

THE ENCOURAGER

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The magazine of Elevate Christian Disability Trust

Congratulations to Tauranga City Council who have put down special mats to enable people with disabilities in wheelchairs to have access to the beach!





*Your calling is not what you do
- Paul*

Our Wonderful Shepherd

A Devotional by Margaret Thompson



Psalm 23 is a very much beloved poem that we all know so well. However, when I read the opening lines in the Passion Bible Translation, I got a whole new picture that I had never grasped before. "The Lord is my best friend and my shepherd. I

always have more than enough. He offers a resting place for me in His luxurious love." It shows another reflection on our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

David wrote the psalm knowing God is a real, personal shepherd for David himself. He does not say The Lord is the shepherd "for the world at large", but the Lord is "my Shepherd". He cares for me; He watches over me, He preserves me. The Shepherd who is my Lord and King is my protector, my comforter, and security- as my constant friend and companion. His love cannot be measured, but is always there, wrapped around me, protecting me from all danger and distressing situations. He is faithful to me, His servant.

A description of God's protection and power is given in verse 5: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup

overflows." This is the greatest fulfilment of obtaining eternity. I will be an honoured guest at the Shepherd-King's house. I will be free from my earthly trappings, and as His guest at the table will be provided spiritual rest and food.

In our busy schedule of daily life we need to be reminded to meditate on His Word and to be soaked in His love. The wonderful Shepherd of Israel guides us like a flock. He leads us by His providence, by His Word and by His Spirit. We follow His commands and directions because we are His sheep.

God's loving care puts my mind at ease, so I can rest peacefully. To be refreshed means to be restored and strengthened for what is to occur in the time ahead of me. Allow God to renew you, to have the opportunity of being in His presence, to know the fulfilment is a process of earthly living until we pass into Glory.

I love verse 6: "Surely Your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. "This professes my full confidence in the future, a confidence grounded in the Shepherd's faithful covenant love. ■



**DISABILITY
AWARENESS
SUNDAY**

**COMING UP
ON 16 JUNE**

ASK
your pastor NOW

ARRANGE
something from a testimony,
Bible reading, braille or sign language

To **AID** you,
get ideas from the Disability
Sunday Awareness booklet

Contact the Centre 09-635-763
or visit us on Facebook
facebook.com/ElevateChristianDisabilityTrust
for inspiring ideas

Visits to other Branches

On the 2nd Sunday in November, Hawkes Bay Joy Ministries were blessed to take 38 people to Taupo to celebrate with them ten years of Joy Ministries. After a worship sing-a-long time and lunch they then enjoyed the Joy Ministries service which included a birthday cake, worship and a message. Next they enjoyed some wonderful games and activities, including the conga and limbo, shown here. We were all so blessed to be able to be there to celebrate and to farewell Wendy Emsley, with a gift of flowers, as she heads off to Rotorua to new adventures the Lord has planned for her.



Conga line



Limbo

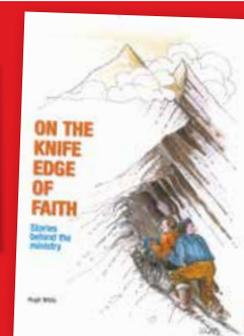
A great day was had when a bus load of people from Hamilton CFFD turned up at Mount Maunganui to have fellowship with Thrive (a group of people with disabilities in Tauranga). Thirty in all, it was a great day getting to know one another, and what a witness to others with a mass singing of Christian songs on the beach! Meeting up with reps for the council was very special as they expanded on their plans to develop the blue mats shown on the cover of this magazine.



We are having a SALE!

We are temporarily reducing the cost of both the book "On the Knife edge of Faith", and Elevate cards "Changed into His Likeness" to \$5 for a packet of 10.

Please add a further \$5 if you need them posted to you, or call at the Centre yourself.





*My concern is not whether God is on
be on God's side, for God is a*

Is it Coincidence ...Or God?

Dear Elevate Trust,

"In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory. "

- Ephesians 1:11-12

God delights in arranging coincidences. Consider having a big New Zealand day bbq. The sun is warm and the bbq is working and everyone's bringing salad and watermelon, but unknown to you, God wants it to rain. He wants your friends to leave early before the storm hits. He wants your brother-in-law, Ed, to help you hurry the bbq into the garage where you two will stand leaning against the car, listening to the downpour. There you will get into a long conversation leading into spiritual things that will eventually lead to your brother-in-law's conversion to Christ.

How does God pull this off? Earlier in the day, it may have been warm, but five miles above your house a polar jet stream was bringing colder air from the southwest. Yesterday, the jet stream was 200 miles south, but a

by Joni Eareckson Tada



disturbance three days ago pushed it your way. What caused the disturbance? Merely a complicated sequence of atmospheric twists and the ocean water temperature three weeks ago. Yet that temperature was being affected months ago. Whew! God has been thinking about your brother-in-law for a long, long time.

