

# The encourager

The magazine of ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

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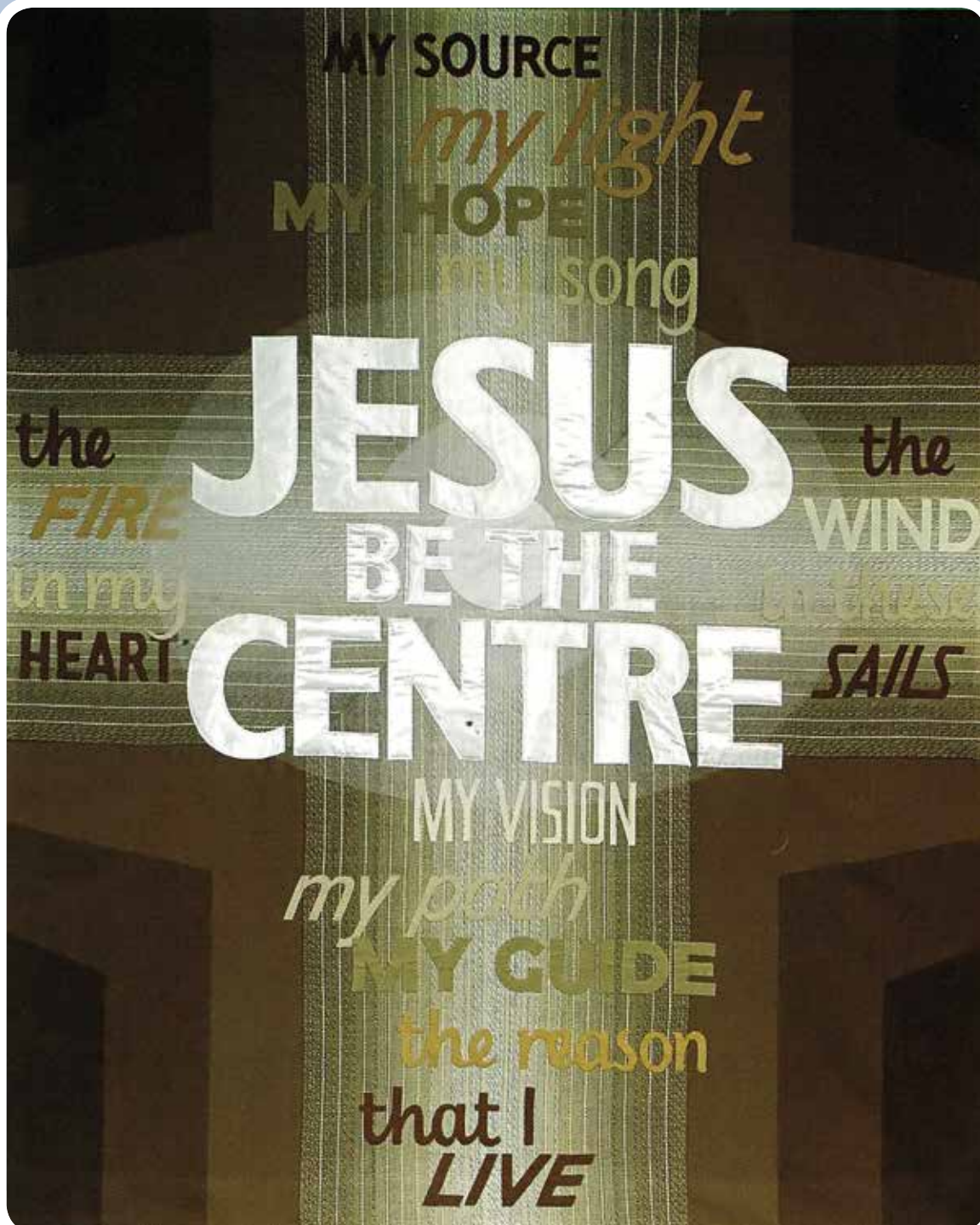
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## PLUS:

Inspiration

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and much more



Five years ago Di started speaking to a lady, Priscilla Nunnerley, at a London station and gave her an Encourager. She has been receiving it ever since. The other day she wrote to say how much she continues to enjoy it, and sent a donation. How special – maybe you could give out Encouragers. She has also sent us a book she has co-authored, 'A Celebration of Banners' and the cover of this Encourager was taken from it.



We can do no great things, only small things

Devotion by Tere Va'a

## NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF GOD

I am a Christian woman with a physical disability. I was diagnosed with a medical condition called Diffuse Idiopathic Skeletal Hyperostosis (DISH). The condition is considered a form of degenerative arthritis or osteoarthritis. In 2007 I also had a spinal cord injury that paralysed me from my neck down. I have been married to my husband of 14 years who was also diagnosed with Muscular Dystrophy (limb girdle) two years into our marriage, and we have 3 amazing adult children.

I'm reminded of the story of Job which never ceases to amaze me. It reminds me that I have so much to thank God and be grateful for. Job lost everything, yet he had a good reputation with God. God Himself said to satan "there is no one on earth like him, he is blameless and upright, a man who fears the Lord and shuns evil" (Job 1:8). Still, Job lost his health, all his wealth, and every single one of his children in tragic deaths. His own wife raged at him to "curse God and die". But with all that he faced he held fast

to his integrity and never wavered in his trust in God, constantly praying and crying out to Him. And this amazes me. With all that he endured, Job's faith and trust in God - that He is with him every step of the way - never wavered.

