

The encourager

THE MAGAZINE OF ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST

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NATIONAL CAMP 2017

Totara Springs, Matamata



Explaining Prayer



Becke - Girls Workshop



Praying for Geoff


ELEVATE
christian disability trust



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

Don't wait for people to b

WERE YOU THERE?

by Joni Eareckson Tada

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body. I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Galatians 2:20

The cross is a place of peace and power. Just look at this man's letter:

"I spent one-and-a-half years on a kidney machine before getting a transplant. At first I did a lot of complaining, but then I stopped when I read the account of the Crucifixion, because...

- In the kidney centre they helped me get out of my coat: with Jesus. they stripped off his clothes.
- When entering the centre, the nurses spoke a kind word; Jesus heard 'Crucify him!'
- On my machine I would develop a headache and they would bring me an ice pack and aspirin; a crown of thorns was shoved on Jesus' head.
- Sometimes I would get thirsty and they'd give me juice: Jesus got vinegar.
- I laid on a comfortable bed for five hours: Jesus hung on nails.
- I hardly felt the needle they inserted in my vein: spikes were driven through Jesus' hands and feet.
- My blood was cleansed; His blood spilled on the ground."

"Jesus turned my days of complaining into days of praising when I took time to look at the cross. A careful look into the events that took place that day on Calvary should stop all our complaining."

The cross is a place where one dies to self, enjoys no rights, and grovels in humility.

How odd for our Lord to invite us to be crucified with Him; but God knows the cross is also a place of grace, and the nearer one draws to Calvary, the more abundant the peace and power.

O blessed cross, teach me to nail my cares to You. Crucify my complaining, mortify my grumbling, and cause me to praise!



Taken from Diamonds in the Dust
© by Joni Eareckson Tada; used with permission.

**CAMPS
2018**

Please take note and put in your diaries

Wellington CFFD	2-4 March	El Rancho, Waikanae
Kids Connect	9-11 March	Moto Moana, Blockhouse Bay, Akl
Auckland CFFD	23-25 March	Carey Park, Henderson, Akl
Emmanuel Family Camp	13-15 April	Totara Springs, Matamata
Christchurch Day Camp	14 April	Totara Springs, Matamata
Joy Ministries National Camp	18-20 May	Totara Springs, Matamata
National Labour Wkend Camp	19-22 Oct	Totara Springs, Matamata

Thoughts from a First Time Helper

(Phil Lucas, who took to camp like a duck to water!)

Our drive up from Palmerston North was stunning as we viewed New Zealand at its best, especially the snow covered volcanoes. The trip was not without its challenges due to a malfunctioning wheelchair that reversed at great speed, and shot poor Leon backwards into the curb at Putaruru as we unloaded everyone for takeaways! By 8pm we were all relieved to be safe and settled in!

My highlights of camp

- My Great Buddies – Johnny and Scotty!! I've been so impressed with them
- So too with all the good people I've met and chatted with around camp.
- My Awesome Cabin Leader, Andre - really appreciated his experience and awesome help to us all.
- The sense of being under God's shield of protection here.
- Great gratitude for being given the opportunity to serve and grow over these three days.

I'm hooked! And planning to come back next year, God willing! What a privilege it is to serve! Thank you, God!!

A CHANGE OF TREASURER

Hugh Willis is retiring from the role after being the Trust Treasurer since the formation of the Trust 30 years ago, and for a number of years before that in the early formative years of the Fellowship. He is also retiring as a Trustee, but will continue to be the editor of The Encourager, a role he took over in edition no 6.

Onne Hiemstra has been appointed as the Finance Manager, and Alan Pace takes over the financial oversight for the Trust Board.

COMING TO CAMP LED TO HEALING A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP

I came to my first Elevate camp in 2015. I had been a Christian for just four weeks. I decided to get baptised there. After my baptism I asked God for my Dad also to get baptised. In 2016 he came to camp and was baptised. Sadly my Dad was called to heaven early this year, but I thank Elevate for the opportunity of bringing him to camp. And I thank God for the healing relationship Dad and I had before he went to heaven.

Michael Smith

Kim Jamieson said in the car on the way to camp, "This is the best week-end of the year. You can see God's Spirit rain on the camp. I do not think it is God, I know it is."

Over the years, no matter what trials or triumphs we are facing, God continually reminds me at camps that it doesn't matter if you're feeling whole or broken, abled or disabled, His Holy Spirit teaches that although I might be feeling like a bonsai tree, God sees me as a kauri tree, because He dwells within me.

