

The encourager

The magazine of ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

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Inspiration

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and much more



The Joy Ministry Camp at Ohope





If Christians spent as much time grumbling, they would soon have

In this devotion Margie Willers writes about Wishington.

I'm astonished and often saddened by people who have great potential for the Kingdom of God but who are continually living in Wishington.

Wishington? Where is Wishington?

"Oh, I wish we lived in that magnificent house... we can't wait for retirement, then we can relax and really live it up...How come the man of my dreams can never be found when I'm awake? Oh, I so wish I possessed those God-given talents and abilities - those levels and dimensions of faith - I'm fed-up with living in a wheelchair...How about someone else taking a turn...If God is the God of the miraculous, then why doesn't He heal me? Doesn't He see my frustration? My constant pain? My solution to the situation? Does He NOT CARE?

When we are living in 'Wishington' we can become extremely vulnerable to turning aside and filling our loss of direction - that empty void with substitutes outside the will of God!

Psalm 37 is a very precious piece of writing. It is about the destiny of the wicked and of the good. It has brought life, encouragement and hope to many of God's people. Let's consider verse 7.

'Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to Him and He will bring it to pass'.

Delighting yourself in the Lord is the condition. What's the opposite to delighting yourself in the LORD? It's in 'things' isn't it? I'm learning from experience that my desires never catch up with my wants. The 'joy of the Lord' is right now- and it's NOT found in things. We can become so self-centred - grizzling, grumbling, whining wimps! Happiness does not come from what you DON'T have. It comes from what you DO have. Recorded in the Bible are these words:

"My God shall supply ALL your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus."

As Christians we have the tremendous privilege of acknowledging that God is the source of our supply.

Therefore, it's imperative that we keep our eyes focused on the Lord and not on the channel by which we are supplied, otherwise God may take our source of supply from us. Our dependence must be in Him.



Margie Willers

THEOLOGY, DISABILITY AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD CONFERENCE

July 1st to 3rd at Carey Bible College. Cost \$150. Last day to register is 14th June

The two main speakers are Professor John Swinton and Professor Amos Yong, who are ministers in the Church of Scotland and Assemblies of God respectively. It will be a stimulating, inspiring conference.

On Monday the first evening is free! Register online at: www.carey.ac.nz

1-3rd
July

Cover Photo – Two highlights of the Joy Ministries Camp at Ohope. On the Saturday afternoon the whole camp went to the beach to construct sand sculptures on Creation. On Sunday the camp ended with everyone taking part in the service at Whakatane Baptist with groups bringing their camp displays of Creation onto the stage, and ending, as shown here, with the whole camp on stage.

praying as they do
nothing to grumble about.

National Camp 2013

25 - 28 October, 6pm Friday to 2pm Monday

RISE UP, BE RENEWED

📖 Isaiah 40:13

"Those who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will rise up on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not grow faint"



COST OF WEEKEND:

Adults - \$160, 11-14 - \$110, 5-10 - \$70, 0-4 - Free

Adults only pay \$150 if paid in full before 1st September but this is non-refundable.

Closing date for all registrations is 1st October 2013.

It is a huge help for our organising if you register as early as possible.

- All cheques made payable to Elevate Camps.
 - To make a deposit into our ANZ bank use **01-0142-0029706-05**.
 - Use the first initial and last name of the camper.
 - Send registrations to the Camp Registrar Richard Goh, 118B Sunset Rd, Unsworth Heights, Auckland 0632
- You can download a registration form from our web page, and we are still working on setting up an online way to register.

We are bringing from the USA as our speaker a blind pastor – LOTO LEALAIMATOFALO and his wife. He was highly recommended by Pastor Geoff Wiklund. But we need donations towards their fares plus the camp expenses which amount each year to some \$12,000 above what the camp fees bring in. Loto says he sees better now than he ever did when he had his eyesight. After a shotgun blast to his face, his encounter with God began. Hear his story and be inspired, challenged and encouraged to *"Rise Up and Be Renewed"*.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY



We need **EACH OF YOU**
to do something in your church.

You can get the very helpful booklet:

**'Some IDEAS you might find useful for
DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY'**

Can be sent out to you by ringing the Centre on:
(09) 636-4763

Contact your minister urgently to see what you can do.

