

# The encourager

THE MAGAZINE OF ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST

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and much more



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# In every desert of trial God

## HOW GOD USES US

Dawn Bakker writes:

### *I am a Christian Lady who was diagnosed and operated on for cancer.*

While waiting for treatment God told me I was healed, and I rejoiced that I was, but later when I started to have trouble walking, I said, "Lord, You told me I was healed." He said, "And so you are, you have the ultimate healing, that is the inner healing of the Spirit and the heart!" Oh the power of those words that gave me so much peace and still do, I thought of Romans 8:28 (GNT), We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God—those whom He has called according to His plan. They still bring great comfort to me now that I have physical disabilities. I need crutches for short distance walking, a mobility scooter or wheelchair. God uses me in different ways now, sometimes it might be in sending emails, and I have later been told that they were so inspiring, or that they arrived at just the right time, or that 'I just needed that'. Often when I make phone calls it is the same. Other times it might be just

a friendly smile as I pass someone, or a friendly hello that often turns to a conversation, or a gentle touch.

When I have a lot of pain and have to rest, I have a quiet time where I can talk to and hear God in the stillness, and I pray many prayers for others. I know there are many more ways of doing God's work given in 1 Corinthians 12:6 (NLV), but it is the same God who uses all these ways in all people.

As I was coming home from town one day I felt prompted to go a different way. On passing some flax bushes I saw a man lying half under them in the sun.

I said, "Hello. What a beautiful day", and he replied, "What's good about it, I said, "God loves us - you and I." As I drove on he called out, "Hey Lady!" As I stopped my mobility scooter he ran up behind me and said, "Why did you speak to me?. You're the first person to speak to me for over a week." We talked, He was a lonely homeless young man, God wanted to reach out to him, Genesis 21:17 says, "For God has heard the voice of the lad where he is," and Deuteronomy 4:36 says, "Out of heaven He let



**"Lord, You told me I was healed!"** He said, "And so you are, you have the ultimate healing, that is the inner healing of the Spirit and the heart!"

you hear His voice, that He might instruct you." I believe this is what happened that day. The boy was lost and lonely, God knew, the Holy Spirit prompted, I obeyed, and God acted. We were both very blessed that Day.

John 14 (GNT) says, "If you love me, obey my commandments. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. He is the Holy Spirit."

We all need to be aware of God's prompting's, it may be a small

still voice speaking, a feeling to do or say something, or maybe a just-knowing that we need to be aware of, listen to and be obedient.

## CAMPS IN 2015

13-15 March	Kids Connect CBM	Motu Moana, Blockhouse Bay
20-22 March	Wellington CFFD	El Rancho, Waikanae
27-29 March	Auckland CFFD	Carey Park, Henderson, Auckland
16-19 April	Torch Camp	Capernwray Bible College, Cambridge
23-26 October	Elevate National Camp	Totara Springs, Matamata



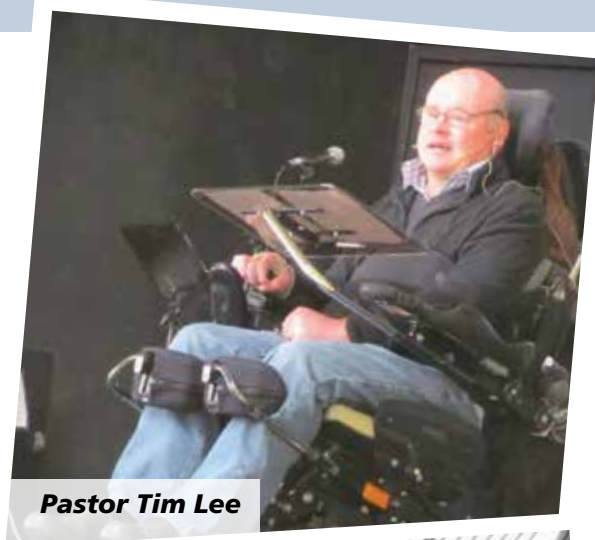
## FOUR OF THE SPEAKERS AT NATIONAL CAMP HAD DISABILITIES

*Joan Parker wrote, "Having speakers with disabilities from NZ that were in leadership was so encouraging."*

What I was hearing was that people felt they could identify with them, and therefore could hear what God was encouraging them to do, so hearts and lives were being opened to God. I do hope you find more people with disabilities that can encourage and are in leadership within the church."