Fiona Thomas

A need in the Philippines

Rodelio Gutierrez (a new member of PCFFD) has congenital bone disease and needs to use crutches to mobilize himself.

He is very studious and eager to finish his studies despite his disability and poverty. He drives (by his hands) for 30 minutes a customized trike, rain or shine, to be able to go to a public school.

Help with a \$30 monthly sponsorship would be very much appreciated. Ring Janet 027-2644172





If God brings you to it, H

My Turning Point, The Game Changer!!

by **Brian Macanawi**
who came to National Camp from Fiji

2 Cor. 12:9

"My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness."

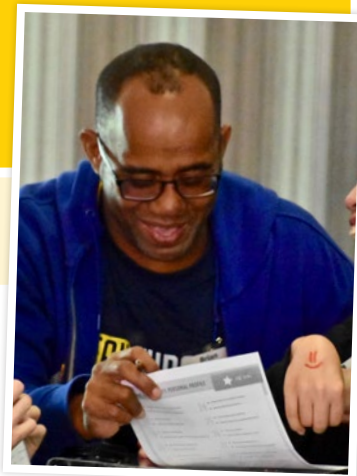
Indeed, my humbling task and privilege is to share how God purposefully lifted me out from the pit, wiped the dirt from my eyes, renewed my mind and spirit, and is gracefully moulding me daily into His intended MASTERPIECE!

I was really blessed to have been brought up in a Christian family that had firm, loving and God-grounded parents. But in the majority of Christian families I knew personally, we kids would rebel. I started developing and nurturing bad characteristics that defined a "rotten apple" easily swayed into the wrong crowds and submitting to their influences. I admit that having one rotten apple in the barrel was bad enough, but my mates and I were rotten altogether, and we brought the worst out of each other.

Aside from this, my father was BLIND. He was not partially blind but totally blind. Having a father who was blind at times gave me the "green light" to be disobedient because of the fact that when the rod fell it was less painful due to his disability! Well, for years I took up the role of being the "black sheep" of the family and playing the victim, just so I could get someone or anyone's attention. I am forever thankful that despite all that was happening, my parents were steadfast in their faith. They constantly persuaded me and my sisters to participate in the church and help wherever we could. This definitely was a positive factor that drew me away from prison life or even death. I also whole-heartedly believe that their overwhelming support through prayer kept me safe and sound.

Eventually I encountered my turning point in life in early January of 2015. I never really took notice that God wanted to use me because of my past. I certainly wouldn't and couldn't have imagined being where I am and doing what I do now. So my

turning point came after a heavy night in town with friends. Waking up the next day my body was overwhelmed with heaviness, and I could sense a "red light". My body felt out of sorts, and I knew then I wasn't right.



So mum decided we pay the doctor a visit. It was in the doctor's office that everything turned sideways and the world just stopped. He told me that I had been diagnosed with Bells Palsy which then I knew absolutely nothing about. But what he told me next was definitely the game changer. He looked at me and mum and told us three things that would probably break anyone. The first thing he said was, "What you have we cannot tell you how it was contracted." The second thing he said was, "We also cannot tell you how long you'll have it for. It might be a day, week, months or years." And lastly, "There is no cure!" Mum with teary eyes looked up to the doctor and asked, "Are you sure? Is there nothing that can be done?"

It was then I told myself I had to change, and I set myself to doing that. God was so gracious that despite all my shortcomings He still intended using me because it was definitely His grace that made this unworthy vessel, worthy and fitting for Him. I started involving myself more with God's work in the ministry, and He involved himself more in me. I am relative proof and evidence that God is a healer. (Isaiah 53:5) Within a month He healed me, and just a little later on I was out playing footy and hanging around with friends. But all thanks to God my Jehovah Raffa and Jehovah Jireh in providing me with what I needed and who I needed at the right time.

