

The encourager

THE MAGAZINE OF ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST

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**Lots of fun in
the activities of
Dunedin CFFD**

*our southern
most branch!*





The photos shown at the top of the pages were taken at Dunedin CFFD branch activities

The best way out of di

Does God care?

By Ruth Beale. She was in Philippines CFFD, their representative for years, also on the Wellington CFFD committee, and on the Trust Board.

As many of you know I have been in hospital for nearly two years! At times I have sometimes felt quite despondent.

I have been very thankful to have the use of an iPad. Praise God for the Internet with the good stuff that can be looked up. I was listening to a preacher, and he mentioned the words of a song:

No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you, Lean weary one upon His breast. God will take care of you.

This spoke to me deeply. It is easy to say or sing these words when everything is going well, but life is not like that. All of us face trials or tests, and I sure have had my fair share, but remember, no matter what the test God will take care of you.

Over the time I have been in hospital I have had periods of despondency and been fearful, particularly when facing life-threatening surgery earlier this year. I had to keep reminding myself that no matter what the test, God will take care of me.

So does God really care about us? Let's see what His Word the Bible say about this? I come to my favourite verse I Peter 5:7 - Casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you. KJV

So let's look at what this verse means. Casting is like throwing, and the word is plural, so not just once but many times we can cast our cares upon God. The modern words for cares are anxieties worries and fears. Why? Because God cares for you.

So how do we cast our cares on God?

Well, we need to communicate with God, and the way to do this is through prayer. God really wants us to tell Him about our worries and anxious times, and what we are fearful of. He will then provide us comfort through the reading of His Word, the Bible. Verses like Hebrews 13:5 - God says I will never leave you or forsake you. Psalm 73:23 God says, I am always with you, You hold me by my right hand. So we can take from these verses and many others that God cares about us personally.

When I was a child my parents, whom some of you will remember from their involvement in Wellington



CFFD some years ago, had a verse hanging in the hallway of our house in Masterson. It was an old house with a long hall, and each night my sister and I would walk past that verse on the wall to our parents' bedroom for family reading and prayers. It is found in *Deuteronomy 33:27*. The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms. As a child I thought of this as God holding the world like a globe, with His arms embracing it underneath. But as I grew in my faith I came to understand that the everlasting arms are there to catch us when we fall, and to help us to stand under trials or tests.

So does God care about us and our situation? I think we can say a resounding YES.

God knows where you are at today. He knows your struggles, and wants to be there for you because He loves you and cares deeply about you. So often we think that no one else can possibly understand what we are going through, but God knows and He cares.

So, in closing, I wish to quote the words of another lovely old hymn. "Does Jesus Care."

Does Jesus care when my heart is pained too deeply for mirth or song?

As the burdens press and the cares distress and the way grows weary and long.

Does Jesus care when my way is dark with a nameless dread and fear?

As the daylight fades into deep night shades, does He care enough to be near?

Does Jesus care when I've tried and failed to resist some temptation strong?

When for my deep grief there is no relief though my tears flow all the night long.

Does Jesus care when I've said goodbye to the dearest on earth to me?

And my sad heart aches till it nearly breaks, is it aught to Him, does He see?

Oh yes He cares, I know He cares, His heart is touched by my grief.

When the days are weary and the long nights dreary I know my Saviour cares.

Difficulty is through it.

NATIONAL CAMP 2017

20th - 23rd October 2017 | Totara Springs, Matamata

Philippians 3:12-14

REGISTRATIONS ARE NOW OPEN.

Register online or contact your local branch.

PRICING:

\$190 Adult

\$125 11-14 years old

\$85 5-10 years old

SPEAKER:

We are excited to have last year's speaker **Becke Medina**, back.

She is inspirational, challenging and fun.

Contact the camp registrar for further details at

elevatedtcamp@gmail.com

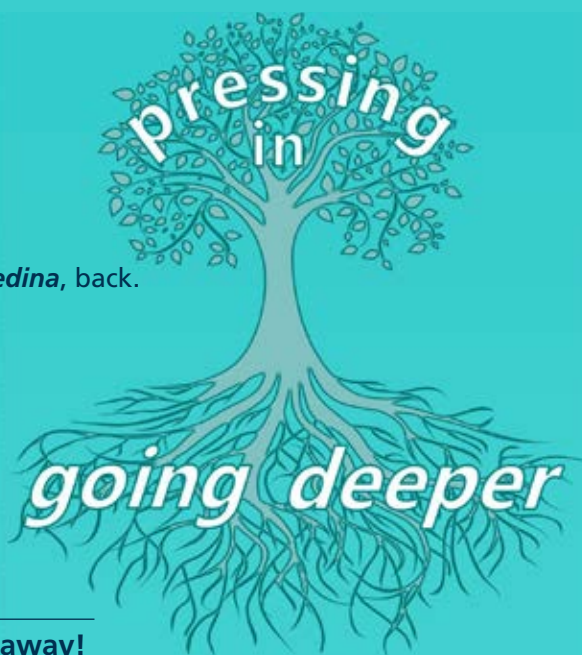
Richard Goh - Phone 09 444-3062

118B Sunset Rd, Unsworth Heights, Auckland 0632

Hurry to put your form in **NOW** - online or post

We'd love to have new folk as campers and helpers, and of course we need experienced folk who have been before. **We need you!**

Note: Registrations close on 20th September— only a month away!



