

# The Encourager

The magazine of Elevate Christian Disability Trust

Issue. 175 | November 2022



# Contents



**4** An experience I will never forget

**6** Stronger together

**8** Reflections on Prayer

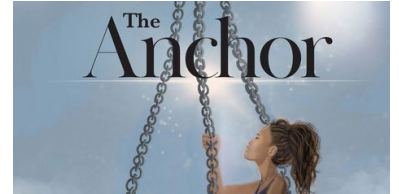
**9** Kevin Park's Communication Ministry

**10**



Volunteer Spotlight

**11**



The Anchor

## Welcome



When I sat down to write for this issue of The Encourager, I spent some time reflecting on this year. Our National Camp theme of 'Stronger Together' really sums up the year for us as a ministry but also for me personally.

My husband and I had our first child in July. She is an absolute blessing! At the same time, in those first weeks it felt like I was in a fog. I am so very grateful for the support of my family and close friends during that time.

My husband and I would have survived without the support, as many parents do, but we were definitely stronger with it!

This year has also brought some challenges for us as a ministry. We are still praying for the right person to fill administrative and finance roles at our National Support Office. I also took maternity leave and although I have kept in touch with the team I am not back at work until January. This means the team are covering tasks that they normally wouldn't have to. Some have taken on more tasks and responsibility than others, but it is only together that they are achieving what needs to be done.

In this issue of The Encourager our articles build on this theme of 'Stronger Together'. We were blessed to have Rev Timothy Lee as our main speaker for National Camp and Ps Geoff Wiklund, Ps Bruce McDonald and Di Willis as our workshop speakers. We have included an outline of the messages in this issue and have made the recordings available to you on our website. I would encourage you to watch or listen to them if you have access to the internet.

As you read the articles, I hope you are inspired to consider not only your part of the 'together' but also how you allow others to be part of being 'Stronger Together' - within our local communities, our workplaces or schools, our families, and the church.

**Noho ora mai,**

**Kirsty Armitage | National Director**

**Have you been encouraged or impacted by one of our articles? We would love to hear from you!**

**Email us at [encourager@elevatedcdt.org.nz](mailto:encourager@elevatedcdt.org.nz)**

**Phone us on 09 636 4763**



**Sign Up to our E-Newsletter**

If you would like to sign up to receive our monthly E-newsletter you can do so by scanning the QR code or by contacting us at the office.





## God Calls Us to Work Together

In Nehemiah we see that God always keeps his promises. Nehemiah prayed trusting that God wanted the walls rebuilt.

Nehemiah chapter three onwards tells us that the people worked next to each other. Cooperating and working as a team. Some couldn't do the building as they weren't physically able. I know I would have problems building the wall! Everyone was able to do their part. Some were able to contribute money or equipment. I guess the women would have been feeding the workers, so their energy levels were maintained.

This phrase comes up all the time. "Next to". Were they all best friends? Probably not, but they were happy to be next to each other because the job was more important than how they felt about each other. We don't always get on well with people we're working with, but our common goal is more important.

If you'd asked a builder on the north side of the wall what

he was doing it would be the same answer as the builder on the south side. *"We are building the wall of Jerusalem so God's people can come and worship safely and His purpose can be carried out."*

So, how did the wall get built? They did it by working together. Different people had different jobs to do. The priests or leaders could have been working with the builders. And the goldsmiths and the gate keepers could have been like security guards keeping an eye on everything. They needed each other to get the job done.

Good things happen when we work together. We get more work done. For instance, one person painting the drop-in centre would take so much longer than 12 people. Different skills are used and we learn new things. Someone may know how to paint the edges or show me how to put masking tape around the windows.

It's more fun to work together. We can laugh, sing, chat and meet new friends. Finally, when the job is done, we can enjoy each other's company around a meal and praise God together for a job well done.

So, the young, the middle aged and older people can use what they have for God. *1 Corinthians 12:12 tells us that "just as a body though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body. So, it is with Christ" (NIV). Verse 18 says "But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be."*

The body of Christ is a group of people working together but we are all different with unique skills and gifts. That doesn't make you less or more important than someone else, just different.

Just as each person had a part to play in building the wall, we have a part to play in building God's Kingdom here on earth.