The ministry that God has us purposefully involved in as a family is centred on disabled persons specifically. Horeb Disability Christian Fellowship has been active for the last 8-10 years, but it had originally started from Friday get togethers within the disabled community. And from that humble beginning God

has brought forth a blessed ministry. We are based within a compound that has both affiliated offices of Disabled Peoples' Organisations (DPO's) and a vocational training centre for people with disability. We have an office for the ministry which is located with the DPO offices, and we hire the Vocational Centre's hall for service on Sundays. The office plays the role of advocating God within the community, through open prayer requests for anyone, frequent office drop bys, holding prayer meetings, etc. Our programme on Wednesday afternoons is prayer for the intercessors (who we call "The Wise Ones") who pray for and about the ministry, the disabled community and other prayer points. On Friday afternoons we have fellowship, and then our ministry service is on Sunday mornings. The ministry consists now of probably 30% disabled and the rest able bodied. The able bodied persons are those that work with disability, either in schools or DPO's. We normally generate about 20 people on a Sunday, but sometimes we get blessed with more numbers, but we believe that God does not need big numbers. He just needs availability. And though we may be small in numbers, we claim to be among the few labourers that are ready for the harvest. (Luke 10:2) I am grateful for



this wonderful platform that God has provided for my testimony. And also for my loving and blessed parents, Setareki and Ana Macanawai, for their unwavering support in my life and my spiritual walk. Many thanks for giving me the chance to be part of the National Camp that has definitely sharpened me (Prov 27:17) for the better. But Lord, Yours alone be the praise and the glory, and my prayer be that this testimony reflects How Great a God You Are!! God bless and Moce mada!! ■

Sue O'Brien writes about

Fountains

On one of my overseas visits to Formby in Liverpool, England, my friend Cath Morgan shared with me her desire to set up a ministry where folk could come along to meet new friends, share Jesus and have fun.

I told her about our Able 2 Worship in Warkworth, and how we were inspired after a visit to the Elevate Centre in Onehunga, then set up our ministry.

Cath manages homes for people with disabilities, and whilst visiting the Liverpool cathedral for a service she saw people with learning difficulties worshipping the Lord. Something was birthed in Cath watching and seeing the gifts of these special people. Then, while at work one day, God gave her a vision "Treasures in Hidden Places". Her passion and belief had always



been that people of all abilities have the right to worship God who loves them. She went with her passion, and Fountains was formed. It is run by Cath and her team for adults with learning difficulties. They meet together monthly for fun, faith and friendship at the Formby Christian Fellowship, a church that welcomed this ministry, and see it as an important part of the church.



Blessed are those whose dreams are

Public speaking is no longer possible for Margie Willers, but her writing ministry is as powerful as ever:

On the Potter's Wheel

One of my most favourite Bible stories is found in the book of Jeremiah Chapter 18 - The Potter - I'm eager to share some insightful thoughts concerning this very beautiful passage of Scripture.

Now, isn't it true – we all appreciate a word of encouragement? To me, the story of the potter is one that can help us in this way. It can be applied to how the grace and compassion of God comes to a broken, wrecked life, picks up the pieces and makes that life into something new. It applies whether the life is a Christian or not, although the application in the original story was to God's People. These were people who'd known deliverance after deliverance, blessing after blessing and privilege after privilege, yet in spite of all, they'd wandered and fallen from the will of God. "Like clay in the hand of the Potter, so are you in My hand". Those were God's Words to them. I figure these are some of the rarest and truest words of comfort found within all the pages of the Bible.

1. THE PRESSURE OF THE HANDS

What a beautiful expression! When the potter puts his hand upon the clay, He exerts pressure. The clay is a great blob when it is thrown on the wheel – and it's the pressure from the hands that moulds it into shape. It's wonderful for us to realise that day by day, the hands of God are seeking to shape and to mould us. From the day when we first committed our lives into His hands, we yielded OUR will to HIS. Then the wheel began to turn and the pressure of His hands began to come upon us.

There are two ways that we experience the pressure of God's Hand.

a) Through conviction.

"Day and night Your hand was heavy upon me". The context implies this was a situation David was experiencing through the conviction of sin in his life and the workings of the Holy SPIRIT. Many of us can identify with that. Perhaps we

attended some church service [or Christian outreach] all happy, light-hearted; everything in life was honky-dory. Whilst we sat listening to the message, God put His finger on something in our life. We sensed the 'Hand of God' came upon us concerning some particular area, and there was no peace until we yielded that issue to the Lord.

b) Through circumstances.

What are our times in? The changing whim of circumstances? NO! The devil's control? Absolutely not! "My times are in Your Hand". Isn't that wonderful to know that your life is in the Hands of God? Have not circumstances moulded the lives of us all? Sometimes circumstances we'd never have chosen to go through. However, that has been the very path GOD has taken us through, to shape us and to mould us to His pattern. This is particularly apparent when we consider events over which we had no control.

It was the invalid, Frances Ridley Havergal, who wrote: "When the Pressure is the greatest God's Hands are the nearest." That's very true. However, often when the pressure is the greatest, we think God's forsaken us. When the heat is on we think He's over the hill somewhere. God doesn't exist anymore. But, be assured as I have learned from personal experience – when the pressure seems unbearable, that's when He's squeezing us into the image He's eager to conform us into.