Even though you may have a disability and you're a Christian, you'll still face a lot of challenges. But for me prayer has always brought me through the tough times, if not rescued me from it. And I believe this with my whole heart, because what I've seen God do cannot be put down to just coincidence or luck. Today, I am no longer paralyzed completely, but have gained full use of my arms, and can walk with limited strength. **Romans 5:3-5 says:** "We also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance character; and character hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts



through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." Therefore I can trust that God is in control, and thank Him for the good He has done and will do on my behalf.

And even when things get so heavy for me that I can't think of what to pray for, I remind myself that **John 3:16 says** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

That, at least, we can always pray and thank God for.

Joy Pollock tells how the Centre has been

## BLESSED BY A SUPERMARKET


Praise the Lord for God's amazing provision. Several years ago I approached the Royal Oak Pak N' Save and asked if they might have damaged goods that we could use for the Centre. Their kindness was amazing! They asked us to call two days each week and they have given out a large collection of products from everything a supermarket sells, and have continued to bless us right up to the present day. We have also been able to bless our volunteers with food as well as with many other products. I have seen God's hand move in an amazing

way. One family whose husband had died leaving a family of eight were all gluten-free. During their time of need lots of gluten free products came through, but when they did not need any more the supply stopped. Many people have told me I gave them just what they needed, even though I was completely unaware of their need. Tea, sugar, muesli bars and many other products have so helped the Centre. A big thank you to the caring manager and staff.

## THE 2014 NATIONAL CAMP

At Totara Springs, Matamata  
24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> October

The Camp Theme is: **Who Am I..?**

 **1 John 3:1** "See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"

### **COST OF WEEKEND:**

Adults - \$170, 11-14 - \$110, 5-10 - \$75, 0-4 - Free

Adults fee reduced to \$160 if paid in full before 1st September (this is non-refundable)

**Closing date for all registrations is 1st October, but please, to help our organising, register SOON.** If you've been thinking about it this year or for years – come. You'll love it. **It's LIFE CHANGING!** A great opportunity to meet people, grow your faith or find it. Lots of fun. All disabilities and all ages, Helpers – no experience necessary – learn there.

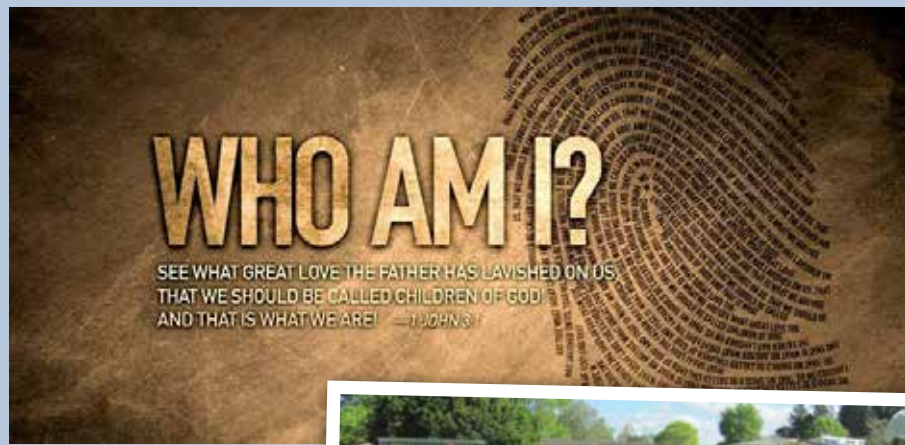
### **YOU CAN NOW REGISTER ONLINE!**

Registration forms are available to download from the Elevate website.

**Email:** [elevatedtcamp@gmail.com](mailto:elevatedtcamp@gmail.com)

Richard Goh, 118B Sunset Rd, Unsworth Heights, Auckland 0632 **Phone:** 09 444 3062

**Come and have FUN and FELLOWSHIP and go deeper into FAITH!**



## HELPERS SEMINAR

27th September • 9:30am to 3pm

173 Mt Smart Road  
Onehunga, Auckland

RSVP: (09) 636 4763

[info@ELEVATEcdt.org.nz](mailto:info@ELEVATEcdt.org.nz)  
[www.ELEVATEcdt.org.nz](http://www.ELEVATEcdt.org.nz)

Cost is \$10 (bring your own lunch)

Sign up for a day of learning and laughter

Hear personal experiences of disability

Learn practical ways to assist and communicate

The photos at the top of these pages were taken on an outing from the Centre to a walkway alongside the motorway in Auckland on the city side shortly after it comes off the harbour bridge.



Faith does not operate in  
There is no glory for God in th

## PART TWO

# KRISTA'S STORY

By Mary Horning

**K**rista was born with a misshapen skull, hands and feet that required multiple surgeries, almost all of which were life-threatening. At four months her skull was sawn apart and carefully pieced back together in a different way. In the June Encourager Krista's mother told of the herculean struggle to bring the tiny girl through and the developing trust in God through the unending surgeries. She here takes up the account:

My sinful, rebellious heart often strayed from the truth of God's faithfulness in our lives, but that summer I learned the joy found in God surpassed all the pain we endured. Jesus was enough. He would always be enough.

*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither the present or the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:38, 39 (NIV)*

I was overcome by the weight of God's mercy that was evident in the hard times. There is one day we will never forget. Krista was scheduled for another surgery. Although it was a simple ear procedure, it was at a different hospital than usual, and that added to her fears. On our way there, we sang Bible verses recounting the goodness of God and how He provides everything we need. But I was irritated. Why didn't God just heal her ear? Why did we have to go through this over and over again? As we walked in the door, we discovered that her favourite hospital show, starring Porky Chops the pig, debuted that very morning at this new site.