Use your gifts and skills for God. And be ready to tell people about Jesus and what he's done for you. We are a team serving the Lord together. What part can you play in serving God? Let us all pray and ask God to show us what we can do to build His kingdom, for God calls us to work together.

**By Jan Bridgeman**



*Blair Woolley and Viti Dranica*

## ***An experience I will never forget***

In July this year I went on a ministry trip to Fiji, which had a profound effect on me. Pastor James and Viv Anson from Faith-Pointe Church in Auckland led this amazing mission alongside Atawhai Morgan and myself. During our stay we were hosted by Pastors Samu & Radini Susana who set up FaithPointe South Pacific in Nadi a number of years ago.

We travelled to Vatulele Island, where there was a Sevens rugby tournament in which our planted church had a team playing. There were no shops or resorts on the island, so we were billeted in the village community. No mobile coverage or WIFI was available to us while we were there, and so we had a truly unique “village experience”. There were only five foreigners on the island, ourselves and a lady from Australia who was helping to sponsor a village team from the mainland. It was an interesting experience, to say the least. They had a generator for the village that started at 6 pm and shut down at 1 am.

During our stay, we ministered to people at night, visited different village huts with our team, played worship songs, prayed and

sought healing for many. During this time, I met Viti Dranica, a 65 year old, born again Christian lady, who shared her story with us. She had been unable to walk for five years due to knee issues. Living with her was a 13-year-old named Saimoni, who she had looked after since her sister died giving birth to him. My first impression was that I could see “the joy of the Lord” all over her. She was “shining” with Gods glory.

She had a powerful passion for all things about God. We had many conversations over the days I spent on Vatulele and often prayed together.

We visited her house one evening with the ministry team, and many tears were shed as we worshipped and prayed together. Viti had a profound impact on me. The way she prayed and the joy she possessed was truly amazing. Pastor Samu told me she was a prayer warrior and an encourager to people who are lay preachers in the Village Church. She was actively involved in sharing the gospel and had a real passion for praying for people within the village community.





“  
...My first  
impression was  
that I could see  
“the joy of the  
Lord” all over  
her  
”

*Pastors Samu & Radini Susana*

Viti had minimal furniture in her hut as she could not use it. She moved around the house crawling or sliding on the floor, which genuinely humbled me. She was unable to leave her hut due to her mobility issues. While on the island there were a number of large formal get togethers, and each time as I made my way to them I saw her dressed up and sitting in her doorway so she could take part in the activities and worship from afar. It broke my heart.

Pastor's Samu & Radini Susana (from Vatulele originally) set her up to make tapa. Bark cloth, or tapa, is not a woven material but is made from bark that has been softened through soaking and beating. The inner bark is taken from several types of trees or shrubs, often mulberry and fig, and designs are applied with paints and vegetable dyes of light brown, red, and black. Viti has a floor bench and the tools she needs to beat the pulp into cloth within the confines of her home. This allows her access to work at her own pace.

The tapa is regularly collected and put on a ferry back to the mainland, where Pastors Samu & Radini Susana pick it up and bring it back to Nadi. It is sold online and makes its way to all over the world. This allows Viti (along with others on the island) to provide for herself and her sister's orphaned son who she has looked after since he was born.



*Tapa cloth made by Viti*

I hope to return to Fiji one day for further mission work. I would love to reconnect with Viti.

She was a genuinely inspiring soul; utilising her talents to make a living for herself and her nephew. In addition, she reached out to others to make a real difference for the glory of God. What a great example she is setting.

### ***By Blair Woolley***

*Blair Woolley has been volunteering for Elevate for 10 years and is an Auckland CFFD committee member. He would like to acknowledge his daughter Nadine Rogers, who took time out from her busy job as a journalist, to write this article together.*



## Stronger together

***Keynote speaker of National Camp Online 2022, Reverend Timothy Lee spoke about Nehemiah and people rebuilding the city walls and gates of Jerusalem. This is an edited summary of his presentation.***

God's people had spent time in captivity with the Babylonians. It was about 100 years before they were allowed to return to Judah, their homeland. The temple had been rebuilt, but Jerusalem was unsafe without a city wall around it.