2. THE PURPOSE IN THE MIND OF GOD.

If you sit and watch a potter at work, your attention will be drawn initially to his hands, to what he is doing. But then your attention diverts to the vessel



he is shaping. THAT'S HOW IT IS WITH US.

I wonder in our lives, how far we are revealing to a watching world the purpose and the pattern that is in the mind of God for us? What kind of vessel is the world seeing God form? Or are we just 'blobs' because we resist and refuse the pressure of those Hands?

There are two basic reasons that God has created us - spiritual beauty and usefulness.

The **spiritual beauty** conforms us to the image of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible records again and again about the beauty of holiness, and God says, "I will beautify the meek with Salvation - that we might be partakers of His holiness, - this is the will of God." Years ago there was an evangelist by the name of Gypsy Smith who was fond of singing a wee song. "Can others see Jesus In you"? That's what the Master Potter is after. The loveliness - the true beauty of JESUS CHRIST - is an ingredient GOD desires to shape and make evident in the lives of us all.

And along with spiritual beauty is **usefulness**. It is God's intention for all His people that they live lives of useful service. It's written in The Bible, "You have NOT chosen ME, but I have chosen YOU, and ordained you to bring forth fruit" - and that 'our' fruit should remain". I well remember being seated at a luncheon with a bishop. He picked up a beautiful, pearl-handled, stainless steel knife to peel his apple. The knife was blunt. He winked at me, then muttered - "Just like some Christians. Stainless, but absolutely useless!". God isn't interested in stainless, useless Christians. He doesn't have a china cabinet filled with fancy ornaments. Some Christians settle in their church pews. They hear powerful sermons Sunday after Sunday, yet they never do anything with them. That to me is a tragedy. It's also a travesty. God's ultimate purpose for you and me is one of fruitfulness and usefulness.

3. THE PURPOSE OF HIS LOVE.

The vessel the potter made was marred. Something was wrong. There was some fault in the clay. The vessel had to be broken and re-made. 'M A R R E D' that isn't a good sound. I figure at some stage it has been written over the life of every Christian. They've marred their life. "Blown it" - is the common expression. We all make mistakes, but God has picked

up the pieces and started again. Oh! the patience of His love.

It's possible, the clay may have been too soft, too dry, or something else, but the purpose of the dedicated potter is NOT thwarted by the flaws in the clay. Don't you find that encouraging? God will NOT allow HIS purposes to be frustrated by some imperfection in us - our disabilities included. Sometimes His purposes may be delayed, but they'll NOT BE DEFEATED. He'll work on the problem - if the problem is a ghastly habit He'll get rid of it, and work to make us into something else. WOW!! That's great comfort for some of us who feel like giving up. GOD'S NOT ABOUT TO GIVE UP ON YOU, even though you may be about to give up on yourself.

The steadfast purpose of God for you and me is never faultless. Never - NEVER!! The Bible does not record the vessel was so marred he threw it away. That's what can happen when people are born with severe disabilities, or someone who has fallen from moving in God's will. Too often we give up - and rubbish such people. They don't appeal to us, or they make one bad mistake, and in our opinionated attitude - they're finished! Thankfully, that's NOT how God operates. NO - the vessel wasn't so marred that He threw it away. IT WAS SO MARRED HE MADE IT AGAIN. God's tremendous, loving patience ...

Aren't we glad He's made us again - once or twice or more often? Plenty of times, during my life, I felt utterly convinced I was only worth 'throw-away' material. But God ... tenderly picked up my life's broken pieces. And, for that I'm tremendously grateful.

Let's take note here. There's no word of recrimination from the Potter. NO WORD OF REJECTION. No word of impatience, No word of condemnation about the clay. This speaks of the consistency of the love of God in all things. What a beautiful picture we see in this story.