NATIONAL CAMP, FROM THE VIEW OF SOME OF HELPERS

Camp can be one of the most tiring, exhausting, and emotionally challenging experiences. You may have very little sleep, physical tiredness from manual handling, and even emotional or spiritual battles.

So then why have we come for another camp?

It's because of:

1. The joy of seeing someone change; from crying to go home on their first night, to begging not to leave by their last night.
2. The smiles, laughter, and jokes.
3. The movement of God in their lives, chains are broken!
4. Hearing amazing stories and testimonies of how God moves.
5. Seeing a camper beam as they come to realise just how much Jesus loves them!
6. Learning selflessness by having to put another's needs before your own.

Another amazing camp –
thanks for the good times!

The Hendersons

HELPERS' SEMINAR



AUCKLAND

30TH SEPTEMBER

Our helpers' seminars are a great opportunity to hear personal experiences of disability and learn some practical ways to assist people.

ELEVATE Christian Disability Trust

173 Mt Smart Road, Onehunga

Time: 9:15am – 3pm **Cost:** \$10

(Bring your lunch with you)

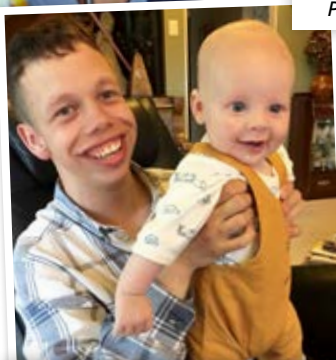
Register 09 636 4763 or info@elevatedtc.org.nz



FEAR knocked on the door, FAITH



Gordon family at Adrian's 21st
Photo credit Nathalie Evans



Adrian with nephew Julian
Credit Gemma Rasmussen

OUR SON THE TEACHER

Brenda and Dennis Gordon, from Wellington who are interviewed here, have a 24-year-old son, Adrian, with Williams Syndrome (WS). Brenda is a volunteer in the special-needs community; Dennis formally retired in 2015 but is still active as an emeritus science researcher and is an ordained minister in Grace Communion International. Over the years they have shared their experiences bringing up Adrian.

Q. What was it like for you both when Adrian came into the world? You already had two sons and were not anticipating any more children.

Brenda. That's right. I was 40 and Dennis was 48 when Adrian was born and the pregnancy had caught us by surprise. We consoled ourselves with the thought that this would be the daughter I always wanted, but it was not to be. Adrian was delivered by Caesarian at 33½ weeks and weighed only 1460 grams. He was weeks in the neonatal unit, starting off in intensive care. Weight gain was agonisingly slow and we were so relieved to have him home after five weeks. But during his first night home he developed a strangulated bowel and vomited a stool. He was operated on for an inguinal hernia, had a second hernia operation at six months and a third at 18 months.

Q. When did you discover that Adrian might have a genetic disability?

Dennis. During this period Adrian was diagnosed as having elevated blood calcium. That, plus his general appearance and slow growth suggested to the paediatrician that he might have Williams Syndrome, a condition we'd never heard of. His explanation, accompanied by poor photographs of elfin-featured children and a prognosis of slow physical and intellectual development, left us reeling. You don't plan for this sort of thing.

Brenda. We clung to the possibility that the paediatrician might be wrong and waited more than two years to see if Adrian conformed to the symptoms. At that time a fluorescent microscopic technique confirmed the loss of the elastin gene from one of every chromosome 7 pair in his body, which

was diagnostic of WS. The elastin protein is found in connective tissues, arterial walls, and the dermis of the skin, among other places, and its lack results in the facial characteristics that make every Williams kid look as though they belong to the same family. Our experiences in the neonatal unit, during which we shared in the distresses of other parents, gave us understanding and compassion. But we were also to learn that life with Adrian would bring self-discovery.

Q. What was it like, as Adrian grew up?

Brenda. That first year was hell for me. Adrian was very slow to develop. He didn't walk until he was nearly four, and started school with single-syllable sounds. By the age of seven he had only the abilities of a three year old. Even today, he is still not much more than emerging in his ability to read, write, work with numbers, and draw. And his bodily coordination and posture are less than what they would be for a person his age. On the plus side, Adrian has always been very social, outgoing, fun-loving, empathetic, and compassionate. These attributes are said to be characteristic of Williams kids generally, but I think they are partly developed in Adrian as an expression of his own temperament. Perhaps because of this, and to our great relief, Adrian was readily accepted, even loved, by the teachers and children at kindergarten and primary school. He has been mainstreamed from the beginning, and has thrived. No institutionalisation, no marginalisation. Thank God I live in a society that no longer rejects young people with special needs! Today, Adrian is flatting with a friend, with help from Community Connections, who are terrific, and it is going very well. And he is active in sports thanks to Special Olympics as well as various other activities, and he does paid employment four hours a week.

