

# THE ENCOURAGER

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The magazine of Elevate Christian Disability Trust

For over 40 years we've been empowering people with disabilities to live life to their full potential — physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.





# Praising God through your struggle

a devotion by Olivia Shivas



## Colossians 2:7 (NLT)

*Let your roots grow down into Him, and let your lives be built on Him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.*

**W**e all go through struggles in life. As much as we like to pretend life is all good and show our best selves in front of other people and on social media, life can be hard. Whether it's a breakdown of a relationship, a difficult situation at work, dealing with a disability or illness, or a family issue that doesn't look like it will ever resolve itself. No matter how hard we try to control and fix the situation, sometimes it just feels like it will never get better.

I recently experienced rejection and it hurt a lot more than I thought it would. I was sad for weeks, and just wanted to feel 'normal' again. I tried to distract myself and my negative feelings by going out with friends and having fun, and it would only temporarily make me feel better. And then I would go back to feeling really low again and end up being burnt out. But through all our struggles in life, there is one thing that we can hold on to - and that's the love of Jesus Christ, which is eternal.

What I have learnt from experience is the more we are rooted deep into God's love for us and have faith in Him, the more capable we become to deal with our struggles. The pain from a struggle or hurting season does not disappear straightaway - it would be very unusual if it did! But by praising God through the good and the bad times, we are able to lean into a God who will never leave us; He wants the best for our lives.

What I love about Colossians 2:7 is that Paul wrote this while in prison. He was not in an ideal situation,

but was still able to praise God and encourage others. If we are firm in our relationship with God in the first place before the unexpected suffering comes in our lives, we can deal with it better and use the situation as an opportunity to strengthen our relationship with God. The enemy will try to tell us our situation will not get better, but by building our lives around God's truth, we can be grateful for His faithfulness in our lives, and live by knowing the best is yet to come.

## Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT) 6.

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done. 7. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

The best thing we can do when going through a struggle is to pray and praise God, despite our circumstances - even if it's praising God through our tears! We may not understand why we are experiencing what we are going through in that moment, but God loves us and gives us peace when we are living through a storm. After experiencing a difficult season, I try and think what I can learn from it. One thing that is certain after experiencing a struggle is I always feel closer to God as a result and have an overwhelming sense of thankfulness for my relationship with Him. ■



# COURAGEOUS FAITH

**NATIONAL CAMP  
2020 ONLINE**

**LABOUR WEEKEND 23-26 OCTOBER**

## TALENT QUEST

**The search for talent is on! Do you sing, dance, juggle or act? We want to see your talent! Go on! Be courageous!**

Maybe you've trained your dog to do tricks or maybe you're a pro at sports? Don't limit your ideas! Show us what you've got by sending us a video of you performing your talent. Voting on our finalists will take place during National Camp.

All entries must be filmed in landscape and be less than 3 minutes. There are epic prizes for First, Second and Third winners!

Entries are open to individuals and groups.

For all the details, go to the National Camp section of our website or our Facebook page.

**DUE DATE:** Entries must be received by midnight on Saturday the 19th September.

**EMAIL:** [talent@elevatecdt.org.nz](mailto:talent@elevatecdt.org.nz)

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### NATIONAL CAMP 2020 ONLINE

We all have seasons in life when we need courage. We all have times when we need to hold onto faith, sometimes for much longer than we thought we could. Sometimes we need a courageous faith! Ps Geoff Wiklund is joining us online as our camp speaker!

**Join us! Be encouraged, be inspired and be challenged!**

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### HOW TO JOIN US

Our website has all the information, links and sign up forms. And we can send you all the details, right to your inbox. Sign up to our new email list and stay in the loop!

We will be using a combination of Facebook and Zoom for camp online. Click 'going' on our event page on Facebook! You can join us there for everything other than the cabin times and workshops. Plus, there will be loads of extras on Facebook that you won't want to miss!

([facebook.com/ElevateChristianDisabilityTrust](https://facebook.com/ElevateChristianDisabilityTrust))

The devotions, messages, and workshops will be uploaded onto our website afterwards for those unable to join us live.



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### CABIN TIME

We know this is such an important part of camp each year. We build friendships, pray together and encourage each other. So, we will be hosting cabin times on Zoom! Head to our website to register! We will email you a link and instructions. These will be such a special time of connecting and sharing together!

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Some of our regional ministry groups will be gathering together on the Saturday afternoon and joining us live! We will be linking together for a message from Ps Geoff, our Talent Quest finalists, and live interaction between our ministry groups!