Now there was something to look forward to after a painful morning. During the program Krista won a Porky Chops T-shirt, pencil and key chain. The author and illustrator of her favourite pig book was a guest on the show, and to top it off, a real live pig, the mascot from a local baseball team, walked right into her room



for a visit. Krista loves pigs, and that day they showed up everywhere. God did not heal her ear, but He did provide laughter that healed our hearts.

*But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. Lamentations 3:21-23*

Krista's facial deformity made her noticeable wherever she went. People stared, pointed, and laughed. "What's wrong with you? Why do you look so funny?" Their taunts stung. Their words hurt. Anger burned inside. I dreaded going to public places since even innocent trips to the grocery store grew into major events. Krista begged to stay home, avoiding the embarrassment and rejection. I shared the heaviness of Krista's hurt and wished I could bear the load myself. Why do people have to look at her that way? Why couldn't they see who she really was? I longed for my girl to have an ordinary face, for the anger to go away. Every day we struggled to listen to God's voice more than the world's. "I know you and made you. You are mine." We held on to His words and gradually saw God had a purpose, even for her disfigured face.

the realm of the possible.  
that which is humanly possible.

*Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 2 Corinthians 1:9*

Living with disability is a daily test: will we find our satisfaction in Jesus? Every day Krista wakes up and in the mirror her nose is still crooked and her eyes are still slanted. Every day she relies on our care since her arms do not work and her mental processes are impaired. Every day Krista faces people who dislike her simply because she is different. Every day sin makes us doubt God's purpose and plan. Every day disability affects our lives in a hundred ways. But every day God is good to us. Every day He gives us all that we need. Every day He fills us with grace and mercy and love. Every day we receive forgiveness for our sins through Jesus Christ. Every day God does ten thousand things beyond our understanding that show how great and glorious He is.



*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28 (NIV)*

In all these years with Apert syndrome, we have known God's greatness in helping Krista endure over sixty surgeries. We have seen His tenderness in family and friends who love and encourage us. We have experienced His grace in preserving our marriage. We have grasped the truth of His Word. hidden in our hearts. We have hope and a future. Now I know why Krista was born.

*Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor the fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield*

*no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God, the Lord, is my strength. Habbakuk 3:17-19a*

*Krista published the book, "JUST THE WAY I AM" God's Good Design in Disability, which on its first printing sold out in a month. This excerpt by her mother Mary is taken from that book, a book that is beautifully put together with a series of stunning black and white photos. The book is copyright, but these excerpts are included here as we have been graciously granted permission by the publisher Christian Focus Publications. In NZ it can be ordered from Christian bookshops.*



## SET FREE

LORD, why do people look and stare at me as if I am weird? Is it because they see my body bent and twisted? You created this body of mine, just like theirs, in Your own image LORD, Even though I cannot speak and tell them how I feel, but through my big smile I can show them Your wonderful love for them.

LORD, how can I tell them about Your wonderful love when I cannot use my voice? Let me use my big smile when they say Your Name out loud! Then I can show them how much I love You.

I know how much You love me, LORD, because You came to die for my sins. I hear Your wonderful voice every day of my life. You speak to my soul and tell me that I am so special to You. And I know of Your love for me, and I am not afraid anymore because You will always be there for me.

One day soon my soul will be set free and I will soar like the eagles on the wind. Then I will be set free from this bent and twisted body. My new body will be made perfect Because it will be like Yours O LORD! So LORD, I will wait on You to come and take me home in Your loving arms. Then I will be set free indeed to live in Your kingdom forever.

**Amen! O LORD**

*Les Facooory wrote this poem especially for the Dunedin Branch's Disability Awareness Service.*



I feel as though sometimes I'm  
and other times to tr

Margie Willers writes on

# OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT



One day Satan decided to sell up. He put all his weapons up for sale that he'd used against the people of God. Most were wedged instruments he had on display. Each had a price tag: Resentment, Envy, Hatred, Jealousy, Fear, Disillusion, Pride, Greed. However, it was discovered the tool most used and most highly priced happened to be **'DISCOURAGEMENT'**. This proved Satan's most effective weapon hindering our Christian walk and service for God.

I believe there are times when every Christian goes through serious and deep discouragement. The Word of God reveals every character whom God used with amazing transparency. God openly displays their strengths and their weaknesses to encourage us that man is only human.

We find in Scripture many of God's great men experiencing discouragement:

**Elijah** - after his great victory on Mt Carmel.

**Jonah** - after the revival at Nineveh.

**David** - after his crushing blow at Ziklag - where all was lost.

**Jeremiah** - when the people despised him and mocked and ridiculed the prophecies.

**Peter** - after he denied the Lord three times.

And the list could go on...

Allow me to suggest two times when you can expect discouragement.

1. After a great victory.
2. After a time of real blessing.

Elijah reached his lowest point when he actually asked God to take his life after he challenged the nation. Elijah made his stance before the prophets of Baal. *"Let's build an altar. Let's lay a sacrifice upon it - and the God who answers by fire - He is the Lord!"* Gallons of water drench the sacrifice. The prophets of Baal work themselves into a frenzy, slash their wrists and pray all day. Despite the ritual and drama, no 'fire balls fell! Absolutely nothing happened. Total ZILCH!

Elijah, a mighty man of faith and power stood before the nation and called on God. It was a simple prayer, but nevertheless effectual. Bang came the fire! Consuming the sacrifice. Water - the lot! Awestruck, the people bowed with their faces to the ground crying- *"The Lord, He is God"*.