Dennis. I like the expression 'special needs'. Adrian is a 'normal' human being. He just operates at a

different level according to his abilities. He can be very affectionate. At other times he is like a rambunctious teenager and can even be devious. But he thrives on love. Because his needs are more obvious, it is easy to respond to them. I was far more gentle, merciful, understanding and forgiving with Adrian than with my two other boys as they grew up. Perhaps that came with age and experience, but there's no doubt that his very needfulness evoked my compassionate response. One begins to look at all 'special-needs' people in a different way.

Q. What, if any, spiritual lessons have you learned from life with Adrian?

Brenda. In Adrian's first year I put God at arm's length. I remember sitting on the bed one time, shaking and saying, 'I can't do this!' But the way I survived was to give it all to God. It was like in the Footprints poem: 'My precious child, I love you and would never leave you. During your times of trial and suffering, when you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you'. He did this in many ways. I had a guardian angel in a friend from church who would unexpectedly drop by at critical times and help out in so many ways. Actually, Adrian himself has been a kind of spiritual teacher, and not just to us. When he was just seven, a teacher's aide sent home the following note: "Today I came to school with a broken toe and couldn't wear my shoes in class. Adrian was very concerned and said to me, after giving me a big hug, 'Please God, give Rose toe big kiss, make better, Amen.' I was so touched, I thought I would share it with you. Nobody has ever said a prayer for me. It was so cute." When Adrian was still living with us, and Dennis invited friends and science colleagues home for dinner, Adrian often made a point of thanking God for the meal and the visitors, and got everyone holding hands, generally to the wry amusement of non-Christian guests!

Dennis. My relationship with Adrian has helped me to understand a lot about God. We human beings may be a wonderful creation, but behaviourally we're a pretty pathetic lot. We are so error-prone, so susceptible to character weaknesses like pride, lust, greed, selfishness and just plain orneriness. When I observe the blatant crassness and casual immorality on prime-time television and in popular magazines these days, and see people poisoning their minds and bodies with drugs, I really think that God must consider human beings as quite spiritually 'retarded' (if you'll pardon that Latin-derived word—it just means developmentally delayed). That would seem to be a more serious condition than mere intellectual retardation. The prophet Jeremiaiah quoted

God as declaring our human nature to be a kind of sickness—'The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure'. Perhaps this explains an observation that the Apostle Paul made to the church in Rome—'The sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law nor can it do so!' From God's point of view the human condition is serious, terminal in fact. Fortunately, God fully understands our condition and how it came about. In the person of Jesus, God experienced the human condition, and suffered torture and death to rescue us. If we accept Jesus' sacrifice and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that's the cure for our otherwise incurable 'heart' condition. It does require, however, that we all admit that we really are spiritually retarded and need to be made whole.

We know that God loves all human beings, but I think the ones he finds particularly irresistible are those who admit they are 'special-needs' and want to become his children. At one level, this world is an incubator for the children of God, a kind of spiritual neonatal unit in which God sees little ones fighting to survive. His heart is captured by our vulnerability. As the father of an irresistible special-needs son, I can identify with the words of Psalm 103—'As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those that fear him; for he knows how we are formed.' God isn't put off by the spiritually retarded human condition. Rather, he is attracted to it, so as to alleviate it. Isn't that wonderful!

Q. Any final thoughts?

Brenda. 'The will of God will never take you where the grace of God will not protect you'. ■



Adrian at Special Olympics track meet
Credit Dennis Gordon



Adrian with Newstalk ZB host
Credit Dominion Post



We only have what we



There's Healing in Communion

.....
by Margie Willers

Athetoid CP, co-founder of Elevate, writer and speaker
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In the 1980 era I seemed to be forever packing a suitcase to embark upon some speaking itinerary, addressing congregations of all denominations. Unforgettable was a visit to a particular Baptist Church. Some weeks prior to receiving the invitation to share with this congregation I'd watched a film series, 'BLESSINGS FROM BROKENNESS, by Joni Eareckson-Tada. Joni's interview with a lady named Gloria Hawley left on me an indelible impact.

Gloria was the mother of two teenagers. Both had special needs. Gloria was a role-model, for her love, loyalty and devotion to these special youngsters – she absolutely adored them. They were most definitely her God-assignment. Suddenly tragedy struck: She learned that one of these precious teenagers had an incurable illness. Death was imminent for this young person – and anticipated within a very short time frame.

Gloria at the end of her cope-rope, and unable to contain her inner conflict, strode into her living room. Letting go all her pent- up pain-filled emotions, she thrust her fist high into the air – into the face of God and screamed, "God what do You know about your kid dying?" Immediately she recoiled in horror at the realisation of her blatant accusation.

I take enormous comfort in knowing that God understands our feeling, our frustrations, our inner

turmoil. HE DOES NOT CONDEMN US. However, it's what we do with them that counts!

Let's contemplate those horrendous, dark hours when Jesus hung on the cross, writhing in agony. Imagine the excruciating pain. Visualize his body beaten. The grotesque facial disfigurement. He is beyond all recognition. The crowd is blaspheming, taunting, mocking - Jesus is big-time, laughing-stock! The scene is utterly humiliating.

