



In the Chair



DCF
Connect
Day



Goodbyes
and New
Beginnings



Visit to
Haiti



Victorious in Uganda

by **Tim Wood**

Our two-week trip was drawing to an end as our translator, Pastor Joseph, declared, "James has overcome many things, so I shall give him a Ugandan nickname meaning 'Victorious'".

James was the young role model on our summer mission to Uganda. Integr8 was there to inspire a spirit of inclusion within communities. One teacher couldn't get over the fact that James was only 16, had learning disabilities and autism, and had come all the way from north-east England to Africa. She asked him, "How could you possibly manage that?" James replied, "I don't know, I guess I'm adventurous". She laughed, but was very impressed. She acknowledged, "adventurous and determined, a very determined young man".

James was on the trip to, in his own words, "encourage the children, teachers and leaders" (as well as being the team photographer). After speaking to the room of delegates about his life experiences, one person asked if James saw himself as disabled. James spontaneously replied, 'half disabled, half clever'!

As James' nickname reveals, he coped very well with all the new experiences in the trip, such as the heat, culture, his script being edited and also last-minute changes challenging his need for consistency and order. James reflected, 'I've coped really well on this trip... and it might have something to do with the man upstairs'.

God really did help him cope by his grace and to cope better than any of us expected. James truly was 'victorious'. Find out more about the trip at www.youth.throughtheroof.org



by Dr. Mike Townsend

Chairman of Trustees

I have the honour of being your new chair. What does that mean? I looked the word up in my dictionary: "A place where someone sits alone".

That sounds isolated! My friend Wendy says she is usually left sitting alone in her wheelchair. Social isolation is a big issue for disabled people - as if there's an invisible barrier. I have been reminding myself of our values. One of TTR's values is "relationship". We recognise that we are dependent on God and interdependent upon one another. Interdependence is in the fabric of Christianity. God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three persons in one. Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs (Mark 6:7). Why? "The Lord God said, 'it is not good for the man to be alone'" (Genesis 2:18).

Interdependence means that all of us, not just disabled people, depend on each other. We at Through the Roof value each other--recognising our gifts and needs. My chair is not by itself. It is with you all.



John Naudé at the Enabling Church conference

"Made in the Image of God"

Through the Roof and partners of the Churches for All network recently organised the Enabling Church: Disability, Wholeness and Christian Theology conference with Premier Radio.

The Right Revd Michael Langrish, Bishop of Exeter, gave the opening address and 400 delegates heard that, "If every one of us is imprinted with the image of God, there's only one label that ought to be pinned on us and that is 'Made in the image of God.' God is love and looks into each and every person that He has made." Author and lecturer, Roy McCloughry, said that human beings were interdependent by design: "We're people in community, ... in relationship, and not individuals. We need one another, and that is part ... of what it means to be God's original intended human beings, part of creation, that we are interdependent."

Audio and text content from the conference can be found via our website www.throughtheroof.org



Through the roof

Contact Details

Great Britain Office:

PO Box 353,
EPSOM, KT18 5WS

Phone:

01372 749955

Email:

info@throughtheroof.org

Web:

www.throughtheroof.org

Northern Ireland Contact:

Email:

ni@throughtheroof.org



New Vital Link

Now you've got this far, you may have noticed that Vital Link has a new full-colour look. Thanks to the marvellous work of PDC Kingston and modern printing technologies, the cost is very similar to previous two-colour versions. We hope you enjoy it! We also continue to produce audio, Braille, email and large print alternative versions. Please contact us if those would be useful for you.



Our Mission

To make the Christian message accessible to all people affected by disability.

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Tenerife 2011

DCF plan another visit to Tenerife in May 2011, and there are only a few places available. We still need two female helpers for this two week holiday in the sun. Cost will be subsidised and all the helpers work together as a team. Please ring Jenny on 01372 737046 for more information or an application form.