SUNDAY JUNE 16th



If you want a positive life,

A NATIONAL CO-ORDINATOR OF THE NZ TORCH MINISTRY

At the recent Torch House Party in Cambridge Allen Little of Levin was commissioned as National Co-ordinator promoting TORCH throughout New Zealand. Along with his wife, Margaret and their family he has lived in Levin since 1984 after graduating from Bible College of NZ and has been a long time supporter of the CMWDT ministry. Prior to their Bible College days Allen had trained as a Community Nurse at Wanganui Hospital and he has worked in Disability and Human Services until his Retirement last year. There are many experiences in his life which make him so suitable for this role. His interest in Radio and Broadcasting began with the Pirate Radio Hauraki.

Over the years he's established various broadcast projects including the "Radio Reading Service" which still broadcasts from Levin and can be heard on www.radioreading.org.nz Allen also runs a local station "88fm" which broadcasts gospel programmes in Chinese to Levin's Chinese people. He's a licensed Radio Ham with the call ZL2GB.

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN MET WITH DESTRUCTION OF BOOKS AND FOUL LANGUAGE

Allen who grew up in an anti Christian home struggled as a child with illiteracy because of inability to see print. On returning from Athol to live at Milton he was desperately lonely, alienated and had a huge identity issue with low self esteem until being befriended by the young people of the Presbyterian Bible Class who sponsored him to their Easter Camp at Tuapeka where he heard he was LOVED despite..... 50 years ago, on the last night of camp, an 'altar call' was made and Allen went forward to accept Jesus who loved him. "My whole being seemed to undergo a radical change with a deep hunger for learning, and discovery replacing the darkness of ignorance" he said. Returning home Allen told his mother and siblings he had become a Christian and Jesus loved him. This news brought a hostile response with clothing, books etc destroyed amidst a barrage of non descript expletives and Allen was kicked out... The Church women found me an alternate place to stay and the Bible Class youth plus a Church Elder the late Mr Spence befriended me. It was the time when

Television was first being viewed in New Zealand and I would go to Jimmy's home "ta watch a wee bit da telly".... Jimmy (Mr Spence) who was a widower welcomed me and would tell me stories from his Bible. He took a sheet of 'Newsprint' paper pinned it on his wall and showed me some marks. With a big thick 'Black beauty' pencil he made the letter "J", then showed me what it was - a letter, of which there were 25 others. He showed me letters and how they made words, how words come together to make sentences, and these were what we talk. This was how he learnt to read! Allen affirms the Holy Spirit began an amazing enriching, transforming work in his life which continues every day , and he testifies to the fact that "God loves all people always equally."



Allen Little

Allen is passionate about communicating the Christian Gospel to Blind and Sight Impaired citizens. "Helping people to understand the relevance of scripture plus their right to fully participate in and enjoy their local Church, is something we should all do," says Allen. "Whilst we are comfortable in our Blindness many well-meaning Christians don't know how to cope with us and have superficial 'needs-be' contact. They fear offending and tend to keep us on the side-line. My vision is to identify Blind and Sight Impaired Christians where ever they live and encourage them to grow in and enjoy Christian fellowship. The account of Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (Acts 8:26-40) is a perfect example of how a life can be changed when people take time to respond, care and share... the Eunuch 'heard' 'asked' and 'responded', just like a Blind person could if given an opportunity."

Allen is a Justice of the Peace (JP), has a wide interest in not for profit organisations, and was awarded the Queens Service Medal (QSM) in 1989. He believes a full and active life in Church and Community where Blind people are genuinely included is what living is about. To connect with Allen simply email vision@inspire.net.nz or meet him on SKYPE where he is Kiwilittle

WHY I LOVE COMING TO THE CENTRE AS A HELPER

Four photos from the Centre.

To me the Centre, along with the camps, is like a piece of heaven. A place where everyone is accepted and cared for, without having to be worried about being judged or criticised. A place where there is an atmosphere of love and care, living in harmony as God intended, and where I find refuge from the challenges and concerns of the outside world.