He knows to a much greater measure than any human being what it is to feel forsaken. Abandoned. With a broken heart He cries out, "My GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?" The intensity of the Father's anguish in the soul's darkest night: God could not look upon His Son dying. He covered the earth with total blackness. He understands. He identifies with our emotions, our tears, the hard, deep- dark, difficult times we journey through.

I'd been sharing thoughts along these lines, then with the service over, people were milling around my chair – all eager to touch, hug and express their own thoughts. Suddenly, I spotted an attractive Asian lady eager to converse with me. She appeared a picture of wellness, with a vivacious love of life. The following story is her amazing testimony:

"Two years back I lay on my death-bed. The prognosis wasn't good. The medical professionals predicted I had not more than two to three weeks at the MAX! One afternoon as I lay in my hospital bed I was given

a tremendous vision. I saw a large silver goblet filled with wine. A communion cup. The Lord Jesus beckoned me to come - to partake of the Cup of Suffering. My inner being filled with terror. I bolted upright in bed and literally howled... "No Lord, Oh NO-NO!!! I want nothing – absolutely nothing further to do with suffering. Then I sobbed: I cannot – cannot – cannot endure any more pain...

This horrendous journey has robbed me SEVERELY – of life itself!" The 'vision' made no sense: "Three times this silver goblet - the communion cup appeared. I fell backward on to my pillows in total exhaustion – totally mystified. And ever so afraid.

Suddenly, a knock came at my hospital-room door. The door opened and in walked a hospital chaplain. In his hands he held a silver tray, and on that tray my eyes focused upon a small, silver goblet, and placed alongside the 'goblet' - a tiny piece of unleavened bread.

The chaplain wasted no time with introductions. He seemed adamant his assignment to me that afternoon was to administer Holy Communion. He briskly walked from the door across to my bedside. His voice sounded authoritative. "The Lord has directed me to you. Would you be open and willing to receive this Holy Communion"? [a silence fell] Then, too weak to even talk – I nodded, raised one hand, and signalled the victory sign.

He continued - his voice softening, "There's a unique sense of the HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE HERE IN THIS ROOM that I've never previously witnessed in this hospital. I'm certain of a God-calling on your life. There's so much more for you to move into. Never-NEVER have I sensed so strongly the Lord's presence.

Please allow me to proceed:

"I urge you to take, eat this bread, a symbol of Christ's body - torn and broken that gives fullness of LIFE. and forgiveness of sin. Then, drink this cup, symbolic of His precious blood that was shed. Drink – drain until you swallow the last drop - and receive this very hour – a divine transfusion from Calvary, In the Precious -Mighty name of JESUS CHRIST and His RESURRECTION POWER'..... All infirmity – sickness

and fatal disease GO –I declare His Healing penetrate through this entire body."

He pulled a Bible from his jacket pocket. Opened it, flicked through the pages, and commenced reading aloud from the book of ISAIAH Chapter 53 –concluding with verse five..... 'And by HIS STRIPES YOU ARE HEALED '.....

The room filled with an awesome presence of the Holy Spirit... I still grapple with finding appropriate words to describe what actually happened ... Obediently, and according to instructions, I swallowed the tiny piece of bread then slowly drank from the small goblet. And, as I drained the last dregs of wine from that silver goblet, a tremendous heat surged through my body. I knew -that I knew - my entire system was being rid of the fatal illness.

'Margie, believe me – Oh believe me - That hospital-room became Holy Ground!! Some hours lapsed. The medical team were utterly confounded. And astounded! MY instantaneous cure they acclaimed, could be nothing but 'DIVINE INTERVENTION ' - A TOTAL MIRACLE!

Next day, following umpteen medical examinations and scans I walked out from that hospital in total wellness. And, I've kept walking in His 'miraculous healing power'. Her eyes brimmed with tears, " Margie, Please believe me, I've not come to put you down because I'm healed and as yet, you're not, but to encourage you – and share with you that 'The Cup of Suffering' can become 'THE CUP OF HEALING'..... For me: From that day onward, Communion became deeply meaningful. I've never since, refuted there's potential for miracle-healing power available to us as individuals as we partake from the Communion Cup. ■

CAN YOU READ THIS?

Ar you v r f ling not n d d,
v n us l ss?

If you can or even if you can't, turn to page eleven...



HOW ONE MAN BUILT A \$51M THEME PARK FOR HIS DAUGHTER - Part 1

By Claire Bates - World Service at the BBC



A father from Texas realised there were no theme parks where his disabled daughter could play. So he decided to build one.

Gordon Hartman had just got out of the swimming pool on a family holiday when his 12-year-old daughter Morgan went up to some children playing in the water. She tried to make friends with them, but they quickly left the pool. "Hartman thinks they shied away from her because they didn't know how to react to someone with a disability - Morgan has the cognitive understanding of a five-year-old as well as a form of autism. The incident played on his mind.

"Morgan is just a wonderful young lady. When you meet her you will always get a smile and she will always want to offer a hug. But there were so many times we couldn't take her places," he says. Hartman and his wife Maggie asked other parents where they could take their daughter - somewhere she would feel comfortable, and others would feel comfortable interacting with her. We realised such an inclusive place didn't exist," says Hartman.