[Seeing the sights in Tenerife 2010](#)

The Connect Day

A day together for all linked with Disabled Christians Fellowship

by Jenny Edwards



Discussions abounded at the Connect Day

King's Church, Epsom was the venue for a lovely day of fun, laughter and chat for everyone who gathered on this very first 'Connect Day'.

The sun shone as 30 people from various areas of DCF shared a day of ministry together. We welcomed Dr Phil and Mrs Anne Moore who took us through the seasons of life, exploring the implications of likening the weather and seasons to our own lives and how we feel about ourselves during the tough times. It was challenging and also encouraging, giving us much to think and pray about afterwards. After a wonderful buffet lunch we explained the purpose and reasoning behind the Sharon Award (presented 'for demonstrating the attributes of cheerfulness, courage and faith in God for which we remember Sharon Key'). We had hoped to be able to present the award at this event, but the recipient, Janet Wade, was in hospital at the time – she has since received the award.

Group discussions then followed, exploring subjects such as the future of DCF and ideas for more events on similar lines. If the chatter was anything to go by, much ground was covered! Throughout the day items were put up for a 'silent auction' as well as a 'guess the weight of the cake' competition and other fund raising stalls. It was a good day, great fun and raised a small amount for the DCF Holiday Fund.

After a cup of tea and a cake we said our goodbyes, all of us agreeing that it was good to have been there. We look forward to seeing many other members at the next Connect Day in 2011.



Everyone together at Dalesdown

TTR's Family Holiday 2011

There are still a few rooms available for our next holiday for families with an autistic child: 12 – 15 April 2011 at Dalesdown centre, near Horsham in Sussex. We are also always on the lookout for more helpers to join the team. If you are interested, please contact Margaret at the TTR office: Margaret@throughtheroof.org or her direct line: **01372 737045**.

Christmas Gifts of Possibility

Through the Roof aren't producing Christmas Cards this year, but our 'Gifts of Possibility' scheme is still running – with a special Christmas themed card! Please consider giving a gift that helps make a difference to the lives of disabled people - you will receive a colour printed card with an original TTR design to send to a gift recipient. The wording inside the card will say: 'Christmas Greetings. This card is to let you know that disabled people have been given the gift of possibility on your behalf'. There will also be space for you to add your own personal message. You can order the 'Gift of Possibility' from our online shop at www.throughtheroof.org, or by contacting the office.





Life is full of goodbyes and new beginnings

As I celebrate my 66 birthday in January I have decided it would be a good time for me to say goodbye to my role as Chief Executive of Through the Roof. I have been working with the charity since 2002 and have felt privileged to work with a fantastic team of people, all committed to working alongside disabled people as they reach their full potential in every sphere of life.

There has been laughter and tears. We have seen God's hand move in many miraculous ways guiding the work and I step aside from the leadership role knowing that the charity is in a very healthy position.

by **Jacky Oliver, CEO**

I am delighted to announce that our Development Manager Tim Wood is taking on the role of Chief Executive from February. I have every confidence in his heart for God and his vision to take Through the Roof forward.

The Board has requested that I be retained as a non-executive director in a part-time capacity to provide some mentoring for Tim, so I will still be involved on the sideline for a period of time.

I believe this will be a new exciting phase for the charity with a younger leadership to move forward to the future God-given direction.

Jenny's Letter

by **Jenny Edwards**

Jenny chats with DCF folks at the Connect Day



As I look back on the Connect day, not only am I pleased that it was a success, I am also aware that throughout this day all of us were in agreement on many of the issues, thoughts and ideas that were discussed together. This is so important as friction takes us nowhere and does not glorify our Saviour at all. I often think of the people we read about in Acts who, after coming to know the Saviour, shared everything and were all in 'one accord'. They were in full agreement over all

things, they shared all including their wages and possessions, and from this unity many others were brought into the Kingdom. What a lesson for us to learn today, to be working together in full agreement over all things so as to enlarge God's Kingdom; perhaps each of us needs to take this as a personal challenge and do our bit towards unity of God's Church.