Mitchell Aitken



I come to the Centre because of the happy faces and the love each one gives, it's contagious. Each one touches my heart in their unique way. They are like magnets that draw you back. I come to give, but go out with so much more. If it was not for our 20 year old daughter Naomi (who has an intellectual disability), I don't know if I would be coming here, not being brought up with disability around me, but God blesses me each time. It's so encouraging.

Anne Haverfield



I come every Tuesday. When I started, I was very quiet, but the Centre has helped me to grow as a person and in confidence in myself. I began to help by writing down the day's programme for a client. Later I was given the job of finding people to share a five minute devotion. The last few years I have been given and taken on the challenge of giving a Bible study once a term and I am still doing this. Lately I have been asked to organise helpers to write down what the clients feel God is saying to them through the Bible. I feel fulfilled as I help at the Centre.

Jenny Hook



I came to visit the Centre one day; I have been coming ever since. Coming to the Centre has been like stepping into a foreign land except it has felt like home. It is a safe place with a unique family vibe. Everybody is precious. I have felt warmed and valued. A part of my journey here has been learning in God, Acceptance and Belonging through rain and shine. God's love has so uniquely met me where I was at. This has been very significant. I have had so many amazing opportunity's, and ultimately for an amazing purpose in God.

Gemma Parsons



These four regular helpers have shared what it means to them. Would you consider helping at the Centre, even just one time? Wonderfully, we have been given new rooms for extra activities, but are hampered in using these through shortage of helpers. DO COME. YOU WILL BE BLESSED!



HAWKES BAY CFFD'S 30th

People from the branches of Wellington, Thames Valley and Auckland joined with the locals recently in celebrating Hawkes Bay CFFD's 30th. Started in August 1983 under Ivan Northcott's leadership (shown on right) they were twice blessed by visits from Margie Willers, and in 1985 Di Willis, Don Miller and David Senior all came down to address a number of workshops they were running in a stunning start to the fledgling branch.



Joni Eareckson Tada was in NZ in 1989, and a busload travelled up to her meeting in Hamilton.

More than any other branch they have thrown themselves into fundraising, selling goods made over a long period, along with cakes etc, and these saw astonishing amounts raised over many years in street stalls, with the money going towards supporting Ruth Beale's work in the Philippines and helping with transport costs to National Camp.

Joan Parker (seen to the left) became chairperson in 1993 and her enthusiasm and drive over the next 20 years, along with good committee members, saw participation in church services in a host of churches of different denominations, as well as enthusing local trusts to give towards the branch purchasing their own bus (shown here to the right being blessed by Spiritual Advisor Rev Di Woods) which has been used extensively to bring as many as 61 at a time to national Camp.

Early on the branch joined in with Wellington and Manawatu in holding combined meetings, and these continue to the present day. Another highlight has been the partnership formed with

the Monastery at Takapau. Many CFFD meetings have been held there, and the Abbey has built visitor wheelchair friendly accommodation and formed walking tracks such as the one being enjoyed here below. On the right one of the Brothers is seen welcoming the 30 from Hastings as they stepped off the bus.



OTHER MEMORABLE EVENTS HAVE BEEN:



Two visits from the highly talented Voice Group from Auckland.



Israeli Dancing



A boat trip on Napier Harbour



The Mad Hatters party.



Briccio, Ed and Monica from the Philippines called in on the Branch.



And the 25 year celebrations in Kerunga Gardens



GRACE spells: God's

Lani's Testimony By: Aukilani Va'a

Hi my name is Aukilani Va'a, I was born in New Zealand, at 6 months old my Mum took me back to Samoa to the beautiful of Village of Samamea Fagaloa in Upolo. Mum left me in Samoa with my Grandfather and returned back to New Zealand to find a better life for her children.

When I was 11, my Mum remarried to my step father who is Swiss and German, and that's when I returned back to New Zealand, it was quite daunting. But change in lifestyle impacted my life so much that by the age of 13 I ran away from home and started living on the streets in town. I started committing crime, went into jail, and got involved with a gang called the King Cobra.