So in 2007 he decided to build it himself. A former property developer, he sold his homebuilding businesses in 2005 to set up "The Gordon Hartman Family Foundation", a non-profit organisation that seeks to help people with disabilities. Then he set about creating the "world's first ultra-accessible theme park".

"We wanted a theme park where everyone could do everything, where people with and without special needs could play," Hartman says. He brought together doctors, therapists, parents and other people with and without disabilities to consult on the facilities. These were built on the 25-acre site of a disused quarry in San Antonio, Texas.

The park, called Morgan's Wonderland, cost \$34m (£26m) and opened in 2010. Attractions include a fully-accessible Ferris wheel, adventure playground and miniature train. Visitors regularly tell Hartman it is the first time they've been able to experience such attractions.

To be concluded in the next "Encourager"



Fifty Years of God's Faithfulness

Recently Joni Eareckson Tada celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the day she dived into a pool and broke her back. Here is a small part of what she wrote on that occasion.

I was once a 17-year-old who retched at the thought of living life without a working body. I hated my paralysis so much I would drive my power wheelchair into walls, repeatedly banging them until they cracked. Early on, I found dark companions who helped me numb my depression with scotch-and-cola. I just wanted to disappear. I wanted to die. What a difference time makes—as well as prayer, heaven-minded friends, and deep study of God's Word. All combined, I began to see there are more important things in life than walking and having use of your hands. It sounds incredible, but I really would rather be in this wheelchair knowing Jesus as I do than be on my feet without Him. But whenever I try to explain it, I hardly know where to begin.

Ten Life-Changing Words

Back in the '70s, my Bible study friend Steve Estes shared ten little words that set the course for my life: "God permits what he hates to accomplish what he loves." Steve explained it this way: "Joni, God allows all sorts of things he doesn't approve of. God hated the torture, injustice, and treason that led to the crucifixion. Yet he permitted it so that the world's worst murder could become the world's only salvation. In the same way, God hates spinal cord injury, yet he permitted it for the sake of Christ in you—as well as in others. Like Joseph when he told his brothers, 'God intended [my suffering] for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives'" (Gen. 50:20).

Ten words have set the course for my life: God permits what he hates to accomplish what he loves. For the saving of many lives? Yes, so I dare not hide my testimony under a bushel. Too many people with disabilities are floundering in hopelessness. It's why I wrote the Joni book, and did the Joni movie. I started Joni and Friends when special-needs families started asking, "How can I help my son with cerebral palsy out of depression? Why doesn't God heal everyone? How can I get my church involved?" and more. I wanted to show these people what the gospel looks like, just like my Christ-with-me-in-suffering friends did.

Now, every day when I wheel into the Joni and Friends International Disability Center, I try to squeeze every ounce of ministry effort from my quadriplegic body. This summer, Joni and Friends will hold 27 Family Retreats in the United States and 23 in less resourced nations, reaching thousands of special-needs families for Christ. Christian physical therapists will serve on our Wheels for the World teams in more than 40 countries, delivering Bibles, giving the salvation message, and hand-fitting wheelchairs to needy people with disabilities. Hundreds of our Cause4Life interns will work in orphanages overseas, showing that spina bifida isn't a voodoo curse and people aren't better off dead than disabled. Because Jesus is ecstasy beyond compare, and it's worth anything to be His friend.



Through the roof

"Through The Roof", a group in England very much like ours, recently made a survey of people with disabilities about concerns they had about the part that churches were playing in their lives, and we have, with permission, condensed their long article into one focusing on answers to replies to just one of the questions:

"What one thing do you wish churches knew?"



Perhaps the biggest heart-cry under this category was not just to be included on Sundays but to find deep and genuine friendships in their church community. Many felt neglected and excluded from what ought to be the most welcoming community in the world. John Swinton writes that there is a difference between "inclusion" and "belonging" – the former means that people are friendly towards you on a Sunday, the latter means you would be missed if not there. Many disabled people did not feel they would be missed.

This deep longing for genuine friendships, disabled people felt was a serious lack in churches, even churches who were quite kind and welcoming on Sundays. One might expect that it would be the lack of physical access or facilities that caused people difficulties. But interestingly, these were not, in the main, what the majority of answers focused on. Most people were far more concerned with the attitudes they encountered and the lack of any real understanding of what their lives are like or what their most pressing needs are.

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Other replies were:

1. I wish churches knew how hard and how lonely it is to bring up a child with a disability, that this is not just a "bad day", this is every day. (100% of parents of disabled children who we surveyed gave some version of this answer. Parents really do feel people in churches don't understand.)
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2. Several people said that they want churches to know that their disability is not their only problem in life, and that when they request prayer, people should not assume that the only thing they are praying for is healing from the disability. The "Through The Roof" mantra is "Don't assume, ask". "Those with disabilities are not necessarily looking or expecting healing (though of course that is sometimes God's plan). God has a powerful plan and purpose for us all, very often, in our weakness.