God is doing the exact same thing with people all over the country who need a little sunshine -- or rain -- to further the Lord's work in their lives. How does God manage it all? He does it totally naturally. But it's mind bogglingly complicated. These sorts of divine coincidences happen every day. Today, meditate on how He works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will in your life.

God of wonder, I cannot begin to fathom the way You work in this world to advance Your purposes, but thank You for running things. I submit my will to You, happy to know that Your plan for me is perfect.

Blessings, Joni and Friends

Gaining that Winning Attitude

Each of us is fighting a battle of some kind, but not all of us are winning. Those who win come in many different varieties, but they all have one thing in common; a faith that, refuses to quit.

Did you know that Admiral Lord Nelson, England's famous hero of the sea, suffered from seasickness all his life? Yet this man who sank Napoleon's fleet refused to let his personal struggles rob him of his destiny. He not only learned to live with his weakness, but to conquer it every day. All of us have our battlegrounds. And while nobody pins a medal on us for winning, nothing can diminish the satisfaction of knowing we didn't quit or

the joy of knowing we overcame the battle.



The story's told of a little boy who lost his right hand in an accident. When the doctor questioned him about his handicap, he replied, "I don't have a handicap; I just don't have a right hand! Later the doctor discovered the boy had gone on to become one of the leading scorers on his high school basketball team.

His philosophy in life was; it's not what you lost but what you have left, that counts.

On our side, my greatest concern is to always right – Abraham Lincoln

The Soul Lounge

AT FESTIVAL ONE

If you haven't heard of Festival One you're missing out! With the goal to create community in the church through music, art and culture, it's the place to be over the last weekend in January.

Wanting to be a part of the festival herself **Kylee Black has been the driving force behind weaving inclusion and accessibility into this weekend.** The organisers are on board with this and believe strongly in making the Festival accessible for as many as possible.

As well as a raised platform for better viewing, ramp access to buildings, sign language interpreters, assistance with mobility transport to and from Hamilton, and free mobility equipment on-site, there is an amazing space called the Soul Lounge.

Set up to support those with and without disabilities that need a little extra TLC, a place to connect, a place of quiet, a place to rest and recharge themselves and their wheelchairs, and a safe space where people know there is always someone around who can help you out. During the weekend there were seminars held to work at continuing to break down barriers around disabilities.





Every child of God is equally equally necessary in the Church



Margie with Harry Oor, who had the vision for Eleos

RUNNING WITH A GOD GIVEN ASSIGNMENT

Margie Willers, who has cerebral palsy, writes:

I've always been drawn to people who seize 'God-Assignments' by the tail. From long time observation, I recognize they're people with an intense passion - driven by a burning enthusiasm. An unquenchable 'fire in the belly'. They remain totally focused to their God-Calling regardless of obstacles and opposition. Such people have impacted and transformed nations around the globe.

As co-founder of Elevate-Christian Disability Trust, allow me to share some thoughts on 'Running with a God dream Assignment'. For 12 years it was my privilege to 'run' with what was formerly 'Christian Ministries with Disabled' - from its spiritual conception through to 'first stage maturity' in 1989. For myself, the calling to be in partnership with Hugh and Di Willis - this GOD-ASSIGNMENT most certainly ignited a passion and purpose in my life. I thrive on having a God-project.

PEOPLE NEED A VISION:

The one who is gripped by a VISION - A GOD-ASSIGNMENT - will be inspired to run with enthusiasm and zeal. The Prophet Habakkuk describes such a person. 'Then the Lord God answered me and said, "Record the

vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run". VISION IS NOT WISHFUL THINKING. VISION IS CONCRETE. Moving with a God-Assignment involves having your spiritual eyes 'open' so that those things which are not visible to most people are more real to you than the natural world around you.

VISION TRANSLATES GOD'S WORD INTO REALITY:

Let's sit and unpack some thoughts about the prophet Elijah. Elijah knew God was going to send rain after a three-year drought. Although there was no sign of rain on the horizon, he told King Ahab to go eat and drink, in preparation for that rain. He knew this because it was his daily practice to be in contact with God. He knew God's will.

Elijah's vision was such that he acted as if the rain was already a reality. And he ran to Jezreel. 1 Kings 18: 41-46 records the story. God's purpose in giving us vision is not that we sit back, twiddling our thumbs, and wait for it, but rather that we get up and run with it. He desires us to co-operate with Him in making the 'vision' tangible and real.

THE NEED FOR VISION:

Solomon declared, 'Without a vision, the people perish'. No vision - no progress. No progress - the situation becomes stagnant, lifeless. When we consider certain Biblical heroes of faith we see both men and women who saw the invisible, believed for the incredible - and received the impossible!