My dream of working and returning back to Samoa to bring my Grandfather and Dad back was slowly slipping away. Instead I fell deeper and deeper into crime and drugs. You see my Mum is a strong believer in God, she eventually became the Pastor of a Church and would pray for me everyday. She was always saying to me, son there is another way through Jesus Christ, but it was through my wife I rededicated my life back to GOD. Here is the thing when a woman gives you one ultimatum, and says to you it's either God's way or the highway, I can guarantee that's a woman who knows what she wants and is prepared to fight for her family. I rededicated my heart to God in June 1999, and have never looked back, then in 2000 I developed a medical condition called

(Muscular Dystrophy Limb Girdle), in simple terms, it is a condition where all my muscles are slowly deteriorating. The following year my younger brother discovered he too had Muscular Dystrophy.

Life today is good and amazing. It has not always been a box of chocolates and I still have to deal with life's challenges just like everyone else, but GOD is my strength and my ROCK, His love and grace is what gets me through. God has gifted my hands with a talent to design hand carved birthday keys, which include Pacific Island designs. I give honour and Praise to God for His mercy, for I was lost in sin, but GOD found me and set me free.



During my time in Paremoremo prison I wrote the following rap while serving my sentence. When this rap is spoken with a musical accompaniment it is amazingly effective.

Hey everybody, my name is Va'a, there is something I would like to say.

I was bad and mean smoking dope, doing stupid things without no hope.

I went to a party and pulled out a knife, then I went back home and my mother was crying, she said Son there's a way through Jesus Christ.

I kicked the door and didn't give a damn, went to my friend and he said hey my man do you wanna have fun. I said no my man just give me the gun.

We went into town and robbed the bank, we took the money and we shot the man.

We went outside and they grabbed my leg and broke my arm and kicked my head, they took me to court

and this is what they said, If you do the crime, your gonna do the time.

They put me inside and locked my cell, I sat on my bed and thinking to myself.

This is not the way, and this is not life, so I said to myself that my mother was right.

So I got down on my knees, and started to cry, I opened up my eyes and I saw the light.

I said please my Lord can you forgive my sins. Yes my son if you let Me in.

So I opened up my life and gave my heart to Him, so I thank you Jesus for everything, and in Jesus name I will come to You to share His love as He told me to.

Do you want Jesus in your life? Look up: John 3:16

Look what this guy accomplished using the ol' typewriter

Just a Typewriter

He lived at Rose Haven Nursing Home (Roseburg, OR) for years.

Paul Smith,

The man with extraordinary talent was born on September 21 1921, with severe cerebral palsy.

Not only had Paul beaten the odds of a life with spastic cerebral palsy, a disability that impeded his speech and mobility, but he also had taught himself to become a master artist as well as a terrific chess player even after being devoid of a formal education as a child.

When typing, Paul used his left hand to steady his right one. Since he couldn't press two keys at the same time, he almost always locked the shift key down and made his pictures using the symbols at the top of the number keys.

In other words, his pictures were based on these characters @ # \$ % ^ & * () _ . Across seven decades, Paul created hundreds of pictures.

He often gave the originals away. Sometimes, but not always, he kept or received a copy for his own records.

As his mastery of the typewriter grew, he developed techniques to create shadings, colours, and textures that made his work resemble pencil or charcoal drawings.

This great man passed away on June 25, 2009, but left behind a collection of his amazing artwork that will be an inspiration for many.



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

ELEVATE P.O Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland 1643

I wish to give \$.....for the magazine

\$..... for general running costs

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....





We can do no great things,

Who better to write on this topic than
Joni Eareckson Tada:

SUFFERING AND MY FAITH

Suffering increases my faith. Faith is like a muscle that is strengthened when put to the test. If there is never an opportunity for faith to be proved, it will not grow. Suffering provides the gym equipment on which my faith can be exercised.

Jeremiah 29:11 *"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

Suffering teaches me that the greatest good of the Christian life is not the absence of pain, but the growth of Christ-likeness. To be like Christ in suffering is to be prayerful, obedient to the Father, self-controlled, hopeful, patient and long suffering.

2 Corinthians 4:10 *"We always carry around the death of Jesus in our body, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body."*

God desires truth in my innermost being, and one way He achieves it is through my suffering. Affliction can serve as a sieve, stripping away the unnecessary from what is necessary in my life. Suffering forces me to recognise the truth about myself and my situation.