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3. There were a few comments about practical access issues such as lack of disabled parking, uncomfortable seating, lack of clear print in service sheets, etc. "I wish churches knew how hard it is for hearing impaired people to do crowds and noisy things (coffee after church / meals with more than four to five people)." One person summed up the problem very well: "I wish churches knew that it's no good to say they don't need a ramp as they have no disabled members – as long as they have steps no wheelchair users will come!" But there were also comments like, "I wish churches knew that the right attitude is the most important access requirement, ahead of physical things like ramps."
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4. There were a number of differently-expressed comments about the church's need to follow Jesus

in welcoming all. For example: "God's heart of compassion for the weakest members of his flock." "The church should be an advocate for disabled people as Jesus was." "The church should evangelise disabled people who are, in many of our communities, a largely unreached people group." "The point of Christianity isn't personal faith and discipleship as much as it is being a holy nation, a royal priesthood. We are to be signs of the kingdom by how we involve all and enable full participation for all."

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5. There were many comments about how unaware churches are of the spiritual contribution that their disabled members can make. "Be more aware of the positive contribution disabled people can make to church life by using their spiritual gifts." "I wish there was more awareness of the positive contribution disabled people can make to church life. Everyone has something to give and should be encouraged to explore how they can best use their spiritual gifts." "Disabled people can be gifted, used and called by God just as non-disabled people are." This even applied to those whose ability to contribute was not obvious: "I wish churches realised that I can't necessarily meet their expectations because I'm exhausted all the time, but that doesn't mean I don't want to contribute to the life of the church."

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6. Many people felt that they were simply not understood by churches, and that their value as people was overlooked. Comments ranged from

simple heart-cries such as "I wish churches knew what it feels like to be disabled, and the restrictions in life", "How to listen to the needs of people with disabilities" and "How isolating it is not to be able to take part in things in the services...There is nothing so isolating as when everyone else is laughing at a visual joke/incident and I can't see it" to the slightly more theological: "The fact that we're all, disabled and non-disabled, created in God's image and redeemed by Christ's atonement means that we're all of incredible, huge, mind-bending value."

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7. Many said they wish people would stop making unhelpful remarks that trivialise the condition (e.g. "You don't look too bad to me" or "But you cope so well".) Comments of this kind came particularly from people with hidden disabilities such as mental health conditions, and people whose symptoms varied in severity from one day to another, such as those with arthritis, ME or MS. But there is another side of this coin. As one person put it, "Seeing me as 'amazing' or an 'inspiration' is patronizing, and just another way of making me feel I'm different." ■

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The full report of the survey may be found by calling up "Dismantling Barriers" on www.throughtheroof.org. Any other information can be obtained from info@throughtheroof.org

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You too can know Him

The Encouragers are full of testimonies of 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 witha 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.

TRANSLATION

The translation of the letter on page 7 where the letter "e" was missing is:

.....
: Are you ever feeling not
: needed, even useless?
:

It shows the effect of just one letter being missing. The same applies when "U" are missing from your church.



*It is not our s
But our reaction to*

Tim Hansel's Story

Tim never did anything halfway. From football to mountain climbing, Hansel kept pushing the envelope. Life was full throttle, everyday. But he was not doing this for himself. Hansel loved young people and wanted them to achieve their best, the kind of life that God had in store for them. To do that, Hansel would take students with him on various "wilderness" experiences, working multiple jobs at a time just to make ends meet for his ministry. These high adventure outings proved effective at shaking teenagers out of their apathy and towards transformation:

But things changed dramatically one afternoon while descending from a glacier in California's Sierra Nevada. Hansel slipped and fell into an ice crevasse. It was a devastating fall although he was able to get out and walk back 20 miles to the car. He did not tell his wife about the fall initially. But within days the real pain began. He had cracked vertebrae and crushed

discs in his upper back and neck. For the next 35 years Tim Hansel had to live with severe chronic pain.

Hansel lost a lot. The stress of the injury impacted his marriage, leading to divorce. It led to other broken relationships. For most people in a situation like this, there would be nothing left but despair. But it was different for Tim Hansel. He was coming to a new

understanding of what it means to have a relationship with Jesus.

He came to know what real joy is all about. He wrote a book, *You Gotta Keep Dancin'*, clearly his best book, which explained his philosophy: You can choose joy...Life can be tough. Stress, disappointment, heartache, hurt—all are part of the human condition. But while pain is unavoidable, misery is optional!



TIM HANSEL'S AMAZING ADDRESS ON "JOY"

At one of the roughest points of my life I received a plaque through the mail with the message:

"Tim, Relax! Trust Me! I have everything under control". - Jesus.

In the post, the glass in the frame had been shattered, and I was at first very disappointed, but as I thought about it, I realised that that message is far more powerful behind broken glass. Now if you were to call on me in my office today, you would see broken glass hanging on the wall, and behind it you would see that same message. You know, that plaque for me is the best definition I have ever heard of "JOY". It is a remarkable thing, but Joy is doubled when it is divided. Joy is something that radiates out from many disabled people, even those who in the eyes of the world would seem to have little to smile about, but Joy is not the same as happiness. Happiness depends on what happens to us. It goes up and down with our happenings, but Joy defies our circumstances. It is that deep double confidence that God is in control of every detail of our life.