But, where are we in relation to the Potter? Are you actually resenting the pressure of the hands? Or maybe you're only hankering to be some beautiful ornament? Are you unwilling to be made into something useful? Maybe you're already journeying through the pain-filled experience of being broken



Preach Christ always, and if necessary

and re-made. Perhaps you are conscious that your life has been marred – something has happened and you don't feel your life can be of any value again? Those who feel their life is so marred that it's no longer of any use, I encourage you to remember to focus your thoughts on ISAIAH Chapter 52 verse 14, "There was one whose visage was marred more than any man". He knows what it's like to be marred beyond recognition. If you can visualize yourself looking into

His face – you'll find forgiveness, absolute pardon, complete and absolute acceptance, an unfaltering purpose and an unchanging love! Will you invite Him to make you into another vessel? Allow the Master Potter to make you over again? Remember these words from the Master Potter Himself, Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My Hand, O people of God. ■

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Dave Roever

Beauty for Ashes

One of the most stirring addresses at the 1989 Congress was given by Dave Roever, a large man with a huge booming voice and an ability to play with astonishing dexterity on the piano. Some 18 years earlier all this would have seemed beyond the realm of possibility. Dave Roever had been drafted to Vietnam. Having opted to go into the navy, he was assigned to one of the 30 ft fibre-glass boats which sped up and down the rivers of Vietnam as the Americans attempted to keep the waterways open. One night there was an unbelievable barrage of fire by the Viet Cong, but the next day Military Intelligence reported that the enemy had abandoned their positions. Dave's boat was assigned to confirm their absence. He was directed to check out the

bunkers. From the deck of the boat he prepared to toss a phosphorus grenade, one which would burn down the hard plant cover and in so doing would detonate any booby traps.

Dave describes that moment: "I pulled the pin out. I drew my hand back as I prepared to throw the grenade, but it never left my hand. The enemy was still there. A bullet hit the grenade. It exploded six inches from my right ear. Instantly 40% of my skin was blown off. 60 pounds of my flesh went up in smoke. My body was wrenched apart. I looked down and could see my heart – it was still beating. My back was on fire. My skin was literally dripping off. I jumped off the boat into the river but the water bought no

relief. Water will not extinguish phosphorus and my body continued to burn away. As I bobbed to the surface I screamed at the top of what was left of my burnt voice: "God, I still believe in You."

Twice in the next two weeks Dave was given up for dead, but God had further plans for the young American so hideously burnt by the phosphorus which had been driven deep into his body. Two weeks later he was flown to Saigon, then to Japan, and finally to the U.S.A. As he lay on an operating table and was opened up, the air rushed in igniting the phosphorus inside. He burst into flames and the room too caught fire. They rushed out and left him in there, but Dave survived even this! God was not finished with the hideously fire-ravaged young man who in the years ahead was to develop a tremendous ministry to the young people of America as he inspired them to press deeply into Christ. But it was to be a long time before he had a chance to do any such thing. His life hung by a very fine thread, but the thread held. Years later, a slowly recovering Dave was asked to address a large gathering in a church.

Dave recalls that occasion: "I had only just got to my feet when I noticed some 60 people stand up and move out into the aisles. What's this, I thought. A standing ovation! All I've done is get up, and all these people start moving out the door at the back. The last guy turned as he reached the door and this is what he said, "Why don't you get the sin out of your life! God will take the scars off your face!" I stood there for a minute. My legs buckled. I was only just mastering my balance, getting used to having my feet back on the ground, was just learning to control my bowels, and was struggling to graduate from nappies again. I was struggling too to get together a little self respect and dignity. I had to grab the podium, and I clung to it. I stood there thinking, "Oh God in heaven, have I deluded myself? Have I committed some heinous sin so that You are doing this to me?" But God gave me an answer. It hit me like a ton of bricks, but it was lost on that last guy who had already gone. I said, "Ladies and Gentlemen. I have an answer. If God did this to me because of some hidden sin in my life, it would be an admission on God's part that when Jesus died on the Cross, what He did was almost good enough, but not quite, so that God had to do this to me to make up the difference. But that was not true. Jesus paid it all,... ALL,...ALL!"



Dave came through that devastating experience as he had come through others before. Life brings across our path gruelling experiences, but God's love transcends them all. That love stopped Dave becoming bitter, and led him to move into a tremendous evangelistic ministry with young people. It was the same love that had shone through so brightly on that first day in the hospital in America when he was put into a room along with 13 other shockingly-injured servicemen. 90 days later he would be the only survivor from that room. Dave describes that first day:

There was a man in the bed next to me. He had no skin on his body. He had 100% third degree burns over his body, but he lived long enough to see his wife again. She came into the room, took off her wedding ring, and dropped it between his charred feet. "You're embarrassing!", she said. "I couldn't walk down the street with you." She walked out of that room, walked right out of his life, and within hours he had died. Later my wife came in. She was 19 years old, a teenager and very beautiful. She stepped up to the bed and read the chart and the tag on my arm. When she was pretty sure it was me she bent down and kissed what was left of my face. "Davie", she said. "I just want you to know I really love you. Welcome home Davie!"

