



*Stories
about the
unique
role of the
church*

Beyond Disability

Contents

Introduction.....	03
Excerpt from The Lost Mandate	04
How a Pastor was Impacted	05
Family and Children.....	07
Points.....	08
Testimonies/stories	08 - 14
Resources	15
Intellectual Disability.....	17
Points.....	18
Testimonies/stories	18 - 22
Resources	22
Physical Disability.....	23
Points.....	24
Testimonies/stories	24 - 29
Resources	29
Mental Health.....	31
Points.....	32
Testimonies/stories	32 - 34
Resources	34
About Us.....	35
Some Further Books and Resources for Churches	36
Further Publications from Elevate Christian Disability Trust	36
A few Christian Organisations with Useful Disability Information	37
References and Contributions	37

Introduction

“Be not conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”

As a society, New Zealand places high importance on intellectual knowledge, independence, “climbing the ladder of success” and our appearance. People with disabilities often do not fit the world’s mould. A person might have an impaired body, tightened muscles, weak bones, or disrupted nerve pathways. They may have an unsound mind.

Are we in the church conforming to the world’s thoughts and attitudes? For this is not how God sees it. The Bible says “Be not conformed to the world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Rom. 12:2. And again, “Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.” 1 Sam. 16:7. Those with disabilities have many talents which are hidden behind an exterior which makes it difficult in all sorts of ways for these to be seen.

This is where the church has a special task to enable these talents to be recognised, seen and encouraged. God has a special purpose for each and every one of us, and the church is called to bring these to the fore for all people, including those with disabilities.

The purpose of this book is to help you as a pastor, or church leader, welcome and include those with disabilities, to get to know them, to recognise their talents and to give opportunities for these to be developed. As this happens the people in your church will be encouraged to learn to reach out and embrace those with disabilities, to see not their disability but their worth as a person.

This book is not comprehensive but is instead meant as an introductory resource to disability and the church. It includes many testimonies which will show how encouragement by those in the church has opened ways for people with disabilities in their church to develop practically and spiritually, and through this the church has been blessed. This has happened over and over again, and has come about as opportunities have been made for those with disabilities to play a meaningful part in the church family, and in doing this the life of the church has been enriched.

Who is indispensable in the church?

The text in **1 Corinthians 12:12-27 NIV** reveals that the way to prevent division in the church is to have a culture of “honoring” one another - each and every one in the body of Christ. In fact, according to this Corinthian text, those who are to be most honored should be the weakest and the most vulnerable. We would be hard pressed to get more counter-culture, more prophetic than this.

Look at verse 21, “I don’t need you.” By our actions and inactions, prejudices, secret thoughts, attitudes, and inclusions or exclusions of others, we all in some measure say to some members of the body of Christ, “I don’t need you.” Black, Caucasian, Latino, Asian, fundamentalist, evangelical, Pentecostal, Catholic, liberal, poor, rich, powerful, obscure, strong, weak, lovely or unlovely – members of Christ’s body can be found saying in word or action, “I don’t need you”.

Verse 22 states that on the contrary “I don’t need you” is all wrong; it is fundamentally flawed. Now listen very carefully and closely to what God the Holy Spirit says next: “Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”

Of all the members of the body, the only ones that this text declares are “indispensable” are those who “seem to be weaker”. The Greek word used for “seem” means “only appears to be, but is not really so” as in an illusion. While we often hear

that perception is reality because what people see is real to them, this is not so with theological or philosophical truth. Thus, perceptions can be, and frequently are, false views and just wrong-headed ideas. As Christians, our minds and hearts, and thus perceptions, must align with God’s word.

While people with disabilities seem to be weaker, in actuality they are indispensable. We can’t do without them. I have visited and worshipped in scores, perhaps hundreds of churches of all sizes in various denominations and non-denominations. Most have been Christ-honouring, loving, and Bible-centred. But no matter how vibrant and healthy they may be, if they are not inclusive of people with disabilities, they are not all God has designed them to be or wants them to be. In fact, while their buildings may be full of people and programs, they are not yet full or complete as a spiritual body (Lk. 14:23b).

Taken with permission from: Pages 114,115 of The Lost Mandate: A Christ Command Revealed. Dan’l C. Markham

A pastor shares why he was so deeply impacted

It all started when the Lord very clearly led Bev and I to a new church at the end of last year – Riverbend Bible Church. As I was chatting one day with pastor Russell, my involvement with Joy Ministries came into the conversation.

He was gobsmacked, because the Lord had recently been challenging him about his lack of attention to people with disabilities, and he wanted to do something about it. Up to that point he knew nothing about Joy Ministries or CFFD. He also shared with me that in February he was going to visit Joni and Friends as part of a ministry trip to the States.

On the morning after his visit to Joni and Friends, he sent me an email – he was deeply impacted. The following is most of what he shared – it brought me to tears:

“It is 6:30am. I have been awake for over an hour – way before I needed to be – The Lord is not letting me sleep, and so I am writing this note to you before my

day starts – but somehow it has already. Oh how I wish you were with me yesterday when I was at Joni and Friends. I underwent many emotions and my heart was incredibly challenged in so many areas.”

“I believe what I heard and was challenged about, was of the Lord, and I am just wondering what the Lord would have me do, and how my life will change as a result of yesterday’s conference. I really was moved in my heart on a personal basis and also on behalf of the church.”

“We need to be not just involved with those we call disabled but actively seeking them for Christ with love, friendship and the Gospel – we are presently doing none of these. But you both coming among us as a church has added a richness to us that is exciting and of great opportunity for all involved – and of course initially for what the Lord might be doing among the disabled whom we can reach out to.”

“I was humbled yesterday as Joni reached her hand out to me and asked me to hold it – she said she could not feel anything, but it makes the contact that is so necessary in friendships. While she could not feel anything and her hands and arms are of no practical use, the Lord has been her hands and arms for over 41 years, and it is like I have had no arms or hands in comparison to what she has done... I feel that I have been the disabled person for all those years, and I don’t want to be anymore.”

The first Sunday after Russell arrived back from that trip, he shared with the church some of what had happened, and that he could envision the day when we would have to widen the aisles to accommodate wheelchairs.

Colin Winters

Family & Children



Testimonies & Stories

A family with a child or parent who has a disability is primarily a family. They still have the variety of challenges and needs as any family does. Disability brings additional challenges and blessings on top of these, but it does not cancel out all that being a family is expected to encompass.