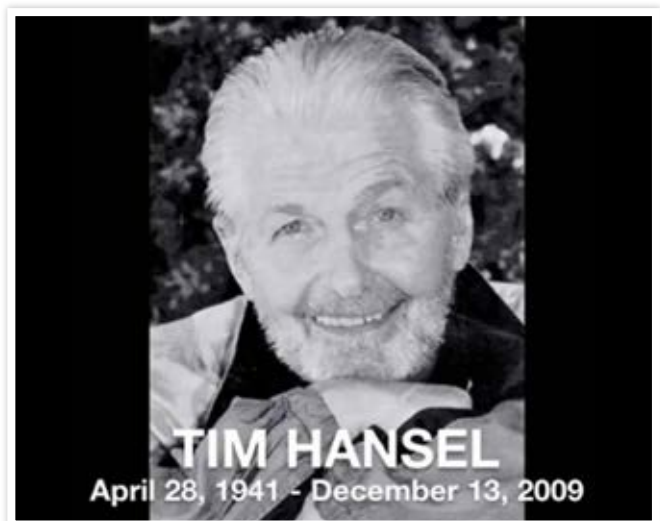


*Tim out on a
wilderness experience*

Joy is... "the flag that flies from the tower of your heart when you know that the King is in residence there". Joy is understanding that in the midst of difficulties, life can still be a celebration. Some live in the past, but God's name is not "I was". Some live in the future but God's name is not "I will be", but when we live in the present, life is not hard because God's name IS "I AM". The source of our strength is Joy. Joy is Biblical. John 15 v 11 says "So your Joy may be complete". Joy is optional. We must choose to take it. The reason Joy is so important is seen in Nehemiah 8:10, where it says, "The Joy of the Lord is your strength". Joy too is a healing process. Do you know that here in the USA there is a "terminal laughter clinic" for cancer sufferers, and there are patients who go away from that clinic who are healed? Prov 17 v 22 tells us, "A cheerful heart is like a medicine".

These are some of the facets of Joy which are freely available to us all and which come through people, even those severely disabled. Some find this hard to understand, but we need to see people on the inside, not from the outside. Those who radiate Joy are those who have discovered that Joy depends on who Jesus is and what He has done for us. These people have discovered that incredible Joy which is their strength.

A study was held a few years ago on exceptional people in the world and they came up with a list of 411 people, and 392 of them were disabled, either physically disabled or from abused family situations. Because of the struggle, they had learnt to grow emotionally, but some of them learnt to grow spiritually too, and discovered the truth of those words, "The Joy of the Lord is my strength". ■



THE COAL MINER AND THE Ph.D.

Some of you reading these lines today may not have had the benefits of a good or extensive education. You may be deficient in your knowledge of many things - science, philosophy, the arts, etc. But here is the encouraging thing – none of these issues are important when it comes to the matter of defeating Satan.

I remember being present some years ago in a church in South Wales when a debate was held between a university professor and an ordinary coal miner. The subject was: "Is the Bible true?" The university professor presented his arguments in a clear and cogent fashion and I remember feeling quite sorry for the miner as I envisaged some of the difficulties he might have when making his reply. After the professor had finished, the miner stood to his feet,

and for over an hour I witnessed one of the most amazing demonstrations of the Holy Spirit at work that I have ever seen in my life.

The miner began by asking everyone to bow their heads as he prayed a prayer which went something like this: "Lord, I have not had much education, but You know that I love Your Word and have spent my life searching its pages. Help me now to say something that will convince my friends here that Your Word is true." He then proceeded to demolish the arguments of the professor simply by quoting appropriate scriptures without making even a single comment. When he finished, there was thunderous applause. The professor's highly intellectual arguments had been torn to pieces by the sharp edges of the sword of the Spirit – by that and that alone.



Report from Di Willis, the Ministries Director

Firstly, I want to say what a great team we have at the Centre, and in our teams throughout NZ and the Philippines, and in our Branches and Ministries.

The 40th Anniversary of the Trust was celebrated in Auckland at Mt Wellington City Impact Church. It was an amazing evening, so many branches and ministries took part, and there was singing and speeches, Including a DVD from Joni - a real Praise the Lord for all God has done. Many came from years ago, reps from Eleos, Barnabas and CBM, and we gave all the branches and ministries banners.

The camps have been very special National Camp, great having Beckie, also Wellington and Auckland CFFD camps, Torch, and Emmanuel Family camp which is slowly growing and is greatly appreciated.

The Centre has been a busy place with many changes: Tanya left at the end of term three to go back to Aussie. It has been so sad that many other staff have left, all for personal reasons. Hanna (Kitchen) has been replaced by Alison who was a volunteer before, and she is doing so well. Melissa (Drop in) has been replaced with Jirah, who is also doing a disability course, and her husband Rob is helping out. She has lots of ideas and is getting on well. Grant (Driver and Mr Fixit) was replaced by Ross, who was on ACC and he has incredible experience and qualifications. We are so blessed to have him. Kathy was doing the finance and has been replaced by Onne, who is doing a brilliant job, a man of many talents who

has had all sorts of extra responsibilities.. Kathy, the Operations Manager, has been away with a foot injury.