Get in touch with your local area to see if they are organising something. You can still join us on Zoom and Facebook if you can't get to a gathering. How about getting some friends together if there isn't something in your area?



# Some people complain because while others praise Him for



## ADON

WRITTEN BY HIS MOTHER  
DOROTHY STEWART

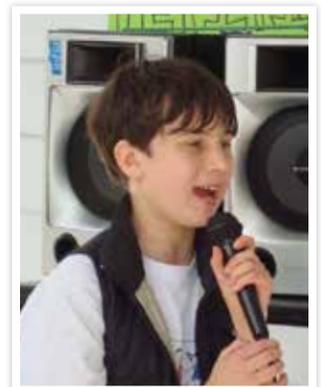
We were told that we only had a 5% chance of success in “Artificial Insemination”. We went ahead with it and had a few close friends praying. Two weeks later it was confirmed that the pregnancy was successful. My pregnancy went well for almost all of the nine months – but in the last ten days the baby was overdue there were multiple stops and starts. Unbeknown to Neil and I, when my waters broke the meconium was black. This meant that there was a possible problem ahead, so I was connected to a machine. When Adon finally came out, he took his first breath, and then his lungs stuck together as the meconium was so thick and deep in his lungs and had been there for many days.

Immediately, the doctors tried a baby’s respiration machine to help him breathe but it wasn’t working. They flew up a child’s one from Middlemore Hospital, but that didn’t work. They then tried an adult respiration machine, but none of these was any good. The amount of oxygen getting into his brain and through his body was not sufficient. His lungs were not working, and his heart was now hooked up to another machine. By now four hours had passed.

We were told that Adon would be a vegetable due to the lack of oxygen to his brain. The doctors informed us of a new machine that might help his lungs to work, but it had never been used on a baby before, but that brain damage had already occurred. They said putting Adon on the machine had the possibility of helping him, but also ran the risk of killing him. We decided that no matter what state he was in, having been a miracle conception right through to his birth, God would somehow help us. We gave them the go ahead to put him on the machine. Adon was hooked up to multiple tanks of gases, some being so large they couldn’t fit them into an ambulance, so Neil, an orderly and other doctors slowly pushed him down the drive, carefully over the speed bumps, between National Women’s and Green Lane Hospital.

I once saw Adon’s finger spasm, so being excited, I told the nurse, and they immediately increased the morphine, as any movement could take the tubes out of his heart. The machine took the blood out of Adon’s body and artificially oxygenated it. Morphine and multiple other drugs were slowly added into his blood which was then put back into his body and passed around with another machine that helped keep his heart beating. He had a respiration machine releasing a very slow puff of air to help his lungs. This process took longer than the expected time as his lungs were so packed with meconium which was not dissolving as quickly as expected.

Once when I was there the blood pump showed there was a blood clot forming. The specialist who had been down the road at a nearby restaurant for dinner, arrived dressed in his suit, and worked with the staff to manually put oxygen into Adon’s blood. They only had a few minutes to get this done. My chair was pushed back a bit and I saw it all happen. They then loudly cheered as it was done quicker than ever before. I moved back up to



# use God put thorns on roses, putting roses among thorns.

Adon, second on the left, with his family



the bed and as I looked I saw another miracle taking place. After eight days we finally managed to hold him. Adon now seemed real. He was soon transferred to isolation as a rotavirus was going around the hospital. His first bath took place twelve days after his birth and he still had oxygenation tubes in his nose. I was re-admitted to see how feeding would go. It proved very difficult as Adon couldn't suck, and all the bottles we used never worked. Finally, a teat shaped like a spoon meant that the milk would slowly trickle down his throat. This was done every hour and a half both day and night.

Preparations took place to get the house measured so that oxygen tanks could be dropped off, and to ensure that the oxygen tube was long enough to walk around the house. Small units were also arranged to take out with us. One day while Neil was bathing Adon he noticed that the oxygen tube had fallen down. Another model was tried but soon doctors realised that Adon was breathing naturally, so no tubes were needed anymore! Through all this I have learnt to take one day at a time. I came to realise my life was like a glass half measure. I had always thought it was half empty, but realising it was half full was a revelation, and I can now choose how I react. From being a person always totally organised in my job and home, all of a sudden I realised I had to LET GO and LET GOD TAKE CONTROL

“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways” says the Lord. **Is:55v8.**

“In all your ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct your paths.” **Prov 3v6 (NKJV)**

Adon's legs, toes and fingers were all slowly moving, and he was soon discharged from seeing the specialists. When he was two years of age a child's ECMO was donated to Auckland Hospital. Adon and I were at the Medical School for that celebration. His photo was in the NZ Herald as a child who wouldn't stay still. From only a 5% chance of a successful pregnancy, to a baby who was predicted to be a vegetable, we have instead a son who has climbed over fences, squeezed between metal bars and even climbed out of our two storey windows, balancing on the bricks shaped as a window sill.