The prophet Elijah had almost reached the pinnacle of his ministry - yet a short time later we find him in the depths of despair.

**1 Kings Chapter 19v4:** *And, he took a day's journey into the wilderness and sat under a Broom Tree and requested that he might die... "It is enough O Lord, take away my life"*

Now, doesn't that sound incredible?

The lesson we learn from Elijah's spiritual dilemma and disillusionment - we are vulnerable to the attack of the enemy and to discouragement after a time of real blessing. After the battle has been won the tendency is to settle down, to take things easy, to drop our guard.

## SOME OF THE CAUSES OF DISCOURAGEMENT.

### 1. UNANSWERED PRAYER:

Maybe you've prayed for weeks, perhaps even months for an answer to prayer - and it NEVER comes! Discouragement sets in. Maybe you've struggled with difficult circumstances in business, your marriage, your health, the sudden death of a loved one or ridicule of your ministry.....

### 2. FAILURE OR A MISTAKE:

Failure is not defeat unless you never rise to try again. We all make mistakes. Like Paul, we need to forget those things which are behind, and press onward towards the MARK!

# There to comfort the troubled to trouble the comfortable

Our God is the God of 'The Second Chance'. A God of 'New Beginnings'. How many times do we read in Scripture...*And the Word of the Lord came a Second time.....?*

He can begin new things for you! He's the master of turning our failure into SUCCESS!

Peter and Moses failed. Timothy, it would seem, also failed. But the Word of the Lord came a second time. Doesn't that excite you and encourage you to keep pressing onward in your spiritual journey? 'The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord'. But, take heed – so too are the STOPS!

*Though he fall he shall not be cast down, for the Lord upholds with His Hand.*

**The Lord never gives up on you. NEVER!**

### 3. PERFECTIONIST OF STANDARDS.

Many of us set standards we can never attain. Even the preaching of The Word can present standards which are idealistic and totally unrealistic. Things like: If you're desirous to know God in a real way, then you ought to set aside three hours a day to pray! Others say, "WHAT! If it takes that, that's way beyond my cope-rope. I'll quit now!"

Then an added insult...If you're a real Christian you'll live in victory all the time.

What a load of codswallop!

God wants us to, but it does not happen that way. These are unobtainable goals.

### 4. A WRONG FOCUS.

We read in the Book of Nehemiah where the children of Israel were becoming discouraged...Their focus had turned to all the things that were going wrong. They had lost sight of the fact that a great wall was being built that would be a protection for Jerusalem. Yet, their eyes focused entirely upon what was called '*the much rubbish*'.



I SO appreciate the following quote: Two men looked through prison bars.

***One saw mud. The other saw stars!***

It all depends how and where you look. If you look in wrong places you'll become discouraged.

### 5. SELF PITY:

Some would claim SELF PITY is the major cause for discouragement. Being extremely self-centred. Thinking woe is me, constantly griping and whinging about one's problems and all the things that have gone wrong in one's life Who wouldn't get discouraged with this lot? I would!

Allow me to suggest a healthy remedy for dealing with this...REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS...IN EVERYTHING GIVE THANKS...I guarantee there'll be no time for self pity!

### CONSEQUENCES AS A RESULT OF DISCOURAGEMENT: 2 Thess 5:16,18

#### a) RUNNING AWAY FROM OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Elijah ran away from his situation and responsibilities after Mount Carmel. He ran to a cave and lodged there. And, behold the Word of the Lord came ... "*What are you doing here Elijah?*" Allow me a modern day response? Well, *the grass looked greener on the other side.*

Let me warn you: The other side-expectations may not result in the desirable "bigger and better opportunities" you so anticipated. We figure that if we can change our situation, we'll rise out of discouragement. The biggest danger when running from a situation is to run outside the will of God.

When we run from our responsibilities, God is unable to develop one of the greatest qualities in our life - and that is PERSEVERANCE. Perseverance is the **backbone** put into our Christian walk. When the going gets tough God wants men and women of backbone – and character!

Romans Chapter 5v 3 & 4 - *We rejoice in our suffering knowing suffering produces perseverance, and perseverance character, and character, hope.*

And God answers our hope!

#### b) LOSING YOUR PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS.

Elijah cried '*I am the only one left who has remained faithful to you!*' *Continued on next page* ►



# You can have peace in the storms of life

God replied “Not quite Elijah – I’ve seven thousand men who’ve not bowed the knee to Baal.”

He made out things were far worse than they really were. In reality, they were seven thousand more than he realised.

**I ENCOURAGE YOU.** Don’t make decisions when you are discouraged because you do not see or think too clearly. When the fog lifts and the storm clears, things won’t seem nearly as discouraging.

## c) GIVING IN.

The most tragic thing we do when discouraged is to give in. That leads to despair – depression – loss of hope – loss of vision. And without a vision people, you are naked. Empty. And so vulnerable to turning and filling that loss of vision – or void with substitutes outside the will of God.

*Your grace is sufficient for us,  
for Your power is made perfect  
in our weakness; we will boast  
all the more gladly of  
our weaknesses, so that  
Your power, Jesus,  
may rest upon us.*

-2 Corinthians 12:9

**PRAYING AWAY  
DISCOURAGEMENT**

## Real healing came through the people in the church family

**W**e came from the UK via Australia. Ten months after arriving in New Zealand we found ourselves at City Impact Church on Auckland’s North Shore. The church, about half an hour’s drive from our home, is not exactly convenient, but we wouldn’t go anywhere else unless God moved us.