Let's consider Noah and his Divine Assignment: God said to Noah, "Noah, I'm fed up with the wickedness of the people. Build an ark! I'm sending torrential rain - floodwaters. I'm wiping everything from off the face of the earth. Here's my plan: carry out these instructions."

People thought Noah a complete crackpot. He'd totally lost the plot. Think about the situation. RAIN! What on earth was this guy on about? People in Noah's day never experienced rain. As for a flood - foolish talk! Utter nonsense! They'd never heard of such a thing. The people ridiculed and mocked. In their opinion, old Noah was the local idiot. But Noah believed God. He carried through with all that God commanded. Now, that surely took faith, and gutsy courage.

What about Abraham? He left the country of his birth and moved to a country he had only seen with his spiritual eyes. He had a vision of a spiritual nation that he was going to father. Even when God required him to sacrifice his own son, he knew he had to begin

precious, equally important and each, His body – Nelson Mandela

establishing that great nation. The vision of the spiritual nation became more real to him than the natural circumstances... compelling as they were.

Some hundred years later we meet Gideon. He emerges when Israel was under siege by the Midianites for seven years. He was threshing wheat and crouching in a winepress to avoid detection by the enemy. Suddenly an angel appears with a message. The angel said, "Go, mighty man of valour, the Lord is with you". I can visualise Gideon's head popping up out of the winepress. "Er, were you taking to me?" If God was scouting for gutsy-warrior material, then he was peering into the wrong winepress. The task was ridiculously large. The enemy's soldiers filled a gigantic valley and appeared as 'thick as locusts'. Yet God accomplished His plan through Gideon's little band – a mere 300 people, a group that God kept small 'in order that Israel may not boast against Me that her own strength saved her'.

A little earlier, there'd been Moses. God revealed to him an altar, and Moses built it according to the pattern he'd been shown. Now, isn't that faith! That's commitment to a God Assignment!

The Bible clearly records many examples of this kind of faith overcoming great obstacles.

WHAT VISION GIVES:

Vision, as necessary as it is, is not an end in itself. It leads on to a number of things. Vision will give you hope, because we have a confident expectation of what lies ahead. Vision will give you a proper sense of value. It may mean financial sacrifice. The challenge is we don't put our energies and talents into something temporal and ultimately worthless. If we have no God assignment – no vision, we have no idea of anything beyond the immediate.

Vision enables us to build for the kingdom of God. It will give us direction. We all set goals in life, and goals bring action. Vision will give strength. It gives us an exciting life. It will put a sense of purpose into daily routine, and each day can become part of the process to obtaining the goal. And vision must be both practical and progressive.

We must be practical in our thinking – and think big. It may be long-term thinking. Perhaps in some areas the dreams and ultimate goals God entrusts to us seem utterly impossible. There are two little words appearing in the Bible that make the impossible possible - "but God".

I believe wholeheartedly there is an essential key to achieving goals and to overcoming obstacles. It is LOVE

– the 'unstoppable kind' – a love that goes beyond the ordinary. God's Agape love has 'Divine Potential' to move mountains. However, we must recognise that it is only by exercising the infilling of the Holy Spirit in our lives that we can give out supernatural love: That is - a love that takes on the impossible.

LOVE IS SERVICE MADE VISIBLE.

Personal revelation is always associated with the call of God. Abraham saw a fiery torch, but one day held a baby in his hands. Moses saw a burning bush, but one day stood as head of a nation. The apostle Paul saw a great light but one day had the pastoral care of a multitude of churches which God entrusted to him.

When we see with spiritual eyes and walk in His Spirit we will experience the reality of the purposes of God, and some of you within the organisation of Elevate – Christian Disability Trust are God's agents for bringing those purposes to pass. WOW! Now isn't that an excitement?

INVESTING IN VISION:

A vision – or a God-Assignment is the basis for an investment. It's not enough to ask God to heal our eyes and then remain passive. God gives us vision so that we run with it. We play a vital part in making that God - vision a reality.

We must always see that the context is the integrity of God. God is not a man that He should lie. Vision comes from God and He watches over it and is faithful about bringing it through to complete fruition. HE IS THE GOD WHO PERFORMS MIRACLES!

DAVID SPOKE TO HIS SON Solomon and said, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, My God Is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work of the temple of the Lord is finished". And through the prophet Habakkuk, God has sealed His promise: "Though the vision linger, for it is for an appointed time; it will certainly come and will not delay. God is always faithful to the truth and to His Promises. ■

N.B. This is a new era, your appointed season. I encourage you to reach out - seize with both hands everything God has for you! Aim high. Fix your eyes on God's bull's eye. Make your mark - and mark it with IMPACT.



Every person is of infinite

On leaving the Drop In, staff member Paul writes;

I CAN'T WAIT TO COME BACK AND SAY HI!