How could God's people be a strong nation again? How could they reclaim their city and re-establish their spiritual roots? They needed someone close to God's heart who could lead them well. Enter Nehemiah.

### **We are stronger together because of our concern for one another**

Nehemiah was working in government for the King of Persia. A visitor told him, "The survivors who escaped captivity are in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been destroyed by fire."

When Nehemiah heard this, he mourned for days. He prayed and fasted for God's people. His heart was stirred out of empathy for them.

We can show the same empathy by thinking of each other before we meet again in camp next year. Maybe there are some people we can pray for especially. We can send a text, an email, or a card to others we normally meet at camp. By helping one person you may not change the world, but you will change the world for them.

### **We are stronger together because of the different gifts God gives us**

God gives gifts to us out of His grace toward us. He likes it that we are all different. It's like pieces of a puzzle—they are not all the same but are all needed to form this wonderful picture.

There were approximately 42 groups and individuals working hard, side by side, to rebuild the city walls and gates. They included priests, tradesmen, tribes people, temple servants, goldsmiths and even perfumers! All these people were important.

Lots of people are needed to make camp happen: planners, kitchen servers, small group prayers, cabin buddies, leaders, teachers and sound system people. And all of us are needed to sing and share stories, and to laugh and cry together.

We are all skilled differently in life. Our differences reflect something of God's creativity. We are all important and we are made stronger together.

### **We are stronger together when facing the challenges of life**

Opposition grew as Nehemiah continued to rebuild the wall and city gates. There were lots of enemies and they were just over the other side of the wall. Consequently, as the people worked away, they could hear their enemies accusing them.

***"We are all skilled differently in life. Our differences reflect something of God's creativity"***

The enemies' words became discouraging. Nehemiah encouraged people by praying for them. He said, "Hear us, O God, for we are despised. Lord, turn their insults back on their heads." Nehemiah 4:4 (NIV). He helped to shift the people's focus.

God thwarted the enemies' plans. His people rebuilt the wall and the city gates in 52 days! It was an impossible task, but it was made possible with God and with all the people working together.

We are all vulnerable to attack in life. People's words hurt us. Worry robs us of life. Tragedy and sickness grieve us. We become depressed and lonely. We need people to pray for us and stand with us, side by side, to give us courage to carry on in life.

### **We are stronger together when we fight together using the tools God provides**

Life is like a spiritual battle, but God provides us with tools and armour: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, shoes for the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit. Prayer unites us. The Spirit helps us, guides, leads and equips us. Side by side, we can change the world with the message of God's love. Will you join me in building God's Kingdom, together? We are strong in His sight.



***You can watch Rev Lee's full presentation at -***

***[elevatecdtcamp.org.nz/camp-messages/](http://elevatecdtcamp.org.nz/camp-messages/)***



**STRONGER**



# Reflections on Prayer

***This is a written summary of a workshop about prayer by Di Willis. The workshop was part of Elevate National Camp Online 2022.***

Di says she is not an intercessor, nor an expert on the subject of prayer. Nevertheless, she loves talking to God and hearing His voice. There are so many different ways of praying. For example in churches Christians can use written prayers, set prayers, memorized prayers, or they can just let God lead them.

The Bible has many examples of prayers which we can use as a basis for our own. There are so many ways in which to speak with God, including Spirit inspired ones as we speak in tongues.

Di has a little teddy bear which appears to be in a praying position. These are called Prayer Bears, and they encourage people to seek divine guidance from the Lord as they pray. The Prayer Bears also remind people that they don't need to pray out loud because they can pray quietly in the Spirit.

When God speaks to Di she hears a still small voice, and the following scriptures encourage her:

- 1 Kings 19:12 "And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice."
- Matthew 7:7 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you"

Di loves to model Jesus and uses Him as an example. Jesus would be walking along the road and when He would see someone who was ,say blind, He would stop and pray.

## **Di's story:**

As a child Di grew up in the days of World War II, and she was given a teddy bear named Timmy. When she came to New Zealand she became a Christian and then got married, she brought Timmy with her. Di heard of a family that had no teddies or dolls, and the Lord spoke to her and said, "Give your teddy bear to this family." As much as Di loved Timmy, she freely gifted her childhood friend.

