

# BREAKING BARRIERS

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## A Preacher's Handicap

I am a minister of 81 years of age. Shortly after I retired, in 1991, I fell upon some hard times. I was diagnosed with an inoperable and untreatable soft tissue sarcoma in my mediastinal area. I was blessed with the experimental services of the University of Michigan, which both treated and removed a huge tumor. In the process I received such a large amount of radiation that it impinged on adjacent organs. I eventually began to suffer vocal cord collapse, making a tracheotomy necessary in 1994. This resulted in a string of problems and many more surgeries with the result that I have lost most of my voice. Consequently I no longer am able to preach. I did preach once, on the 45th anniversary of my ordination, with a good microphone, but with difficulty. It was a great and wonderful occasion, but it was my last sermon. And I, who once sang the bass in the Calvin Seminary Quartet, haven't sung a note in a dozen years.

For someone who found preaching a great challenge, this was and is a rather distressing problem. I was never one to say how much I enjoyed preaching. It is much too serious a calling to use the term *enjoy*. But meeting the challenge of proclaiming the gospel gave me tremendous satisfaction. There could be no greater calling than working to bring God and people together by preaching the Word. And I could no longer deliver the good news. I had to leave it to others.

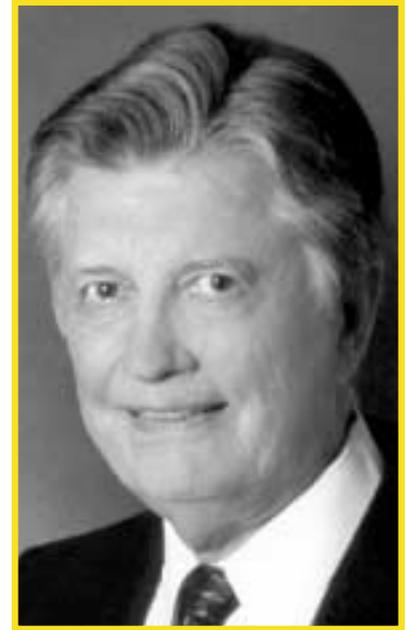
That's not easy, especially when there is so much I would like to preach about in these critical times. So it leaves me wondering what I might

still be able to do if I had my voice. I've been asked how I am able to cope with the loss of so vital a ministry. The ultimate answer is that the Lord has maintained me in the conviction that my life is in his hands for good, and that lays the foundation for living, today and tomorrow. But there are other aspects to coping.

First, I had to put things into proper perspective. When I was told my cancer was inoperable and untreatable I was basically given a death notice. At that point my concern was for life itself. I wasn't wondering whether I might preach again. As that struggle went on I became accustomed to a different way of life, just being happy when I could go to church and hear a good sermon. For months I was not even able to meet in the worshiping community. A struggle for life itself makes one much more appreciative of those things we often take for granted. I really began to count my blessings.

Another aspect of coping lies in the satisfaction of my having been able to preach for over 40 years. I remember the six congregations I served, and my ministry to some vacant churches in my retirement, with real joy. My cup was really quite full when compared with many others. So why shouldn't I rest in the reality of my limitations?

Finally, I found I still could have a voice by means of the printed page. I have discovered the reality and rewards of writing as never before. I very likely would not have written much if I had continued serving in a preaching and pastoral way, especially with the ongoing shortage of



*Ty Hofman*

ministers. So I took up a new kind of ministry, that of writing on themes of general edification for those who read my stuff.

I must say that at this point I miss a singing voice most of all. I miss it nearly every day. But I really miss it on Sunday!

*Ty Hofman*

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## From the Director



### Invisible Disability?

Is there such a thing as an invisible disability? Our working definition of a disability is an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Well, major life activities are obviously quite visible, and so are any required limitations. Impairments too are visible in some way or other. The judgment of a professional (such as an M.D.) may be needed to authenticate the fact that some part of the body can not function normally, but the impairment can be objectively established.

Yet there is more to disability than the facts about the impaired body and the limited activity. It is the negative part, the “dis” part, the invisible part. Who can really say with certainty that the impairment in question makes certain activities impossible? Only the person who has the disability can answer that question, and in this way all disabilities are invisible.

Suppose I have a multiple chemical sensitivity. A doctor can verify the changes in my skin or lungs that occur when I am in certain places, and anyone who knows me can check out the restricted activities I follow as a result. But I know that many people will think I am making more of this disability than necessary and that at least some of it is “in my head.”