- When a member of a family has a disability the whole family is affected. If a child has a disability both the parents and siblings are also impacted, and in different ways. If a parent has a disability this is also true for the spouse and children.
- Disability can demand a significant amount of time and effort, for medical appointments, therapy sessions, additional needs during day to day life activities, and many more things. This can make it difficult for the needs of other family members to be met and can put a strain on family relationships.
- Initial diagnosis can be a stressful and challenging time, but this is not the only time a family need support. If you are aware of the stages of grief you will know there is a process each family member will go through and experience differently. As children with disabilities reach the age of an expected milestone there is new grief as families come to new understanding of how the disability will affect their child. This can also be so for the child themselves.
- Siblings or children of someone with a disability can sometimes feel overlooked, as the practical needs of the family member with a disability require more time and attention. A marriage can often feel strain due to this required time and attention as well.
- The following stories give a glimpse into what it can be like to be or have a family member with a disability. There are some great resources and books available to assist with including a child with a disability in a church. A key point worth mentioning though, is when considering how to include a child who has a disability in your church, your best resource is the parents.

“When a diving accident in 1967 robbed me of the use of my hands and legs, I found myself in a hospital ward wondering if I would ever smile and be hopeful again. I had become just statistical data – another member of the population affected by disabilities. And I was dangerously close to becoming a number on the list of the depressed.

The darkness lifted when friends from my church rallied around my family, offering help, hope, and positive meaning for my life. It was the church that kept us connected to reality, opening doors of possibility and paving the way for me to re-enter the mainstream of life. The church made all the difference.”

Joni Eareckson Tada (In Special Needs Ministry for Children – Creating a welcoming place for families whose children have special needs)

Real healing came through the people in the church family

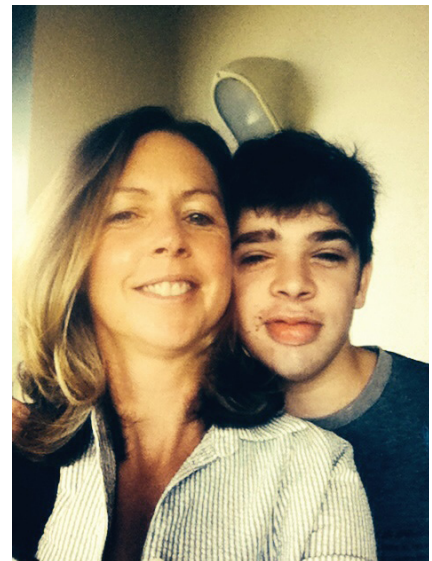
We came from the UK via Australia. Ten months after arriving in New Zealand we found ourselves at City Impact Church. The church, about half an hour's drive from our home, is not exactly convenient, but we wouldn't go anywhere else unless God moved us.

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 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.”

My blindness was the best thing that ever happened to me

At ten weeks old, I was diagnosed as being legally blind. A lot of parents would be devastated at this, but mine overcame their initial shock and sadness, and raised me as they'd raise any other "normal" child ... just with a few little adaptations. They got an amazing lady called Ainsley in to work with me on tactile and audio things, developing my senses of touch and hearing. While sighted people learn from colours, shapes and scenery, I learnt by texture, taste and sounds.

Yes, we had our struggles, my parents and I. Especially when I was little. But we fought through them well. My parents were told that I wouldn't walk until I was two-and-a-half, because I wouldn't have the visual motivation to get up and walk. But no, I was walking at 14 months instead, and was able to walk down the aisle as the flower girl on my parents' wedding day.

We were also told that I'd never attend a mainstream kindergarten or school, and would have to be sent away to a special school to get the education I'd need. But my parents jumped up and down and fought for this, and I've been fully mainstreamed ever since. Yes, I had to use Braille books and technology rather than print, and learn through tactile and auditory means rather than visual, but I did it. There have been many more occasions



where my parents and I have had to fight for things, but it was worth it in the end! I've found out that you can be bitter about having a "disability", or you can get better at the things you can do and exceed expectations. I know what I'd choose!

I have a quote on my wall that says, "One of the greatest pleasures in life is doing things people say you cannot do." So true! On so many occasions, people with "disabilities" are put in the Too-Hard basket because people think we're unable to do something because we're blind, deaf, or in a wheelchair. Okay, maybe I can't do some of the things sighted people can do. But I do other things instead

Story continued on next page ►

that not many other people can do. There are so many advantages to blindness, and they cancel out the rare disadvantages to my situation. From silly little things like being able to use the mobility carparking spots in carparks, jump cues in theme parks and the airport, get special discounts or things, and being an eco-friendly citizen because I don't necessarily need light to operate! I also have the ability to judge people by personality, not by appearances. I'm blessed to have an amazing group of friends around me, because I've been drawn to people by the way they treat me and others, rather than how they look. I could be surrounded by the ugliest people in existence, and I couldn't care less. They're still good people, still people I want to spend my time with, so there!

And then there's the ability to sense the atmosphere around people, places and things. If I walk into a room where someone's upset or angry, I can tell. If I come into a positive, warm and welcoming environment, I know as soon as I walk in the door. I sense the environment around me and mould to that setting so that I can add to it in positive times and be a light in the negative.

When I was little, I asked my Mum why she made me blind if she could make my younger siblings sighted. I may have not known then, but I do now.

I responded to a salvation altar call when I was maybe ten or eleven, but didn't really have a relationship with God until I came to my incredible youth group, Wired Youth Ministry at Harbourside Church, Takapuna, in my second year of high school. Since then, my faith in God has grown and grown, making me the person I am today. Since I was little, I've always wanted to be a singer/songwriter - touring the world maybe. Singing with my favourite artists etc. But a couple of years ago now my youth pastor spoke a message on dreams and purpose, and invited us to let God stir up our dreams in our hearts, and help them come to fruition. I'd always known I wanted to be a singer/songwriter, but I felt like something was missing from that

“You can be bitter about having a “disability”, or you can get better at the things you can do and exceed expectations.”

dream. I realised that I wasn't called to be your average singer or songwriter, but to escape the norm of writing about sex, partying and drinking, and bring messages of hope, freedom, encouragement and inspiration to mainstream media through my lyrics and personality in general. Since then, I've had gig opportunities coming out of my ears, heaps of exposure in the media, and a real chance to get my name and music out there.

So what I'm basically trying to say is, God can take someone like me who others would think would be the underdog of society, and use me to do great things for Him. And He has made me a princess in His kingdom, just as He has with all who read this, even if you don't know it yet. So when people are sympathetic towards me about my blindness, I just smile and say, “No, it's okay. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me. My physical eyes may be blinded, but the eyes of my heart will always be open.”

Natalie Te Paa

A Bible study and prayer time revealed God's purpose for my life

I have this awesome nephew named Leon. He has been a gift from God to our family. He has Duchenne muscular dystrophy. Watching him grow up and face continual challenges has humbled me so often. His love for life has always encouraged me to “count my blessings”. Watching his spirit being bridled has given the family many stories and increased the laughter in the household (a tonic for the immune system that we have all benefited from).