Kit has Rubenstein Taybi’s syndrome. When he came on our second visit to church, he was uncomfortable in a strange noisy environment and he definitely was not going to go far from my side. His brothers, one older and one younger, were much more willing to be involved in what was on offer for children. During the service the Spirit of God ministered to me. Hurt, broken and exhausted I cried through about six months of church services. The real healing was able to happen through the people in the church family that He had placed us in.

One of the Pastors came and visited us in our home and asked how Kit could be best supported in church. At the time Kit was often unwell, he had difficulty hearing and seeing, and lots of his behaviour was on the autistic spectrum. The Pastor offered that they train someone in the children’s church to be able to look after him so that I could go in and have a little space for myself in the church service. For many weeks this lovely Pastor looked after Kit herself. She did find a young man, Brad, who wanted to work one to one with children rather than with lots of them. Brad committed to being Kit’s helper, and for the next five years he was there faithfully every Sunday. Kit grew to love Brad, love Jesus and love children’s church, it became a safe fun environment where he could grow and be himself.

Since that time Kit has had a few other helpers who have also grown to be his special people. There are other amazing families that have taken

the time to get to know Kit, opened their lives and their homes to him and to us, and I am very grateful for them. Kit is too old for children’s church – it is taking him some time to come to terms with this, as he would still love to be there. He is now made welcome as part of the wider church family, whether it is messing with someone in the café or lying down in the service if he has sensory overload. Kit like us all is learning. Sometimes his behaviour is challenging, but our journeys are made for sharing, and maybe we won’t get where we are supposed to be going without loving each other along the way. **Shan Young**



“During the service the Spirit of God ministered to me, hurt, broken and exhausted I cried through about six months of church services. The real healing was able to happen through the people in the church family that He had placed us in.”



if you know who is in the boat with you.

## Joy Ministries changed our family's life

By Karen Spurgeon

Before my involvement with Joy Ministries I worked with problem children at a Children's Health Camp, with children with a physical disability as a home help and in the I.H.C. in Auckland. I really enjoyed working with the intellectually disabled and I saw them as people who were caring, special and fun. I was very active in getting the guys out in the community. At the time I was a party animal, bordering on being an alcoholic, and was into New Age thinking there were many ways to get to God. Years before, with my brother, I had proclaimed Jesus to be my Saviour, but was totally put off by the religion I saw. I felt that I had given Christianity a go and it wasn't my path.

I had spent a long time travelling the world and after some soul searching asked my brother to take me to church, but I didn't want to be narrow minded like he was, so I asked him to take me to all different churches. However God had a different plan. My brother took me to a church where we had some limited involvement when growing up, so I was happy to go there. At the service they sang two songs – "Jesus take me as I am" and "Something beautiful, something good". They challenged my heart deep down, but I didn't want to just succumb to peer pressure. Later that night I prayed and gave God one more try. It is hard for me to write this now, as I know I was coming to God so proud and not fully aware of all that He had done for me. But God saw my desire. I had

asked Jesus to be my saviour but didn't understand the truth of Him being my Lord. I continued to live as before, but this time just asking God to forgive my sins.

I moved to Palmerston North to take on a Social Work degree, and on the drive down prayed to God that I would either be full on for Him or I would walk away altogether. I knew I wasn't living as a true believer should. I joined the Navigators Christian group on campus and began to study the Bible and form my own convictions. Through this I felt God was saying to me that I was not to do Social Work. In its place I did a one year internship with the Navigators. I was also working part-time for the I.H.C. This became a full time job working with some difficult behaviours. I formed many friendships with the guys I looked after.

During my time in Palmerston North I met and married Brad, and we now have five children. I always had a desire for my children to grow up not only accepting but embracing those who are different. It was an answer to prayer when I heard about Joy Ministries. I visited first with a good friend, then the next month took the whole family, and we have been going every month since. After six months we realised that we could be an active part in the meetings with the music, as our children are all very musical. Soon we were asked to lead the music team and be part of the committee. In the beginning of 2013 we were asked to take over co-ordinating the meetings.

Being involved in Joy Ministries has not only been a huge blessing to us



as we grow and develop such wonderful friendships, learn to trust God in a more simple way, and accept others different from ourselves, It also has been an opportunity for the children to grow in their God-given gifts and serve God.

They have been able to take an active part in leading a ministry. It gives Brad and me great joy to see them growing in the Lord with their giving of time and talents. Adam, 19, plays the drums and often leads in prayer. Joel 18, is the musical director, He plays the guitar, tenor horn and sings, leads in prayer and MC'd our special theme night. Luke, 16, plays the piano, sometimes the bass guitar and cornet, and leads in prayer. Jonathan, 13, helps with the sound desk, and plays cornet. Julia, 10, sings and plays the cornet.

Brad is on the sound desk and often gives the message. I welcome folk and lead the sharing time.

Joy Ministries provides an opportunity to serve, an opportunity to love and to develop in the gifts God has given us. It is a ministry where we can serve as a family which is a huge blessing to us.