The Lausanne Conference by Jacky Oliver



Over four thousand Christians from every nation all worshipping God, telling their stories, studying the bible, bringing their cultural perspectives, a colourful pageant and celebration of the church on the move. This was my experience of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town. Focused on the theme of 'God in Christ reconciling the world to himself' (2Cor 5:9).

The Lausanne movement was begun by Billy Graham and John Stott with a congress every ten years. It was a great privilege to be invited to the 2010 event. I was there to link with others in disability ministry, promote inclusion of disabled people in churches and learn about the work of God in other nations. It was

inspirational – I met new friends, heard stories of God at work across the world, enjoyed presentations and expressions of multicultural worship. It was disappointing there was little focus on disabled people. The one session provided was in a tiered lecture theatre! However, this session, led by Dr Steve Bundy from Joni and Friends provided a great opportunity to connect globally with others who cared about this issue and I know we will be stronger working together.

Much was said about the Holistic Gospel -- showing love to others as well as proclaiming truth. I pray that Through the Roof will continue to play its part in reaching 'All the people in all the world with all the Gospel'.



Joni Eareckson Tada

Joni Eareckson Tada is receiving treatment for breast cancer. Please do pray for her and read more details on her inspiring blog online at <http://www.joniandfriends.org/jonis-corner/>. Here's a recent

extract... 'It's amazing how often I've tried to find "meaning" in tough times (like the one I'm going through). I've got to remind myself that suffering has no meaning in itself. On its own, it is a frustrating burden. But given the context of relationship, suffering has meaning – I see

that with Ken as he tends to my needs; with my get-up girls; with the team at Joni and Friends, and with friends like you who pass on inspiring stories, scriptures and hymns! But nowhere does the meaning in our suffering become clearer than in an intimate relationship with Jesus. There's nothing absurd, from his point of view, about a relationship with hurting humans... It's then when my suffering makes sense. Complete sense.'

Get in touch if you'd like to sign up to our weekly prayer e-mail and follow Joni's progress through that.

"...shine like stars in the universe..." (Philippians 2 v 15)

by **Simon Nicholson**,
TTR Board Member

Shine 2010 was a full-on Christian adventure holiday for adults in their 20s and 30s, with and without physical disabilities. Rumours that a guest had a spare 10 minutes proved utterly unfounded as 36 hosts and guests canoed, caved, rock-climbed, abseiled, dodged raindrops and zip-wired on days out in the Lake District, the Yorkshire Dales, and at the Bendrigg activity centre.

The spiritual rhythm started with a short daily reflection on Discipleship: how and why we can live as Jesus' disciples. Each evening we responded to the topic further. One of the holiday's aims was to push boundaries to see more of what can be achieved with God. As two attendees commented...

"...Discovering joy in shared new experiences, seeing first the disability and discovering the capability, the determination, skills and insight and then seeing the person fearfully and wonderfully made in God's image... It has been an immense privilege. This is what the Kingdom of God looks like - living in community - valuing, encouraging, helping".

"I have learnt such a lot and really feel like I have strengthened my faith. It was really inspiring to be around so many passionate, devoted young and older Christians."

Shine 2011 will be running from 22-26 April - please contact Simon and Sarah Nicholson on **0114-2669062**, or on the Facebook Group Shine 2011 to learn more.

(Shine is run in partnership between Scripture Union and Through the Roof).



Visit to Haiti

by Derek Watts and Glenda Pike



Glenda fixing a chair

So many people have given to our Haiti fund – we've been in contact with people over there and the good news is that we have now started working into the country. Here is our first visit and report...

Wheels for the World was invited by Dr June Hanks, Advantage Programme, Les Cayes, to visit and see if there was a way we could help in the work her team were undertaking. They had recently come under Medical Teams International who co-ordinate and help faith based aid agencies.

