special camps. Those Filipinos who come to their camp have a struggle to make ends meet and are not able to afford paying any fee. Both years over a thousand NZ dollars were given, last year it was \$1450, and with a further \$500 from the Wellington camp, the PCFFD Retreat became a reality.

Briccio, Ed and Monica write,

“Thank you to all of you for your prayers, partnership and the wonderful support that came from those who attended the national CMWDT camp last year and the Wellington CFFD camp, for without your generous giving this camp could never have taken place.” We thank God for ALL He has done in our retreat. It went over two days, and was a very meaningful one to us. There were 126 participants with disabilities and all in all, there were 203, so many being first timers and many were young people. It was exciting to see people meeting together and enjoying every part of the activities. The message was listened to well, the speaker was so good at connecting with fellow disabled participants, especially when he gave his personal testimony, young deaf people got delighted when they heard (through an interpreter) about the kingdom of heaven, and at the end they understood the need to acknowledge Jesus in their lives.”



THE PHILIPPINES CFFD RETREAT

(above) The whole Retreat



(left) Dianne Bailey meets some first timers



(below left) The deaf students in the pool

(below right) The view from the back





Games were as ever very popular

(above) The “Crawl, Hop, Knee, Duck and Walk” race

(right) The “Produce the Longest Line” game

(below left) Pastor Ernesto, the deaf preacher

(below right) Pastor Nathan praying for the speaker



MARK FARMER., THE MINISTER OF THE MAHURANGI PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WARKWORTH TELLS ABOUT STEVE HALL WHO HAS JUST COMPLETED A BOOK OF POEMS TELLING OF THE LOVE OF THE LORD.



Steve Hall

“Sometimes the simplest student can prove to be the most instructive scholar. Steve is a man I have known and respected for some years as a fellow member of this Church family. Many would consider that having sorely arthritic wrists and three children at varying stages of special need would raise question marks about faith in a loving God. Not so with Steve. This man is a profound worshipper and disciple of Christ.

He and his precious wife Debbie, who also has on-going health issues, somehow reach people that most of us wouldn't give the time of day to, whilst at the same time being dedicated and kindly parents.

Many times over the years I have seen one or other of them doing 'stuff' with their kids around town, and frequently I and others receive reports of family progress, including glows of pride for achievements at Special Olympics.

These poems that Steve brings to you are a mix of naive curiosity and personal discovery of how God is present at the point of our deepest needs.

It is both a pleasure and a privilege to write a brief endorsement of his offering, and to thank God for his example of faithfulness under trial and from time to time his prophetic and challenging observations.”



Steve, Debbie, Kelly and Amy

There is Hope

Sometimes you feel as though you're going to fall apart,
That everything is falling down around you,
That it's hard to push through to the other side,
To the light at the end of the tunnel.
But we do come through with the help of Jesus,
For He walks through the valley with us.
In His strength we can make it
and stand strong in the power of the Lord.

Though Roads Seem Tough

Though roads seem tough
and along the way rough,
sometimes you reel
as though you have had enough.

Do not despair
for there is a friend very near.

His name is Jesus
and He always cares.

He is always waiting for us to share,

He always takes good care

Do not fear

for Jesus is here,

He lifts all despair.

and takes away all fear.



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OUTSTANDING CALENDAR OFFER

A TWO WAY OPPORTUNITY TO HELP BOTH YOU AND THE TRUST



This year Graham Braddock has produced two calendars, one inspirational and one scenic, that between them feature 24 full colour prints of many of his best paintings. The two covers are shown here. Graham so wanted to help our ministry that he has given a limited number of these calendars to the Trust at minimal cost. We are offering them at **\$15ea** which is well below retail price. In getting behind this - fund raising venture you will be richly blessed with a quality product.



Yes, I want to purchase at \$15.00 each:

..... inspirational calendar(s) for	\$.....	Name
..... scenic calendar(s) for	\$.....	Address
Post and packaging	\$ 2.00
TOTAL	\$_____

Make out cheque to CMWDT and send to PO Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland