

# The encourager

THE MAGAZINE OF ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST

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LOTS OF VARIETY IN GAMES THOUGHT  
UP AT NATIONAL CAMP FOR THOSE  
WITH DISABILITIES





# When you play with sin,

## A DEVOTION WITH A difference!

*A synopsis of what Geoff Wiklund said at National Camp:*



**A**t camp we looked at four areas around the cross. Firstly, we looked at moving from curse to blessing. Then we looked at the simplicity of the cross and its message, then the victory we have through the cross, and lastly the healing. Here I want to remind us of the simplicity of the cross;

*1 Cor 1:17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."*

*Five simple things were considered:*

**1. Repentance and forgiveness:**

Through the cross we can repent and receive forgiveness for sin. That also empowers us to forgive others. Freely we have received and so freely we can forgive others. We don't have to go through anyone, but come to God and confess and repent.

**2. Believing:**

Jesus spoke to one man and told him to only believe. Without faith we won't accomplish much. The disciples, of course, asked Jesus to increase their faith, but Jesus said if we would only use a mustard seed measure we could do great things. So we don't need more faith but to simply believe and act on that and we will see big things happen.

**3. Obedience to the Word of God makes life simple:**

My observation is that when things go wrong in relationships it is because we are simply not applying the Word of God. I learned years ago from Psalm 119:165 that if I am offended it is because there is something in the Word of God that I don't love. If we simply live the Scriptures then life ceases to be complicated. Even though there may be issues we are at peace.

**4. Revelation:**

Revelation comes from meditating on the Scripture. Lots of people read the Word and read about it, but the key of Psalm 1 and Joshua 1 is to meditate on the Word day and night and you will have good success and you will prosper. Test it out for yourself. Revelation causes us to live differently.

**5. Mercy, Grace and Truth:**

I see mercy defined from the Good Samaritan. He saw a need and he had compassion, secondly he cared for his wounds, then he carried him on his donkey (sometimes we take the hard road and give the other person the ride), lastly he cared for him at his cost. This is mercy. We look through two lenses. Truth and mercy. We have to use both or we become legalistic or a door mat. ■

## An amazing bargain for you to give others a great Christmas present!!!

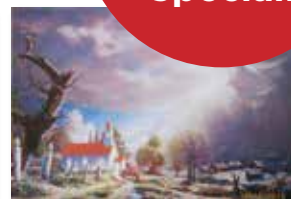
We have four prints of Graham Braddock paintings (27cm by 19cm) that have been selling for \$30 each.

Now, to aid our fundraising, Graham has gifted them to Elevate and we can offer them to you at **4 for \$50** (compared to \$120!). This includes a protective cardboard tube for sending through the post, but postage is extra:

in Auckland: \$5.50

elsewhere in North Island: \$8.00

in South Island: \$14.00



## What did you like best about camp?

Some extracts from the evaluation forms

*Everyone mingling and being treated with honour and respect. Very positive and happy vibes!..... I enjoyed myself. I came here as a helper, but am leaving more changed and happy than I've been in a long time.....God was glorified in so many ways.....The sheer joy of being here.....Seeing the amazing campers coping with their disabilities.....A great mix of people and ages. Such a fantastic buzz and energy.....There is such a caring atmosphere that pervades this camp.*

Virginia Adams writes on:

**God working through the interactions in Cabin Time**

It was not by chance that I came to National Camp for the first time this year. God preordains and predestines. Nine of us came from our church. Only one had been before, many years ago.

The first day's challenges gave us the opportunity to explore solutions TOGETHER. The next day at Cabin Time we dropped our masks and shared our hopes, dreams and fears, and felt like sisters. The second day shifted our focus from looking at peoples' (dis)ability



to their ability in Christ. We could see and hear in the testimonies of people how God uses their limitations to stretch them, show them His grace and mercy, and how this becomes a testimony of God's mercy and grace.

Over the days as we prayed together in our cabin one person was released from bitterness, another decided to renew her baptism and rededicate herself to God publicly. All of us "confessed" and laid our burdens at the cross, and were fortified by each other and the presence of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

We came to serve, but we were served. We came to pray for one another, and were moved to tears at the holy and anointing presence of the Holy Spirit. I feel humbled by what I've seen, learnt and experienced. Our joy is not in our circumstances – our joy is in the Lord. We came to preach the Gospel.

Instead we **LIVED THE GOSPEL!**



# In the middle of a diff



## How I'd love to plant that little black lady within our churches!

by **Margie Willers** (co-founder of the Elevate Ministry)

*“Some years ago I met an unforgettable church pastor by the name of Bill Haythornwaite. Bill was also a book analyst and critic for American publishing companies. He was assigned to Jamie Buckingham, that prolific writer who wrote all but one of Kathryn Kuhlman’s books. Pastor Bill had a long association with Kathryn*

*Kuhlman’s ministry. He actual sang in her choir 10 years. I was privileged to work with him when he was the analyst and critic for my autobiography – AWAITING THE HEALER. Over three decades Bill was a pastor at several large churches. One day whilst we worked, he shared the following story: **To me it’s an absolute classic.**”*

**T**he church was a large congregation with several thousand members and a team of pastors for the life and work of the church. The congregation consisted of upper class and influential people. Also within this church was one little black lady. No one knew how she came to be a part of this particular congregation – it was NOT an obvious match for her.

This little black lady desperately hankered to adopt a child. Sadly, her husband had been killed in the Watts race riots in Los Angeles some years before. Apparently, because she was a widow, and because she was black, the authorities refused permission for her to adopt. Inwardly she battled coming to terms with their decision. And there remained an emptiness – a lack of fulfilment deep within her life. Finally, reaching the end of her emotional rope, she plucked up the courage to share her inner conflict, grief,

and general lack of self-worth with the leadership of the church. This took considerable courage. She had absolutely no idea how or whether the Pastoral team would receive her, or if they’d even listen. Whatever she did, she didn’t fit the scene. Her decision to talk with the church leadership was ‘risky’ faith.

Amazingly, they did receive her and heard her through. The outcome was the gift of a vehicle – a van which the church approved for ministry to the derelicts of the city. However, there were stipulations. She was forbidden to bring anyone within the church doors who might bring a reproach, discomfort, or embarrassment to others.

She respected their boundaries – No problem! Six weeks passed. Everything went very orderly – it was the city’s derelicts she was working with, after all! Then, one Sunday morning the inevitable happened. The church side door

flew open and in she marched with a vanload of severely disabled black children. Some were hideous, with grotesque, physical deformities, human flotsam nobody knew what to do with. Unloved kids with absolutely no expression: no smile, no tears, total vacancy. Understandable – what would you expect where there’s no love, no incentive of any quality?

Horrors of horrors, she positioned the children along the front row, directly beneath the pastor’s gaze. Not surprisingly, they squirmed, fidgeted, and wriggled uncomfortably at the scene before them. On one side was a little girl with Cerebral Palsy. She could not sit without support. Her body flopped from side to side. An assistant worker sat on each side to prop her into an upright position. Her face showed no expression. Only despair, and total nothingness. All the children were of varying age and with different



# Difficulty lies opportunity.

disabilities. Sunday after Sunday the scene continued. Bill expressed amazement at the tolerance from the church leadership.

Then, one Sunday, the lady responsible for it all walked in with a 'thing'. And only God knows what. It was an awful spectacle. Grotesque – PLUS! Bill took a long, hard look prior to figuring out the body's torso, with a head attached somehow. Few features appeared even vaguely human at a casual glance.

Bill's eyes welled up as he searched for appropriate words, "Margie, I couldn't sit up on the platform and do nothing – not any longer." He turned to his ministry colleague seated alongside him and suggested, "What say we go down, lay hands on these people, and pray?"

The retort: "You can't do that. They're black, and we're white!"

Bill was flabbergasted, deeply disappointed at the man's blasé attitude. In this church, that was the accepted stance and attitude. A silence followed. Bill rose to his feet. "I don't care what you think, I'm going down to minister JESUS to these precious kids."

He did. He chose first the little girl with Cerebral Palsy – the one who flopped from side to side. He took her face in his hands and began to pray, 'Precious Jesus.....' A smile spread from ear to ear. He immediately sensed he stood on 'HOLY GROUND' – the presence of God descended like a blanket. He moved along the row laying his hands upon each child, praying in a manner he'd never experienced in his life. That day, evidence of something positive showed with each one – a smile, tears, alertness, improvement with co-ordination – staggering stuff.

Week after week Bill persisted in prayer, laying on his hands and speaking life, health and wholeness into these children. Some months passed. Bill's contract with this congregation ended.

At the time of his departure the little girl who'd once flopped from side to side – totally dependent upon carers, was on her feet, her body perfectly co-ordinated, dancing. And, there was a marked improvement with several of the children, including, "The Thing."

How I'd love to plant that little black lady within churches throughout this nation – to provoke people to love. Love is a fruit of the SPIRIT. God wants spiritual fruit – He chokes on spiritual nuts! The 'key' to JESUS MIRACLE MINISTRY was compassion. Power without compassion is futile. ■



Thank you to the **POST HASTE COURIER COMPANY** for completely sponsoring the courier bags which take bulk copies of 'The Encourager' four times a year all round New Zealand. **We are so grateful for your generosity.**

## YOU TOO CAN KNOW HIM

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

*Answer to  
Prayer, and  
Some More  
Needs*

- Thank you to the person who responded to our appeal by giving us a wonderful whiteboard - two sided and on wheels!
- Does anyone have spare **Pop Up Gazebos** or **large Shade Sails** that would enable us to be outside in the fresh air during the Summer Months. **Please contact [reception@elevatedcdt.org.nz](mailto:reception@elevatedcdt.org.nz) or ph 09 636 4763.**
- We need finance to run the first ever **Emmanuel Family Camp**. You can give through "**Give a Little**" Give reference Elevatedcdt - Emmanuel Camp
- We need some assistance in the library doing CDs, Daisy and USB



*We are never so near to God as when*

Care Giving:

# *A Cause for*



**L**ots of people agree: I have a beautiful wife. With her ready smile and engaging personality, most people hardly notice her wheelchair. And when they learn that she writes books, travels extensively, and leads a dynamic ministry to people with disabilities around the globe, they're amazed. To most of the world, Joni Eareckson Tada doesn't seem disabled at all.

After 48 years of quadriplegia, Joni makes having hands and feet that don't work look easy. I love that about my wife. I like that she doesn't make a big deal about her spinal-cord injury, but simply moves forward

into life leaning hard on the grace of God. Everybody says the same: Joni seems "normal;" someone who is not defined by her disability.

I wish it were that simple. Actually, Joni does, too. Most people have no idea what it takes for my wife to simply get up in the morning. It's nearly a two-hour routine that includes giving her extensive range-of-motion exercises, a bed bath, toileting routines, putting on her leg bag, support hose, binders, strapping on a corset and getting her dressed, sitting her up in her wheelchair, brushing her teeth, fixing her hair and face (not to mention fixing breakfast). And I've just described the abridged version!

Plus, don't assume that in the evening, Joni simply jumps out of her wheelchair and into bed – it's virtually the same routine as in the morning, except in reverse. Day in and day out, 365 days a year. And it never varies – unless Joni becomes ill; then there's even more involved.

Caring for Joni is something I gladly signed up to do 3 ½ decades ago when we took our vows on our wedding day. In sickness and in health, for better or for worse, I promised to cherish my wife and take care of her to the best of my ability. In the years that followed, never once have I regretted my decision to marry Joni with her quadriplegia – even in the midst of the many nightmarish ordeals related to her health and the dreary day-to-day routines. I love my wife with a love that is anchored in Jesus Christ. But that doesn't make it easy.

All relationships have their challenges, but when you add a chronic disability, the challenges can seem overwhelming. You could be a son caring for your father with Alzheimer's, or a single mother coping with your teenaged son with autism. You could be the father of a boy with muscular dystrophy, or the wife of a husband who has suffered a stroke....

## for Christ

by Ken Tada

All relationships have their challenges, but when you add a chronic disability, the challenges can seem overwhelming.

Disability has a way of testing even the best of relationships. Daily routines that never vary... social isolation... financial pressures... unmet expectations... and a life that is extremely untypical from others. Without Christ firmly in the center of the suffering, a caretaker can crack under the pressure of loneliness, guilt, and despair. Little wonder that the divorce rate in families affected by disability is nearly 80%.

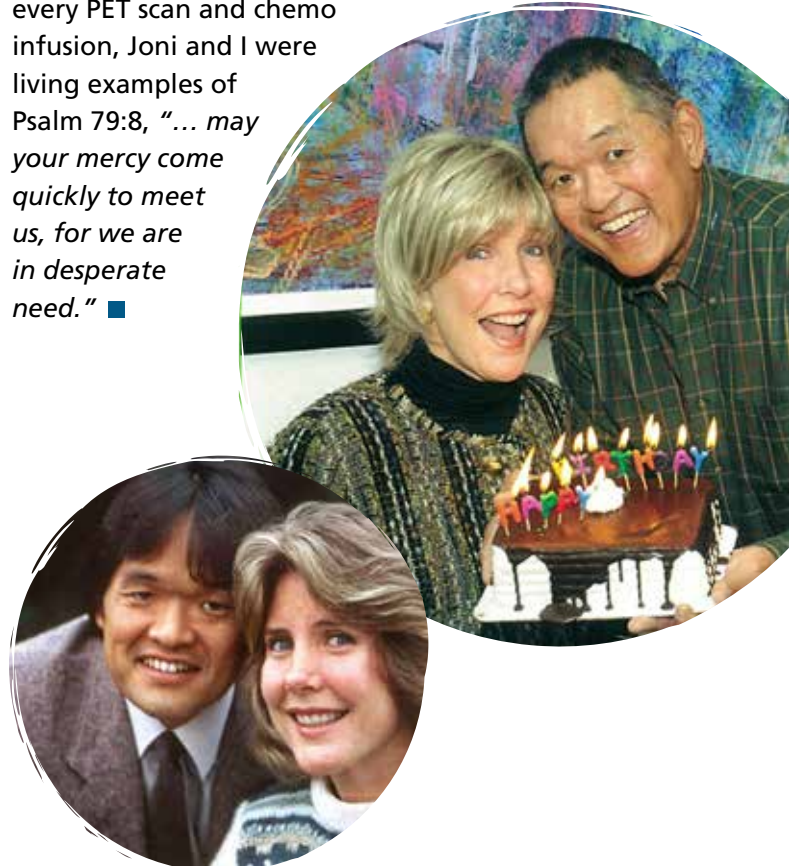
I have witnessed the heartbreaking reality of that statistic. Every summer Joni and I participate in our Joni and Friends' Family Retreats where we have the chance to meet hundreds of families affected by disability who come for the fun, fellowship, networking, times of prayer and Bible study (next summer Joni and Friends will hold 27 Retreats across the US and 17 in developing nations).

But at each Family Retreat, I'm always amazed at the numbers of single mothers who attend with their disabled child. Where are the fathers? Again, statistics show it's usually Dad who bails out, even in the face of Isaiah 58:7 that says never to "turn your back on your own flesh and blood." Ironically, almost all of these single mothers never seem to blame their disabled child for their misfortune. Instead, they describe that child as their "biggest blessing."

And after years of caring for my wife, I would say the same about Joni. She is my biggest blessing – especially as I was helping her through her recent battle against stage III breast cancer. The prospect of losing my wife to a dreaded disease made all the "baggage" related to her disability seem minor. The major thing was rescuing her life! Thankfully, God gave me the grace to put my caregiving skills

into overdrive as I stood by my wife through her mammogram, biopsy, her mastectomy, recovery and chemotherapy. I was the companion at her side for countless hospital visits and oncology appointments, and her counselor as we sought out second and third opinions.

Lots of people thought God was "laying too much" on Joni, a quadriplegic in her 60's who also deals with chronic pain. Privately, I sometimes wondered if it all might not crush me. But once again, by the grace of God, Joni was able to make even cancer look easy. And for me? If anything, the long battle against her cancer strengthened my faith in Jesus Christ, as well as deepened my love for my wife. Together, through every PET scan and chemo infusion, Joni and I were living examples of Psalm 79:8, "*... may your mercy come quickly to meet us, for we are in desperate need.*" ■







# Justice is getting what we deserve, Me

His disability was a

gift from



**T**he last two Encouragers told how Christopher Coleman was pronounced dead at birth and put to one side as the doctors worked on a second baby coming through. Miraculously, not having breathed for 15 minutes, he survived, but with extensive brain damage! Incredibly, Christopher secretly taught himself to read. An amazing mother allied with great determination himself saw him overcome tremendous hurdles, but he still hadn't given his life to Jesus.

I was in regular classes with dozens of students in each one, but I was lonely. The other students joked and laughed with each other, but they kept their distance from me. They seemed afraid to interact with someone in a wheelchair. I had no student friends except my sister Christal, but she was already a junior. So, I poured all my efforts into my studies, and made education everything to me. It helped take the sting of rejection away a little, but not completely. I was never going to be like the other kids, no matter how good my grades were. To the students, I was still just a crippled kid who couldn't talk normal.

As the years passed, my reputation as a serious student opened doors to even greater learning opportunities.

Teachers were eager to have me in their classes. The administrators kept challenging me with college prep classes and advanced studies, and I was flying through them with ease. My dreams of being a real student had finally come true. On March 25, 1993, at the age of 20, I graduated with honours from St. Amant High School. I was ranked fifth out of 360 seniors.

The time for making the break from my home and all that was familiar to me was fast approaching. I knew I wanted to go on to college, but the reality of entering a whole new world was frightening. I was confident that I could do anything intellectually I set my mind to do. But there were things my body wouldn't allow me to do – things the world I was entering would require. How am I going to make it? How is a crippled guy in a wheelchair going to survive out there in the real world? People won't be able to understand me. I'll be seen as a freak, I thought.

"How did you make it, Mom?" I asked her one day. I reasoned that a woman who could raise seven children on her own, work two full-time jobs and maintain her sanity had the answers I needed. But my mom, my hero for my entire life, and the one I looked up to all these years, would give no credit to herself. "I didn't," she answered quietly. "I would have walked out on all of you a long time ago. It was the Lord Jesus who gave me what I needed to stay here and raise my kids."

For as long as I could remember, my brothers, sisters and I always went with our mother to church. In

my mind, that was just something people did. Now, Mom was telling me the Jesus she praised and worshiped in church and talked to at home was a real person. She actually had a relationship with Him. He was her helper in her times of need. It sounded good to me. It felt right.

"It's cool to be a Christian," I said. If Mom was a Christian and we all went to church with her, then we were all Christians too, I thought. "Are you?" she asked. "I gave my life to God for the sake of myself, not my kids. You have to choose to give your life to God for yourself, Chris. I can't do that for you."

It was the most important question anyone had ever asked me. All that week I thought about my life and all that I had been through. Someone other than myself had to be in control, I thought. If Jesus wasn't the truth, I wouldn't be where I was. The following Sunday my sister pushed me to the front of the church. I wanted what Mom had. I humbly asked Jesus to be Lord in my heart, too.

In September, as I entered Nichols State University's pre-law programme, everything seemed to be going well on the surface. But deep down inside I was uneasy. I had trusted God with my future, but I hadn't given him my past. I didn't think anyone would ever like me for who I was. The memories of how people outside my family treated me in the past haunted me. I never thought people had treated me unfairly – I believed they were justified for what they said and what they did. I was a crippled kid who couldn't talk or act like a normal



## God

### Part 3 - The Third & Final Part

person, and I deserved to be treated poorly.

In my new surroundings at NSU, I tried to cover up my disability. I tried to present myself in a way I thought others would love and accept. I wanted students and professors to like me, but I was afraid to be who I really was. I remember visiting a restaurant and feeling afraid to pick up my spoon to eat. I was sure I would make a mess and embarrass my friends. I was afraid to reach for a napkin because I might knock over a drink. I didn't want anyone to see that I didn't have it all together. There are always insecurities that come with a disability, and they had me bound up inside. I didn't want to be vulnerable. I didn't want to be hurt again.

At the end of my sophomore year, I felt God urging me to do something more with my life. I wanted to move to Marietta, Georgia, and finish my college education at Southern Polytechnic University. Mom didn't like the idea, but she reluctantly agreed to help me get there. "I don't want my baby to move to Georgia. But if you want to know the truth, I can sit here and tell you all about Jesus, but you won't ever know Him until you get out there and try Him for yourself," she said. Mom was right.

After I moved to Georgia, I started doing things I never thought I could do. I was living in an apartment on my own, keeping up with my studies and cooking and cleaning for myself. I functioned fairly well for nearly two years. My grades were good, and I was well on my way to a college degree in technical communications.

But as my college years were coming to an end, my life became a stressed-out mess. I was falling apart.

Jonathan Carter showed up for the last few months of school. He was to become my personal assistant. I knew God had sent Jonathan because I hadn't been able to confront my fear of who I was, disabilities and all, until he came into my life. We were having lunch one afternoon at a small restaurant when I felt a sneeze coming on. I was afraid, because I knew my limbs would fly in all directions. I had no idea what might come out of my nose or where it might end up. Sure enough, that sneeze was everything I expected. Jonathan received his second shower of the day.

His kind words were not what I expected, but they were what I longed for all of my life.

"It's okay," he said, softly. The words came from Jonathan's mouth, but I knew God put them there. It's okay, I thought, as those simple words echoed in my head. I thought about everything that goes with being disabled. It's okay that I can't move my body the way other people move. It's okay that I can't speak as clearly as other people. It's okay that I need help to do some things. God made me this way, I thought. And when He did, He put His stamp of approval on my life.

The challenges, heartaches, trials and unfair situations that I have faced in 33 years have enhanced my life. I no longer resent my wheelchair or my physical condition. In the Bible, it tells of Jesus meeting a man who



*Christopher's Mother*

had been blind since birth. Jesus'

disciples asked Him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"

"Neither this man nor his parents sinned," Jesus replied. "This happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life." (John 9:1-3) I've found these verses to be no exception to my life. I've realized God uses my disability to prove His ability. It hasn't been easy living life in a wheelchair, but it has been a life of freedom rather than confinement. I can truly say that I have joy in my heart, and it was Jesus who put it there. I believe God is using me to bring glory to His name.

The doctors didn't think I survived in that Louisiana delivery room 33 years ago. A white sheet covered my first moments, and I was given up for dead. I am so grateful that God had other plans!

Christopher Coleman lives in Acworth, Georgia, and speaks to Christian organizations, schools, workplaces and disabled groups throughout the world through "Empowered Ministries/Empowered Inc."

*Christopher covets your prayers*



# Worry ends wh

Kirsty and Di met Jeff in USA at Joni's Conference

## Ministry to persons with disabilities is not an “organic” ministry

by Jeff McNair

I was chatting with a friend recently who was visiting. She talked about conversations with the pastor of her church about working toward developing a ministry to persons with disabilities at her church. The pastor replied that he doesn't feel the need to reach out to people with disabilities in the community. He feels that ministry should be “organic” meaning that you don't do anything till someone shows up. I have heard this nonsense many times before. As I have stated elsewhere in the past in the blog, I have students in one of the classes I teach interview their pastor about ministry to persons with disabilities. I have the students ask...

Is ministry to persons with disabilities a priority at our church?

If it is a priority, what is the evidence that people with disabilities are a priority?

If it is not a priority, why isn't it a priority?

A typical response is that we love everyone the same who comes to our church. Now that sounds great, however, you have a group of people who likely have no ability to come to church. If they are intellectually disabled, they don't have driver's licenses. If they have physical disabilities, they also may not be able to get themselves to church without assistance. Even those who live in group homes likely need people to go to the home and talk to those who manage the home to invite them etc. There are also families who have been shunned because of a disabled family member.

But this pastor sees no need to invite people with disabilities to church.

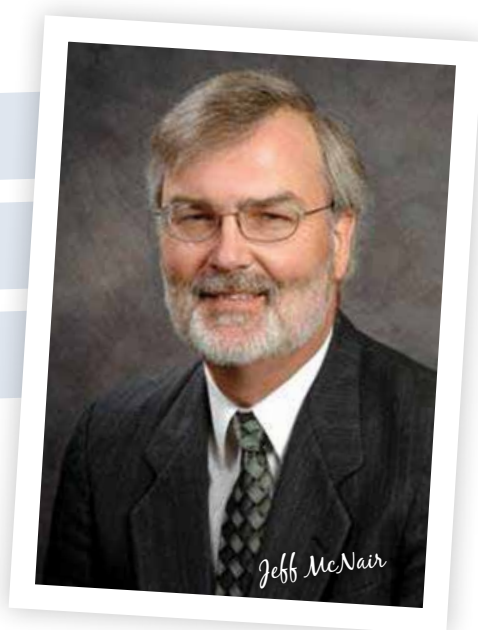
Luke 14 is a passage that is often cited as important in supporting ministry to persons with disabilities. But the part of Luke 14 which has always impacted me is

verse 23. The NIV says, “Then the master told his servant, ‘Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full.’”

How do you compel someone to do something? Actually, the first question is probably why would you have to compel people who have been devalued to come to a wedding banquet? Perhaps because you have participated in their devaluation. You see the starting point in disability ministry is to ask those who you have devalued for forgiveness. To compel you to come, I begin by saying, “Please forgive me for how I have treated you in the past. I have not acted as Jesus would call me to act toward you. Please forgive me. If you are able to do that, would you please give me the opportunity to serve you....” and we go on from there. Also note that the passage says, “Go out... and compel.” This is not a wait for them to show up. This is a go out and convince them to come in. You have to do something! Not sit and wait.

That we would just wait for those we have hurt in a variety of ways just to show up because we are so wonderful is stupid and foolish.

I once spoke to a group about disability ministry. I shared the idea of beginning ministry by asking for forgiveness. I said, “I really don't have the power to do this, but I want to say to anyone in the room, please forgive us, the Christian church, for the way we have treated you. You did not deserve the treatment you received from us. I humbly ask for your forgiveness and ask if you would give us another chance.” A woman in the group immediately began sobbing. Through her tears she said, “I have been





waiting for this apology for years!"

Our starting point is not that we project to the community that we are "God's gift" to them. I honestly believe that the Christian church is a significant part of God's answer to supporting individuals and families, however, not as it is at the

moment. There is much change and growth that needs to occur. There are pockets of beauty where amazing things are happening. But there are also still those in their foolishness who spout the nonsense that contributes to the ongoing exclusion of persons with disabilities. ■



**F**rom the way God has unfolded the events of my life I can see He has worked out all things for my good. I have been in a wheelchair for 16 years and I recently felt that God wanted me to believe for a miracle of healing in my physical body. During this journey, I began to realize that the miracle of healing was not even the greatest of goals; rather, it was my total dependency on Him as the greatest privilege and focus of my life. My question was; if I loved and served God all my life, why did I find it so hard to relinquish full control? I needed to focus more on a genuine relationship with God rather than trying to get something from Him.

My father-in-law is a missionary, and one of the comments he made in his e-newsletter caught my attention. He mentioned how reading through the Bible in a different way or in a different version each time, can provide a better understanding of

## SUSTAINING POWER!

by Vahen King.

**Here is an excerpt from her book entitled "Going Farther."**

Scripture. I laughed to myself, "Each time? Try maybe one time!" I was strongly convicted. How many times have I started, but failed to follow through? How did I think I could grow spiritually and not put out the effort and commitment it required? I read my Bible and prayed, but there was no depth. A lot of my prayers were merely me telling God all the things I needed or wanted, but I hadn't learnt to listen or wait to hear what He has to say.

In January of 2014, a pastor prophesied over me. He said, "God is calling you into a deeper relationship with Him. He wants to take you deeper than you have ever been." He then challenged me to read the Bible through in one year. Those words resounded in my heart, and I knew I had to step up and really commit myself. I felt in my heart this was the key that would bring me into that deeper relationship with God, and I accepted the challenge.

As I approached the completion of my goal to read the Bible through in one year, I thought "Yes, I did it! - now I can return to my previous routine of daily devotions." Instantly, I felt a bit of panic, and

thought, "No! That was my food this past year." I couldn't believe it had taken me so long to really "get it." I can look back and see how I was developing spiritual discipline in my life. Was it easy? No. At times it felt like I was reading words on a page that had no meaning, but as I spent time each day getting to know the author on a deeper level, I began growing my Spiritual muscles.

My perspective has changed tremendously, and my time spent with God and reading His word, is more than just a "goal to accomplish." I now understand that the joy of the Lord is my strength, and I have a passion to encourage others - "Don't forget your food, because without it you will not have the strength to fight and overcome the challenges you face."

The more I understood the truth of God's word, and who He was, the more I could see that He not only had the power to bless me, but that He desired to bless me more than I could ever ask or think." I take great confidence in the words of Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." ■



# Golf without bunkers would be ta



## John Fox on Euthanasia

### Hello I'm John Fox,

I want to share some thoughts of mine on euthanasia from a disability perspective. To begin with, I should say two things. First, this is not abstract for me. I live with a mild form of cerebral palsy and various associated problems including spastic hemiplegia. I know from first-hand experience how hard it is to be physically vulnerable, to lose control of one's own body. How hard it can be to depend on other people. From this angle I have every human sympathy with Lecretia Seales and others like her who show to us how real, ugly and frightening death can be. Like everyone with a functional pulse, I recognise how hard and difficult this issue is. Advancing medical technology means the debate about 'the good death' will not go away.

But secondly, I also know some other things from the same experience. I'd like to share with you why I believe the so-called "choice in dying" bill should not proceed. In fact, I want to put it in the waste-paper basket. I say this because for me, this issue is not abstract. When talking about the deaths of people who are sick, terminally ill and disabled, I am not able to forget that we are discussing my life and my death.