Many believe the same of those who have other “invisible disabilities,” such as chronic fatigue syndrome, multiple sclerosis, mental illness, or hyperactivity disorder. Some may even think this of people with major visible disabilities. One wheelchair user may be much more cheerful and vigorous than another, so people will wonder whether the second person is not babying himself. Others’ suspicion that those of us who have disabilities are too easy on ourselves adds to our frustration. How can we counter it?

Most people want to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible. This begins already in infancy. It is what accounts for the “terrible twos.” Is there any reason for supposing that people with disabilities should be any different? It is hard enough needing extra help from others.

Letters are welcome in keeping with the purpose of *Breaking Barriers*. They may be edited for style and length.

—Rev. James Vanderlaan

## Caregivers!

Using the following web community address, caregivers can ask and answer questions or make comments that they feel could benefit someone.

[www.caregiver.guidedvision.com](http://www.caregiver.guidedvision.com)

Please try it out and let us know what you think.

—JV

Why would we want to make more of it than we must? No doubt a few of us with disabilities are inclined to baby ourselves—just like some people with able bodies—but there is no reason to suppose the proportion is any different for those with disabilities than those with able bodies.

It comes down to this: Disabilities may be no easier for able-bodied people to look at than for us with disabilities to live with, and we understand that. But that is no excuse for blaming us for being too easy on ourselves or for doubting our strength, patience, and perseverance. In fact, how disabling any disability may be depends more on the attitude of society towards the disability than on the character of the one who has the disability. As Professor Nydam says in his article in this issue, “Disability is in the eye of the beholder.”

If you, an able-bodied person, are convinced that you yourself could not do a job without sight, you probably will not hire me, a blind man—no matter what my resume and references say. If you, an able-bodied merchant, decide it is too expensive to make your store accessible because not enough people in wheelchairs will come in, it is my choice, not yours, that is restricted. Sure, there are laws supporting people with disabilities, but the only way those laws will be enforced is if we who have disabilities go to court, and that is expensive, time-consuming and of uncertain outcome.

We do not mind living with our disabilities, visible or invisible, especially because we have Jesus Christ the Lord with us to fix the goal, to plot the course, and to give support. But we also want the support of the Christian community and the wider society without being told what we can do or how hard we must try. Just take us the way we are, the way we take you.

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## Letters

**A**s always, I enjoyed reading the Spring 2004 issue of *Breaking Barriers*. Two items from that issue have been on my mind a lot, and they are bothersome enough to make me write you.

### 1. The Life and Death of Our Son Edward.

As the parents of a 27-year-old son with autism we are very familiar with events that take place in a family like that. It is probably necessary to read their entire book because the story now makes Edward's parents appear irresponsible. Their precious son, in my opinion, should never have been left alone after what had happened before. I know there are high-, medium-, and low-functioning people with autism. I don't want to make a judgment without knowing all the facts.

### 2. Give Thanks for Julianne.

I would like to believe that if Julianne would have been in that upper room with our Lord and his disciples, he would have shared the meal with her. Our son was confirmed in the Lutheran church and is a member in good standing. Naturally he will never vote during congregational elections, but he will not be denied the elements.

*Arnold H. Spiering  
Fort Wayne, Indiana*



**J**ust finished the Spring 2004 issue and appreciated it very much. Thank you for both the sad and "successful" stories of brothers and sisters with disabilities, and especially for your commitment to the value of each person created in God's image. Your quote from Luke 12 in the context of modern medical ethics was powerful. Keep up the good work.

*Rev. Tim Holwerda  
CRWM Philippines*

**You may now access  
*Breaking Barriers* through  
our website at**

<http://www.crcna.org/crdc/index.htm>



**T**he inclusion of people with disabilities in the body of Christ continues to be of much interest and importance to me. I'm thankful for what the CRC has to offer those with mental and physical handicaps through the Friendship Series Bible studies. My 18-year-old son, Mark, attends a group at the Calvary CRC in Pella, Iowa. I attend with him and also benefit. Pastor Sheldon presents the lesson in a pertinent way. I find my son being attentive even though he isn't able to grasp everything. When we sing "Jesus Loves Me" and "God Is So Good" his face beams and he joins in with some words. This is Mark's testimony.