I started at Elevate as a volunteer on a Wednesday, and immediately felt there was something special about the staff and our clients. An opening became available to work longer hours, and as I spent more time with the staff and clients I realised just how special Elevate is.

Elevate is so important in the lives of every single one of our clients and provides them with essential opportunities for socialising, counselling, learning and expressing their Christian faith.

Elevate is a place which nurtures and strengthens our clients and helps them cope with their very real life challenges -with lots of fun and laughter along the way.

Elevate is a home for everyone, and everyone is included in the family, regardless of (dis) abilities.

We love each other, care for each other, support each other, pray for each other and laugh with each other.

Our staff and volunteers are inspiring and amazing. Their prayers and daily support for each other, commitment and love for our clients, and their faith in Jesus are truly incredible.

Our clients are special people too, equally inspiring and amazing. I was privileged to spend time with many individuals who humbled me with their own



challenges and inspired me with their strength of mind and their strength of faith.

It was through spending time with our staff, volunteers and our clients, along with ongoing prayers, gentle encouragement and support from Elevate staff that I also became a Christian myself.

I'm going to miss Elevate and spending time with such special people, and can't wait to come back and say, "Hi"

WE SO NEED VOLUNTEERS AT THE CENTRE!

You too can experience what Paul has described, because the hours are so suitable:

- Just three days a week
- Only in school term time
- The hours are from 10am to 2pm, so you can send your children or grandchildren off to school and be back before they come home!

AND HERE'S SOME TESTIMONIES FROM PEOPLE ATTENDING THE DROP IN CENTRE

I am accepted here. I am shown love and am learning how to love others - *Rosemary*

I love meeting new people here, I've been coming for 11 years - *Peter*

I have learned patience and endurance through being here - *Dale*

I feel accepted here. It has helped me to look outside of myself and help others - *Nick*

It's a wonderful safe place to make friends and grow together – genuine love - *Jeanette*

Great to see the changes in people's hearts as they come and grow here - *Michael*

I used to be really shy but now I get asked to get involved in lots of things - *Lara*

I find it a great place where I can get help to overcome the struggles I face - *Amanda*

I love coming here to see all my friends - *Errol*

Elevate has given me an opportunity to know God more and to help others - *Michelle*

I feel part of a community here, everyone (strong & weak) working together - *Michael*

I love being able to praise and worship with all my friends - *Pritti*

We are all family here – I would feel a great loss if I wasn't here - *Joy*



Sadly, Jason Fraser has died

Di Willis, speaking at his funeral, said;

Jason had such a deep faith, and Jesus was his shepherd. He was so involved in the ministry for years, ever since he was a teenager. He came to everything he could without fail - National Camps, Auckland Camps, CFFD Auckland main and area meetings, and regular attendance at the Centre.

I sometimes think of Jason with the letters A to F -

A = Adored the Lord

B = Behind everything

C = Committed

D = Delightful man

E = Expectant, Excited, Enthusiastic

F = Focused

We were very fond of him. Jason was always interested in us, always asking questions, deep spiritual questions too. He was so keen not to miss anything. His was a gentle spirit. He will be missed.

**CAMPS
2019**

Please take note and put in your diaries

Emmanuel Family Camp	29-31 March	Totara Springs, Matamata
Christchurch Day Camp	13 April	
Torch Camp	11-14 April	Capernwray Bible College, Cambridge
National Camp	25-28 Oct	Totara Springs, Matamata



Getting hurt in life is inevitable



Mothers Day 1989

This is when Coralie suddenly becomes animated about her faith journey. Coming up to 30 years ago, their family embarked on a journey that would cause her to question the nature of suffering, humanity and God as she knew Him. For Coralie, this was when her faith was deepened and widened and stretched. They had been out for dinner and three-month-old Sam had fallen asleep in his crib-style pram. They put the buggy in the nursery and let him sleep. 'I firmly believe that I was sent back into the room,' recalls Coralie. 'I thought, "I'll just go and pop him into his cot," so I went back to move him, and that's when I found him with his head rolled back and not breathing.'

'I resuscitated him at home, while Kevin was calling an ambulance, and he was rushed to hospital.'

In hospital, Sam began to have seizures and was put on life support. He was not expected to live. They were harrowing, tumultuous days. 'I remember making the prayer of, "I'll have him back on any terms,"' recalls Coralie. It was Mother's Day, and a decision had to be made. They went for a walk, having to decide when to take Sam off life support, and whether to elect for 'extreme measures' or let nature take its course. They opted to let nature take its course. 'So Sam came off life support and he started breathing on his own, and 30 years later, he's still breathing on his own!' laughs Coralie.