Opportunity may knock once, but ten

## 2014, TEN YEARS ON - IT'S STILL "ALL RIGHT MUM!"

By Heather Vincent

*"It's all right, Mum,"* still echoes in my ears at times whenever I struggle to cope with a journey that often seems overwhelming and too heavy to bear. And with the words comes a reminder of the son who first spoke them. How often when life got tough would he encourage me – "It's all right Mum, I love you." How could I forget him or his words. It was a reminder too of the Lord's comforting words, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

2014 marks the 40th year since our son David was born and 12 years since he passed away. He's no longer disabled but living forever with the Saviour he loved (there are no wheelchairs in heaven!) Soon after he died I finished writing his story and our family's journey in the book called "It's All Right Mum" It was a labour of love from my grieving heart to other parents who were carers of their disabled children. Published by Daystar in 2004, it has been widely read throughout New Zealand, and further afield in Australia, UK, USA, Chile, Japan, the Philippines and more. Through the years I've met the most amazing people who are living through difficult situations and who have appreciated the encouragement our family's story brings. You may have read it too.

David thought he wasn't doing much for God – but he was an inspiration to all. He prayed that he would leave behind a witness that will carry on. May you share the hope that

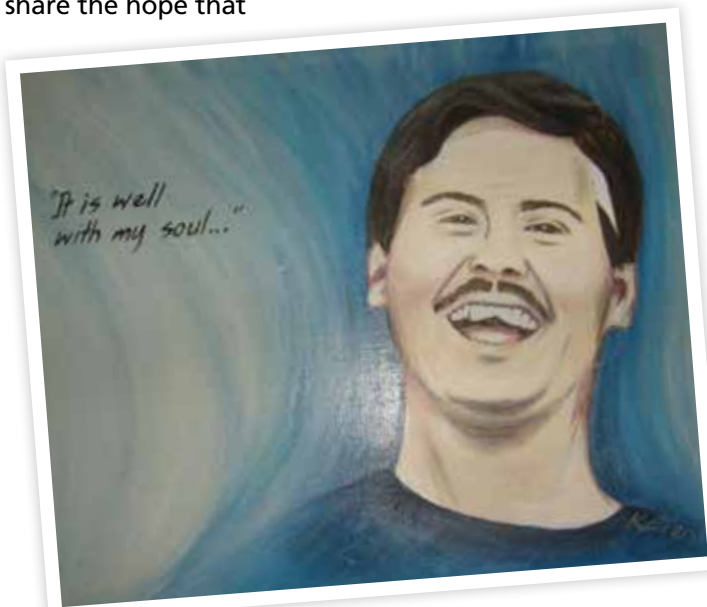
lived in his heart, and find the Saviour's love for you. Then you too, when you are gone, will leave behind a witness of what Christ has done for you.

The book ended with David's funeral, or Uncle David's "Goodbye Party" as his nephews called it. It was a fitting celebration of his life. I included Brian's perspective as a dad and that of our daughters, Cherie and Karen. Their stories with muscular dystrophy had just begun, but much has happened since then! In 2005, when Jordan and Judah were eight and six, Karen became a single mum. This of course has meant major adjustments and stresses for the family. A year later Judah was officially diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Karen had suspected it for some years, knowing full well what the signs were.

The resulting diagnosis was none-the-less a disappointing blow to the hopes that we might have one family member who was not affected. It means Karen and Cherie are both carriers, as I am, of the defective gene in Duchenne MD. It also means three of our four grandchildren have this disability. Jordan is "fine".

How we identify with both our daughters, and empathise with our sons-in-law. Watching our grandsons over the years naturally reminds us of David – a bitter-sweet feeling as we remember days gone by. Sadness and grief because we miss our son so much, but a sweetness in knowing we understand what the boys and their parents are going through. Theirs is a story of tremendous courage, resilience and faith as they face the future. It has meant major alterations to their homes, vehicles and lifestyles.

Brian and I now live in Tauranga, joining the O'Sullivan's in 2010. We enjoy our 'semi' retirement living closer to one half of the family, while making the journey to Whangarei, where Karen still lives, as often as we can. All the grandsons are now teenagers and continue to give us great joy. Joel is 19 and Ben 18 and they attend Bethlehem College here in Tauranga. They've both been living life in a wheelchair for seven or eight years now.





They enjoy motorsports just like their Uncle David, and both have a quirky sense of humour. Jordan is 17 and has now left school, studying and working towards a career in computer technology. Judah at 15, shows talent in art, just like his mum. He was able to walk until recently and is now adjusting to life in a wheelchair. He loves to play wheelchair rugby in Auckland when he can.

So how do Brian and I, handle this hereditary heritage of muscular dystrophy? How do we say "It's Still All Right?" There are two things which have not changed and we cling to these as an anchor to our faith. "God's grace is still sufficient for us, for His power is made perfect in weakness" and "He will never leave us or forsake us." These are truths which we have proved as we've gone through life.

"It is well with my soul," is inscribed on the portrait of David which hangs in our home (see page 10). Karen painted this picture of her brother before we moved to Tauranga, so that we'd always be reminded even though he was no longer with us. And as we face the future God's promise still stands: *From everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness to their children's children!* Psalm 103: 17.