When his disability increased and his body wasn't able to do the things his mind and soul wanted to do, this resulted in frustration and anger. Have you ever heard of a 15 year old in a wheelchair playing hooky from school?

Yes, he would be bussed to college, and for reasons only known to Leon he would skip a few classes. He'd be found 5kms away from school along the footpath. Or he'd even find hiding spots on the school grounds (under stairwells and the like).

His holiday visits to Eleos were probably a new experience for those who worked there, as he processed his “loss of physical ability”. Their love and acceptance sowed seeds in him that would help him in his journey of faith.

It wasn't until he was invited by a “carer” in his home to be a part of a bible study and prayer time that he gave serious thought to the purpose of life, and how he had a part to play in it. He was not a mistake but had a destiny and a future through a relationship with Jesus. God knew of him and was drawing him.

We could always see in Leon a strength of spirit that could only be born out of adversity. Pain does evoke you into the presence of our Heavenly Father. Leon has met with Him, and finds peace and joy in his circumstances.

Alison Mooney

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

Charles Hewlett
(Hurting Hope)

Look for why it happens and what I can do about it

The topic under discussion was the little boy with Downs Syndrome. “He’s a danger to the others,” they said. “He’s aggressive.” “He should be removed from the group.” “He has rages.”

This did not tie in with the experience of the boy. “What causes the aggressive behaviour?” I asked. They seemed to feel the explanation was patently obvious. “He’s Downs Syndrome,” they said.

To me this was a far from satisfactory explanation, and I began to observe the three-year-old boy whenever possible.

Firstly, there it was, a definite rage with blocks flying in all directions. Fortunately I’d seen what led up to it. He was trying to build with the blocks. The first one was carefully placed on the floor, the second on top of it. The third one went on, then the fourth. This was when the trouble started because the blocks were very smooth and he just didn’t have the dexterity to get those third and fourth blocks to stay in place. They slipped and fell every time. His rage was his frustration with the blocks, and with himself.

Inspiration came – in the box of offcuts at the woodwork bench were several pieces which had smooth rounded sides, but were rough on the top and bottom. I collected a pile and took them to him. He started to build: one, two, three, four, five! The traction of the rough ends held the construction safe and steady. Never before had he built so high! The excitement of his achievement transformed him, and the frustrated rages gradually became a thing of the past.

It is very easy to judge and condemn situations or behaviour we don’t approve of. A much more constructive reaction involves two questions. The first one is: “Why? Why is this happening? What’s causing it?” And the second one is even more important. It goes like this: “What can I do about it?”

Claire Thompson

Together we have learned

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

Together we raised two children, one of whom had a disability also, as we discovered when he was four. John has Asperger syndrome, a type of Autism. Through Pete's love I have seen modelled Jesus teaching of "Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave His life for it." "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend".

He has encouraged me in my walk with Jesus and supported me all the way, so I have been able to serve the Lord in many ways in Aglow and church, and grow in my giftings.

"I have been able to serve the Lord in many ways in Aglow and church, and grow in my giftings."

Through my time of caring for John and teaching him to read, count, talk and eventually communicate with us, I learned a little about how unconditional God's love is for us, constantly loving when He gets no acknowledgment from us whatsoever. Together we have learned to be patient, faithful, humble, kind and grateful, and that we needed a sense of humour!

Margaret Hansen

I saw past his disability

Out of the whole camp Joshua impacted me the most. This eleven year old boy had the biggest smile and beautiful blue eyes. On both of the days I was with him we talked about many things, but the one conversation I will never forget was the one on pregnancy. When he saw that I was pregnant he began to ask me a lot of questions. I loved the fact that he was so curious, and I answered all his questions. But then he said to me – "I hope it is not disabled." That sentence broke my heart. All I could see was a beautiful boy looking at me and I couldn't help thinking how much I loved him just the way he was, and how much I would love my own child (despite whether he or she was disabled or not). In response to his statement I told him that if my child did turn out disabled I would still love her. He understood, but then he looked at me and said, "It's so hard."

I couldn't say a thing. It was hard for him to be disabled and yet I could see past his disability. He was more than just a little boy – he was special. I could see he had potential. He was a lovely person with a heart of gold, and when he smiled it felt like the whole world was smiling with him.

Heather Benn

A Few Books and Resources

Another Kind of Courage. By Doug Mazza and Steve Bundy.

Challenging Parenting: A practical handbook for parents of children with handicaps. By Bonnie Wheeler.

Helping Kids Include Kids with Disabilities. By Barbara J. Newman.

Hurting Hope: What parents feel when their children suffer. By Charles and Joanne Hewlett.

It's All Right Mum! A mother's journey with muscular dystrophy. By Heather Vincent.

Joni and Ken: An untold love story. By Joni Eareckson Tada and Ken Tada.

Leading A Special Needs Ministry: A practical guide to including children and loving families. By Amy Lee Fenton.

Remembering Ann. By John Goldingay.

Special Needs Ministry for Children: Creating a welcoming place for families whose children have special needs.
By Pat Verbal.

Tough Cookie. By Lillian Sparks.

CBM (Children's Bible Ministries) - www.cbm.org.nz

Key Ministry - www.keyministry.org

Intellectual Disability



Testimonies & Stories

People with intellectual disability are diverse and each is unique in their personalities, likes and dislikes, preferences, abilities and ambitions. Most people appreciate being asked what they would like and given a choice in what they would like to do. This is the same for people who have an intellectual disability.

- An intellectual disability can make it harder to learn or understand, particularly when something is not obvious or direct. Because of this some people with an intellectual disability may not know how to read, may need longer to learn something, may not be able to learn a particular skill and may not pick up on social norms or body language. Although some behaviour may appear childish, an adult with an intellectual disability appreciates being treated like an adult, particularly when it comes to the way people talk to them.
- Friendships can be few and far between for many people with intellectual disabilities. Relationships often only include family and paid caregivers. It can be difficult for people with intellectual disabilities to make friends, as their worlds are so often segregated from the rest of society in places like special schools, day programmes, support homes, and respite services.
- An intellectual disability does not hinder a person having a relationship with God. Biblical truths can be taught in simple ways and often do not need to be complicated, as Robert so clearly demonstrates in the testimony on page 21. It is often a higher intellect and the desire to reason things out that get in the way of believing and trusting God. In fact, Jesus teaches us all to have faith like a child.