Adon is not a vegetable, but rather against all odds, he is an Awesome Miracle. Now twenty years of age and a lot taller than me, Adon is someone who is soft and compassionate and a gift to us every day of his life. Let us enjoy each day and live it for God's glory and service. ■



**Central Auckland CFFD met at Mark Grantham's house, his idea!**

**They did a video item for the Talent Quest.**



## POINTERS FOR

# LEAD



**Margie Willers writes,**

Let's consider the Apostle Peter: During his early life, people were acutely aware of his unpredictability, impulsiveness and, big-time tendency of putting his foot in his mouth. He could be both exasperating and infuriating! However, Jesus saw something else in him. That's the reason He re-named him Peter, implying he would become a stone most suitable for a foundation. Can you

audio visual. [OBE-UK] Bear is a former SAS survivor, instructor, writer, narrator, television presenter, businessman, and a committed Christian.

Surprisingly, our afternoon's topic focused on pointers for leadership. I sat utterly intrigued. To me, Bear's presentation was sound. Realistic. Simplistic. Down-to-earth stuff. Certainly within our 'do-able-zone' for every person involved in the life, work and outreach of Elevate Christian Disability Trust. I felt fired-up. Eager to pass on lessons I learned from Bear. Hence this article is a combo effort - Margie Willers with Bear Grylls - and used here with permission from Bear.

### SOME THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

#### 1. How can you practice leadership in your life?

Leadership does NOT require an official role - although as you journey through the 'school of life', taking on a leadership role may be something you're really interested in. Sometimes it means standing up for some vulnerable, abused person, or one living with a severe disability and unable to communicate clearly. I so appreciate willing people who were prepared to step-in and provide me their 'voice' . Cerebral palsy speech can prove challenging on a first-time introduction with people organising a group project or volunteering to provide 'helping hands' for a disabled person who has limited hand co- ordination. Whether it's a long-term commitment, or one small moment of action, leadership can make a big impact.

#### 2. What makes a good leader?

Good leaders don't view themselves as the biggest person on the block. They recognize it takes team work. They view themselves more as shepherds caring for their flocks. They understand how

imagine the look on the other disciples faces when Jesus stated: You are Peter... upon this rock I will build my Church, and... Hell will N O T conquer it. [Matt. CH.16:18 NLT] What? Lord, are you out of your mind? You've got to be kidding – not erratic, impetuous Peter. No deal?

Yet the 'miracle' happened: Peter did become a pillar, a very respected leader - and founder of the Church. And all because of the Lord Jesus' ability, discernment and willingness to look beyond the surface and see what was locked inside.

Peter was a man of huge potential. Sometimes it takes someone with Insight and sensitivity to recognize these attributes within people and be prepared to come alongside as a mentor, and draw out their uniqueness. Too many of us see only what's on the surface. There's truth in the saying: 'Don't judge a book by its cover!' Let's be honest, we're so prone to peg someone as arrogant – quick-tempered – or weak-minded.

Sometime back I attended a church workshop. Within the afternoon's program we watched a Bear Grylls

*Little, few people are able to hold it.*

# LEADERSHIP

## PART 1

imperative it is to build people- rapport – good relationships. **“Good leaders CARE: great leaders SERVE”.** – Bear Grylls

There are several qualities that make good leaders stand out. The best leaders are the first to affirm they have flaws, but regardless, they are excellent communicators, collaborators, decision makers and strategic thinkers. They are organised, resilient and accepting of others. They listen and can manage risks. It's imperative you have a chunk of these attributes, or at least an awareness of them to be a good leader. If you are scouting for a blueprint of leadership to follow, as Christians we have the 'ultimate person' – there's no finer leadership example than JESUS CHRIST.

### 3. You might ask: What will I gain from a leadership position?

Prior to moving in any leadership position, success is all about growing yourself. When you become an actual leader, success is all about growing others. It's okay to have internal motivation for taking on a leadership role – such as having credentials on

your resume or building your own skills. However, it's imperative you take time out to question your motives. Are you only applying so that you obtain a title or a role of importance? Or have you a genuine interest in caring and serving people? Are there areas you desire to seek change for the betterment of others – or are you prepared to give that extra time overseeing the well-being of people caught in some dilemma? Do you possess the stickability to wait-it-out until help arrives? Do you truly want to develop your leadership skills? These are all positive attributes you can pursue.