There's a Bigger Picture that transcends what our finite minds can understand. A picture that God sees and in fact has planned since the beginning of time. He is the Master Weaver who is fashioning our lives according to His Master Plan. This thought is echoed by the words of this famous poem:

### **The Weaving**

*My life is but a weaving,  
between my God and me,  
I do not choose the colours,  
He worketh steadily.  
Oftimes He weaveth sorrow,  
and I in foolish pride,  
Forget He sees the upper,  
and I the underside.*

*Not till the loom is silent,  
and the shuttles cease to fly,  
Will God unroll the canvas  
and explain the reason why:  
The dark threads are as needful  
in the skillful Weaver's hand,  
As the threads of gold and silver  
in the pattern He has planned!*

**Grant Colfax Tullar**



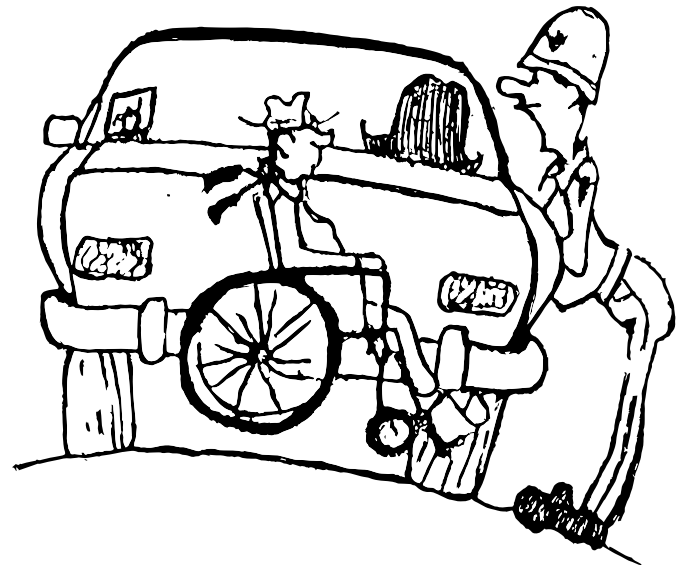
Goliath was too big! But h

## A LONG TIME COMMITMENT



Carol Bennett has been reading "The Encourager" onto tape and now CD for many years. When we first heard her speaking we realised she had such a good voice for recording, so she was conscripted for the job which she has been doing voluntarily ever since. We have so

appreciated her gift of time. She had previously had a lot of experience talking to groups. We thank Leslie Jackson who was our reader for many years earlier, and now we have new readers for the books.



"Your husband goes inside the car lady!"

## HEY, I CAN SEE!

By Kathryn Stevenson.

For years I have been unable to read the words on the data projector screen at church. After asking what to do, one of our IT guys at GPC researched and found a program called XL Screen Streamer, a software package that streams the content of the computer screen over the network. I connect my tablet into that over the church wi-fi and I can see on my tablet whatever is projected onto the screen. Hey bingo, now I can see the words of songs, which has made the song time so much more meaningful being able to see all the words.

Some of you might want this program at your church too for someone in a wheelchair who can't see past people standing up, or, who are vision impaired and need the words to be closer. The

package can be accessed by going to [www.xldevelopment.net/xlscreenstreamer](http://www.xldevelopment.net/xlscreenstreamer).

There is a 30 day free trial version. During the trial period, you will see a nag screen, and then a screen asking you to select 'Advanced Viewer' or 'Web Viewer'. If you have an Android device, you can't use Flash so would need to choose the web viewer and you should then be able to see the projector screen in your browser. You would see an exact copy of what's on the big screen.

The software can be configured to broadcast just over the church local network, so that anyone in wi-fi range can make use of it without using any of the church's broadband quota.

This means: anybody in the church

could view it over the wifi. The cost is US\$50 (one-off payment). I hope you find this information as useful as I have. **PRaise GOD, I CAN SEE!!**



e was also too big to miss!

## Excerpts from Immanuel Koks' talk on the **THEOLOGY OF MESS** at the Beyond Disability conference 2014

**M**inistry to people who are different is not nice, clean ministry. It's messy. I speak as a person with a disability. Our lives can at times be messy, Ministry for people with and for people with disabilities can be messy ministry, and we need to be prepared for that. And this is not a negative. It is the ministry of the Church, what we should be doing in reaching people in all our diversity.

Christ is the one who became human for all. For people with disabilities, it's really important to plant ourselves on this reality, that Christ did what He did for us just as much as He did for anybody else. He ministered to all people. He cared for all people in their mess. He didn't ask them to come out of their lives, to come away to tidy themselves up before He would reach into their lives. He met them where they were. He died for all people, and He was resurrected for all people, and He ascended to heaven carrying the memory of His human life, His broken life. And that is an important theme in the book of Hebrews, that no matter who we are we can come to God, come to the throne room of grace and know that in Christ God understands our experience, because there is a way that He carries that memory with Him up there.

Therefore we can't say to anybody that they're dispensable, because the Spirit has gifted them in unique, special ways that the church as a community needs, even the weakest, less honourable members. Paul is saying the people you want to put away, who you don't want seen, are like the parts of the body that you don't want seen, and he is saying actually, they are the ones who you've got to look after because they are the ones who are gifted too and they have special things for the church.

But this not easy. At a conference at Laidlaw college, Scott McKnight said love is "rugged." We do tremendous damage to 1 Corinthians 13 when we make it all beautiful and all sweet and soothing. Paul is challenging the Corinthian church to rise above the things that make them divide from each other and to rise above struggling with their uniqueness.



The only way for Paul to do this is to do the hard work of putting on love. It is patient, when the last thing you want to do is to be patient. It is kind, when all you want to do is leave that person to their problems and not sit with them. It is a rugged commitment to them. So for Paul I want to suggest that love is the foundation of how we do ministry in the mess. Love is at the heart of this theology of mess.

So Paul, I believe, also recognised that the community is not simply a community that stays within itself. It is a community that is meant to be open, meant to be inviting people, and meant to be an evangelistic community, but he was aware that mess is scary. From the outside that can chase people away. On the one hand he says, let the church come together in its messy diversity, where different other people participate in the way the Spirit has uniquely gifted them. On the other hand we make sure our gatherings remain inviting when we design structures to create order, but not to stifle their gifts. And that's a challenge. It needs to be a well-thought-out ministry where you are thinking about what happens or what will happen when you include that person.