“My most enduring impression of the visit of the Joy Fellowship came at the end of the showing of slides after the evening service at the St David’s in the Fields Presbyterian church. As the few who remained started singing “We are the people of God”, Janice joined Lori-Ann up the front. As they sang, Lori-Ann tickled Janice under the chin, and she in turn put her arm around her companion. Their faces were radiant. They just so enjoyed the love each had for the Lord and for one another. How much they could and did teach us!”

Michael couldn't read, but having a Bible impacted his faith

It was National Camp in 2003. We were giving Bibles to new believers in Jesus. On this night Michael, (who is a Christian and happens to have Down syndrome) came to me because he heard that we were “giving out Bibles”, and he wanted one!

Now I was faced with a dilemma. I knew Michael was already a Christian, and these Bibles were meant for new believers. As well as that I was pretty sure Michael could not read, and if that was not enough, that year I had not bought enough Bibles and only had a few left. My initial thought was to turn Michael away, and explain to him that I was saving the Bibles for new believers. Then I thought again...Michael was very keen to have a Bible and I simply thought, “Why not?” Why is he not as deserving as anyone else to get one? So I gave him one of the last Bibles we had. He was so happy to receive it...

The next day his mother came to me and thanked me for giving Michael a Bible. She told me that he'd wanted one because he wished to be like everyone else at church and have a Bible with him at church. She also confirmed to me that Michael couldn't read, but that it meant a lot to him to simply have a Bible.

Some time later I was speaking with Michael's mother again, and she was excited to tell me the impact that having a Bible had on Michael's faith. He'd become more enthusiastic at attending church, and sat up the front. Before each service he'd go to the pastor and ask him to open his Bible to the passage he would be preaching from that service, which the pastor was happy to do. When others were reading from their Bibles, Michael would be looking at his also. Further to that, she said the most exciting thing was Michael was now beginning to read for the first time! And that he had learnt to read from this same Bible! The Holy Spirit had worked a miracle! (Michael was still not able to read from any other book at this time).

As she said this I thought about the implications of not giving Michael this Bible that I had originally wanted to hang on to. God had used His Word to strengthen Michael's faith! He just wanted to be like everybody else.

Evan Clulee

When others were reading from their Bibles, Michael would be looking at his also. Further to that, she said the most exciting thing was Michael was now beginning to read for the first time! And that he had learnt to read from this same Bible! The Holy Spirit had worked a miracle!“

A tribute to Carol and her Church



This article has been written to pay a tribute to both Carol Moulder and the New Life Church she attends on Auckland's North Shore. It is many, many years since Carol was first invited to come to a CFFD* meeting. She had no idea what it was about or what CFFD* stood for, but once she saw that she was in the midst of people with disabilities she thought, "This is for me!" And ever since that day few have been able to match her enthusiastic, whole-hearted involvement. Attending all the ministry's activities became a No 1 priority in her life. For many years she consistently attended the monthly North Shore prayer meetings, and whenever she could afford it she would come to both the Auckland and National camps.

Wherever she goes she tells everyone about Elevate Christian Disability Trust. Once she spent ten days in hospital. Placed in a ward of women recovering from serious operations she soon had the Encourager magazine in all their hands. The whole mood of the ward lightened. One said later, "No-one could possibly be miserable when Carol's around." At the Sunday service Carol gave out more magazines and also spoke about the work of Elevate Christian Disability Trust.

And what did her church do? They took up the challenge thrown out by the closure of so many of the homes for disabled, placing these folk out in the community. They

provided Carol with an advocate (i.e. a couple who are involved in "Citizen Advocacy" set up by the IH Society). They took a real interest in her, and continue to be available for discussing problems of any kind – medical, budgeting or whatever.

Carol phones them at least once a week and they take notes of the activities at long weekends. The pastor encourages her to announce in the services, details of Elevate Christian Disability Trust camps, meetings and requests for helpers and for transport. Invariably someone comes forward to meet these needs. They have also often helped with her camp fees.

Carol has been appointed as the church representative for Elevate Christian Disability Trust in the church and hands out magazines and other information. Every year the pastor asks Carol to share something during the service on Disability Awareness Sunday and also to speak to the children. At Carol's invite, the pastor has been to the Drop in Centre to take a Bible study. It's a two-way interaction, and for each prayer meeting she first rings up the pastor to find out what the church would like prayer for. No matter how small the task Carol is asked to do she gives of her very best and is proud of what she does. So many have had their lives enriched by this enthusiastic, delightfully uninhibited young lady.

*CFFD - Christian Fellowship For Disabled

Jesus Loves Me!

It was 2000, and we were at our annual National Camp at Labour Weekend. I had been “buddied” up with Robert, who just needed a little support and supervision. (Robert happens to have Downs syndrome).

On the second day of camp I saw Robert looking at his Bible. I didn’t know Robert well at that stage, and thought I’d better be careful what I said. I convey here our brief conversation...

Evan — *“Robert, Can you read?”*

Robert — *“YES”*

Evan — *“Would you like to read something to me?”*

Robert — *“YES”*

(Robert flicks through his Bible and stops at a mid-section which had cartoon like pictures of Bible stories, and then proceeded to “read”)...


Robert — *“JESUS LOVES ME, ...AND GOD IS IN CONTROL!”*

(Robert then closed his Bible matter of factly, and placed it neatly on the bed beside him, and looked up contentedly at me)

Evan — *“That’s excellent Robert! Thank you for reading that to me”*

I then tried to process what had just happened, and our brief conversation. I concluded — What more do you really need to know about our Christian faith? I think there’s a tendency to over complicate things, and maybe our faith can be summed up very succinctly as Robert so eloquently verbalised, in a nutshell...“Jesus loves me...and God is in control!”

If we know and experience only those two truths in our Christian lives, then I believe we’d be in a pretty good place!



“What more do you really need to know about our Christian faith? I think there’s a tendency to over complicate things...”

My walk in faith

I went to Sunday School at St George's Church, Epsom, and enjoyed it immensely. I started attending church services as I got a bit older – they were beautiful, very dignified and meaningful. I was in the choir and also an altar boy. After being confirmed I began to feel closer to God as I grew into manhood. But it was when I went to my first National Camp at Totara Springs, Matamata, that things really changed for the better. I had a wonderful time, making heaps of new friends and worshipping God and Jesus in a way that I'd never known before. I sang each praise song with all my heart. It was truly a "life-changing" experience. Since then I have been attending Eden AOG Church and have been playing the drums in the worship team there and at National Camp.

I've been going to the Auckland and National camps ever since. As the time draws near I get excited, and I can't wait to get there, to catch up with all my new friends, and really get into the worship. I sincerely thank all those who supported me when I repented and was baptised at the National Camp last year, as I felt strongly about wiping the slate clean and starting all over again with Jesus at the centre of my life. He is number one in my life! He's the boss, the supreme leader! I'm following Him all the time – no turning back.