It's important for members in Christ's church to accept the disabled for who they are. John Milton's sonnet "On His Blindness" comes to mind when I think about involvement of the disabled in the church. He concludes his sonnet with these words:

God doth not need  
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state  
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,  
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;  
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Naturally those who are limited due to a disability may not be able to serve in some capacities in the body of Christ, unlike those who are not faced with these challenges. But this poem made me realize that they also serve if only by "standing and waiting." Serving is not necessarily equated with "doing." Serving can simply be your presence.

I recently learned that John Milton (1608-1674) also penned the metrical verses of Psalm 136. There's something for all of us to glean from his life. His confidence was shaken when, at age 44, he became blind due to writing. His wife died that same year. Four years later he remarried, and his second wife died within 15 months. In these sorrowful years, Milton wrote his greatest works. His daughters rebelled against the drudgery of reading to their father and actually disposed of many of his books. Yet Milton himself made a peace with the world, God, and himself. He had to cling to his faith in the enduring mercies of God, "ever faithful, ever sure" (Ps. 136). Although he was physically blind, John Milton's keen vision has truly stood the test of time.

*Ruth Stevenson  
Pella, Iowa*

## Disability in the Eye of the Beholder

It is often said that “what we see is what we get.” Truth for us takes the form of our perception. In this sense perception *is* reality.

Many people who live with disabilities deal with this every day. They are seen by others as helpless because of their disabilities, as if there is something “wrong” with them. They must deal not only with the challenges and limitations of living in a wheelchair or without hearing or sight, but also with *how they are seen by those with able bodies*.

There are two worlds in every ministry. One is that of the care receiver; this is the world of the person in need—need perhaps even to survive. Without assistance of some form, without a leg brace, or a guide dog, or a ramp off the front porch, their daily living is compromised.

But right here where we who have able bodies size up the needs of those with major disabilities, we may be making things *more* difficult for them because of the way we see them. During a panel discussion at Calvin Seminary in September on the subject of disabilities, several members of the National Council of Churches’ Disabilities Committee made it very clear that their struggles as people with disabilities were not so much

with the physical difficulties they faced each day, but more with “how they were seen” by others.

In short, the world of the caregiver needs to be put under more careful review. Perhaps our eyes are part of the problem in that we see people with disabilities in a discriminatory and biased manner. In this world of ability, of full-bodied life experience, we perceive people with less ability to be less valuable in today’s society or in our churches or even in our families. To whatever degree people are pushed aside, socially and economically marginalized, thought of as less because of a given disability, they experience the double sting of living with less-than-perfect bodies and *being seen* as different and less because of those bodies.

So there may be a disability in the eye of the beholder. That shortcoming may have to do with our own deeply defended impulses to “see” another person as less. I will never forget one Denver mother’s pain some years ago as she told me the story of her daughter’s introduction to a new pastor in her church. Her daughter has spina bifida. The minister was caught up in the after-service morning crowd when this mother pointed him in her daughter’s direction. As

this young lady sat in her wheelchair awaiting his greeting, the minister turned toward her, gave her a brief cursory glance with a “hi,” and went on quickly to talk with others. Neither mother nor daughter ever forgot.

In the way this pastor sized up the need of the moment he showed his cards as a pastor with an “eye of the beholder disability.” He could not “see” this daughter of his congregation; he only saw the person in a wheelchair. He could not make eye contact with the person there; he could only see the chair. The person remained invisible, out of his pastoral sight.

It is no easy thing to “see” a person in true light. This takes time and energy as well as attitude. All three need to be in place in pastoral ministry to persons with disabilities, otherwise ministry falls short. And attitude is the most difficult to change. We may manage *our* anxiety about another’s disability by saying a short “hello” and looking away toward others in the crowd, but in so doing we betray our Christian calling to *be* the body of Christ together.

Jesus spent so much of his ministry bringing spiritual healing as well as physical cure to those in his community who suffered with a variety of disabilities. In the midst of a crowd he paid attention to those who suffered, who slipped by him only touching his garment. In his ministry Jesus *noticed* people; he beheld them as worthy, as valuable, as central players in the kingdom of God. Our Lord did not look down on those with disabilities. He kept lifting them up, noticing them, honoring them in his kingdom, seeing them as full children of God. Disability best *not* be detected in the eye of the beholder. Best we see like Jesus!

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*Rev. Ronald Nydam*

# Samaritan's Carriage: The Birth of a Ministry

by Gary Ruiter



*Showing God's love to wheelchair residents of local nursing homes.*

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**P**hillip Yancey, in his book *Soul Survivor*, reflects on his search for the meaning of life as follower of Christ. The subtitle of the book is "How My Faith Survived the Church." Yancey shares the stories of thirteen people who have been his spiritual directors. He explains how these people assisted him in ransoming his personal faith from the damaging effects of religion. This fascinating story resonated with me because I believe we have all shared his experience to one degree or another.