Always keep in mind, being a leader is also an opportunity to be an example of Jesus to others through your actions. Prominent positions and public flattery are NOT a POSITIVE for some of us - we start believing our own hype when people treat us as 'special or famous'. **Make it your goal to promote Christ'.**

To be continued in the next Encourager.

HAVE YOU BEEN  
INSPIRED AND  
CHALLENGED IN THE  
ARTICLES BY THE  
FAITH, TRUST AND  
PERSEVERANCE OF  
THESE PEOPLE IN  
THE MIDST OF HUGE  
DIFFERENCES?



Cartoon by Cathy Wilcox of the Sydney Morning Herald.



Know before you vote what is involved in the

## End of Life Choice Act Referendum

On 19 September we are NOT voting on whether assisted dying should be made legal in principle. We are voting on the details of a specific version. The question is “**Should the End of Life Choice (EOLC) Act 2019 come into force?**” It is a binding referendum, which means it will become law after a year if it gets more than 50% support.

The Act contains both euthanasia (a person being administered lethal drugs by a medical practitioner or a nurse practitioner) and assisted suicide (a person receiving lethal drugs to take themselves).

Many of us assume that this Act is for people with uncontrollable pain. Not so. It's already legal for a doctor to give a terminally ill person as much medication as needed to control their pain and other symptoms.

The very real risk is that people would access euthanasia for the underlying reasons of a lack of societal or professional support, or existential suffering or depression - all things that may be connected to their terminal illness but also treatable.

Elevate Trustee Rev Dr John Fox, who has spastic hemiplegia and suffers daily pain, says,

**“Don't drop us. Don't make it harder for us. Don't tempt us to end our lives. When we have our darkest moments, we need our country to reflect back to us that we are loved, necessary, valued and equal. Even though they say they've fixed [the Act], we know a law like this broadens, that we can't control it, that loopholes come back to haunt us. That's why [this] Act is dangerous.”**

### Ten points to seriously think about, discuss and share with other voters:

- 1. The EOLC Act leaves out important safeguards.** *(It is riskier than the US, Australian and Canadian laws.)*
- 2. A terminally person who also has depression or a mental illness, can be eligible.** *(Depression may be the reason someone opts for assisted dying, not the terminal illness itself.)*
- 3. No requirement to try treatment first.** *(Most Kiwis think it's a last resort but it is not.)*
- 4. No requirement to see a specialist first.** *(So the person may not be fully informed of the available treatment options).*
- 5. No independent witnesses are required at any stage.** *(If steps are missed or the person changes their mind and the doctor gives the lethal dose anyway, the only 'witness' may be dead.)*
- 6. Only one doctor has to “do their best” to check the person is expressing their wish free from pressure.** *(They may have never met the person before and may conduct the meeting via video call; an abuser could be in the room and out of sight.)*
- 7. The person is only “encouraged” to talk to family.** *(Family may not know at all, e.g., an eligible terminally ill 18-year-old could opt for assisted dying without telling their parents.)*
- 8. There is no cooling-off period, so a person can request a lethal dose on the same day they receive a diagnosis, while they are still in shock. If eligible, they could receive the lethal dose as early as 4 days later.** *(Unlike in Oregon, Victoria or Canada).*
- 9. No mental competence test is required when receiving the lethal dose.** *(Unlike Victoria and Canada).*
- 10. There is poor oversight. The Review Committee can review deaths that they were personally involved in. No one needs to review all the documents of a case.**

# HAVE YOUR SAY!

This is your opportunity! You can influence the future direction of The Encourager Magazine and development of new online content. Your response and comments will have a real impact on the effectiveness of this publication.

This survey is also available online, so you don't even need to worry about postage. If you are outside NZ we would encourage you to go online as delays with post may mean we don't receive your survey in time.

Send us your response by the 1st September. Time needed to complete survey: 5-7 minutes

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

## How did you come across the Encourager Magazine?

- I was sent it in the mail
- I was given it by someone
- I picked up a copy at church
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## How do you currently read the Encourager Magazine?