The full extent of his significant disabilities

Technically speaking, he has spastic quadriplegia, epilepsy, and cortical blindness. This means he is in a wheel-chair, has no purposeful movement, is non-verbal and is unable to interpret what he is seeing. Growth milestones were met, but developmental milestones were missed. There were times of grief, stress, relief ... 'Yes, there were seasons of all of this,' says Coralie. But she also remembers a deep sense that her prayers had been answered. 'We were very supported through it, we had really good, close friends around us who were just fabulous, and the Corps was fabulous,' says Coralie. A warm memory is holding a thanksgiving prayer meeting to thank their friends for their support, and thank God that Sam had been restored to them.

'I found that I loved my child, so I started to understand the power of unconditional love,' says Coralie. 'I loved him for who he was, not because he could coo or say, "Yes mummy".' It also strengthened their marriage. 'Often in these circumstances, you can turn away from each other, but Kevin and I turned towards each other in this situation, so it actually made our relationship stronger. Kevin has been intimately involved with all of Sam's care for the whole of his life, and as I've done more and more study in these latter years, Kevin has actually become his primary carer.' Meanwhile, they made a decision to expand their family—so Caleb was born, then Sarah. The next years were mostly busy raising a family, parenting

Telling *His Own* Story

When Coralie Bridle resuscitated her own three month old son Samuel she knew their world had changed forever. Ever since, Coralie has been her son's mouthpiece, helping him tell his own story. She'll never forget the moment she heard him cry again, knowing in that instant that her son was changed forever.

Until then, Coralie's life had gone more or less as predicted. Born to officer parents, Coralie grew up in the Salvation Army. She lists her early spiritual journey as attending church and making a faith commitment. At 18, she trained as a nurse, and by the time she was 21 was nursing in an oncology unit. Her husband Kevin was a teacher, working with intellectually disabled students, but she remembers going to visit and feeling very intimidated. When she was training as a nurse, she had a placement at Mangere Hospital, working with IHC clients, 'and hated it'.

Then, when Coralie fell pregnant, they eagerly anticipated their first child. The birth was not easy. After a prolonged labour, the baby was in some distress, so they were rushed into an emergency C-section. A beautiful boy was born to them, and they named him Samuel.

and 'just getting on with things'. But as their children got older, Coralie attended a writer's conference in Washington. 'I don't get visions,' explains Coralie. 'But there was a prayer meeting and I had a very clear picture of the Bible College of New Zealand [now Laidlaw], and I had a sense that I had to shore up some Biblical foundations.' So Coralie stepped into what would become the next defining season of her life, as a student of theology. While studying, she found that questions about her son, his disability and his spirituality, ignited a sense of holy discontent.

I felt that if anyone was going to tell his story, it had to be me, because he can't speak. It started raising all these questions for me in terms of faith: if he can't speak or give assent to salvation, can he be saved? If he can't go up to the mercy seat and make a confession of faith, what does that mean for his salvation?

Prayer and confession are valid, adds Coralie, but we need to expand our understanding of salvation. 'Jesus has achieved salvation objectively for the whole world, and it's how we participate in that salvation that is different for different people. So, for someone like Sam, who is non-verbal, I firmly believe that Spirit speaks to spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit communes with Sam in a way that is perhaps more direct and less mediated than our own.' Perhaps most of all, Sam embodies unconditional love. 'He loves and trusts as much as I do, probably more. He totally embodies dependence—that leaning on the Saviour. He embodies patience and perseverance. He embodies a certain dignity that shows the face of God as well.' And Coralie adds, 'He's adorable—that's the thing you get. To the outside world he may not look as adorable as the next person, but as a parent you don't see that because you're so connected with who this person is.' In this way, Sam serves as a beautiful mirror of how God sees us, His creation. 'I even see his spiritual connection with his father, when Kevin leans over him and whispers, and has special songs that he sings to him. Sam stills right down and giggles—even a giggle for me is a mark of his personhood and his spirituality.' We are made whole by the love of our Father, who rejoices over us with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

What is a person?

One of the questions raging above most of our heads, is what makes someone a 'person'. An ethics writer argues that some people are responsive to stimulus but are not rational—and are therefore not persons. This may seem irrelevant to most of us, but it has implications for who we as a society believe deserves care and dignity. Our concept of what makes someone a 'person' influences our beliefs about everything from abortion to euthanasia—from who deserves medical treatment, to who deserves a food parcel.

Some beliefs about 'personhood' write Sam off as not deserving of dignity, human rights and care. 'What makes

Samuel a human being?' asks Coralie. 'At its essence, Sam, like all of us, is created in the image of God, and therefore of worth and value. It's not what we can do as people, that matters to God in the first instance, it's our very being that matters. It's who we are as part of God's good creation—we are loved always and forever.' 'Just because the dust of Sam's physicality has been rearranged, does not mean he is loved any less. It doesn't make him less of a person.'