"I'm sorry Baby", I said. "I can't look very good." She bent down and said, "You never were good looking anyway", which was her way of saying, "I love you for what you are, not how you look." That's what I call God's love. Love in the first degree, and when we learn to love like that, it's God's love living in us. ■



*Today, give a st
It might be the only su*



REPORT FROM MALAWI

BY MACKINLY

I would like to thank God who made it possible for me to meet up with Elevate when I was doing my Ministering to Children course for four months at Children's Bible Ministries in New Zealand. This wasn't by mistake but to fulfil God's mission towards people with disabilities.

This was my first time to be trained on how to work with people with disabilities. I was filled with awe before coming to New Zealand when I received communication from CBM to participate in their Kids Connect camp, since here in Malawi we don't have such programs. Thank God, after being trained and by reading all the booklets you gave me in advance, it really helped me to know my real calling and mission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In my previous ministry, I thought I was always showing my passion for them by not involving them in any activity because of their disabilities. Now, I am able to understand that this was not PASSION but OMISSION of not introducing Christ to them. I thank Elevate for the eye opener to my life to know the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ towards ALL Creatures. I do confess to God as well as to you that I was taking it as easy as A, B, C, by not doing anything towards these people. I ask God to forgive me and increase my faith as I work among them.

DISABILITIES AWARENESS IN CHURCHES

Just after my CBM graduation in May, I said, I don't have any excuse as I go back to my country, because you have entrusted and invested a lot in me that will help me to reach out to the rejected ones. "I don't have any resources, but I do have a "human resource", which means that as long as I live, I can do something towards those living with disability.

With the few resources I had back in Malawi, I have managed to have an awareness campaign whereby I have reached seven churches to talk about children, youth with disabilities and families who have someone with a disability. It was a shock to discover that we have many children who don't go to school or attend church services or Sunday school, and many parents

are doing nothing to take care of their children due to poverty and not knowing the skills of how to care these people who don't even have walking sticks, wheel chairs and other needs in their lives. Many parents decide to lock up their children behind them when they go out about their daily business. Nor do they spend time with them as they do with their other children. A very low percentage are employed, and they face challenges with the big steps into offices and hospitals, nor can they find suitable pavements to walk on. There aren't even social programs for them in villages or communities to socialize with other people.

I also took the opportunity to talk to the Presbyterian Church about those with disabilities within their churches, on how can we help them and accommodate them in our services as well as our activities. I thank God for the response I got. They have shown the interest to take responsibility to give support to such people. Praise God!

From what I learned through Elevate, I was able to communicate with my 72 year old aunt who has had mental difficulties for 30 years, and who I now realise I used to take for granted, and we had a good time together. She really needs my support. I am glad that I was able to sing her some Christian songs. She likes singing, and after singing she had time to tell me stories. I really enjoyed being with her.

My worry was her house which you see behind us in one picture. It is the custom here to often dump disabled in most unsuitable buildings. Most of them don't have blankets or other daily needs. The clothes they are given to wear are not nice, since they won't be going anywhere.

*bringer a smile,
sunshine he sees all day*



I really thank Elevate once more for the booklet "SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES", for reading this booklet has really helped me to reach out to these people. I have also discovered that they are the neglected people in society. They really need our love which was shown by our Lord Jesus Christ who accommodated them in His ministry.

CHALLENGES:

- Every time I brought an awareness in the church or families on disabilities, they would ask me what next? I thank God who gave me wisdom to answer them. In their thinking, they thought that immediately I'd be going to give support to them. I have been answering by telling them that it is a task for everyone to take part in caring for these people with love, sharing a meal with them, providing their needs to them as a church, accommodating them in church activities. If we can't have any of these, we need to try to show LOVE through shaking hands with them, listening to them, good communication, spending time together and many more.
- Those with different disabilities have different needs. We need to find out about these, and then how we can give support in each case. ■

Selwyn Motu, an intern at City Impact Church, brings

AN INTERN'S PERSPECTIVE OF NATIONAL CAMP

For me, being at National Camp for the first time feels like a once in a life time opportunity, being surrounded by God's most prized children that do not get the full advantages in life as I do.

I leave with a brand new perspective on life, and I am truly humbled and inspired, definitely a key highlight of my 2017 year. The memories and experience made here I will cherish for a life time. Just witnessing God's love shown in each person here to serve is phenomenal. Every young and old person pressing on to be the hands and feet of Jesus - what a blessing they are to this world!