Kim Jamieson

A Few Books and Resources

Friendship Ministries is an American not-for-profit organization that exists to help churches and organizations around the world share God's love with people who have intellectual disability. Various resources are available on their website.

New Beginnings - teaching material for people with intellectual disability. By Bible Friends Wanganui.

Theology and Down Syndrome: Reimagining disability in late modernity. By Amos Yong.



Physical Disability

Testimonies & Stories

There are many different kinds of disabilities, which may or may not involve mobility, sensation, vision or hearing. How a particular condition affects each person is different, with one person being totally independent while another totally dependent.

- People who experience disability are first and foremost people. As with all people, respect and acceptance is important. It is beneficial to consider how you would want to be treated if you had a disability.
- Remember that each person is individual, with different likes and dislikes. This also relates to how a person prefers to do things and how they like to be helped.
- Accessibility is a fundamental consideration for a person with a physical disability. This includes access to the environment and facilities but also to information and resources.
- Communication is vital for all of us. Some disabilities can make this difficult. If a person is unable to communicate their thoughts, feelings or opinions, it can hinder the growth of friendships. People who have difficulty communicating appreciate others making the effort and taking the time to communicate with them.

The church leaders came to understand I was just like one of them

“I was 15 when I lost my leg through falling from a coconut tree. I was confused in life until a friend shared with me about Jesus Christ and I finally gave my life to the Lord. For some time my Christian journey was a fluctuating one because the church was not able to understand people with disabilities, but I loved the fellowship with Christians, and as more and more of them came to know me this helped the church leaders to understand that I was just like every one of them. After some time I became the leader of the youth fellowship there, later a lay preacher, and finally a lay pastor.

In 1988 I became President of the Fiji Disabled People’s Association, and eight years later joined the newly-formed group that had started as a branch from CFFD in New Zealand. It soon became self-supporting, changed its name to the “Disability Outreach for Christ”, and earlier this year changed yet again as it moved from a fellowship to a church – now the Horeb Christian Disability Fellowship meets every Sunday morning, has three cell groups each week and a youth program on Fridays and Saturdays.”

Pastor Sam Vilsoni

A pastor saw how people with disability brought benefits to his church

It's a wonder to discover that, physical limitations aside, those with disabilities are people who can meet our needs, teach us truths, and in other ways promote growth in our lives through their personality and their spiritual gifts. We discovered that ministry to those with disabilities is not a one-way street.

As a pastor I've seen the visitors to our church respond positively to the sight of people with disabilities being accepted and cared for within our fellowship. As they saw love expressed in practical ways the visitors gained a clear impression of our church's priorities and the commitment of its people. Some who were initially hesitant about approaching these disabled folk, grew bolder as they saw

others like themselves interacting with those who were blind or deaf. And our fellowship developed both spiritually and numerically as a result.

Paradoxically, ministry to a group that would seem at first to contribute little to church growth in fact becomes a key to a growing fellowship. Ministering to those with disabilities can be a road to blessings as long as one does not begin walking the road solely to receive a blessing. Start ministering in obedience to Christ's commands and the blessings will multiply.

Pastor Phil Skellie

A young man with severe disabilities uses his talents to reach out for Christ

I live by the Bible, its teachings, principles, and precepts. The wisdom of God supersedes all of human wisdom, philosophy, and ideology. I am non verbal, and that is a blessing as it gives me time to think before I communicate whatever I am thinking. I regard the true beginning of my existence was when I joined the Salvation Army Corps. Like an enigma I rose to become a new power in God's Army and Kingdom.

You might look at all my disabilities and wonder how I could possibly be

a power, but God has given me great power through the internet, power to spread His Holy Word throughout the world. God created me for such a time as this with the technology to spread His message with just a few taps of my head-switch. Every day I try to send at least three or more encouraging, inspiring, thought-provoking messages, devotionals, poems and stories via email to as many others as possible.

I don't seek the power of leadership or rank. The power I have is a

silent power. A loving power... but also a mighty power. A power to fight Satan... to fight alongside my comrades in Salvation Army uniform and others in the Christian faith.

A power to encourage, comfort, admonish, and bless others with God's love... and hopefully bring souls to God through our Lord Jesus Christ into full salvation. To tell others that there is an absolute truth, and that is Jesus Christ who says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

Heydon Bailey

I have a place in the church

I was brought up in a Christian family and gave my life to the Lord when I was 7 years old. Like any other Christian young person I've had my highs and lows. But because I have a disability there are different church experiences I've had compared to my able-bodied friends.

Some of the best experiences I've had are when people simply treat me in an ordinary way, without focusing on my disability. To start off with, this makes me feel at ease straight away, and I feel comfortable being there. One of the first times I went to the high school youth group at my church I went by myself and was incredibly nervous – I didn't know what to expect! I started chatting to a girl who was really friendly and she introduced me to her friends. I became a part of a great group of girls, and without them I wouldn't have wanted to go to youth group so often.

We would often (and still do!) go out for dinner or a dessert night, and it was really nice to feel included. Before I could drive, my friends would give me rides everywhere, and that was something I really appreciated. Inclusion is a part of what has really enhanced my church experiences. The more connected in with church and friends I made, the more I wanted to go to church. This has really helped me grow my relationship with God, because now I'm not just going to see my friends, but because I'm in God's house and getting spiritual input in my life.

“Inclusion is a part of what has really enhanced my church experiences. The more connected in with church and friends I made, the more I wanted to go to church.”

Encouragement from leaders has also been a really positive part of my church experience. Small, kind words and gestures from someone mean a lot to me and many people I know. When I started going to the young adults youth group everyone was so welcoming, and I fitted in right away.

One of my favourite memories from going to this youth group was the camp. We went to Whangamata for 3 nights and I stayed in a bach with 10 other people. The best part was when we went to the beach. Usually I don't like going to the beach because it is difficult to get around in a wheelchair, but everyone said it would be possible. So the guys in our group took turns carrying me down the grass onto the beach, then along the sand and helped me into the water. That was probably the highlight of my year because it made me realise what people would do to include me. I felt so happy when I got home because I felt so much love that weekend.

Late last year I was asked to become a leader because my leaders saw potential in me, and it was something I had never thought about before. I went through the training like any

other leader. What was great was that my leaders didn't see any barriers for me to become a leader. It has been one of the most exciting parts of my journey with God, because being a leader has added a different element to my relationship with God and other people.

I feel that I have a place in the church. Yes, I've had some bad experiences because I have a disability. But because I have supportive family and friends I am able to move on from the past and not be scared about trying new things. I am so excited to see where my journey within church and with God goes next. For me, and I know for many people with disabilities, it's about inclusion, understanding challenges, and actively engaging with them to remove those barriers in a positive, non-embarrassing way. Not only did my church remove barriers, but they also allowed me to grow in ministry and service back to the church and others around me.