A theological model of Disability

Despite this deeply Christian belief in the dignity of all people, Coralie says that Christian attitudes have sometimes worked against people with disabilities. Last year, she embarked on a PhD, hoping to develop a theological model of disability. She suspects that medical and social models of disability, along with human rights initiatives such as the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities—whilst limited in their spiritual focus—have potentially done more for the lived experience of people with disabilities than the church has. 'I am conscious that in the wider church, people with a disability can be seen as "embodied signifiers of the fall"—people with disabilities represent to us our fallen-ness, sin and decay ... so then it becomes hard to welcome and embrace the disabled.' New theologies are helping us see disability not as a distraction from our true personhood, but as part of our personhood. 'This is a complete counter argument to disability as a signifier of the fall. Disability is another way of being human,' reflects Coralie. 'There is something lacking in our expression of the body of Christ if we don't have disabled people among us.'

So, does that mean it was God's will that Sam would become disabled? Coralie gives a passionate response: 'Absolutely not. I don't believe it was God's will because I don't believe God causes suffering in order to bring us into a relationship with Him. 'If we stay yoked and connected to God and a faith community, then He brings good out of it—but thinking that we were 'chosen' to suffer because we might make a good fist of it just makes me feel sick. We live as part of a fallen world, so challenging stuff happens to everybody—just like the sun rises on everybody, every day.' She is a passionate voice for her son, and she is a prophetic voice to the church, challenging us to see everyone as worthy of knowing God—just as we are all known by God. I do believe Sam was given back to us, but the dust of his personhood had been slightly rearranged.' It started raising all these questions for me in terms of faith: if he can't speak or give assent to salvation, can he be saved? ■

This article by Ingrid Barratt was condensed and included with permission from The War Cry, the Salvation Army, New Zealand, Fiji, Tonga and Samoa'



God doesn't call the qualified, He

Separated in birth, but united in death!

Prabhu and Nancy told us about Lisha in India.

Lisha was the first grand daughter in the whole extended family of Israel, whose father was the first convert in that village. It was a big celebration, but that was short lived! Day by day, one by one, relatives, who were around Lisha's parents, began to disappear! The reason – Lisha was born with Cerebral Palsy,

After a few weeks, they discovered that she was blind as well!

The talk quickly started and spread...

"Who knows what sin they must have committed?"

"But they doubtless deserve it! Oh, what a pity!"

Except for the parents, grandparents and Lisha's aunts, no one cared for her!

But every soul is precious, irrespective of their bodily infirmities. All are equal in God's sight. - JTK Daniel

After 3 ½ years Lisha went back to her Creator following a brief illness. She laughed and squealed when she was in company or listening to songs; on the whole, she was a cheerful little adorable girl! Lo and behold at her

funeral, Israel was surprised to see the whole family; even the neighbours who had not set their eyes on her, turned up.

"We saw the way you took care of your disabled daughter."

"We noticed the love you showered on that handicapped child."

"We understood from the way you did your best for your disabled child that there is something beyond this disability in the body!"

Those were some of the testimonies. Today the whole extended family of more than 45 members along with their neighbours worship together in the same church!

Parents of children with disabilities go through the struggles of not only their own unspoken, depressing attitudes towards disability, but also the negative attitudes of the society, thereby making their upbringing a double-fold burden. They go through guilt and shame, and added to it the enormous task of taking care of that child whilst fighting against an insensitive neighbourhood. ■



"Through the Roof" in England told us about Sahr

They told us that encouragingly more and more people with disabilities are joining their teams, including people like Sahr Yillia in Sierra Leone where their ministry serves.

Sahr lost his sight due to measles when he was a child. His parents spent years taking him to doctors to

find a cure, but nothing changed! The village rejected the family, and they lost business and property. If crops failed or an accident happened, the community blamed Sahr. He was attacked, and had to move from

village to village. Sahr managed to escape his situation and received a sponsored education, finding work in international disability advocacy. When Sahr became a Christian he felt compelled to return to his village to offer forgiveness. He says, " I have God's love in my heart. God has not abandoned me. I am not a curse. I am a testimony to God's glory."

Sahr continues to live where he was attacked as a child, and helps the community that didn't want him so that they can see him as a blessing in their lives.

Recently Sahr was an integral part of our mission team. His insightful presentation inspired hundreds of pastors, community leaders and families during our inclusion workshops. ■

Philippines CFFD

Leslie de la Ganar writes from the Philippines.



On the left you see a photo taken at our Christmas Fellowship with some 65 having a hilarious time together. Thanks so much for your hearts and the way you have been supporting out PCFFD ministry. It means so much to us.

This coming April we have our annual camp with the theme, "Be Strong and Courageous". We covet your prayers that the Lord will use us as instruments to evangelize and minister to the precious people with disabilities and their families as well. Thanks for your great collections at your Matamata conventions that make these camps possible.