If we are aiming for perfection, for neat tidy churches, it is disrupted by disability and difference. Messy ministry makes space for those things. When a church is what it is meant to be, people with disabilities will be welcomed and feel welcomed. Yes, you may need to do the work of redesigning a few things, but you will want to do that because doing that is doing what you should be doing anyway. So I'm leaving you with a challenge - design messy ministry well.



Faith means trusting in advance what will only

## THE PHILIPPINES MINISTRY

### **KIRSTY ANDERSON WRITES:**

Since visiting Hebron four years ago to assist with setting up the new library, I had wanted to return and spend time with PCFFD (Philippines Christian Fellowship for Disabled). My trip this July really was in God's timing. Having attended Joni and Friends two years ago and having worked with Elevate for over a year now, I was much better positioned to be a support and to encourage those involved, not to mention the immense personal and spiritual growth God has worked in me the last few years!

I was able to meet many of those involved in PCFFD in the new home for children with disabilities. It was such a privilege to glimpse the heart of those involved in the ministry at Hebron and to see some of the impact the ministry is having on their community. Many great conversations were had, building relationships with people I already knew and developing new ones. Often I came away from a conversation with my head full of ideas and thinking how those of us in NZ can support those at Hebron more.

I have come home with a greater understanding of the work at Hebron and the context. I am confident I can now be a relevant support and encouragement from NZ. Amongst others I visited Evelyn, a young lady who has attended a PCFFD camp, but has never attended school due to poverty and difficulties with accessibility (as with many Filipino children with physical disability).

### **LESLIE DE LA GANAR EXPLAINS ABOUT THIS:**

Here in the Philippines the main forms of transport are jeepneys and tricycles, neither are wheelchair accessible. Many people who need a wheelchair do not have one and even those who do often still cannot leave their house due to access issues. Consequently it is difficult for me and other persons with disabilities to go to church, but we know that this is not a hindrance for them to grow in faith and in the knowledge of the Lord. We know that the Bible is really essential for them to grow spiritually. However there are other tools that can help persons with disability to grow in faith as here we have a Christian radio station. They can listen to their broadcast. I am thinking that it

will be helpful for them if they can have a pm (portable mission) radio. It has only one station which is the Christian station, so they have nothing to do but to listen on it. The price of PM radio is Php 400.00 (15 NZD). Distribution of these things will be one of the projects/ plans of PCFFD.

### **A CHANGE OF FOCUS FOR BRICCIO**

With the SPED school being integrated with Hebron College, Briccio's focus on ministry with the disabled has changed. What excites him is being involved with local government departments advising on ways of providing adequate structures so that disabled people's physical needs are met in the community setting. To that end Briccio has already established a group of people with the same vision. It has become clear that Briccio needs to be free to pursue this passion, so he has resigned from CBM in order to continue doing that. However, he and the family will continue to live at Hebron, as his wife Marina is the registrar of the Bible College and his son Samuel attends our High School. Leslie

de la Ganar who has worked with Briccio for a number of years is coordinating the outreach ministry to disabled from Hebron.



Kirsty Anderson

## A GREAT NEED FOR VISITING

Kirsty with Leslie visited a couple of people with disabilities - 25 year old Evelyn, shown on the previous page with her father, and 16 year old Emjay who has a lot of difficulty speaking. He like Evelyn has cerebral palsy, and has never been to school because of poverty, and Evelyn's parents showed a lot of interest in the possibility of her coming to Hebron. Leslie is keen to spend one day a week visiting but needs someone to drive her and help her with getting into some of the houses, but there are few CBM staff able to assist her in this way. Being practically house bound, there is a real need for these two and others to have access to spiritual help and encouragement.



### YOU TOO CAN KNOW HIM

This Encourager is full of amazing testimonies from people who know and love the Lord. If you aren't a Christian, have you thought about bringing Him into your life and coming to know Him just as they do? Christianity is a relationship with Jesus. The basic message of the Bible is that Jesus is the Son of God, and He came to die on the cross for our sins. We can ask for His forgiveness, and He will give it to us as well as eternal life, and furthermore He promises to be with us always!

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

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Onehunga, Auckland 1643

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<b>Kumbayah - St David's Presbyterian Church - Palmerston North</b>		
Ann Bennett		06 355 2818
<b>Bible Friends - Wanganui</b>		
Louise Rostron	rostrons@extra.co.nz	06 344 5955

# VISIT TO JOY FELLOWSHIP



Dave Junior leading the worship

Hugh and Di Willis were so blessed with staying a weekend in Canada with Dave and Ruby Hayward and their son Dave. To meet again all those folk who have visited NZ in teams from Joy Fellowship was wonderful as well as those who we had met before in Canada. To visit Lezlee's home and have lunch together was like a reunion! She has been to NZ twice.

The service on Sunday was an experience – so full of life, joy and worship! So much variety – Scripture reading, a power point, a play on how to treat people without any favourites. Jesus loved us all and so should we. There was a signed choir, all those with birthdays were sung a song separately, and Dave Junior, who very ably ran the whole service, brought the message.

There were so many wheelchairs, lots of folk with intellectual disabilities, care givers and helpers. All were included, accepted, loved and valued. They send their love and blessings to folk in New Zealand.



The Word of God is so precious



Dave Junior encouraging



The signed choir



Over 100 attend their services



Lunch with Dave, Ruby and Lezlee