The campers comments for every speaker were without exception ultra-enthusiastic and included: "amazing", "humbling", "awesome", "uplifting", "so much to take in", and "eye-opening words of wisdom and encouragement."

**Jason Forbes, a Presbyterian Minister,** is shown on the right taking his elective.



**Pastor Tim Lee**



**Pastor Immanuel Koks**



**Natalie Te Paa**



**Pastor Bruce McDonald**





"If I had asked people  
they would have said fas

## SAYING YES TO HARDSHIP AND ADVERSITY

*Hi, I'm Karen, and here's a bit of my journey: I'm a single mum with two teenage boys. Judah is 15, and has Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Jordan is 17 and has 'Teenage-itis'!*



I love my boys and I'm proud of them! I'm living under the grace and mercy of my Lord Jesus Christ! He is my everything; and I'm learning to be carried by Him. Here is an excerpt pretty much straight out of my diary from a few months ago, which I thought a few people would relate to.

Wow, I finally get it! After a whole day of meandering around, unmotivated to do much, but desperately wanting to hear YOUR voice; I finally hear You! Thrashing through music DVD's, and CD's; hoping one will jump out saying "Listen to me!!", I finally resort to YouTube and stumble across a message by a lady I've heard of before, but never listened to.

It was a testimony by a lady called Heidi Baker, and of her missionary days in a very difficult place. At the end of her message she said something that really got my heart. She talked about saying "yes" to God; to whatever He asks us to do. She reeled off a whole list of things to say "yes" to; feeding the poor, healing the sick, preaching, prosperity, sharing God's love, etc etc. Then she said: "To hardship, to adversity, to the cup God gives you!"

What? Yes to *that*? Dear Lord Father, I have been saying "No, no, no," for years now: "No", to accepting divorce (an ugly word), "No", to Judah's condition, "No", to having a low income, "No", to being alone.

I have not said "Yes" to the cup You have poured out for me!

It's easy to accept the glory and the good times, and say yes to favour and wealth. But it's not easy to walk through trials and brokenness.

Sometimes we need to say "Yes Lord," to the difficult road we have to travel. He has promised that He will never leave us or forsake us. He **IS** going to give us the strength to live out each day. We **CAN** trust Him. Psalm 34:18 says, "God is close to the broken hearted, and saves all those who are crushed in spirit."

Now; a little word about trust. One day God spoke to me through a broken mirror! A lovely dress mirror accidentally broke. It was a bit too broken to keep, so I decided to smash it properly and make it into art. I chose a word to make out of the pieces, and started carefully placing all the bits of smashed mirror where they needed to go. My hands got a few cuts on them as I glued them down.

But that's when it hit me. I looked down at the smashed pieces of the once beautiful mirror, and realised that was my life! The word I had chosen was TRUST. My trust in people and God had been

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what they wanted,  
ter horses” - Henry Ford



smashed. With each thing that had happened in my life beyond my control, it was as if someone had come along with a hammer, and smashed my trust. My brother died too young; “Smash!” My marriage ended; “Smash!” My son has the same disability as my brother; “Smash!” All my dreams, it seemed: “Smash!”

But here I was, a broken person, and God was putting back together my life and my trust in Him; one piece at a time with His bleeding hands.

As I finished the mirror, I noticed it was the dark coloured Grout in between the glass that made the word stand out. For without

*This testimony of Karen Linton was one of the items in the CFFD service described on page 6.*

the dark times in our lives, God’s beauty in us would not stand out. I also noticed that all the cracks were causing the light to be reflected so much more than on a normal ‘perfect’ mirror.

The very mirror I had wanted to throw away because it was so damaged had now become the most beautiful piece of artwork because of its cracks. It just needed a ‘Saviour’ to look at it and say, “I can see that this is broken and damaged beyond repair, but I can also see so much more than that. I’ll make it more beautiful than before!”

That is the very thing that God does with our lives. He’ll never give up on us because we are ‘too broken’, or because we find it hard to trust Him. When we come to Him, He begins to heal our trust, and build our lives into something beautiful. One piece at a time.



## DISABILITY NO DETERRENT TO REACHING OUT FOR CHRIST!

**R**enee Tobin is running night classes for a church in Napier. In her class is Richard Mear, a man with a number of disabilities. He is bipolar and has extreme hearing loss. He started by giving out 400 [www.biblein11.com](http://www.biblein11.com) cards. Now some 4 months later his tally has reached just over 2000. How has he been doing it? He has been going around all the shops and businesses in the entire city of Napier and he then moved on to the industrial area.