Growing up I had a best friend, my cousin the late Rowan J Hanif, who was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy as a child, and by the grace of God went into the fullness of glory in 2009 aged 16. He and I were incredibly close, and coming to this camp after eight long years of missing my brother I can say the lost feeling of intimacy I once felt with Rowan has all of a sudden come rushing back upon meeting and befriending young Vince Amosa. Thank you Elevate, and thank you to all the kingdom builders that have had a hand on this move of God, past and present.

Vince is a young vibrant teenager, full of life, and he brings great joy to everyone he comes across. His charm is admirable partnered with his warm spirit which has made me feel like one of the luckiest buddies at the Elevate camp this year. I'll really miss my room mates. The love of God is reflected upon every single person (and animal) in this place. The smiling faces, humorous conversations and warm good mornings make me realise I'm somewhere just a little bit sweeter than home.



All Praise and Worship to God for this organisation, and the movement Elevate Trust is making for our nation. It is both giving the people a real encounter with Jesus, and helping Christians grow to become more Christ-like. I will definitely be back here to serve, and look forward to bringing future generations to invest and be inspired!!



It's nice to be important, but

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

- Part 2

By Claire Bates - World Service at the BBC



In the previous Encourager we told how a father, Gordon Hartman, realised there were no theme parks where his disabled daughter, Morgan, could play, so he decided to build one himself! The extent of what he has built is breathtaking!

Both visitors with and without disabilities can take part in the attractions. "We open every year knowing we're going to lose over US\$1m": he says, "and we need to recover that through fundraising and partners.

This year, the theme park was expanded with the opening of Morgan's Inspiration Island, a fully-accessible water park. "Fewer people were visiting in July because the wheelchairs got too hot. So we decided to create a water park next door. Parts of the island use warm water, which helps visitors with muscular problems Waterproof motorised wheelchairs are provided which run on compressed air rather than batteries. There is also an accessible river boat ride.

Altogether, the water park cost US\$17m. A splash park was added to the complex this year. Yesterday a man came up to me at Inspiration Island and just held my hand. He pointed to his son who has acute special needs, and started crying. He said he hadn't been able to play in water before. Hartman says three out of four visitors to the

park are not disabled, and the park is having precisely the effect he hoped for."It helps people realise that though we are different in some ways, actually we are all the same," he says. "I saw one girl in a wheelchair go up to another girl without special needs, and they began playing together. That was really cool."

Hartman isn't planning to open any more parks, despite receiving hundreds of letters and emails from people who want one in their own area. Instead he is focusing on providing educational facilities to teenagers with special needs in San Antonio. I know there are a lot of different organisations trying to build something like Morgan's Wonderland elsewhere, and we'll continue to work with them," he adds.

He continues to take Morgan along to play at the theme park, where she is now something of a celebrity. "When she comes here she's a rock star! Lots of people want to talk to her and take her picture, she's very good with it," Hartman says. Water used in some areas is warm to help those with muscular issues. Now 23, Morgan continues to go from strength to strength. "She talks more now and most of her physical issues have been taken care of through numerous surgeries. We're so proud of how far she has come." When Morgan visits she's happiest playing on the swings and in the sand zone, unaware of just how much she has helped others. "Morgan knows the park is named after her, but I don't think she understands the magnitude of what it represents and how it's changed lives," Hartman says. "She doesn't realise how she has dealt with things in life has made her a true inspiration." ■



Two outings around the Country

It was a great outing for the Centre to Dilworth campus near Pokeno. They were so welcoming, the boys showing us around the school, having morning tea, then an amazing series of indoor games (shown), a lovely lunch and a wee concert.



One recent activity for the Hawkes Bay CFFD was a visit to the daffodil fields for each person to pick and bring home their own bunch of the showy flowers.

HAVE YOU BEEN MOVED BY THE TESTIMONIES?

The stories in this and other "Encouragers" tell about people from all walks of life who have developed a faith and trust in Jesus, and how this has transformed their lives.

Is that something you would love to have yourself? The steps are not difficult.

You need to be what is described in John 3:3 as "born again".

You need to realise you like all of us, are a sinner. Read Romans 3:23

Ask Jesus into your life as Saviour.
Make Him Lord of your life.

Then walk daily with Him through:

- Prayer
- Studying the Bible
- Fellowshiping with other Christians
- Getting one of many excellent Bible Study guides.
- Attending a "live" church to help you grow.