One of my first memories is hospital, and especially the crippling sense of vulnerability of a sick four-year-old. I was having corrective surgery, and it came time to remove the casts around my feet. My parents restrained me while the doctor advanced on me with a blade to cut the cast. I still remember the sense of utter helplessness I felt. The only thing that made feeling this vulnerable okay was my belief that the doctor was here to help me. That I could trust the nurse and the medical professionals. I've been in many hospitals since. Every time I lie flat for an x-ray or have my scar tissue mobilised I trust the doctors, their good intentions, their competence, their care. The euthanasia bill strikes at the root of the doctor-patient relationship by making doctors an instrument to kill, not cure. For every articulate (but I think misguided) patient like Lecretia Seales, there are many more who are vulnerable, persuadable or unsure. To use the trust and professional skills special to doctors to enable patients to be killed, even at their own

request, is a betrayal of the doctor-patient relationship and the Hippocratic oath: first, do no harm.

I understand, I think, what it is like to feel useless and tortured by your own life. I walk into the pharmacy and the pharmacist says "Hello John. Is it the usual?". The 'usual' includes fairly high-strength pain meds, drugs to put me to sleep, drugs to wake me up again, and drugs to make life tolerable while I'm awake. There are days when my feet refuse to work, when I fall and have to get scraped off the footpath, when I lie awake, staring at the ceiling, wondering what use my life is. But that is not all I have. As my friends and family remind me regularly, even if I am no use to the economy, and even little use to myself, I am valuable to them simply by existing.

If a healthy and able bodied 32 year-old went to the doctor tomorrow and asked to die, there would be severe concern. The doctor would ask questions about the context of his life, his relational support, what it is that makes his life no longer worth living. The doctor's first concern would be to get him to see the bigger picture, the interconnectedness and belonging we share as human beings and members of the human family. Give that 32 year-old a terminal illness, or like me, an incurable disability, and in some jurisdictions death becomes thinkable, even allegedly the best option. I don't know what to call that, other than fear of disability. As modern western people we pride ourselves on our autonomy, our power, our capacity. It is one of our deepest and most unspoken fears – the fear of disability, disfigurement, loss of control and death. It is for this reason that for instance the large majority of Down-Syndrome children never arrive. It is for this reason that we shy away from the mentally ill, the elderly, and the sick, hoping that if we crowd them away we will not become like them. If we pride ourselves on being an inclusive society, a fair society and a society of solidarity, we must change and confront this fear. It is at the moment of death we can measure the practical charity of our society. In our country palliative care is patchy. It took me six months to access pain services in our largest city. There are also multiple reports of the abuse and



# ame and monotonous. So would life.

neglect of the elderly in rest homes.

I argue that we must uphold solidarity with disabled people. We must insist on our connectedness as well as our autonomy. We must remind even those tempted to forget that quote, "each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary". We have rightly abandoned the asylum mentality of the 1970s. Let us make another step and declare, as our law already does, we are all in this together. The euthanasia bill creates a category of people who are killable. That is wrong.

I know slippery slope arguments get bad press coming somewhere around that old chestnut "Will somebody think of the children?" In this case, I think a slippery slope argument can be justified, but rather, I chose a different one. Once you have created the category, whether it is terminally ill people, incurable, or simply people who wish to die, the category will inevitably creep. It is bound to be

and become broader than intended. The DPB was once an emergency benefit for battered wives. The abortion law was intended for the rare, hard case. And welfare was created as a supplement to work. What we see in all three examples is the phenomenon I talk about; not so much slippery slope, but category creep. The law becomes broader than intended, then easily expandable, then a rule, in spite of safe-guards. The only way to stop category creep is not to create the category in the first place.

I want to leave you with a challenge. Whether it is the elderly, the disabled, the young or the unborn, New Zealand faces a choice. We can rise to our best selves: fair, decent, brave and compassionate, or push the red button and sweep up the mess. For me and the many disabled people who think as I do (although not all), we hope that we will be wise enough, kind enough and gutsy enough to choose the first option. Maintain our dignity. **Put the bill in the bin.** ■

## Our Camp attracts Music Connoisseurs!

A lady who had never visited camp before, popped in one day with her dog, and struck the end of the worship time. She immediately hoped (and prayed) that none of the songs sung would be ones her dog knows, but, guess what? The first was one of the dogs favourites, and he startled everyone by starting to howl! He loves those classic old hymns, and this is his way of singing along with them!

These are two of the tables at the catered dinner funded by the Eleos Trust to thank the wonderful helpers who make the ministry of The Centre possible.

A great evening of encouragement all around!