He says, “This is the most fulfilling and rewarding thing I have done in my whole life!” He even has clientele. By this I mean he has people in some of the shops who keep asking for more cards. These are non-Christians wanting to show other non-Christians. When Jesus said in Acts 1:8 we are to evangelise our Jerusalem first, this is what this man is doing. He is soaking his own town first with the gospel. For him Jerusalem is his Jerusalem. All this is spite of disability. What a champion!

For six years Richard has been coming up for prayer for healing for his mental illness. A year ago he got his first medication reduction. Two weeks ago he got a second. His persistence and obedience to God and the joy he gets from sharing the good news is really helping open the way for God to heal him.

**Julian Batchelor (Evangelism Strategies International)**





# True faith goes into operation when the

## THOUGHTS AFTER ASKING A CFFD TEAM TO MINISTER IN MY CHURCH



STEVE



JACQUI

*Pastor Royce Franklin of the Whangarei Liberty Christian Fellowship writes:*

First of all I would like to say what joy it was to have the team minister at our church recently led by Jacqui and Steve Gardner. What an encouraging message each one brought that was intertwined with their personal testimony. How they gave the glory to God as He works through His Son, Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit using them as an example of His grace and power, showing it was not because some part of their body was not functioning in the right order of a normal way but the way of their disability. This was a reason that He gave them the strength to try harder to succeed where others would just give-up using their disability as an excuse to do nothing.

We were challenged again and again to get-up and make a difference in this world like they

were, with a word of kindness and a helping hand or just a smile. Both the songs they sang and the harp as backing music, and the testimonies they gave were full of fire. We could all feel the anointing flowing in our meeting with the smile of the Father over-shadowing the whole team and all of us at the church. What an experience it was! I personally feel sorry for the churches that don't open up their pulpit to them from time to time so the richness of God's grace can be seen. God is using them to make us grateful for our own abilities and the keeping power of God on our own personal lives so that we can declare 'There go I by the grace of God.' So many churches have shut their eyes to the fact that there is a need that all the disabled people should feel wanted and comfortable to be in the house of God. I truly believe we have to answer to God for not making sure that we have them involved in our services on a regular basis. We read that the disabled are a part of our body which is hurting, as if they have been rejected because they have a disability. Yes, many of the churches of Jesus Christ have failed because we have left them out

instead of using them in ministry.

I am sure that you would know that the world uses the blind singers and such like that touch the hearts of thousands of people with their talents, and yet the church makes very little provision in their music groups and other parts of the church service. We must face up to the fact that we have failed the disabled in a big way.

My personal prayer, *"Please Father, by the power of Your Son, cause your leaders to wake to their responsibility and open up their hearts and their pulpits to Your will and purpose, so that we may all embrace this part of the body of Christ that you died for, as we have neglected them."* Each pastor will have to go and act on all these things. Let us stand before Jesus on that day and hear from His lips 'Well done you good and faithful servant.'

### Joke

Paddy says, "Mick, I'm thinking of buying a Labrador."  
"Blow that" says Mick.  
"Have you seen how many of their owners go blind?!"

## KEVIN BRIDGEMAN, A MUCH-LOVED JOY MINISTRIES PASTOR, HAS DIED

Written by: Jean Griffiths

We all knew Kevin as quite a joker, having a great sense of humour and never knowing if he really was being serious. That twinkle in the eye and mischievous smile was a prelude to pulling ones leg, or that tap on the shoulder to find nobody there, or just the downright jokes that had you cracking up. At times, not only would he inflict humorously onto a person, but he would also take the brunt of them.

But putting that aside, Kevin was a man of integrity, kind-hearted, loving, a servant and warrior for Christ, and a man after God's own heart. His involvement with Elevate, which is over 20 years, was mainly with Joy Ministries, a ministry for the intellectually disabled.

He and his wife Jan have been running services once a month in Central Auckland and at the National camps in Matamata. They also participated in seminars, helping people understand and relate to ones with special needs.

Every year Kevin and Jan organised a Disability Sunday service at their church. Joy Ministries was always a highlight as the folks took part in skits, music and testimonials. The dramas were simple and effective with a great message which applied to all of us. Kevin was gifted with a compassionate heart and had an affinity in relating to the JOY folks and was well loved by them.