Psalms 51:6 *"Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place."*

Suffering teaches me to give thanks in times of sorrow. Hardships are God's way of teaching me how to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 *"Give thanks in all circumstances."*

2 Corinthians 1:11 *"Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favour granted us in answer to the prayers of many."*

We aren't always responsible for the circumstances in which we find ourselves. However we are responsible for the way we respond to them.



This article and the poem below, was taken from "MAKING SENSE OF SUFFERING", one of an excellent set of 16 page booklets Joni has just released on a number of topics.

TELL ME YOUR SECRET

Please tell me your secret.
I want to sit at your feet.
I need to know how you handle
the pain that is your daily meal.
How do you keep on smiling
when each day your health grows worse?
How do you keep depending on God
when you're living with a curse?

Every time I see her;
her smile comes from deep within.
I know her fellowship with God
isn't scarred by the chair she's in.
She admits her health is failing;
she knows she's fading away.
How can she remain so calm
when I'd be running away?

My friend, can you tell me
how you can trust the Lord-
How can you stay so gentle and sweet
when He seems to wield a sword?
You are to me a promise
that in the midst of pain
God is near and faithful
if I will turn to Him again.

- Liz Hupp

My friend Liz wrote this poem after a quiet unassuming woman in a wheelchair who attended her church passed away. For years, Liz had watched her from another pew, drawing strength from this woman's soft and submissive spirit – yet she never took the opportunity to tell her. This poem is Liz's attempt to put in writing what she so wished she would have said to this Christian who inspired her!

SELLING BIBLES

A pastor concluded that his church was getting into very serious financial troubles. While checking the church storeroom, he discovered several cartons of new Bibles that had never been opened and distributed. So at his Sunday sermon, he asked for three volunteers from the congregation who would be willing to sell the Bibles door-to-door for \$10 each to raise the desperately needed money for the church.

Jack, Paul and Louie all raised their hands to volunteer for the task.

The minister knew that Jack and Paul earned their living as salesmen and were likely capable of selling some Bibles. But he had serious doubts about Louie who was a local farmer, who had always kept to himself because he was embarrassed by his speech impediment.

Poor Louie stuttered badly. But, not wanting to discourage Louie, the minister decided to let him try anyway.

He sent the three of them away with the back seat of their cars stacked with Bibles. He asked them to meet with him and report the results of their door-to-door selling efforts the following Sunday. Anxious to find out how successful they were, the minister immediately asked Jack, "Well, Jack, how did you make out selling our Bibles last week?"

Proudly handing the reverend an envelope, Jack replied, "Using my sales prowess, I was able to sell 20 Bibles, and here's the \$200 I collected on behalf of the church."

"Fine job, Jack!" The minister said, vigorously shaking his hand... "You are indeed a fine salesman and the church is indebted to you."

Turning to Paul, "And Paul, how many Bibles did you sell for the church last week?"

Paul, smiling and sticking out his chest, confidently replied, "I am a professional salesman. I sold 28 Bibles on behalf of the church, and here's \$280 I collected." The minister responded, "That's absolutely splendid, Paul. You are truly a professional salesman and the church is indebted to you."

Apprehensively, the minister turned to Louie and said, "And Louie, did you manage to sell any Bibles last week?" Louie silently offered the minister a large envelope.

The minister opened it and counted the contents.

"What is this?" the minister exclaimed. "Louie, there's \$3200 in here! Are you suggesting that you sold 320 Bibles for the church, door to door, in just one week?" Louie just nodded.

"That's impossible!" both Jack and Paul said in unison. "We are professional salesmen, yet you claim to have sold 10 times as many Bibles as we could."

"Yes, this does seem unlikely," the minister agreed. "I think you'd better explain how you managed to accomplish this, Louie."

Louie shrugged.. "I-I-I re-re-really do-do-don't kn-kn-know f-f-f-for sh-sh-sh-sure," he stammered. Impatiently, Peter interrupted. "For crying out loud, Louie, just tell us what you said to them when they answered the door!"