As I was reading *Soul Survivor* and reflecting on my own faith journey, I received a newsletter from Life on Wheels, a ministry started by Mel and Alvina Van Dendend in 1987. Their ministry offers nursing home residents in wheelchairs day outings aboard fully equipped mini-buses. The outings, staffed mostly by retired volunteers, typically include a visit to an entertaining site in the Chicago area, lunch at a buffet-style restaurant, and the companionship of that day's volunteers. The residents selected to participate in the program are those who do not receive many visitors and have few resources, friends, and family.

I had admired the Van Dendends and their ministry for quite some time, but what does "go and do likewise" require of me? Clearly I too must look after orphans and widows in their distress. Our convalescent and nursing homes literally and figuratively house the "widows and orphans" of our day. They are often powerless, without resources or advocates . . . exactly as they were in Jesus' day. Nursing homes contain an astounding concentration of need.

I began to let doubts regarding my age and abilities enter my mind. But I was drawn back to James 1:27, where

Jesus instructs us not only to look after the widows and orphans but also to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. Pollution is often unseen and undetected. It infiltrates silently and is tolerated long before we realize its insidious consequences. Perhaps I had, unaware, lost the battle to be in the world, but not of the world?

Jesus did not hide away in the safety of heaven. On the contrary, he entered the zone of danger and risked contamination with mankind. With that in mind, can I somehow pass off ministry to someone with greater compassion or special gifts?

For years I had passed it off to my wife, Eileen. She has greater compassion and gifts for such a ministry. She often asked me to accompany her on a visit to someone living in a convalescent or nursing home, but I always found reasonable excuses for why I couldn't go. You're probably familiar with the excuses; they mirror those of the men who passed by the victim in the Good Samaritan parable. I am tempted to consider my age and wonder whether I haven't earned some rest and enjoyment. I am bombarded with advertisements that say I belong, body and soul, on the golf course or in the hammock.

In contrast, Moses and many of his successors served to a ripe old age and right up until their death. The psalmist declares that the saints of God will bear fruit in their old age and will stay fresh and green.

As I contemplated these ideals and before the ember could grow cold, my wife received a phone call asking if she could help out for a few hours in a distressing situation. She asked if I would come along. I declined, but I knew at that moment how Peter felt when the rooster crowed the second time. It cemented in my mind the need to minister to the "orphan and widow." The question then became, "How?"

After being exposed to Life on Wheels, we could no longer just admire it. With God's help and that of my wife, family, and friends, we began the process of duplicating the ministry here in Grand Rapids. The board of Samaritan's Carriage was formed and we ventured forth, committing our plans to the Lord. Samaritan's Carriage completed its first outing on September 9, 2002. It has now completed 138 such outings and served over 800 guests from nine different homes.

Life on Wheels of Oak Brook, Illinois, has a sixteen-year history with even more impressive statistics. They also need volunteers and can be reached by contacting Alvina Van Dendend in Lombard, Illinois, at 630-629-6109.

Samaritan's Carriage provides a handicapped-accessible bus and volunteers for this ministry. We need individuals committed to praying for this ministry, drivers, companions, and administrative assistants. We want to answer the Lord's command to model the Good Samaritan.

# A Treasure in a Cracked Clay Pot

by Lori West

I want to share with you a little of my life story. Mine is a story of God's amazing grace (with a little humor thrown in.) Like every story there has to be a time and a place where the plot unfolds. The year was 1958. (Now I've done what very few women like to do! I've given away my age.) The setting was a small village in Newfoundland. The event: the birth of a tenth child, a baby girl.

At the time of my birth dad had already fallen ill; he died just two days after my ninth birthday. I see no point in going into detail, so let me just say this: Having been born into a family where I wasn't wanted, the pain of abuse and rejection and the longing to be loved caused me to develop a strong will and determination to survive. These characteristics have been at times a great asset, and at times my greatest detriment.

Second Corinthians 4:7-9 resonates with me. "But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed. Perplexed, but not in despair. Persecuted, but not abandoned. We may be struck down, but we are not destroyed." Let me tell you I am not a woman with great faith. I am a woman with simple faith in a great God. Over the years I've come to learn that the measure of my faith has very little to do with God's response to his working in my life.