JOY ministries is filled with creative skits and dramas, joyful music, teaching the Word, going out

on picnics, enjoying a good feed, having lots of fun and laughter and especially the famous themed dances at Ranfurly Home. Kevin never sat back, he was amongst it all. He loved to dress up at any opportunity, in particular taking advantage of the fancy dress dances at camps. There were times when he was unrecognisable, until that sneaky little laugh came out of his mouth.

Kevin, we are going to miss your antics, your wisdom, your cheeky smile and the love, hugs and warmth you gave to us all. We love you and thank you that we could be part of your life.



*Did you know 2014 is the Bicentenary (200 years) of the Gospel in Aotearoa (NZ)?*

Rev Samuel Marsden arrived in the Bay of Islands on 22nd Dec and took a Christmas Day service on the 25th. He started with the singing of Psalm 100, then preached from Luke 2 v 10, "*Behold I bring you tidings of great joy*". Many Maoris became Christians. We praise and thank God for the arrival of the Gospel.

For more information [www.gospel2014.org](http://www.gospel2014.org) and [www.hopeproject.co.nz](http://www.hopeproject.co.nz)

A group of Christians have put together and delivered to every home in NZ an excellent booklet called "*Hope for All*". Pray people will read it and come to faith in Jesus.





Silence is sometimes

Margie Willers writes on

# OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

## PART TWO



### CURES FOR DISCOURAGEMENT.

#### 1. SUPERNATURAL HELP.

One of the most exciting things to discover is that supernatural help is available. In Scripture the only time an angel visited and actually cooked a meal was for a discouraged man.

That happened for Elijah. *And, he lay and slept, and an angel touched him, and said, "Arise and eat". And he looked and behold there was a cake baked on the coals and a cruse of water at the head – and he did eat and drink and lay down again.* Isn't that beautiful? - God's tremendous concern.

God really cares. He's a God of compassion!

#### 2. DON'T GO IT ALONE.

Elijah became discouraged when he found himself all alone. Scripture clearly exhorts us not to try and fight life's battles on our own. Our reason for resorting to doing so is – PRIDE! Ecclesiastes Chapter 4 vs 9 – 10: *Two are better than one, for they have a good return for their work: If one falls down his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!* One puts 1,000 to flight – a twosome puts 10,000 to flight!

Even the disciples who did many signs and wonders were sent out in two's by Jesus: Paul & Barnabas, Peter & John, Elijah & Elisha. Even King David (a man after God's own heart), God gave him Jonathan.

It's important that we don't go it by ourselves. Don't fall into the trap of an 'independent- spirit'! Some people would rather have a breakdown and go and backslide into the world's ways than own up to someone alongside them and say, "I'm struggling, will you pray with me?" It's a dangerous way to live. The paths of Christian men and women are filled with gravesides of those who tried walking it alone.

**The Word of God says – DON'T!**

#### 3. ENCOURAGEMENT.

A teacher pinned a large white poster onto the wall. The poster featured a sizeable black dot as its centre-piece. 'What do you see?' he asked. Several moments lapsed - there came certain disagreement.

A student suggested, 'Plenty of white', whilst others gave attention and reference to the black spot! This is an apt illustration of people who constantly give attention to the warts and weaknesses of others, rather than expressing appreciation for their excellent strengths and their qualities.

Criticism is a 'cancer of the kingdom' - Cancer spreads and it's a killer! One of the saddest errors I've observed in ministry is Christians downing one another. The devil must have a field day. When given to criticism we actually become instruments of Satan's greatest weapon.

**I provoke you to exhort – to encourage one another. Now GO to it!**

#### 4. REACHING OUT TO OTHERS.

A major cure to stop pity-parties is to get your focus onto others, see other peoples' situations and their needs. Jesus came to serve not to be served. Here's an interesting test! Take a note pad and for the duration of one week, write down two lists:

First, how much do we serve and minister to ourselves? Then, how much do we serve and minister to others? Like myself, you may be flabbergasted to discover just how self-centred we humans can be?

#### 5. PRAYER.

Some years back Jerry Falwell, leader of the majority, was a well-known speaker next to Billy Graham. When



he commenced Bible College he asked the local church if he could take a Sunday school class. He acquired the necessary material for teaching - he had one student! He taught for four weeks then one more student was added. The numbers did not increase, and as the months passed by he became increasingly discouraged. Understandably, enough was enough! He went back to the superintendent with the teaching material and said, "See you later - I've had enough!"