"A-a-a-all I-I-I s-s-said wa-wa-was," Louis replied, "W-w-w-w-would y-y-y-you I-I-I-I-I-like t-t-to b-b-b-buy th-th-th-this B-B-B-B-Bible f-f-for t-t-ten b-b-b-bucks--o-o-o-or--- wo-wo-would yo-you j-j-j-just I-like m-m-me t-t-to st-st-stand h-h-here and r-r-r-r-read it t-to y-y-you?"





In every desert of trial,

THE STORY OF A HALF MAN



PENG Shulin is 78cms high. He was born in Hunan Province, China. In 1995, in Shenzhen, a freight truck sliced his body in half.

His lower body and legs were beyond repair.

Surgeons sewed up his torso. He spent nearly two years in hospital in Shenzhen, southern China, undergoing a series of operations to re-route nearly every major organ or system inside his body.

Peng kept exercising his arms, building up strength, washing his face and brushing his teeth. He survived against all odds.

Now Peng Shulin has astounded doctors by learning to walk again after a decade.

Considering Peng's plight, doctors at the China Rehabilitation Research Centre in Beijing devised an ingenious way to allow him to walk on his own, creating a sophisticated egg cup-like casing to hold his body, with two bionic legs attached. It took careful consideration, skilled measurement and technical expertise. Peng has been walking the corridors of Beijing Rehabilitation Centre with the aid of his specially adapted legs and a re-sized walking frame.

RGO is a recipicating gait orthosis, attached to a prosthetic socket bucket. There is a cable attached to both legs so when one goes forward, the other goes backwards. Rock to the side, add a bit of a twist and the leg without the weight on it advances, while the other one stays still, giving a highly inefficient way of ambulation.

Oh so satisfying to 'walk' again after ten years with half a body!

Hospital vice-president Lin Liu said: "We've just given him a checkup; he is fitter than most men his age."

Peng Shulin has opened his own bargain supermarket, called the Half Man-Half Price Store. The inspirational 37-year-old has become a businessman and is used as a role model for other amputees. At just 2ft 7ins tall, he moves around in a wheelchair giving lectures on recovery from disability.

His attitude is amazing, he doesn't complain. "He had good care, but his secret is cheerfulness. Nothing ever gets him down."

You have a whole body. You have feet. Now you have met a man who has no feet. His life is a feat of endurance, a triumph of the human spirit in overcoming extreme adversity.



Next time you want to complain about something trivial, don't. **Remember Peng Shulin instead.**

Life Is a Gift

Today before you say an unkind word -
Think of someone who can't speak.

Before you complain about the taste of your food -
Think of someone who has nothing to eat.
Before you complain about your husband or wife -
Think of someone who's crying out to GOD for a companion.

Today before you complain about life -
Think of someone who went too early.

Before whining about the distance you drive -
Think of someone who walks the same distance with their feet.

And when you are tired and complain about your job -
Think of the unemployed, the disabled, and those who wish they had your job.

And when depressing thoughts seem to get you down ...

***Put a smile on your face and think:
you're alive and still around.***

CELEBRATING THE BEGINNING OF A DREAM COMING TRUE



The photo shows Dianne, Briccio, Ed and others enthusiastically turning the first sods of the home for children with disabilities. Pastor Dick and Judy Ford, long-time missionaries in the Philippines from the USA, brought this message at the ceremony:

"Several years ago God gave my wife Judy a dream to make a home for disabled children. As she shared that dream with me God's dream became our dream. Today we celebrate the beginning of that dream come true. We thought that dream would come true where we were at Mindoro, but God had a better plan. He introduced me to the ministries at Hebron as I came to observe one of their yearly disability camps. By working together with the ministries here God helped us to provide an elevator in the school and wheelchairs for a few children. Best of all He introduced us to new friends in Dianne, Briccio, Leslie and others whom He has gifted in many ways. It is through this fellowship in the Lord He has brought us to this day".

GREAT NEWS – RUTH'S BACK HOME!

Continue to pray for a miracle of healing for Ruth. She's so thrilled to be home, but she has one great need. She must get help with the magnificent work she does in organising the sponsorship of staff and children with disabilities in the Philippines. We have an urgent need of someone to work with her in Lower Hutt one evening a week with this.