Have you ever felt trapped by the circumstances of life? Are you wondering how you can ever move ahead and get out from under the dark cloud of depression?

Maybe your castle crumbled the day death stole someone you loved who you thought was yours forever. Or maybe the breakup of a relationship has left you soured by bitterness. Perhaps you lost your job and with that loss went your earthly security. Or it could be you were diagnosed with a physical ailment, for which there is no known cure, that has robbed you of hopes and dreams for the future. I imagine most of us feel at some time like a "broken" jar of clay, hardly something fit to hold a treasure!

I've already alluded to my beginnings. Let me give you a brief overview and a glimpse into my past. I was born into a home that did not have many of the conveniences that most people would deem the bare necessities of life. I would argue, though, that the only true essential our home lacked was love. You can have a home without running water; you can have a home without indoor plumbing.



Lori West

Believe it or not, you can live in a home without a telephone, and survive. But try as hard as you will, you cannot survive in a home without love.

Experience has taught me to value and appreciate the gifts I am given, while at the same time to hold them loosely. Possessions, health, family, and friendships can be gone at the wink of an eye.

My life has been riddled with losses that have left me feeling like a broken clay jar: the untimely death of a dad whom I dearly loved; the pain of being physically, emotionally, and sexually abused as a child; being forced to leave home at the age thirteen. Now I face the daily challenges of living with a debilitating illness characterized by chronic pain from intertwining muscles. This "illness" is robbing me of mobility and seeks to silence my voice. Complications from this disease have already made several attempts to snuff out my life. Living on "the edge" makes me ever aware of my own mortality.

Despite a difficult childhood I managed to conceal the cracks in my jar. Then in the late 1980s this jar of clay became noticeably cracked when the disease, familial spastic dysplasia, struck with a vengeance and changed my life forever. I have a choice to make every day. I can allow Jesus' love to shine through this broken body, my jar of clay. Or I can dwell on the cracks in my jar, feel sorry for myself, and allow all the joy to run out of the cracks, leaving me an empty, broken vessel.

## A Treasure in a Cracked Clay Pot, continued

I don't pretend to understand or appreciate the course my life has taken. Having said that, over time I've come to realize that sometimes Jesus chooses to live in a broken pot to allow his light to shine through and to help us recognize we need each other. I need you; your physical strength and abilities enable me. But you need me too, to remind you of God's grace in difficult circumstances.

Please understand that I'm not saying it's easy to let Jesus shine through a cracked or broken jar. I'd be lying if I said I'm thankful for the pain, and I certainly can't say I enjoy having this disease and the restrictions it imposes upon me. But I can truthfully say I am glad and thankful to God for the things I've learned as a result of my challenges. I'm learning a greater appreciation for life, and for the abilities I do have. I realize that any ability I have, even the ability to brush my own teeth or comb my own hair, is a gift and not a right. We should never take our abilities for granted.

Please listen carefully to the next statement I will make; hear it well for it's not something I say flippantly but have thought long and hard before I dared say it. If I had the choice of being strong and healthy and following Christ from afar, or having the physical restrictions I have today and knowing the reality of Christ in my life, I'd rather be the way I am. Difficulties in life bring a greater awareness of the need for Christ on a moment-by-moment basis.

We cannot spend our life bemoaning yesterday's shattered dreams or waiting for tomorrow's lucky break; we have to value what we have and are today. Don't allow life's obstacles to hinder your progress, or render you useless, but take what you have left and make something good from it. Pain is inevitable, but misery is optional, says author and speaker Barbara Johnston, and I'm inclined to agree with her.

While I am fully aware that my past has impacted who I am today—both the positive attributes and the not-so-nice characteristics—I am not a victim of my past. I understand that my mom was a mentally disturbed woman, and although we never reconciled before her death in 1987, I have forgiven her. I still bear scars, but the deep pain is gone. There is nothing that I can do that will ever change my upbringing; I can never turn back the calendar or erase the abuse. And only a miracle from the hand of God can make this disease reverse its course; in all probability, my speech is garbled for the rest of my days. But I do have a wheelchair that helps me walk; I have a voice synthesizer that helps me talk. I can still work every day; I have friends; I have value and I love life. Perhaps my situation wouldn't classify as ideal, but, I awaken most mornings (unless I'm feeling sorry for myself and having a pity party) thanking God that I have the privilege of seeing one more sunrise.