Di was also given many beautiful china dolls from a friend's mother who had passed away,



and once again, the Lord spoke to her and instructed her to gift them to people whom He had handpicked to receive them.

## **Whom do we pray for?**

- Pray for friends
- Pray for family
- Pray for neighbours
- Pray for anyone that needs prayer
- Pray for salvation for others
- Pray for people's needs (healing and comfort)
- Pray for the sick people who are having operations

God spoke to Di and said situations can be like a jigsaw puzzle, and so we need to take life one day at a time. Di is a **SPONTANEOUS** prayer.

- S** - Pray for someone who is sick.
- P** - Provision.
- O** - Operation. If someone who is going through an operation pray for them.
- N** - Need. Someone is in need.
- T** - Thanking God. This is so important.
- A** - Expect prayers to be Answered. And thank Him for Answers.
- N** - When praying for someone name the person.
- E** - Exams. Ask God to give knowledge and focus to people sitting exams.
- O** - Pray Over your current situation.
- U** - Pray for Your own needs.
- S** - Pray for your Studies including God's Word.

Be confident that God will show us what to pray for, and then remember to end in the Name of Jesus because we are not asking God in our own strength, we are praying in HIS strength. Amen!



You can watch Di Willis' full workshop at  
[elevatedtcamp.org.nz/camp-messages/](https://elevatedtcamp.org.nz/camp-messages/)



# Kevin Park's Communication Ministry



Although we know God only wants what is best for us, have you ever been surprised by His work and plan?

I became a Christian in 2011 and have understood my relationship with God well. However, God and His work are still my constant pursuit. His knowledge even cannot compare with ours. Therefore, I have been surprised by God's work in me and His plan for my life.

God's prompting me to be a Christian writer started when I read online devotionals for self-interest. One of my friends used to send online devotionals to those interested in reading them by email. Reading devotionals motivated me to write devotionals to encourage others spiritually. At first, I thought writing devotionals would become my hobby.

However, I noticed promptings of the Holy Spirit each time I wrote devotionals for others. Due to this, I realised becoming a Christian writer has been God's call on my life. Until I became a student at Carey Baptist College, I think I wrote more than 400 devotionals. Then, I became a Press Service International columnist. Since I didn't have time to write both a devotional and an article because of my studies at Carey Baptist College, I had to quit one. Although I love my writing ministries, I stopped writing devotionals.

I had written devotionals for over five years, so I thought it was an appropriate time to leave my ministry of devotional writing. I wanted to develop new writing styles as I desire to write Christian books in future.

Since I have a speech impediment, my writing ministry motivated me to write testimonies of my life with God and share these with churches by playing these through the 'Text to Speech'

application on my iPad. This led me to become a testimony speaker at Waiheke Island Baptist Church.

As a testimony speaker, I aim to link testimonies with the following sermons. Although I now share testimonies of mine related to the church themes at Waiheke Island Baptist, I long to share testimonies of the church theme with other churches as well.

I am also a YouVersion Bible plan leader. As an YouVersion Bible plan leader, I make a space for Waiheke Island Baptist Church community to do life and faith together through Bible plans in YouVersion Bible application. YouVersion allows people to discuss Bible plans together through the 'Talk it Over' section of the Bible plans.

**God's prompting me to be a Christian writer started when I read online devotionals for self-interest...**

Sharing theological knowledge with stories probably is one of the most effective ways to disciple one another in God's Word. Jesus used parables to connect His disciples with the knowledge of God's Kingdom.

Overall, my passion for writing and sharing my testimonies is founded on the good news of Jesus Christ. We experience spiritual death because of our ignorance of the Creator and Sovereign God. However, Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross on behalf of us and rose three days later. Thus, we have been able to surrender our old lives and have a newness of life in Christ.

Therefore, I desire everyone to realise how marvellous the good news of Christ is so that everyone can worship the Lord Jesus Christ in complete unity. If this happens, there would be no more quarrelling, crying, mourning and pain. Instead, there would be an everlasting peace of God in full effect of the message of reconciliation.