Jed was very happy to receive from us one of the PM radios we are still giving out. After a few months I heard a good feedback from his sister that Jed has been enthusiastically listening to the Christian broadcasts, and turns into them very early in the mornings. That makes it so worthwhile, despite our two co-workers nearly being bitten by his dog! Thanks to all those who donated to our radio project and for the fruit it is now bringing forth.



THE GREAT HOUSE CLEANING

by Joseph J Mazzella

It was several years ago. A leg had broken off one of our dining room chairs and couldn't be fixed. I carried it into my bedroom to shove in my closet until I could throw it away later,

but it wouldn't fit. Every square inch of my closet was stuffed with stuff. My children's closets were just as full. The walls around our bedrooms too were lined with boxes and storage containers. It was then that I realized that I had become a mini-hoarder. The old saying kept coming to my mind: "The more things you own, the more your things own you." I made the decision then to begin what would later be known as The Great House Cleaning.

I decided that if I didn't need something in my everyday life or if it didn't hold memories of love and joy for me, then it had to go. First my children and I filled several

garbage bags full of broken furniture, torn clothes, non-working appliances, and trashed toys. These were hauled to the local landfill. Next we gathered up the good stuff that we no longer needed. There were piles of clothes, boxes of books, toys, nick-nacks, and assorted electronics. We loaded up our car and donated them all to local charities. When we were done I suddenly felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders, and at the same time I felt a wonderful joy filling my heart.

Since The Great House Cleaning I have done my best to live simply and not collect too much stuff. I continue to donate everything I don't need to help out others who do need it. It never fails to bring me a feeling of happiness and oneness with God when I do.

Mother Teresa said: "The less we have, the more we give. Seems absurd, but it's the logic of love." Live logically then. Live lovingly. Trade your junk for joy. Trade your stuff for simplicity. Give, live, and love. Remember, God's love is all you need in this life, and the love you share is all you can take with you into the next. ■



Faith is taking even when you can't see

A Walking Sermon

One afternoon in 1953, reporters and officials gathered at a Chicago railroad station to await the arrival of the 1952 Nobel Peace Prize winner.

He stepped off the train - a giant of a man, six-foot-four, with bushy hair and a large moustache. As cameras flashed, city officials approached with hands outstretched and began telling him how honoured they were to meet him. He thanked them politely and then, looking over their heads, asked if he could be excused for a moment.

He walked through the crowd with quick strides until he reached the side of an elderly black woman who was struggling as she tried to carry two large suitcases. He picked up the bags in his big hands and, smiling, escorted the woman to a bus. As he helped her aboard, he wished her a safe journey.

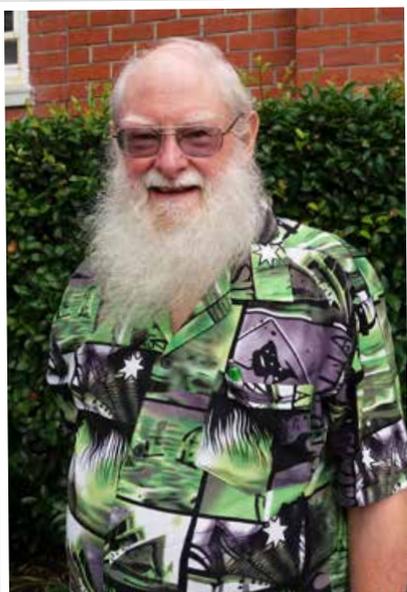
Meanwhile, the crowd tagged along behind him. He turned to them and said, "Sorry to have kept you waiting."

The man was Dr Albert Schweitzer, the famous missionary doctor, who had spent his life helping the poorest of the poor in Africa. A member of the reception committee said to one of the reporters: "That is the first time I ever saw a sermon walking!"

What a beautiful world would be ours if each one of us cared for the needs of others and showed the concern for them we would show to a very close and dear friend! And imagine how fantastic it would be if we did this to those who do not like us, to those whom we consider as our enemies, to those who have hurt us! Let us not ever consider this as impossible! Let us try it just once, and see and feel the difference!



Malcolm Dixon



God, in His love, allowed me to go through the dark journey of depression, even thoughts of suicide from the age of 43.

Being a Christian didn't stop me being sick, but God's Word, "The Bible", sure came alive, and helped me to become well. Prayer, song and the constant positive input and teaching on Radio Rhema helped in my restoration. To these I add the culture of

giving and receiving through Auckland CFFD, the Centre and Joy Ministries for the past 24 years

My involvement all started through attending a free full-time course, "Introduction to skills in caring for

people with disabilities" that I saw advertised on Radio Rhema. This led to going to the Centre, and after 6 months I was accepted there for a 6 month contract through Task Force Green that was renewed twice allowing me to be the wheelchair van driver for 14 months, and I became great friends with the folk there.