Joy isn't found in having parents or a spouse who loves us; it isn't found in being strong and healthy, or in having a picture-perfect body. Nor is it found in being

an academic success or climbing the corporate ladder. Joy and contentment are not found in possessing a beautiful home or vehicle. If these were the conduits of joy, I'd have missed out.

True joy comes when you know who you are, when you believe in what you're doing, and when you learn to accept who you are: a jar of clay. It comes in being willing to use what you are to hold life's greatest treasure, and allowing the treasure to shine through your life. True peace comes when we learn to see Jesus living not only in jars polished and whole, but also in our cracked jars—when we can see Christ in a jar battling cancer or depression, or in a jar that's wearied and tarnished by years of service. I saw Jesus the other day living in a spastic body, sitting in a wheelchair, but there was no mistaking His beauty.

Throughout my life God has proven to be trustworthy. How confident are you in your God? Can you trust your life into his care? There may be times when you feel your faith is under siege. The situation seems hopeless. Let me remind you: Faith is easy when you're up on the mountain and you've got peace of mind like you've never known. Things change when you're down in the valley. But don't lose faith—you're never alone. For the God of the mountain is still God in the valley, and the God of the day is still God in the night.

Let me reassure you from the pages of Scripture, that Christ laid aside the glories of heaven. He became a man of sorrows and today makes his home in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. There are times when we pray for a miracle, but circumstances may not change; things may not work out the way we want them to. The cost may be tremendous, but God has promised that his grace is sufficient.

I have shared briefly my yesterdays and my today, but what about my tomorrows? What does tomorrow hold for me? Like you, I don't know for certain. From a medical perspective the prognosis looks bleak at best. But whatever it holds I know that I'll make it—not because I consider myself strong, emotionally or physically, but because I have a treasure in this broken jar. I know the source of my strength. I sit before you as living proof of that strength made perfect in weakness. Am I ready for what tomorrow will hold for me? No, but I will be when tomorrow comes.

I want to encourage you, when days are dark and you are discouraged and perhaps you feel isolated and helpless for the task at hand. With God by your side, pick up the shattered dreams, disappointments, discouragement, the broken promises, and give them to Jesus. Mourn your losses but don't wallow in the valley of indecision and defeat; live your life as a monument to the living God. He is more than adequate to meet our needs and gives hope for a hopeless situation. May God help us all to finish well the life he's called us to.

# Friendship News



Meta Shamrock

**B**reaking Barriers is pleased to introduce the new executive director for Friendship Groups Canada, Meta Shamrock.

The office for Friendship Groups Canada was moved to Kitchener, where Meta assumed her responsibilities on November 22, 2003. She comes to the position with a wealth of experience, an understanding of the program, and a heart for the ministry. Meta's desire to share God's love with individuals who have intellectual disabilities is evident in her work.

Meta was first introduced to Friendship in 1986 when her pastor invited her and three others to assist him in beginning a Friendship ministry in their church in Calgary. Initial experience as an Assistant Group Leader prepared Meta for her role as coordinator of the group from 1987 until her move to Ontario in 1993.

While working with the Friendship group in Calgary, Meta became increasingly aware that something more was needed to teach their higher-functioning friends how to translate what they had learned into practical application for their lifestyles. They needed to learn how to live a Christian life. As a result, she became instrumental in organizing a group of supportive individuals who together developed the basis of the fourth year of curriculum that was eventually published as "Living God's Way" (CRC Publications).

In 1994, Meta was elected to Friendship's Board of Directors and served on the Board until 2002. During her tenure on the Board, she served as chairperson of the

Conference Planning Committee and held office as secretary, vice president, and president.

Meta and her husband John have two children, Alana and Jared. They live in Kitchener, Ontario. Meta is an active volunteer in her church and is actively involved in the schools of her children.

We urge you to encourage and support Meta in her work with your prayers.

**T**he following poem was written by Erin DeKorte. She is 17 years old and attends the Special Friends Ministry at Sunshine Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Erin was born with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. She loves to write, and expresses her faith through poems and essays. This poem is a tribute to the Creator's hands.

*Sara Roelofs, Coordinator of Special Friends at Sunshine Church*

### The Creator's Hands

The creator's hands  
Must be strong  
To create the earth  
Must be gentle  
To wipe every tear  
Must be willing  
When you need a hand to hold  
Must be big  
To hold the earth  
Must be old and tired  
After all he's created for us.



Erin DeKorte



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