Olivia Shivas

Being a servant at camp transformed a pastor's fear of disabled people

We live in a world where people are anxious about a multitude of things. So often with our worries the actual anticipation and resultant fear of whatever is about to come is actually worse than the event itself. Life is never a succession of successes. There will always be times when we do not succeed in what we set out to do, but even at these times, failure is just a mind-set. If we rise again to give another shot, that is not failure. All too often we are afraid of the unknown.

One of the things I was afraid of was dealing with people with disabilities. I had not had the opportunity in my life to be exposed to a lot of people like this. I found it quite scary, not knowing whether they were *compos mentis*, or whether the disability that I saw on the outside was only that deep, or in the mind as well. How would I deal with them? How slow would I have to talk? All these things produced a real fear in my life. I knew they had a heart, they had a spirit, and God loves them,

but I didn't know how to reach out. So one of the things I did was to go to a camp for people with disabilities. I thought to myself – I am going to deal with it, to learn how to relate to and communicate with a group of people I have always avoided before. What I found there blew my mind!

When I arrived at camp on Friday night everyone was milling around – approximately 150 with disabilities and 150 able-bodied helpers. I arrived knowing that I was going to be helping to look after Mark, a young man with cerebral palsy. In the back of my mind a relieving factor was that I would be working with an experienced carer who had previously worked with Mark, so showering, toileting and all the messy bits and pieces were things that he at first would handle, and gradually he would then be there to direct me how to do those things myself. As a result I was in a reasonably confident frame of mind, only to be told on arrival that the other caregiver had bailed out!

“One of the things I was afraid of was dealing with people with disabilities. I had not had the opportunity in my life to be exposed to a lot of people like this”

My eyes glanced up to heaven. If I had had my own vehicle I probably would have been sleeping in my own bed that night, but I had come down with others in a van, so there was no escape! There was another caregiver with me, but like me he had had no previous experience with people with disabilities. I was freaked out. I gulped and thanked the Lord for giving me the opportunity to grow!

We got Mark to bed, but the next morning was tough – we struggled to cope with his showering, dressing and toileting. Came Saturday lunchtime and God changed my heart. I had confronted fear and pushed through. It could almost be described as a paper wall. The barrier was gone, and it proved to be made of nothing more substantial than paper! That week-end was one of the most fantastic of my whole life.

Pastor Mark Mortlock

Learning to shine with God's glory through disability

I am John. I have a family and friends, I am loved and I love Jesus. I have spastic hemiplegia, with a side dose of cerebral palsy. Ten weeks premature coming out of my mother's tummy, we both made it, by the skin of our teeth, and from that very moment, I loved, and held on to life, and the God who gave it to me.

There are two memories of my childhood that keep coming back: love and pain. Pain because of learning to walk with braces on my feet, of falling, and bruising, falling again and bleeding, of scars and doctors, of antiseptic and plaster casts. And the pain of learning I was different, and would always be so. I wanted so badly to be normal – but God made me strong instead. Both my parents insisted I would do everything everyone else did, even if slower. I climbed and ran and limped and fell, and got up again. And I remember great love: church people sending me cards and letters, hands holding me up, friends looking out for me, learning I could do other things: write and read and speak and pray, and play spastic hockey with disregard for all the rules.

I taught Sunday school, did youth work, mentored kids and used a walking frame to ref at Sunday school handball. I taught Bible class, and found I learned to love Jesus more as I taught about Him. I went to university, got a job with Maxim Institute, and started writing newspaper columns. I met politicians and advocated for social justice – using the same skills I learned when

“In Him was life... and that life was the light of men... Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...”

teaching, got involved in pro-life work, and started advocating for disabled people.

I was prayed for healing, many times – and received through the power of the Holy Spirit, half a healing – one leg was healed, the other stayed the same. I kept asking the Lord what He thought He was doing leaving me like this – and why He did, and what He still wanted me to do.

At first, I wanted to be a doctor, this changed to an English teacher and then an MP, but this all faded away when I became very sick with ME, cerebral palsy related pain, and nerve pain as well.

The vicar came to see me, and read me the Visitation of the Sick. “The aim of the Christian, whether in health or in sickness, is that God may be glorified in him through Jesus Christ.” This is what Jesus had said when the disciples asked Him about the problem of pain. In John 9 He said that God would be glorified in the blind man, just as God wants to glorify Himself in me, shine in me, make me look like Jesus.

Flat on my back with God, I got the point – and will go on re-learning it I think for the rest of my life. I can't do a lot these days, but I can shine with God's glory. I can let the power of the Saviour who suffered for me work in my heart, taking away anger, bitterness, sadness and self-pity, building into me strength, tenderness, love and fortitude.

“In Him was life...and that life was the light of men...Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...”

I don't know what I'll end up doing. But I know Jesus smiles when I try, and reaches down to help me along. And together, as W.H. Auden once said, “We stagger onward, rejoicing!”

John Fox

A passion to communicate the Gospel

I am disabled and I am a Christian. I started attending church when I was eleven. My primary school teacher invited me to join the Sunday School at Papatoetoe Baptist Church, and over the next year I made many friends from the church. My family had difficulty providing transport, but God provided generous people who made it possible for me to go to church and youth group. Getting to church became significantly easier when God blessed our family with a mobility van. In church I feel I am involved and that I belong. However, in recent years I have struggled with people my age getting involved with the church in

practical ways. This challenged me with the question ‘what can I do?’. Practically, I can’t do much, but I think God and my teachers have been getting across to me that I don’t need to serve just in practical ways. I am learning that every kind of service is equally valuable to God. Saying an encouraging word, smiling at someone, or even, I believe, just being present is seen as serving others and glorifying God.

I encourage you to do whatever you can, to be involved in your church. The commitment of being a Christian is to lead a life in obedience to Christ. This means that every day, wherever

you and I are, we must give glory to God. I have a passion to communicate the Gospel even though I am unable to engage in conversation with other people. I can communicate online, but I don’t find this fulfilling, but I try my very best to create friendship in society and have some influence on others.

Manuele Teofilo

A Few Books and Resources

Awaiting the Healer. By Margie Willers.