Although there had been no earthquake damage in Les Cayes, the Advantage Centre is busy issuing wheelchairs, fitting prosthetic limbs and organising rehabilitation for those who had been injured.

The Centre had given out about 200 wheelchairs plus other mobility aids received from Apostolic Christian World Relief and Wheels for the World, USA. The wheelchairs not yet issued were in various states. Over two days we were able to completely empty two stores, put together chairs, seats, list everything and return them tidily. All carried out in temperatures of nearly 100° one day and torrential rain the next!

We visited the Mother Teresa Home in Les Cayes. They care for disabled and sick adults and 98 children, the majority are orphans and severely disabled. We visited just as the children were waking from their afternoon

sleep; it was so sad to see them in their cots with no apparent hope for an improved future. The nuns and carers do an amazing job in very difficult circumstances.

We are planning to set up a wheelchair repair workshop in Les Cayes and Derek (a former rehabilitation engineer with the wheelchair service) who now lives in Chicago, will visit possibly every three months. The Mother Teresa home has many wheelchairs needing repair. We have other help under consideration.

Our return internal flight was cancelled so we returned from Les Cayes on a UN flight, bringing back two earthquake orphans who had been to the clinic for treatment. We were the only passengers! We experienced many problems, all of which were overcome eventually. We were very conscious that many people were praying for us – thank you so much if you were one of those people.



Princess Anne visits the Parkhurst workshop

A Royal Visit

On 1st October HRH Princess Anne and Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight, Major General Martin White visited HMP Parkhurst Wheelchair Workshop. Princess Anne asked Glenda various questions about the work of Wheels for the World. Display boards had been made up showing the work. In all she stayed 20 minutes in the workshop - 10 minutes more than scheduled. In total there were 21 visitors in the workshop - but no prisoners!

Wheels in 2011

In 2011 Wheels plans to visit ... Kampala, Uganda in April, Nakuru, Kenya in June and Ghana in November. We will be providing regular support throughout the year in Haiti. For further details please contact Glenda, Wheels Co-ordinator: glenda@wftw.org.uk

God works in unexpected ways



Team members and a happy recipient

Everything was set for the Wheels trip to Uganda. The wheelchairs had arrived and flights were booked. Then BA went on strike! So many people prayed the trip would go ahead, but the flight was cancelled and we had to rebook – with an extra day in Uganda.

On the extra day, we arrived at the centre to find several people waiting. I saw a young lady with a blanket lying on a mat. My heart sank as I wondered how we would seat her with only bits and pieces left.

The young lady, Anet, is 21. Her mother, Catherine, 60, looks after her. Catherine's other children look out for her, and help comes in for Anet, though helpers keep leaving as Anet is now too big to lift. Two weeks ago, not knowing about Wheels, Catherine felt desperate and put a lot of pressure on a friend to find a wheelchair somewhere.

Anet has Cerebral Palsy. She can't sit up or move except to roll her head. Her mother turns her or props her up with cushions. She has only ever left home to visit hospital.

The family were unknown to the team, but Catherine's brother-in-law lives in England for cancer treatment. Somehow he heard about the distribution and began trying to get Catherine in touch with the team in Uganda.

It was incredible that we found everything we needed to build a chair for Anet. A wheelchair without foot-plates, a tension adjustable back, a blue padded insert that had been rejected as a bad fit for so many others – all of it came together to work! It was as if God had kept the parts for Anet.

Catherine said she was desperate for a chair, to be able to take Anet out, visit friends and to go to church. She said "I was looking at it one way, wanting it and then it came from God's way, and it is so much better".



Uganda 2010 Wheels Team

In Memory of John Wilkinson

by Jenny Edwards

I met John many years ago, when he was part of 'Teens and Twenties' and on a DCF holiday at Meldreth Manor.