Compassion is language the deaf

PAIN IS INEVITABLE

But misery is optional

July 16th is a date Bob Bardwell will never forget, for on that day 44 years ago, as he was repairing a broken cable on a large caterpillar machine he was struck in the back by a large bucket. His back was broken and he fell to the ground unconscious, paralysed from the waist down. He was rushed to hospital where he had a six and a half hour operation. Two six inch steel plates were placed alongside his spine to give support and strength. During his stay in intensive care he learnt the recipe for his future: It was doubtful if he would ever walk again and it was thought he would have to spend at least six months in hospital. He had been married just a year but would not now be able to have any children. Ever since he was 20 he had longed to be able to get into camp work. He had worked towards this with good experience in a camp in Colorado. It seemed all chance of realising his dream was gone. He had lots of time to think about this throughout those six months.

Bob explains what crystallised in his thinking after those months in hospital. He said "I agree with the person who said: **'Pain and trials are inevitable, but misery is optional.'**

Accidents are usually sudden and come without warning. They happen at any time, any age, and usually leave their mark. It may be an outward scar, shorter life, or paralysis, or it may be hatred, resentment, or unforgiveness. There is always someone in worse condition or with greater pain, who has more expense or a heavier burden. Some of the first question that came to my mind were, "Why me?" and, "Will I ever walk again?" I came to consider some of the purposes, provisions, and promises for those who are hurting.

Suddenly this truth was put to the test in my life. God is too wise to make mistakes, and too loving to be unkind. I now had the privilege of choice like each of us, to either turn against God and figure He allowed something to happen to me I didn't deserve

and become bitter, or accept it and believe He could use it for good in my life even though it didn't seem possible. Romans

8:28 has been a big inspiration "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (NIV) God seems often to use the times when we face humanly impossible circumstances to teach us the meaning of faith and trust. Every time we are in situations we don't like or didn't choose and can't do anything to change, these are opportunities for God to show His greatness and power. No one can ever expect to fully understand the whole purpose of trials and accidents. But depending on our level of trust, "If the potter is skilled, does it matter how ignorant the clay?" I don't believe that God would take anything away from a person unless it could be replaced with something better or more useful. It is not God's purpose to see how much misery or pain man can endure, but rather, He uses these opportunities (if we are willing), to bring us closer to Him and realize our dependence on Him as our Creator. Someone said that the knife of God never cuts deeper than what is necessary. If only we would try and view our lives and trials from God's point of view and claim His promises.

Some are paralyzed from the neck or waist down, but many times we are paralyzed from the neck up. A wounded conscience, anger, bitterness, jealousy are a few things that cripple and handicap us. Maybe it's time for us to check ourselves from the neck up. God has a remedy in Ephesians 4:31-32, "Get rid of every sort of bitterness....." Health is a wonderful thing: In fact, it's priceless. It's a gift from God. Every day that you get up and can put one foot in front of the other is reason to give thanks. I like to call it the "ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE." The most important thing for me is not to walk again, but to be in God's will, and when



He accomplishes His purpose for me in the chair, I will walk again."

Bob persevered with what he knew to be God's purpose for himself. He needed much prayer and support and received both. Less than three years after his accident he became the founder and director of the Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch. It is a non-denominational, non-profit-making public charity. It now serves 20,000 campers yearly mainly from churches, but scouts, senior citizen homes and social clubs also makes use of its excellent facilities. Bob sees the purpose of the camp as two fold.

"(1) To provide excellence in camping and fellowship, and give an opportunity for each camper to hear of God's love and salvation."

(2) To provide the best in fun and recreation for all, while enjoying the beauty of God's nature."

There are those who make commitments to Christ and others who are strengthened in their walk with Him. Ironwood is full of challenges, blessings and fun. Hugh and Di Willis were privileged to meet Bob at a Congress in the USA, and later Jacqui and Di stayed at his Ranch, and Bob also came to New Zealand. He has a quiet serenity. He lives out what is written above. Have you who read this received something you know is from the Lord? Don't be put off by trials and setbacks. Just press in and hold on to that scripture which is one of Bob's great favourites: "For when I am weak then I am strong. ■

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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NATIONAL CAMP 2017



The early morning prayer meeting is the "Power House" of National Camp.

Two new groups were formed at National Camp



We had a special program during the main sessions for a small group of youth with disabilities.



One of the electives was for those who wanted to be part of a choir for an item to be given on the Saturday evening



This is a collage directed by Alexia Carbones created by those at The Centre over a week, the theme being "Family" as the Centre is like a family. Several at National camp saw it too in the same way.