(Please tick the option that most applies to you)

- I read everything all at one time
- I read all of it but not all at one time
- I read certain articles that I am interested in
- I only skim read it

## In what format/s would you like to access The Encourager Magazine? (Please tick all format options you would use)

- Print copy
- Audio
- Digital magazine
- As individual articles on our website

## What information and content are you interested in?

(Please tick all options you are interested in)

- Devotions
- People's stories and testimonies
- Elevate event information and photos
- Christian disability news and events
- Editorial and opinion pieces
- Making Churches inclusive
- Inspirational quotes, cartoons and poems
- Reviews of Christian disability resources e.g. book reviews, Bible study reviews
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

(please list any other content you would be interested in receiving from us)

## Through which of the following formats would you prefer to access our articles, stories, event information, devotions, and/or resource reviews? (Select all that apply)

- Written
- Audio
- Video
- NZSL
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Where would you prefer to access our content?

(Please tick all applicable options)

### Devotions

- Print copy of The Encourager Magazine
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- Podcast platforms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Stories and testimonies

- Print copy of The Encourager Magazine
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- Podcast platforms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### News and events

- Print copy of The Encourager Magazine
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- Podcast platforms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Reviews of Christian disability resources

- Print copy of The Encourager Magazine
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- Podcast platforms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Editorial and opinion pieces

- Print copy of The Encourager Magazine
- Website
- Email
- Social media
- Podcast platforms
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## How often would you be likely to read or listen to the following content? (Please tick all applicable options)

### Devotions

- Monthly
- Fortnightly
- Weekly
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Stories and testimonies

- Monthly
- Fortnightly
- Weekly
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### News and events

- Monthly
- Fortnightly
- Weekly
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Reviews of Christian disability resources

- Monthly
- Fortnightly
- Weekly
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Editorial and opinion pieces

- Monthly
- Fortnightly
- Weekly
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Any Other Comments and Ideas

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## BOOK REVIEW

# The Perfect Gift by Chris Gore



Chris Gore writes, "Parents of children with special needs are my heroes. It's my honour to assure you that it's all going to work out. We are on the winning side! We are living in a new day where we are starting to see breakthrough in the lives of our precious children." There's no lack of inspiring quotes in the book 'The Perfect Gift', which includes interviews with seven mothers of children with a variety of autism diagnoses.

Chris Gore was once a pastor in New Zealand, but since moving to California in 2006, is now Director of Healing Ministries at Bethel Church in Redding. He dedicated the book to his daughter Charlotte, and to all other children and adults with special needs. In each testimony, recorded by his co-pastor Angela Locke, the 'Healing Rooms' at Gore's church plays a part.

He writes, "We have a passion to see healing happen in the lives of these precious children, but I soon realised that their parents also needed much encouragement as they go throughout their daily life. I was beginning to meet many parents who lived in shame and guilt, and who had lost hope in God for the healing of their children. We want to help people see past the condition or diagnosis. As parents of Charlotte we've been through the fire. Even in the heat of the fire, we can still thrive. Sometimes in life, we will only receive breakthrough when we can learn to rest in the fire."

The word 'breakthrough' is the key in Gore's vision. In all seven interviews the dear mums share a similar story about their young child diagnosed with

autism, and how their families had to cope with that. A breakthrough often starts with a 'prophetic word of healing', states Chris Gore, followed by years of hanging on to hope. The parents share how faith, big or small, eventually led to a breakthrough prayer at the Healing Rooms and a series of victories, big or small, after that. "Autism bowed its knee to Jesus", the book says.

Stop worrying about your faith, is another advice from 'The Perfect Gift'. "Faith is important to see breakthrough for your children, but we don't experience more faith by focusing on our own faith. Our faith is not found in our own prayers or feelings, but rather in the nature of the Person of Jesus." And that explains the title of his book. "Jesus' greatest sacrifice was to give up His own life so that we could inherit life with Him. We were the joy set before Him. Without Jesus, none of the stories you read in the book would have happened. He is our Healer and He is our Perfect Gift!"

Copies of Chris Gore's book The Perfect Gift are available to borrow at the Drop In Centre in Onehunga, Auckland. Other book titles by Chris Gore are 'Walking In Supernatural Healing Power', 'Practical Guide to Walking in Healing Power' and 'Overflow: A Daily Experience of Heaven's Abundance'. ■

**Review by Onne Hiemstra**  
(staff member, Elevate National Office)



**Do contact us, a local Minister or Christian friend, so you can have that Faith too.**

*John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."*

Marc van de Laar shares his testimony:

## A life with a new perspective

It was only three days before Christmas when life took a dramatic turn for Marc van de Laar. As he was walking backwards over a roof, doing his daily job as a professional exterior house cleaner, he tripped over a Sky dish. Marc fell over the side, onto his head and broke his spine at the L2 level. *“Look at me if you do not believe in miracles. I am one”,* says Marc.