The superintendent looked him straight in the eye. As he did, he spat this comment, "You always looked a quitter, when you first came to collect those teaching notes I knew you wouldn't make it in ministry!" Now, those harsh words had the potential to destroy - to finish the man from ever discovering his God-given potential.

"Wait a minute!" Jerry Falwell eyeballed him. "Show me a room for prayer!"

For the next two weeks he spent time in earnest prayer for his class. He went out into the parks and searched for every eleven-year old child he could find. Within a few months numbers had swelled to 56. These were mostly kids from unchurched families. They made sound conversions to Christianity and greatly influenced their families.

Jerry Falwell preached on over 500 TV stations and was a much sought after speaker. He did not give up! Prayer was the 'key' that turned the situation around. But, take heed. Should God move you into a different work or ministry, sometimes those closest to you may not come through for you with insight nor the support nor the understanding you expected from them.

I've learned from experience - misunderstandings - accusations from 'the brethren' can be the most difficult times. Words have such power, they cut deep into the spirit, and can break a person's character.

If we allow ourselves to dwell on accusations, the pain will increase, they'll blow us apart. I encourage you to go seek someone of wise and godly counsel. Be humble enough to say, "I need help to work through this emotional hurt. Will you pray with me, please?"

As long as we struggle in the dark, Satan will continue to have a field day. By exposing the problem to the light - Satan hates light - he'll have no more power. You can then move forward with a freedom of spirit.

## 5. FINAL CURE: PRAISE.

ISA. 61 V 3 *Put on the garment of praise for the Spirit of heaviness.*

Quit grumbling and complaining. Let's exercise our praise. Many Christians, though assaulted and stretched by circumstances, have testified to this fact, that by putting praise into practice they've emerged from their difficulties - different, developed, and dynamic! Praise evokes the power of heaven.

So, rather than living in defeat, a victim entrapped by circumstances, put on the garment of praise- and SOAR in your spirit. I'm not implying that the difficulties will suddenly vanish and disappear.

Nevertheless, Bring a sacrifice of praise. Experience His releasing power. You can then move out from discouragement, depression and despair. You can become an over-comer! No longer a victim - but a VICTOR!

## RE: THE ENCOURAGER

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[www.elevatedt.org.nz/resources/encourager-magazine/](http://www.elevatedt.org.nz/resources/encourager-magazine/)

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*Just released*

**"Creating Welcoming Churches"**

Written by Rev Vicky Terrell for  
Disability Spirituality and Faith Network



*"You don't think your way into  
your way into a new kind of*

## GOD SPOKE CLEARLY

*By Linda Gill who told of her  
call to start Pinnacle House  
in earlier Encouragers*

**A**n agency in Nelson approached us and asked if we would consider taking at Pinnacle House, Amir, a young Iranian boy. Due to unusual circumstances his family no longer lived in NZ and he had an advocate looking out for his best interests who had heard about Pinnacle House and liked what he saw. He met with me and told me all about Amir, and I chatted to others who knew him. I had not actually met Amir, but I decided that no, we could not help. We were just starting out, we were not ready. He lived in Nelson, we were based in Richmond, transport would be a problem, we did not know him and it could be very difficult. It all seemed just a little too hard. I was very sorry, but no. One day maybe, but not yet.

That night I picked up my Bible and carried on reading (I was in the book of Job and was up to chapter 29), Job was defending himself to those great friends of his, those 'comforters,' he was telling them that no they were wrong, he was a righteous man, and he was busy telling them why.

He had been respected, he had delivered the poor, he had cared for orphans, cared for widows, he had been eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, he had been a father to the needy, and then...he says in verse 16 this line *"and I searched the cause of him I did not know"*. I couldn't read any further – I knew without a shadow of a doubt that God was speaking to me about Amir, whom I did not know. The next morning I rang back and said could we meet again and talk about Amir.

I didn't know how we would do it, but I knew that God had spoken and that was enough. It has turned out to be a huge blessing. He is an absolute delight and we love him very much.

His mother now lives back in NZ, and she is a wonderful Christian woman who has a story of her own to tell. She says that Pinnacle House has answered her prayers. We didn't even know that she was praying.

Everywhere I go I boast that Pinnacle House is supported by our Grace Church family. And for that I am incredibly grateful. We cannot do this alone, we need our church family with us. Joining forces with God is what it is all about. God is not a distant being, watching from afar, with a set of rules judging our behaviour. He is so close, He is right here, and He is wanting to speak to us if we are wanting to listen. These are young lives that God loves beyond measure. What a privilege to stand alongside!