THE Disabled Body OF Christ

By: Sandy Feit

I'd like to tell you about a family I know with a daughter who has a missing connection between the hemispheres of her brain. They are a fortunate family, for their suburban Atlanta church is one of a small but growing percentage nationwide that grasps the necessity of seeking and welcoming those affected by disability; they know that without all the individuals and gifts God intended, a local body functions with significant deficiencies. Yet a majority of churches still lag far behind when it comes to opening their doors – and hearts – to minister to this population.

These churches have thus far not awoken to the need, while others question the feasibility of such a ministry. Yet after speaking with several families who have experienced difficulties related to disability and church attendance, I made an unfortunate discovery: there are congregations that find it inconvenient to re-evaluate and adjust their practices to accommodate such families. But if we're to follow Jesus' instructions as well as His own priorities – we should take care to stay focused on the need and the miracle-working God who has promised to provide.

"P.U.R.E." is a ministry whose purpose is to help churches become more aware of and better minister to those affected by disability. I learned about the group through Diane Reynolds, the mother of a 17-year-old with profound disabilities. She is Outreach Director for the Florida based ministry she started. The acronym expresses that God makes no mistakes. He has loving purposes for every life, and each human being is **Perfectly** created, **Unique** in gifts and talents, **Responsive** to acts of love, and **Eternal** (there are no disabled souls).



People with disabilities are made in God's image, yet churches are often slow to welcome them. What we don't realize is that their absence from our congregations weakens the body of Christ.

P.U.R.E. may be a name, but to Reynolds it's also a philosophy. She mentioned that a growing number of churches are recognizing the unique design, contributions and value of people with disabilities, and the fact that God intended for them to be an integral part of the local body. Similar effective ministries operate under many names, but they all function from the perspective that the children are "P.U.R.E." kids.

According to Reynolds, one estimate is that 90% of families affected by disability don't attend church. But the corollary is even more troubling. 90% of churches see no need for a special need ministry, because they presently don't have anyone with a disability in their congregation. Michael Beates who wrote *Disability and the Gospel: How God uses our Brokenness to display His Grace*, began his research 30 years ago.

His findings suggest that 20% of the United States population – in other words 40 to 50 million people - have some kind of disability, but the definition may be overly broad. If you define the term more narrowly, Beates thinks the number would be closer to 20 million, or about 10% of the population, who are living with a physical, mental or emotional, or psychological disability that would place them outside of what we consider the norm.

"We should be able to look out on a Sunday morning and see 10% of the population who are living in that manner," he said, "and we simply don't. Instead, attendees in this category make up less than 2% of the typical American church."

What is not realised is that their absence deprives the church of gifts that only those who live with disability can bring to the Body of Christ. They with their visible weaknesses are a needed reminder of our own less obvious brokenness, but are just as real.

Awareness is picking up however. Some Bible Colleges and seminaries now offer courses or master's degrees in disability ministry or related studies. But far more

must be done to reach the missing 8 plus percent, because as much as they need to be ministered to, the church is also incomplete without them. I urge you to make a start, start with what is right in front of you, but don't let it fade away.

Included with permission from Charles Stanley's magazine 'In Touch'.

"We should be able to look out on a Sunday morning and see 10% of the population who are living in that manner," he said, "and we simply don't. Instead, attendees in this category make up less than 2% of the typical American church".

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33.3 (Jer 33.3) - Te Puke Baptist Church:

Leslie Schwass 07 573 6421

Group for intellectually disabled - Hamilton Baptist Church:

Jenny Hawker 07 855 0946

Kumbayah - St David's Anglican Church - Palmerston North:

Ann Bennett 06 366 1005

CAMPS AROUND THE COUNTRY



The Kidz Connect Camp, now in its third year, had a mixture of teaching, worship, indoor games, outdoor sports and crafts.



The 2 yearly Torch Camp saw intense concentration amongst the members of the teams until one of the team, sure of the answer, vigorously attempted to catch the eye of the judge.



The Auckland Committee at the wonderful Oscar night.



At the Auckland camp some went out to a local woodcarver.

HELP NEEDED

Who would like to help us with an urgent need at the Centre to get 2 flat TV screens to play DVD's?