**PUT IN  
YOUR  
DIARY NOW  
THESE DATES  
FOR NEXT  
YEAR**

### FEBRUARY

The first ever Family Camp  
Totara Springs, Matamata  
19 - 20 Feb

### MARCH

Wellington CFFD Camp  
Waikanae  
4 - 6 March

### MARCH

CBM Kidz Camp  
Blockhouse Bay, Auckland  
18 - 20 March

### APRIL

Auckland CFFD Camp  
Carey Park, Henderson  
1 - 3 April

### MAY

National Joy Ministries Camp  
Totara Springs, Matamata  
13 - 15 May

### JULY

Elevate Leadership Retreat  
South Auckland venue  
1 - 3 July

### SEPTEMBER

40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Of Elevate  
including all ministries  
Auckland  
Sat 3 Sept

### OCTOBER

National Elevate Camp Labour  
Totara Springs, Matamata  
Wkend 21 - 24 Oct



# Hope is the confident, joyful ex

## The drop in the bucket effect...



Research shows that when people feel an issue is too big to tackle, they are less likely to give or to volunteer. Jesus in an interesting way addresses this issue in the Gospels in *Matthew 25: 37-40*.

*"Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and invite You in, or naked and clothe You. When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will answer them, 'I tell you the truth. Just as you did it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of Mine, you did it for Me.'"*

When I hear people attempt to quote the verse from memory they almost always get it wrong. They get it almost right, but not quite right. This is what they typically say:

*"And the king will answer them, 'I tell you the truth,' Just as you did it for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for Me.'"*

Close, but no prize! What was the key word missing from the second that was in the first? Here it is. **"one."** A small word, but one that makes a big difference.

Here is what I think Jesus is saying in this verse.

"Look, what matters to me is not that you go and try to change the world. How about you just love one person. Let's start there."

By focusing on just one person you begin to humanise the problem. You are not just helping single mums, but you are helping Peggy. You are not just helping kids at risk, but you are helping Robert. It is no longer all those people with disabilities, but it now becomes my next door neighbour Larry who has Downs Syndrome.

I believe that Jesus, in this passage, is taking away the excuse to say that the problem is too big, or that it's a drop in the bucket. Here He is saying, Just focus on one person. Find your one.

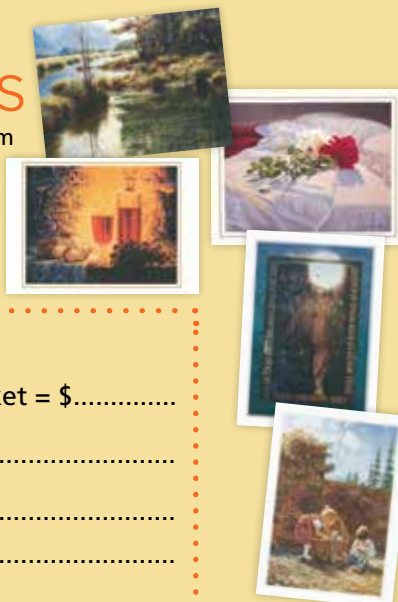
And inspire and encourage your church members to find their one.

Find the one group home, the one family or the one individual to invest your time in, and make a difference.



## GRAHAM BRADDOCK CARDS

You have another opportunity to buy Graham Braddock cards. Packets of ten include one or more of five different paintings (shown) along with two of the Trust cards which depict Jesus talking to a group of people with disabilities.



### I WISH TO PURCHASE

..... packets of cards @ \$12 per packet = \$.....

NAME .....

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This price covers postage and packaging.

Send to: PO Box 13-322 Onehunga, Auckland



### The Leadership Retreat for Joy Ministries at River Lodge, Reporoa

A beautiful place. Great food. Very encouraging two days of sharing and learning enjoyed by all, with one amazingly helpful session on "Maintaining Passion for what we do."



# expectation that good is coming!



Leslie dela Ganar writes from the Philippines (PCFFD):

## Parents Fellowship Started

Last year we had a strong conviction from the Lord to have a fellowship to minister to parents who are affected by the disabilities of their children, most of whom got to know the Lord through the Fellowship. God has been changing them. They testified that they have learned how to come to God through prayers and entrust to Him their children, and accept them as a blessing from God; they have learned to forgive people who wronged them, and have care for others, etcetera. And one mother shared that even though her family is facing trials (her husband has a serious illness) she

did not blame God but has learned to accept their situation as it is and lift it up in prayer.

Their knowledge about the Word of God is increasing. Another mother was crying while she was telling us that she is so thankful that her son is being helped by PCFFD through the Sponsorship Programme even though their religion is different from us. Another mother said that attending the Fellowship gives her relief from all her stress and she receives joy from the Lord. Glory to God!

Friends, thanks so much for all the support and prayers for us. It is really a big help. May God bless you more and more.

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# SATURDAY NIGHT WAS A SWIRL OF COLOUR AND ACTION

Saturday night is always a “big hit” at National Camp, but this year it was enjoyed even more so, as it became a mixture of dressing up in a colourful variety of Biblical characters, participation in team competitions and dancing.

It was great social interaction, lots of fun, with a fast moving programme, and a chance to intermingle in a way people normally never would have the opportunity to engage in at home. As the rest of the team cheered them, on some ten were chosen as the team representatives competing in a variety of tasks, and points were given out and the team totals regularly announced.



Passing the ball  
over the heads



The teams line up



Enthusiastic response as the  
points awarded are announced



Great joy all round



Studies in concentration as everyone helps



and of course the dancing