## Do You Know God?

If you have never experienced God's inner peace, perhaps you have not met His Son. Jesus came into the world to make peace between you and God by dying on the cross to bring you into a right relationship with the Father (Rom. 5:1). If you will accept Jesus as your personal Saviour, all your sins will be forgiven, and He will give you His peace (John 14:27). You can use the following prayer or your own words:

Lord Jesus, I believe You are truly God's Son, who died on the cross to atone for my sins. I receive You as my personal Saviour and confess that I have sinned against You in thought, word and deed. Please forgive all my wrongdoing, and let me live in relationship with You from now on. Thank You for saving me. Help me live a life that is pleasing to You.

## AMEN



a new kind of living. You live  
of thinking." - Henri Nouwen

# Sink or Swim

**Acts 20:35.**

*It is more blessed  
to give than to  
receive.*

Our family attended the National Camp for the first time this year which had an especially huge impact on my three teenagers who were attending as helpers, Moana (18), Wallace (17), and Aukilani Jnr. (16).

When it comes to my teenagers, they're usually thinking about their career in sports, going to the Police Academy or studying carpentry. I'm always strategising how I can teach them about serving others and those with a disability. Of course

as I, their mother, have a disability, they're used to mine. So when I asked them if they were interested in attending the National Camp as helpers, I could see how their brains were ticking away, and knew they were thinking, "Yay, HOLIDAY!",

because let's face it, out of 365 days in a year, what is four days of their time supporting others.

During the camp my teenagers developed an amazing connection with four youngsters: Ronnie, Vince, Taylor, and Harley. The transformation amongst this lot was so infectious, watching them bond was truly heart-warming and wonderful to witness. My teenagers went from being reserved and thrown into the deep end, to leaving that weekend



with having made a lot of fond memories, even to looking forward to next year's camp.

I must admit when one thinks about the National camp and being partnered with a person with a disability, one thinks about the hard work, and how uncomfortable it might be, but in fact it is so rewarding and gives a sense of achievement. So if you didn't make it this year, when next year's camp comes around ensure that you register and get there!

## TANYA FROM AUSTRALIA SHARES ABOUT HER TIME AT THE CENTRE.

I was inspired to go to New Zealand because I know that God has such a huge heart for those with disabilities, and I believe that God was going to show me a lot about His way of using His people to do His work. And He did! I spent a lot of time at the Drop in Centre where people with both physical and intellectual disabilities come for approximately 4 hours between 10 - 2pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. When they first arrive they are assisted to read the Bible for themselves. This is a great way to help them with their individual walk with God.

A time of worship and singing is next, and the members love this! During the time of individually reading the

Bible I witnessed a beautiful lady in her forties treasure a braille Bible like true treasure. She prayed the most beautiful prayer to the Lord asking the Lord to show her what this verse really meant, as she didn't understand it. She just longed to understand God's Word!

Repetition was really important for lessons and memory verses as was the importance of assisting individuals to spend time with God for themselves. This was done by focusing on one verse and having one A4 sheet of paper and assisting the members to write what they think the verse means. In the afternoon session they got an opportunity to share their times with God with everyone else. This was such an encouraging time as I began to realise how much God had revealed to them. I noticed that members with disabilities embraced different ways that they were learning the verses and how they treasured and spoke the Word of God to others. The words from the Bible become real gems to them!



# When you play with sin, y

With permission from the Salvation Army Magazine

## 10 YEARS HEALED

*From the time she was nine, Jess suffered from a debilitating form of illness called fibromyalgia. This year, she celebrates 10 years since she was miraculously healed. Now a Salvation Army officer (pastor), Jess tells her story of fierce faith and freedom.*

I was nine when my world began to crumble. During a netball game I hurt my knee, but it didn't come right, so I was put in a splint. The pain started spreading into my back, so I was given crutches, and the pain spread to my arms. It was the beginning of years of scans, specialists and tests, while the pain became more and more excruciating. I was hospitalised, but told that it must be 'in my head'.

My parents were Salvation Army officers and they were moved to Hastings. It was there that we found a specialist who finally diagnosed me with the most severe form of fibromyalgia—a condition that causes your body to have extreme pain reactions to even the slightest bumps and knocks. I did a trigger test and learnt that I had all of the 18 possible trigger points, to the most severe degree.