After going to my first national camp I was utterly exhausted yet totally exhilarated at the same time. "Total immersion" to put it mildly, and I have been back every year since! There I have had various roles... wheelchair van driver, buddy, devotions organizer, deputy cabin leader, and later helping to lead the Joy Ministries elective at camp. Each camp the theme, carefully chosen by the camp committee, builds on the previous year, and has been so helpful to my Christian growth.

What the camp speakers bring each year is often so simple, yet so profound, from their personal relationship with God, the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Recently I have helped to lead the Joy Ministries elective at national camp, and have been appointed secretary of the Auckland Joy Ministries.

the first step is the whole staircase

Failure

- Failure doesn't mean you are a failure...
It does mean you haven't succeeded yet.
- Failure doesn't mean you have accomplished nothing...
It does mean you have learned something.
- Failure doesn't mean you have been a fool...
It does mean you had a lot of faith.
- Failure doesn't mean you've been disgraced...
It does mean you were willing to try.
- Failure doesn't mean you don't have it...
It does mean you have to do something in a different way.
- Failure doesn't mean you are inferior...
It does mean you are not perfect.
- Failure doesn't mean you've wasted your life...
It does mean you have a reason to start afresh.
- Failure doesn't mean you should give up...
It does mean you must try harder.
- Failure doesn't mean you'll never make it...
It does mean it will take a little longer.
- Failure doesn't mean God has abandoned you...
It does mean God has a better idea.



A New Trustee
Charles Hewlett has come on the Board of Trustees.
He was the Principal of Carey Bible College

Very grateful thanks
to Ultimo Group for their gift of printing calendars we can give to our branches and supporters

Christianity

It is a relationship with Jesus – not just a religion. Jesus said, **"I am the way the Truth and the Life."** John 14:6
If you don't know Jesus. Do contact your local pastor or Elevate.



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.



Attention - all those who have changed their email addresses PLEASE tell us your new ones

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Joy Ministries - National, Auckland Central, West & East Jan Bridgeman	bridgeman@xtra.co.nz	027 641 2653
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Whakatane - Wanda Hughes	bwtroop@gmail.com	07 312 3330
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Other ministries around the country		
Able to Worship - Warkworth Methodist Church Jenny Trotter	k.jtrotter@gmail.com	09 422 7358
Kumbayah - St David's Presbyterian Church - Palmerston North Ann Bennett		06 355 2818
Bible Friends - Wanganui Louise Rostron	rostrons@xtra.co.nz	06 344 5955
THRIVE - Greerton Bible Church, Tauranga Ron Raikes	thrive@gbe.org.nz	021 032 9660



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I wish to give for general running costs: \$

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Philippines CFFD

Sponsorship needed



**Mara Visconde
(0122)**

Mara's sponsor has had to pull out due to financial reasons. Mara is still attending school so requires another sponsor ASAP. Mara is hearing impaired and uses traditional sign language to communicate.



**Dan Paje
(0134)**

Dan is a new child to the system. He has cerebral palsy which affects his legs and walking. He lives in the Hebron Children's Home as his family situation is far from ideal. He is 13 years old and wants to work in a call centre when he leaves school.



**Maryjane Canoza
(0135)**

Maryjane is a little person, but in spite of it she is still eager to finish her studies. She goes to public high school and she is in the 7th grade. She is 16 years old. We need sponsorship for Maryjane to cover her stationery expenses and other school expenses.



**Maryrose Canoza
(0136)**

Maryrose is a little person. She is 21 years old. She is presently to studying in the public high school. She is in the 10th grade and would love to finish her studies. We need sponsorship for Maryrose to cover her stationery expenses and school expenses.



**Roy Pelobello
(033Staff)**

Roy is our newest Staff Worker. He works for PCFFD in the maintenance area. He is a pastor for a local church, but does not receive enough from this to meet all his expenses. He is doing the cleaning of the PCFFD building and it's surrounding area. He also assists with the PCFFD activities.

If you wish to sponsor Mara, Dan, Maryjane or Maryrose, the commitment is \$25.00 per month.

If you wish to sponsor Roy, the commitment is \$30.00 per month.

Please contact:

Ruth Beale

PCFFD NZ Office 6 Guildford Street,
Ashhurst Manawatu 4810.

Ph: 0274927178.

E: pcffd.nzsponsorship@elevatedt.org.nz

WHAT IS ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST ALL ABOUT?

We are an interdenominational parachurch organisation.

We run meetings and camps throughout NZ.

We have four groups:

- **CFFD** (Christian Fellowship for Disabled) mainly for folk with physical disabilities.
- **Joy Ministries** mainly for those with intellectual disabilities.
- **Emmanuel** for families with children with disabilities.
- **Torch** for those who are blind and visually impaired.

We have a Centre in Auckland which is our main office and where we also run a **Drop In Centre** three days a week. We welcome people with disabilities, volunteers and family members.

"We
welcome
your
enquiry"

NATIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE

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