His laugh, smile and mischievous nature, not to mention his numerous stories will always remain with me. Even many years later, John remained the same John. I remember him telling me how he once tried to put toothpaste on his toothbrush by holding it between his knees, then his legs went into spasm and the toothpaste went everywhere but on the brush! John was also full of God's love and his capacity for caring for others was unlimited. He loved His Lord so much and I know of many who

were introduced to the Saviour by John, who were influenced by his level of faith and determination to enjoy life to the full.

He will be greatly missed. John led the Lincoln DCF Group for many years, with help from Graham (his long time friend and helper) and others. He leaves a big gap, but John would be the first to say that God is in charge. His presence on the holidays will be remembered by many and we only have to see the happy fellow in the boat on the DCF leaflet to be reminded of his infectious spirit. Much time was spent strapping John into that power boat, and his parting shot to me was "you next"! We loved him, God loves him and we will miss him greatly.



John on the power boat in Samos

Friends of Jesus, Redhill

by Liz Watts

No-one who attended or took part will forget our 'Amazing Grace' event in June. The evening of drama, music and dance raised over £4,000 for Wheels and was the idea of 'Friends of Jesus', our group for adults with learning disabilities here at Holy Trinity Church Redhill.

The event grew from lessons about missionary work, as the group thought about being part of God's worldwide family. Our 18 members (who range in age from 18 to 82, as do our 16 helpers) were interested and moved by Wheels' work and DVDs of distributions in South Africa and Kenya. The idea of helping took root - an event using our abilities and involving our friends.

Everyone shared preparations, rehearsing a specially-written drama of 'The Good Samaritan', and practising



The Friends of Jesus group

prayer dances, (Christian songs interpreted with simple movements). We were encouraged by people's willingness to help. It was a memorable experience of the parts of the body working together, each part being of real value.

We were delighted and surprised by the generosity of a large, friendly audience, including some from other churches, and relatives and friends of the group. It was a real pleasure to have Eileen Sutherland recount the work of Wheels. The money was raised through donations and additional stalls and events put on by members. As a group, we will follow the work of "Wheels" and we will remember to pray for you.

Donations

We attempt to thank personally all donors of over £20, but sometimes it isn't possible to get in contact with every generous giver. Here's a list of those we haven't been able to reach - thank you for your gifts: CAF £2,700 for Wheels; £25 from SS for Wheels; D & SM Grimshaw £130 for Wheels; Anon £40 cash for Wheels; Anon £1,250 for Wheels; I Olafimihan's Charity Choice donation; Donations given in celebration of J Richards 60th Birthday; donations to DCF in memory of John Wilkinson; donations to the work of DCF collected at the Connect day.

Lent Wheelchairs

Early notice! Consider saving £1 a day for the 40 days of Lent, to sponsor a wheelchair. Encourage your church or fellowship group to join in. Collections boxes are available on the TTR website at

<http://www.throughtheroof.org/fundraising-collection-box>

Correction

On page 3 of the last issue of the Vital Link the lady on the right in the Redeemed Church of God picture is actually Pastor Dupe Afolabi not Pastor Kola Bamigbade. We're sorry for any confusion or upset.

Christmas is a time for celebration

...here are a few ways to have fun and raise money too.

Organise a trip to a pantomime or show. Many theatres give discounts for group bookings. You could give the money saved to TTR - it's a great evening out and raises money at the same time.

Organise a dinner party with a difference - start at one house for the starter, move to another for the main course and finish at the final one for the dessert. You could watch the Wheels for the World DVD over coffee and have a raffle.

Make Christmas cards and sell them at coffee mornings, Christmas fairs and to friends and family.

There are many wonderful concerts over Christmas, in local churches, schools etc. and many take retiring collections. Why not suggest to the organisers that they support Through the Roof?

Christmas presents - How about sponsoring a wheelchair for £40 and sending the certificate to a friend? What a wonderful present!

Have fun.

Karen Goodridge, Volunteer Fundraiser for Through the Roof