I was 12-and-a-half when I was diagnosed, but it's usually a condition that doesn't occur before middle age. Fibromyalgia affects your nerve endings, so that even having a shower felt like needles in my back, and being jostled at school was agonising. I was a teenager living in an 80-year-old's body.

By the time I was 15, I really couldn't remember what life without pain was like. I had a huge spiritual battle going on in my mind, I got to such a dark place that I couldn't see the point of living and I had to decide to choose life over death. I said, 'The point in living is you, Jesus.' I chose to believe that I wasn't a mistake, and that God's purposes for me were good.

Fibromyalgia matured me beyond my years. When I was 15, I met my first love—and my lifelong love. Daryn started coming to the church where my parents were Salvation Army officers. He was a farmer, and here I was, a delicate, frail girl. Daryn asked me to go



on holiday with him and about 20 of his extended family to Brisbane, Australia. It was the trip of a lifetime, but I found the plane ride so painful. I really wanted to join in with all the activities, but my body was breaking down and I ended up staying at the hotel. My mum called me to say there was a healing crusade on in Brisbane. But it was the day that we were booked to leave, so I wondered if I should even mention it to Daryn.

But as soon as he heard about it, he said, 'Right, we're going!' He changed our flights and Daryn's mum agreed to stay on with us—her only problem was that she needed medication, but when she looked, she discovered she'd brought enough with her for the extra days. We even knew where the meeting was, because we'd already been to the event centre on our holiday.

It was a huge stadium and we arrived about an hour-and-a-half early, but to our shock, it was already nearly full. Daryn ran ahead and we just got in. Behind him, I slowly and painfully made my way up several flights of steps. The first part of the meeting talked about our 'spiritual healing', and hundreds made their way to the front to receive salvation. Then they said, 'And now, get ready for your physical healing!' We were so far away, but started making our way down the stairs. I was in agony, and we couldn't get anywhere near the front. In the end, I gave up. I was so disappointed and angry. I was just gutted and my faith was dashed.



There was another meeting the next night, but I didn't even think of going. The next day Daryn started reading a book, *Waking the Dead*, by John Eldredge. He flicked it open, and there was a paraphrase of Isaiah 61:1, a scripture that God had previously given us: *God has sent me on a mission. I have some great news for you. God has sent me to restore and release something and that something is you. I am here to give you back your heart and set you free.*

Daryn and I went for a walk along the beach and I just started crying. I had so many hurts, I had missed out on so much, I couldn't do what others could do. I was physically crippled and my heart was scarred. As I poured out my heart to God, he started healing it. This fire started burning within us, and Daryn said, 'Let's go back [to the crusade] again!'

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## A walking miracle

Something changed within me; I felt that God had healed my heart. We arrived three hours early this time, but the stadium was still full. I hobbled up flights of stairs with great agony, but strangely, I started praying, 'Thank you, God, for my healing ... I'm not going to leave until I get my healing.'

When the time came to go to the front, thousands of people were trying to get through and I was being painfully jostled, but all of a sudden, all these people in front of me parted and I was able to go right up the front. Later, I learnt that Mum had been praying that God 'would part the red sea' for me.

We were packed in like sardines, and someone yelled out, 'Fire!' and hundreds of people in the front fell flat on their backs, including me and Daryn. He jumped straight back up and yanked me up saying, 'She's healed! She's healed!' I would have needed an ambulance if he'd done that before, so I thought, 'Crumbs, I better check it out.' My healing wasn't immediate, but as I kept praying and checking, each time my trigger points became less and less tender.

I kept saying, 'Thank you, God, for my healing.' What happened next was completely foreign and strange to us. The only way I can describe it was like a tunnel opened up inside me and my mouth opened wide and this huge gagging noise came out of me. I just said, 'I don't care how this happens, I'm not leaving here without my healing.'



The crusade finished and people were packing up, and we were still at the front, worshipping and praying. I said, 'I want to run up some stairs!' And I motored it out of the building, up the stairs, down the stairs, and out to the carpark. In the middle of the carpark, I suddenly keeled over and started gagging again. Then I got up and ran again.

In the car, I did these three, huge, disgusting burps from the deepest place in me—I only say this because I want to be honest about how my healing took place; it wasn't pretty!—and I finally had a sense that it was finished. Neither me nor Daryn had ever seen or experienced anything like we did that night.