Marc (57) is a familiar face for those involved with the CFFD branch in Hamilton. He has not missed a fortnightly lunch meeting on a Friday. Marc is also a regular day visitor at the Elevate National Camp during Labour weekends, as he only lives twenty minutes from Matamata. Marc believes, *“through the power of prayer and outpouring of love from those close to me, I beat the odds.”*

It was a beautiful summer’s day in 2011. *“I was just working on a roof, spraying for moss and algae. It was considered a very safe platform, no harness required. It was usual for me to work alone, but I had an extra worker that day. Just after I had hit the ground, and lay unconscious, my colleague came around to see if we could stop for morning tea. Had I been left there any longer, I would not be here today. I remember nothing from the whole incident. I woke up a month later when I came out of a drug-induced coma, in completely unfamiliar surroundings. I was lying on my back, unable to do anything. My legs were on fire, permanently. I had a halo placed around my head with screws in my forehead and on either side. There was a corset around my chest to carry the weight of the braces. I was fed by a straw coming in through my nose. Later I discovered I had also lost my hearing in the right ear. I was unrecognisable for those who knew me. My family was told to expect the worst. However, they prayed and that prayer is why I’m still here today.”*

Marc van de Laar is calm and peaceful about that particular chapter in his life. *“One of my favourite Scriptures is Matthew 22, verse 37: ‘You shall love the*

*Marc van de Laar:  
“The strong  
medication in the  
hospital had weird  
effects on me. At one  
time, I could speak  
and sing in Te Reo  
Maori, fluently!”*



Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ Life does certainly take on a new perspective when going through a life-changing experience like I have been through, and continue to do so each day. You live differently, acknowledging that every day is a blessing from God.”

Marc lives in a small cottage in his ‘little paradise’, on the edge of Putaruru, in the heart of the Waikato. You can see his neighbour, the donkey Colt who wanders through the hills and paddocks outside of the fence. Marc shares the section with his brother Philip, who still lives in the front house that Marc’s parents (immigrants from the Netherlands) built nearly 50 years ago.

The discussions around the End Of Life Choice Bill stir Marc up. His own experiences in hospital were difficult. *“I had to be taped to the bed, because I kept pulling at my tubes. My spine and brain injuries were so serious, to the point that I was relying on life support. My doctors could have made a decision to stop the treatment, but it was mainly my oldest son who kept fighting for me. I would have taken the offer if the doctors had proposed euthanasia to me at the time. **That is now unthinkable. I am very grateful for my life.** I have three adult children, who love to visit me here. I shouldn’t be alive, but I am. I owe that all to God and to the people who prayed for me.”*

Getting involved with CFFD Waikato helped Marc to regain some of his confidence. *“I have a loving family and good friends in church, but it is true - because of your disability you can easily become isolated. The CFFD group in Hamilton is a fantastic caring community. I love to come, to bring my guitar and to be involved.”* ■



## Inspiration from a child with a disability *Part 1*

By Mary Van Nattan  
Sent in by Heydon Bailey

*John 9:1 (KJV) And as Jesus passed by He saw a man who was blind from his birth. 2 And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Master, who did sin, this man, or His parents, that he was born blind?" 3. Jesus answered, "Neither hath this man sinned, nor His parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."*

It has not been uncommon in the past for people to assume that someone is to blame when a child is born with some kind of defect. Many parents have travailed over the horrible questions, "Why?" "Why my baby?" "Why me?" "Why my family?" As my brother pointed out to me once, "It is not wrong to ask 'Why?' Jesus asked 'Why?' on the cross." That is a great comfort to us in our human weakness since we sometimes think, and too often are told, that it is a sin to ask "Why?" We are not better than our Lord, and in Him is no sin, so "Why?" is not a sinful question and will be a normal part of the Christ-like life.

A broken-hearted, urgent "Why?" is different from a rebellious, angry "Why?" The Lord will help to discern the difference. Miraculous healings are not the purpose of every difficult situation like this, but still the works of God can be and are manifested through the lives of His children when they yield these situations to Him. Jesus Christ is still able to bring glory to His Father through these lives.

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*1 Corinthians 1:27-31 (KJV) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; 28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: 29 That no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: 31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

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The following is a true story. I have altered the names and details and filled in some places. Otherwise I have tried to relate it the way I heard it to the best of my memory.

I have chosen the name "Violet" for the girl because violets are some of the hardest, most vigorous flowers I know. I have grown them in Michigan, Arizona and Tennessee and in all three places they have done very well (as long as they had water), and bloomed even when the plants themselves looked malformed or sickly. Violets seem cheerful and friendly to me. They also have a sweet, delicious fragrance, but you usually have to get quite close to smell it.