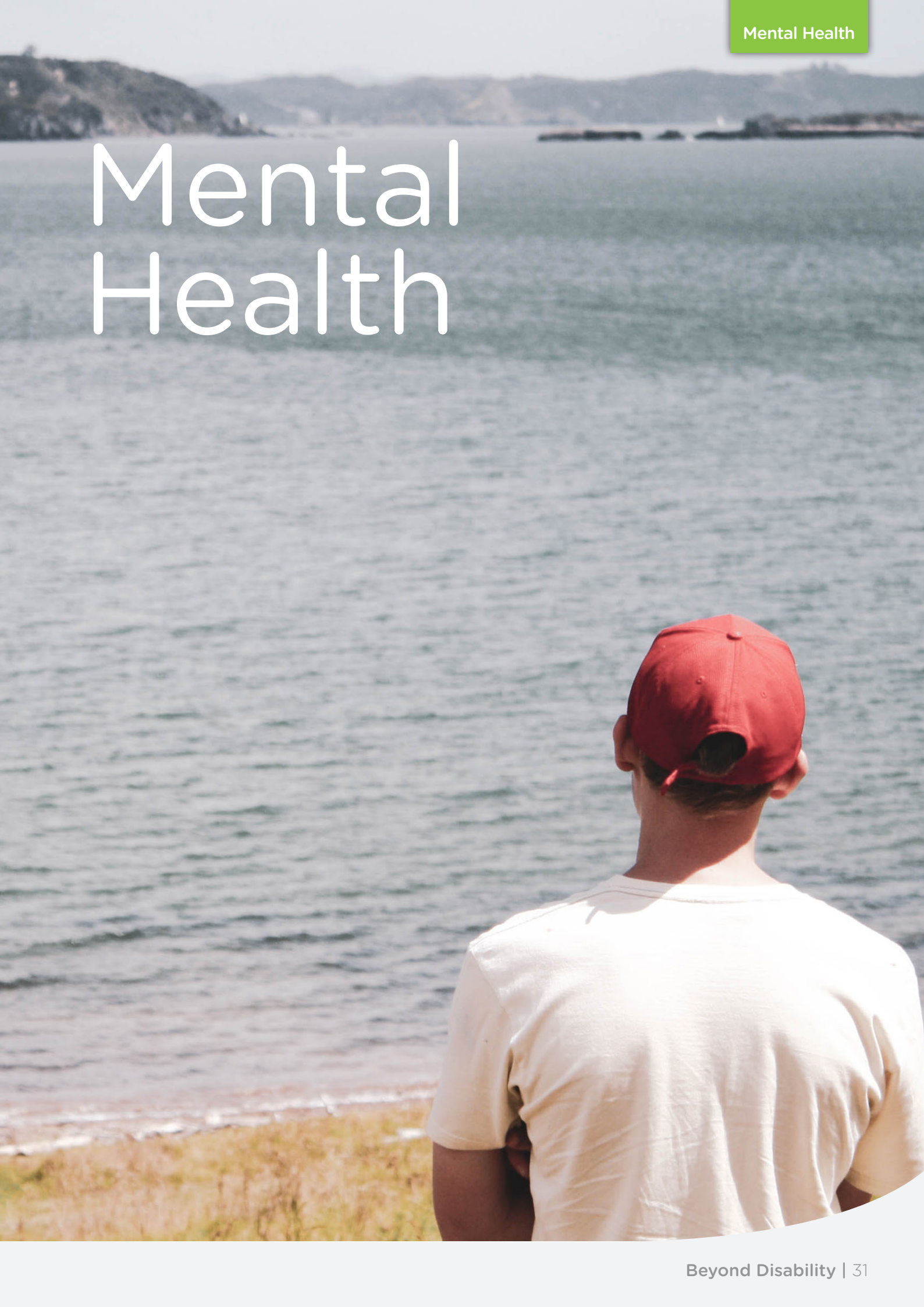
Life Without Limits: Inspiration for a ridiculously good life. By Nick Vujicic.

God’s Quad. By Jim Stallard.

Joni: An unforgettable story. By Joni Eareckson Tada.

There are associations for most conditions. For information and support for a specific disability it is worth contacting the relevant association.

Mental Health



Testimonies & Stories

There are many varied disorders and conditions within mental health, with many of these remaining misunderstood within the wider society. People who experience mental health conditions still face significant stigma.

- Depression, as a specific condition, has received particular attention in recent years in New Zealand, but there is still further understanding needed.

 - It is important to accept and include people where they are at, as with anyone. People who experience mental health conditions can feel quite isolated; relationships and friendships are important.

 - A person may appreciate if friends and key support people in their church let them know they are there to listen if they want to talk. Being able to express what they are experiencing is important, but be aware that asking a person how they are or how they feel can cause anxiety. It's okay to talk about everyday things and make small talk sometimes.

- If you know a person well, keep open communication with them. Ask them about their medication and when they aren't going too well offer support by discussing if they need to make an appointment with their GP or specialist.

 - Large groups of people can be difficult. Make the effort to include people in home groups that are friendly, accepting and not too big.

 - People with mental health conditions have talents and gifts, as with anyone. Encourage them to get involved and use their skills when they feel that they can.

Help came from charities connected to the Church

When I was a child I attended a Sunday school class led by a couple called the Morgans who between them taught me and the rest of the class to value learning, and learning Godliness. I became friends with their son.

I cannot honestly say, I along with my family, had been free of illness. In fact as I grew and developed, attending University and Bible College, I was forced in one year to confront the diagnosis of mental illness. What a shock. As the youngest son I had seen my two brothers reach adulthood, employment and marriage, and here was I facing an adventure, something new. Schizophrenia as we call it means split brain, bringing with it a division of perception and reality, hearing voices or just silence, and as many contrasts as you care to think. But it is a real illness after all.

Despite the wider community fearing it, Paranoid Schizophrenia sets the sufferer on a journey. In every relationship there needs to be forgiveness, yet with the recognition I was ill many sympathetic people came to my aid, many charities helped me out, and I must say most of them were connected to the Church.

I currently attend St Judes Anglican Church in Avondale, where I and my friends are accepted as ourselves. The experience of some at Elevate will be of fitting in physically, while there are others, like myself, who appear whole but have another disability.

Simon Willis

Supported by an approachable priest

I belong to the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church draws on Roman Catholic and Orthodox heritage. And that makes sense to me. I have a mental illness. A diagnosis of schizophrenia. I have been on meds for 27 years. Just take the meds, thank the Lord and stay out of trouble. That's me.

I think in the Anglican Church they do communion in the best way which is very healing. The church I go to draws on stuff from all over the place. The Kyrie is in Latin, we have a rocking and cooking band, the artwork in church is amazing, from all over the place. It's a real mixture. There are all different heritages in the church.

Obviously we respect the priest and the priest's wife enormously. They are treasures, Taongas. I do talk to the priest sometimes. I find I can talk to them. They are approachable.