**By Kevin Park**

*Kevin Park is studying at Carey Baptist College and finds that Christian-writing is God's calling on his life. He writes articles for Press Service International and he lives with Cerebral Palsy.*

# Volunteer Spotlight

## Dave Palmer

Over 12 years ago Dave Palmer became the chairperson of Christchurch CFFD. Six years prior, in 2004, his friend Bruce Catherall, chairperson at the time, invited him to CFFD Christchurch camp at Woodend. Dave was going to be there for only two hours but stayed for five.

"I enjoyed what I saw!" Dave said about that afternoon at camp.

He got to know people during an afternoon session and enjoyed the Israeli dance in the evening. In the short space of time he attended, Dave "was very much welcomed there and was impressed enough to think this would be a good group to be part of."

When Dave's involvement in the children's ministry at his church came to an end, his next venture became volunteering for CFFD.

"I had very little clue about disability, and didn't know much about CFFD, but I had a decent car and thought I could offer transport to meetings and activities, and maybe not much else," he says.

Dave quickly learnt he could offer more! He became the guitarist on the worship team. Then he was asked to join the CFFD Christchurch committee. Eventually, Dave began organising and leading meetings. His reason for stepping up was "not because of ability but because I had the enthusiasm to give it a go, and I'm definitely the most extroverted."

Dave says that through volunteering for CFFD, "I've learnt what I'm good at and what others are better than me at. I do my part, others do theirs, and we're a great team. I've found that it's best I relate to everyone there in the way of the Golden Rule. I want to treat everyone with the same respect and dignity that I want for myself. What that means is I talk and interact with people in a way that I would want for myself, no matter their abilities or disabilities."

Dave has Asperger's Syndrome, an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD),



and he experiences what is familiar to many in the disability community.

"I know how it feels to be treated differently or a bit 'lesser'... and I find that horrible. But I have to say it's been a joy to have been treated with complete respect by everyone in Elevate/CFFD and I trust I've done the same. I suppose if there is one thing that I've learned it's that 'disability' simply means someone may need a bit of help with tasks others can do for themselves – but only if they ask for help!"

Dave has been happy being the chairperson. He appreciates the encouragement from the committee and people of Christchurch CFFD. He listens to the advice of wise members of the committee and always strives to reach a consensus. Therefore, it is important to Dave that the committee discuss everything fully "because if one person disagreed with something, they could be the one who is right."

He speaks highly of his committee members as being "people with brilliant and differing abilities and giftings. They are huge on encouragement and there have been no arguments or personality challenges in all my time in the chair. Probably if there is one thing I bring in leadership it's that I don't try to do too much. We stick pretty much to the core of why we're there, which is prayer and worship...I've learnt from this group, that's what they want."

Dave loves volunteering for CFFD and says, "unless it's clearly time to move on, I'm very much still here."



# **The Anchor**

## **Jenny Hook's poetry book**

If you meet someone on the streets of Auckland handing out free poetry books, it is a good chance that you have met Jenny Hook. The once long-serving volunteer at the Drop-In Centre in Onehunga (2004-2017), the CFFD Auckland Camp and National Camp has published her first book, *The Anchor*.

"God will do the distribution. I just had 250 copies printed, and I hand them out. Some copies even went overseas. God will lead who will receive a copy, as it is His book. My poems are a way to communicate the gospel message," says Jenny, who currently volunteers at Pinehill Primary School and leads a Friday morning Bible study group.

Sometimes it does take a bit longer for received gifts to become public for everyone to see. Jenny wrote poems in the nineties, but only published them this year. She talks about her book with a smile, but the content of her poems is deep and personal. The writing started when Jenny was