The Lord allowed me to hear this moving story some years ago. There may be some who feel that those who are mentally, emotionally or physically handicapped or disabled are not as useful to the Lord. Some who are handicapped or disabled in some way may perhaps wonder if they can serve the Lord. I have little experience along these lines compared to some folks, but this story speaks for itself.

Sometime back in the 1970s there was a paediatrician named Sheila in a large city in middle America. Sheila had been raised in an agnostic family and was living

a “good” life serving children with health needs, or so she thought. Her brother had gotten her into the profession, and she was enjoying it. Yet, in spite of her apparent success, she felt that something was “missing.” It so happened that one of her patients was a young boy, Jimmy, who was struggling with cerebral palsy. He had a very severe case which made life difficult for him. His own parents had rejected him at birth, and he had been taken into the home of a kindhearted lady who was caring for him as her own son.

At some point in this time period, a Christian friend of Sheila invited her to some special meetings. Since she had been questioning things in her life already, she decided to go. The Gospel was given there, and she began to contemplate the truth of it, and also to understand it as the Holy Spirit led her to Christ. She eventually came to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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*Acts 16:31 (KJV) And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

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Jimmy had recently taken a turn for the worse. His cerebral palsy had made it necessary for him to be moved to the hospital permanently. It was only a matter of time before the muscles could no longer be controlled at all and his body would shut down.

When they were setting him up in his new room, the nurse moved the TV to where Jimmy could see it. Now Jimmy’s cerebral palsy was so bad that he could not control his eyes. They jerked back and forth convulsively and were constantly on the move. Sheila questioned the nurse, “Why are you doing that? He can’t watch TV” The nurse replied, “Jimmy likes to watch TV.” This was the first clue that Sheila had that there was more to Jimmy than she had imagined. The nurse proved to be right. Jimmy liked to watch the TV.

As is normal for Christians, Sheila began to be concerned about the souls of those around her. Knowing that Jimmy was nearing the end of his life, she became extremely burdened for him. She knew that the lady who had adopted him was a Christian, but she couldn’t help wondering if she had ever told Jimmy about the Lord and explained salvation to him. Sheila was assuming that others also thought Jimmy could not understand things because his body was so uncontrollable.

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*Mark 10:14 (KJV) But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, “Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.”*

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Now Sheila and Jimmy had gotten to know each other pretty well in some ways since she had been his doctor for a while. So one day when she was with Jimmy Sheila decided she had to speak to him about it. Communicating with him as best she could, and not knowing if he would really understand, she went to his bedside and bent to look into his face. “Jimmy,” she said with great earnestness, “Has anyone ever told you that you can know the Lord?”

For the first time she had ever seen, Jimmy’s eyes stood still and focused on her. Now Sheila clearly declares that she did not get a revelation, and the Lord did not speak to her audibly, but she says it was as if the Lord let her know in her mind somehow what Jimmy would have said, and it was this, “I wish you knew the Lord like I know Him!” She was profoundly moved, and once again she realized there was much more to these children than she had ever imagined. Sheila later learned that Jimmy’s foster mother had taught him the things of the Lord.

Not long after this Jimmy passed into the deliverance of eternal health and joy with his Saviour. ■

*Continued in Part 2 in the next Encourager.*



## Our Staff at the Centre

Onne Hiemstra shares of his role:



### Kia ora!

As an introduction, a name can sometimes be a good indication of the life of this person. Not many Kiwis will recognize my name Onne Hiemstra as a Frisian name, they might mistakenly take me for a Dutchman. How confusing, but like NZ has it's Maori population, the Netherlands has the Frisians. A proud little

people group, famous for their Frisian cows, but we also have our own flag, own language, own sports and yep, even special Frisian horses and Frisian dog breeds.

How is that for an introduction? Most Elevate folks will probably know me as the Camp Registrar for National Camp, or as the Finance Administrator in the National Support Office in Onehunga. You might have seen me in the Drop In Centre, at the different camps, as the driver of the Elevate mobility van, or maybe at Friday meetings with CFFD Waikato in Hamilton, as me and my family live in Cambridge.

As a financial administrator it's my main role to keep track of the bookkeeping. One of the privileges of my role at Elevate is to keep in contact with the eight CFFD branches nation-wide and with the committee that does splendid work for PCFFD in the Philippines. These volunteers are my heroes. Local volunteers make it all happen. They really are 'the hands and feet of Christ' by serving their local disability community, representing Him in their work, and hopefully they do receive some laughs and genuine praise in return.