It has been a readjusting time, but working well.

Volunteers have been a bit changeable, we had quite a few at the end of last year and are needing more at the moment. We have been blessed with two counselling students from BTI in Tauranga , a first for us. We had several overseas students from St John's College again briefly, and we now have ten on Intermission from Carey Bible College on two different days.

As usual we have had a variety of programmes -studies, outside speakers, craft, outings, this term having the theme of Joseph, his life and all that that reveals.

Kirsty and I went to the conference in Wellington for NZ Christian Network which was very beneficial with great networking. We also have been to a series of discussions brought together by Cerebral Palsy Ass. with folk from many disability organisations. There were many key topics, and the Minister for Disabilities came to one of them.

It has been a different year, but a good one, and we praise God for it.



An URGENT need...

The Centre, in Auckland, is struggling to operate at full efficiency because of a great shortage of helpers. The Centre's hours of 10am - 2pm, make it ideal for mothers with children at school to be able to help. They can still see off their children and meet them after school. Even helping just one of the three days – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday during school term would be an immense help. Why not come along on just one occasion, and you could well be amazed at what it can do for you.



Some of the group on an outing
from Centre to Butterfly Creek

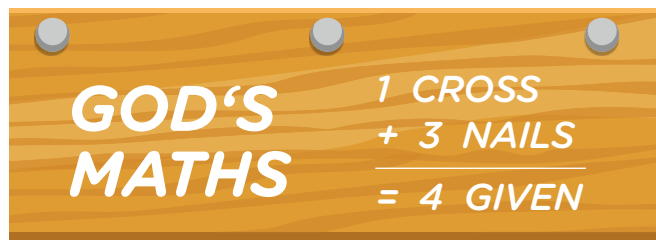
prayer makes one weak.



OUR SOUTH ISLAND TRUSTEE, ALF RICHARDSON, RESIGNS

We thank Alf for his input over seven years. His contribution has been so valuable – his wisdom and understanding. He was from South Africa, lived in England too, and was a vet. He has been involved with our ministry since 1998, and was CFFD advisor, first with Christchurch and later the South Island.

Dean Brennan and Ruth Beale have resigned after shorter periods, and we thank them too.



WE REALLY WANT TO ENCOURAGE YOU... to pass this magazine on to others.

"The Encourager" blesses others, inspires and informs, so share it. Hopefully you'll be blessed too!! Pass the blessing on. People have been encouraged to come to camp, to meetings, to pray and give through the magazine!! We will send out more magazines if you ask..

Did you know that we can email you when the latest Encourager magazine is up on our website? To sign up, scan this QR code, phone us or update your contact details on our website.



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Kumbayah - St David's Presbyterian Church - Palmerston North Ann Bennett		06 355 2818
Bible Friends - Wanganui Louise Rostron	rostrons@extra.co.nz	06 344 5955
THRIVE - Greerton Bible Church, Tauranga Ray Harvey	ray@eol.co.nz	027 284 9433

If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to: ELEVATE P.O Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland 1643 or direct deposit ANZ 01-0142-0029706-00

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A newbie writes about his experiences at Hebron, in the Philippines



Dave Palmer, Christchurch CFFD Chairman, writes: "I had heard so much about Hebron, but now I have experienced it. I cannot begin to describe how full my heart is."

I was invited to go with two from Anglican Life who brought teaching and healing, and taught craft to the children.

Near the front window of our flat was the outdoor sports court. Lots of activities happen there, and the children chat away so happily and noisily it sounds like the Dawn Chorus, and it's just as beautiful. Through our back window was the Children's Home, and there is more activity and chat, and sometimes a song they are practising. Their singing is stunning. These children come from very tough backgrounds, but the presence and care of Jesus is very strong. They have seen the difference He makes, and many of them have given their hearts to Him.

The National Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Week activity was held while I was there. Leslie spent a great deal of time and effort organising this. This included awesome performances by the OT and deaf children, and a particularly beautiful dance routine

based on the Ray Boltz song 'Thank You for giving to the Lord.' There was an action-packed dance by a group called the 'Giant Team', and some beautiful singing, and action-packed games involving most of us including the visiting team. It was a wonderful morning, and a big well-done to Leslie and the whole PCFFD team for such a brilliant effort.

We have seen too the outstanding work of the therapy team, and taken part in excellent activities on site. For me the highlight was when the team visited people with disabilities in slum or semi-slum areas, praying for healing for them, sharing words of encouragement, with Leslie, the PCFFD team leader, giving them radios pre-tuned to the local Christian station. In all our activities we supported the work of the local pastors who are associated with Hebron and who are planting churches in these areas.

Coming here is one of the best things I have ever done.

Sponsoring PCFFD

Would you consider sponsoring PCFFD? Or do you know someone who would?

Sponsors are needed now for workers and children. A \$30 a month commitment makes a massive difference in the lives of disabled children and their families. Their stories reflect with gratitude the achievements and changes that have come about through someone's generosity. Are you interested? Please contact Janet at pcfdd.nz@elevatedcdt.org.nz or 027 264 4172 (if you send a text she is happy to ring you). General funds to help with running the centre in the Philippines are also welcomed.