Denys Brokenshire

The shadow proves the sunshine

“Christians don’t get depression”, that was the comment of a pastor a few years ago, but being a Christian didn’t stop me getting sick, deeply depressed, even suicidal at age 43, and it sure helped in my recovery. The church was activated in prayer, even around the world. Anonymous food parcels and dinners helped my wife with our two very young children. The Bible came very much alive, many verses speaking about our health, mental as well as spiritual. Only close family visited me. Music lifted my spirits, starting one Sunday afternoon with Roman Catholic sisters singing at the hospital. I clung on to the phrase of one song on Radio Rhema, “The shadow proves the sunshine”, meaning for me that Jesus was with me. Prayer helped, especially from a locum at a GP visit, who I have

not seen since. Counselling by a Psychiatrist Registrar in Hospital was a turning point. Working at my Aunty’s place, the fellowship valuable for both of us, as was the pocket money. Giving back to the community, such as at the Drop-in-Centre and camps for Elevate Christian Disability Trust, Auckland Christian Fellowship for Disabled and Joy Ministries New Zealand (for the intellectually impaired), and expressing my journey through poetry all helped, and now I’m again a fully productive member of society.

“I will give you the treasures of the darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you will know I am God,” Isaiah 45:3

Malcolm Dixon



“I will give you the treasures of the darkness, riches stored in secret places, so that you will know I am God,” Isaiah 45:3

A Few Books and Resources

Out of the Darkness: Hope for those with depression. By Barry Pearman.

Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the care of people with mental health problems. By John Swinton.

Turning the Page - a blog about spiritual formation, soul talk and mental health. By Pastor Barry Pearman

Premier Mind and Soul – is a London based nondenominational organisation exploring Christianity and mental health. Various resources are available from their website.

About us

Elevate Christian Disability Trust (formerly Christian Ministries with Disabled Trust) is an interdenominational, registered charitable trust.

For over 40 years we have worked to encourage and support both the local church and people living with disability. We seek to achieve this through our various ministry groups throughout New Zealand, camps, a quarterly Encourager magazine, training, speaking in churches and resources such as this one. The Elevate national support office is in Auckland, New Zealand.



CFFD



JOY
MINISTRY



TORCH



EMMANUEL



DROP IN
CENTRE

Our ministry groups include:

- CFFD for those living with physical disabilities
- Joy Ministries for those living with an intellectual disability
- Torch for people who are blind or have a visual impairment
- Emmanuel Support for families who have children living with disability
- The Drop in Centre in Auckland

Some Further Books and Resources for Churches

Adam: God's beloved. By Henri J M Nouwen.

Disability Resource Manual: A practical guide for churches and church leaders.
By Ashley Peterson with help from Christian Swanson.

Friendship Unlimited: How you can help a disabled friend. By Joni Eareckson Tada with Bev Singleton.

Including People with Disabilities in Faith Communities: A guide for service providers, families, & congregations.
By Erik W. Carter.

Inclusion Handbook: Everybody belongs, everybody serves. Christian Reformed Disability Concerns and Reformed Church in America Disability Concerns.

Joy in Our Weakness: A gift of hope from the book of revelation. By Marva Dawn.

No Disabled Souls: How to welcome a person with a disability. By Dr Jim Pierson.

Reaching Out to Special People: A resource for ministry with persons who have disabilities.
Edited by Dr. Jim Pierson and Robert E. Korth.

Resource Packet on Disability, Spirituality, and Healing. By Rev. Nancy Lane, Ph.D.

Roofbreaker Guide. By Through The Roof

Shocked by Blessing. By Carolyn Kelshaw and Dr Rod Thompson.

Supporting People with Disabilities in your Church. By LeVa.

Supporting people with disability in your church - posters.
By LeVa. Available in English, Samoan, Tongan, and Cook Island Maori.

The Lost Mandate. By Dan'l C. Markham.

Unexpected Healing. By Jennifer Rees Larcombe.

Further Publications from Elevate Christian Disability Trust

Everybody Welcome? A guide on how to make your church disability friendly. By Karen Jack.

On the Knife Edge of Faith: Stories behind the ministry. By Hugh Willis.

Helpers Guide – Helping People with Disabilities – written for helpers at our national camp this booklet provides short explanations of some disabilities along with general points for practically helping a person with a disability.

Communicating with People with Disabilities – this booklet provides people with basic points of how to communicate, primarily, to people with speech impairments, visual and hearing impairments, and intellectual disability.

Working with a Group of People with Intellectual Disabilities – included in this booklet is information on supporting people to get to church, friendship, meeting suggestions and the importance of coming alongside people with intellectual disabilities.

Supporting People with Disabilities – this booklet outlines how you can support people with disability practically, hospitality and ministry areas of the church.

The Blessing of Including People with Disabilities – this booklet gives insight into some of the blessings and challenges of inclusion. Included are some pointers of why more people with disabilities are not in church, how to welcome them, and how to overcome some of the barriers to inclusion.

Personal Cares – for Someone with a Disability – information is provided in this booklet that is useful when assisting with personal cares such as transferring, toileting, showering, dressing, and eating.

Skits & Dramas – Why skits with humour are so effective.

A few Christian Organisations with Useful Disability Information

Access Ministry (USA) - accessministrymbc.org

CBM International (New Zealand branch also) - www.cbm.org

Christian Churches Disability Ministry (USA) - <http://www.ccdmonline.org/>

Churches for All (UK) - www.churchesforall.org.uk

Elevate Christian Disability Trust (New Zealand) - www.elevatecdt.org.nz

Friendship Ministries (USA) - <http://www.friendship.org/>

Joni and Friends (USA) - www.joniandfriends.org

Key Ministry (USA) - <http://www.keyministry.org/>

Premier Mind and Soul (UK) - <http://www.mindandsoul.info/>

Through the Roof (UK) - www.throughtheroof.org

References

Special Needs Ministry for Children – Creating a welcoming place for families whose children have special needs

Hurting Hope: What parents feel when their children suffer. By Charles and Joanne Hewlett.

Acknowledgments and Contributions

Thank you to all the people whose stories or photos are shared in this resource.

Many of the testimonies included in this resource were originally from various issues of The Encourager, a quarterly magazine by Elevate Christian Disability Trust.

Thank you to Hugh and Di Willis for their input and editing. And to those who provided feedback, encouragement and direction.

Thank you to Through The Roof and Joni and Friends for the inspiration and direction given by their publications and church resources.

This resource was compiled by Kirsty Anderson and launched at the Beyond Disability Conference 2014, held in partnership with Laidlaw and with funding from the Ministry of Social Development's 'Making a Difference Fund'.



ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

173 Mt Smart Road, Onehunga, Auckland
PO Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland, 1643

Ph: +64 9 636 4763

Email: info@elevatecdt.org.nz

www.elevatecdt.org.nz