As most staff members, we wear different hats on different times of the day. Luckily there is so much more to the role than just adding numbers. This morning I was the guest speaker for our Drop In Centre, exploring some verses in Psalm 145. "The Lord is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made. The Lord upholds all those who fall, and lifts up all who are bowed down. What a privilege to have a job that allows me to discuss those verses with one another.

**It is your kind donations that enable the Trust to pay Onne and the other staff who are all so essential in running the Centre.**

## Big changes in the Philippines

Newly named as **Elevate Philippines Sponsorship Programme**, they have been experiencing a very difficult time this year.

They have been, and still are in lockdown, and Dianne Bayley, their Director for 43 years, has retired. She has done an incredible job.

Kathryn Hatton, (a grand daughter of the McRaes who were the founders of CBM) is now the Director. Leslie de la Ganar has also left, and returned to her family. We have been so grateful for her many years of involvement.

Manuele Teofilo is looking for testimonies or inspirational quotes for Facebook.

Do you know of testimonies we could include in the Encourager or on Facebook? Maybe you'd like help to write your own! Let us know at the Centre.



## WE HAVE AN URGENT NEED OF FINANCE

Firstly, thank you for those who already have automatic payments, or who send donations when able. We need more folk to help - could you partner with us by setting up automatic payments, or make a donation?

After more than forty years we are humbled to think of the many lives that have been, and are being, impacted through Elevate. Families, people living with disability, caregivers, and volunteers who have been encouraged, given hope, found a place to belong, and many who have come into relationship with Jesus as their Saviour.

As we look ahead, we know that it is only through partnering with people like you that we can continue to

provide this vital role. By partnering with us through **prayer, volunteering and/or regular giving**, you are providing places of **belonging, hope, and encouragement**. You are assisting people to grow in their love and service of Jesus. And you are assisting **local churches in becoming inclusive**.

Will you prayerfully consider partnering with us? Feel free to call us if you would like to set up a regular donation or find out about volunteering with us. Alternatively, you can go to our website for both regular or one-off donations.

### WAYS TO DONATE

**Online:** [www.elevatedct.org.nz/support-us/](http://www.elevatedct.org.nz/support-us/)  
One-off and regular donation options available.

**Internet banking:** 01-0142-0029706-00 (ANZ)

Enter your name in 'Reference', your supporter ID in "Code" and the word "Donation" in Particulars.



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#### Ministries under Elevate

##### Emmanuel Ministry

Nigel & Penny Shivas [emmanuel.support@elevatedct.org.nz](mailto:emmanuel.support@elevatedct.org.nz) 09 846 2046

##### Torch

Auckland - Leyna Coleman [leyna@actrix.co.nz](mailto:leyna@actrix.co.nz) 09 832 0130

##### Joy Ministries

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Blenheim - David Clode	<a href="mailto:clode11@slingshot.co.nz">clode11@slingshot.co.nz</a>	03 578 0598

#### Other ministries around the country

**Able to Worship** - Warkworth Methodist Church  
Jenny Trotter [k.jtrotter@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:rostrons@xtra.co.nz) 06 344 5955

**THRIVE** - Greerton Bible Church, Tauranga  
Ron Raikes [thrive@gbc.org.nz](mailto:thrive@gbc.org.nz) 021 032 9660



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# Revival of the church services

**One thing that needs to be revived is the taking of services in churches by groups from our CFFD branches and our other ministries.** We want to encourage churches to issue invitations for a team to take a part in their Sunday service or to some other group such as their youth group.

In the first 30 years of our ministry this happened a lot, and one church in particular had such a service in each of four successive years. Such a team could bring short videos, testimonies, songs or musical items, thought provoking articles and a poem.

I think back to one in particular when a lady with a speech difficulty struggled to speak, but immediately she started the church quietened right down as everyone carefully listened to make out what she was saying, and this proved to be the outstanding part of that service.



Recently Lani and Teremoana Va'a spoke at Whakatane Baptist church, giving their testimonies and encouraging the church. Tere spoke at her own church for Disability Awareness Sunday, including talking about the Ministry.



Kathie Pace (left) spoke to the Seniors group at Manukau Baptist, sharing and encouraging them in their long experience of a faith walk, to say God hasn't finished with them yet.

Jean Ferguson (centre), who along with her husband Brian has been involved since 1981 on CFFD committees and as trustees, also spoke, as did Bev Duncan (right) who is blind and was on the very first CFFD committee.

## 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 or 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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