When we got back to the hotel, it was about 4 am. I had a shower and started crying because it didn't hurt. The plane ride was awesome, I was up and down the aisles; I felt like I had a whole new body. When we got home I hugged my brother tight, something we hadn't been able to do since I was nine.

I went to the doctor and told him that I had been healed. He did all the tests and signed me off as 'healed by God', there was no other medical explanation—there is no cure for fibromyalgia. The faith God gave me for my healing on that night was a gift from the Holy Spirit, and God healed my heart first, before he healed my physical body. Over the next few years I would say to God, 'Thank you for my healing' every day. And I continue to thank Him. I knew I had to claim my healing because the enemy would want to take it from me.

At the age of 17, Daryn and I were married, with my parents marrying us. **Cont. next page**



Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, to all the people you can, as long as you can.

## The Healer

Over the years, I have pondered why God heals some and not others. The only answer I can come up with is that God can heal and He will, whether it's this side of eternity or not.

My beautiful cousin had a tough battle with cancer, and we prayed for her healing. We went to see her and her body was frail and shutting down, but she was praying: 'I have hope, I have a future, I have a destiny that is yet awaiting me. My life is not over, I have a new beginning just begun, I have a hope. 'On Easter Sunday, we received the news that she had passed away. I was so angry with God. I went for a walk by myself and cried out, 'God, why did You heal me and not her?' And I heard this voice saying, 'I have—I have healed her.'

Jesus prayed that the cup of suffering would be taken from Him, but concluded, 'Not My will, but yours be done.' He suffered and died, and only in death did God's true glory come to pass. I believe in healing and pray for healing—but whether it's this side of eternity or the other, is in God's hands.

This year, I celebrated 10 years since I was miraculously healed of fibromyalgia. I have been able to get married and have two beautiful children. I am living a life that I could never have thought possible. And for that, I still thank God for my healing.

*This article by Ingrid Barratt is included with permission from the 'War Cry' magazine, 20 September 2014*

## LOOKING BACK AT NATIONAL CAMP

Dave Palmer writes,

The camp was brilliant because God was there almost to the point there was little room for anything else. I don't recall that I have ever experienced the love of God in such depth. The theme was encapsulated in this song by Matthew West, "My Name Is" that probably most of you know well that really was about 'what people have said about us that hurts' - and following that 'who does God say that I am?' I suspect that if all the other 300 campers felt as I do, there would easily be a thousand-page book of testimonies about what God did at camp in our lives, confirming that He loves us and is for us, warts and all.

The secret of keeping that 'camp feeling' is to keep our focus on God and His Word and what He is saying to us. If the emotions of a camp wear off after two or three days, it's safe to say that ten days after camp, right back in the reality of home and work, there's something permanent going on in me and others. That song is still stuck in my heart. And a couple of nights ago Mel, who has cerebral palsy and can barely talk, and who came to the camp, let us know it was the same with her too.

### Blair Woolley recalls:

*"I was in the auditorium during praise and worship and I became aware of a "different sound". Upon noticing it got slightly louder and I could hear it a lot more clearly. Words cannot describe the beauty in this sound. It was the most harmonious and holy sound I have ever heard. It was drifting down from the rafters and I have little doubt it was the sound of angels worshipping with us. I experienced this the following day as well and was overwhelmed with the beauty. A very amazing experience and one I shall never forget."*

### Royalty Fancy Dress - Saturday night at Camp





ans you can, in all the ways you can,  
ng as ever you can. - John Wesley

## FORTY HOUR FAMINE RECORD

For a number of years now our Community Liaison Officer, Leila Corban, has encouraged people at the Elevate Centre in Auckland to support World Vision's 40 Hour Famine. This year was the 40th annual famine organised by the aid organisation and the focus was one of the poorest nations in the world - Malawi.

Participants give up something for forty hours such as food

or technology while others sponsor them. Most years a faithful few at the Centre have raised several hundred dollars, but in 2014 a relatively new helper brought the total to an amazing \$1578. Blair Woolley went on line and managed to come up with a whopping \$1090 in sponsorship, making the Elevate team one of the top fundraising groups in the country.



Clockwise the photo of the team (right) shows Leila Corban, Nathan May from World Vision, Blair Woolley, Jenny Cook and Mark Grantham.

### NOTE

Is there anyone still using videos? If so, we have some Christian ones to give away. Contact the Centre.

If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to:  
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# The Saturday night at National Camp