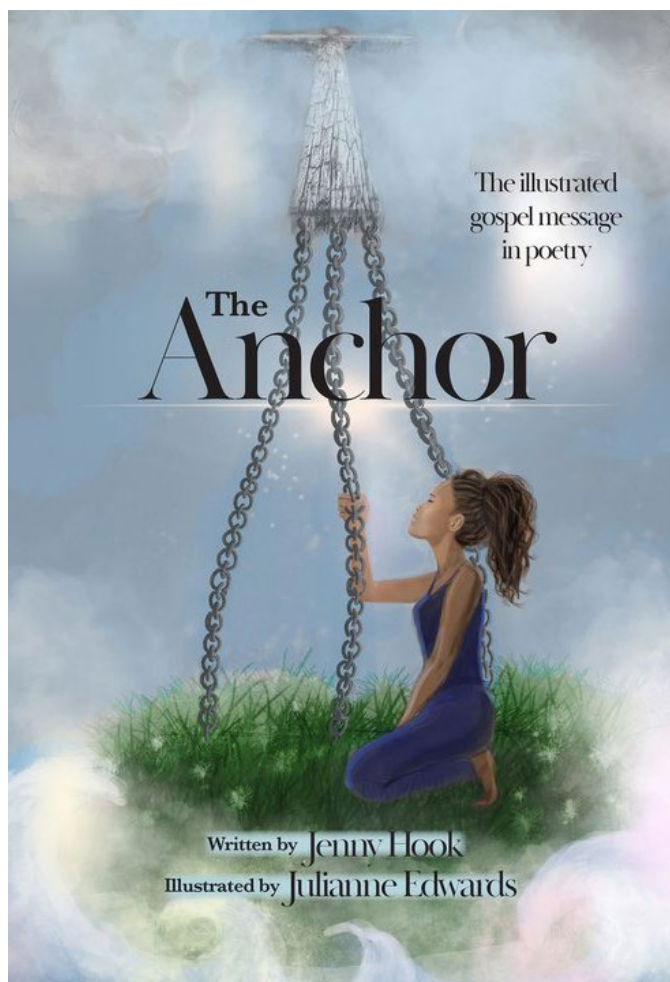
a 21-year-old student at Lifeway College in Snells Beach and was encouraged to use her writing skills.

"I had a difficult time before. I was bullied at school. I was lonely and withdrawn and felt sorry for myself. Poetry gave me the option to reflect on those feelings and bring it back to God. A blank page is a great way to start talking with God. I always loved writing, encouraged perhaps by my Dad who wrote little, funny poems. Being at Bible school was my first time away from home, so my poems helped me to live my life outside the comforts of home.

"My favourite poem in the book is 'The Anchor'. That poem is about eternal life, which is a great thought for anyone in a miserable position. Jesus is my anchor. The harder life was, the more reason to hold on to Jesus. But remember, the poems were written when I was that person. I am better now. I added a new poem, 'The Exchange', to reflect that."

### **By Onne Hiemstra**

*Onne Hiemstra used to be Elevate's accounts person until he moved to Cambridge, Waikato. Onne volunteers at Waikato CFFD events and serves on the National Camp committee. He has a great sense of humour and always keen for a chat or to provide a helping hand.*



## **A chance to win!**

Do you want a free copy of *The Anchor*? Send us a little story about how Elevate has impacted you, whether through one of our groups, camps or *The Encourager* magazine. Your story can be a few lines or a whole page; either way, you'll go into the draw to win a copy of Jenny Hook's poetry book! Please send your story in a Word document or in the body of your email to [encourager@elevate.org.nz](mailto:encourager@elevate.org.nz).

# Do You Want to Hear Some Good News?

**God loves you dearly!** John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life."

**He offers you salvation from the wrong things you have done!** Ephesians 2:8 "God saved you through faith as an act of kindness. You had nothing to do with it. Being saved is a gift from God."

**You can belong to His family and have a fresh start!** 2 Corinthians 5:17 "Anyone who belongs to Christ is a new person. The past is forgotten, and everything is new."

**God wants you to have hope!** Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

*If you would like to become a Christian (a follower of Christ) you could pray something like the following. Lord, I admit that I have done things that are wrong. Thank you that you have died to take away all my sins. Please forgive me. I receive your forgiveness now. I want to live for you, and live life with you, every day. Thank you for loving me. I receive your love. Amen*

**Did you pray this prayer?** We would love to connect with you and help you find a church to connect with. Feel free to email us at [prayer@elevate.org.nz](mailto:prayer@elevate.org.nz) or phone us on **09 636 4763**.

## 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

173 Mt Smart Road, Onehunga, Auckland • PO Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland, 1643

Ph: +64 9 636 4763 • Email: [info@elevatecdt.org.nz](mailto:info@elevatecdt.org.nz) • Website: [www.elevatecdt.org.nz](http://www.elevatecdt.org.nz)

