

I bring you greetings from Charlie, Debbie, and the rest of the staff at the Special Touch National Office. I have the privilege of serving as an AGUSM Intercultural Missionary Associate with Special Touch.

In the '60s, a young couple lived on a farm in NE WI. They had a little girl and boy. Life on the farm was sweet for them, so they plan to have one more child. Unfortunately, this couple experienced perhaps the biggest disappointment in their lives on when their second son was born. You see, I experienced a delay in breathing at birth for 26 minutes. The doctors told my parents that I would either die or to live as a vegetable. However, my family chooses to love me regardless of my struggles as they believed God for a miracle. Although I have CP, I sit here as a testimony of His grace.

Since my family lived in Pound, a rural community up north, our school district didn't offer services for children with disabilities; the leadership decided to send me to Green Bay. I attended Anne Sullivan and later went to Franklin Jr High before going back to my home district for high school. Over the years, I spent some time at the CP Center and Curative Rehab. There are thousands of people with disabilities right here in the Green Bay area who desperately need God's love.

Did you ever find yourself in a miserable situation that you determined was unfair? Last week, I read about an unfair situation in Acts 16:16-40 where Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown in prison. After the beating, they could have been angry and expressed their frustrations to the other prisoners. However, the Word said they prayed and sang hymns while bound in stocks as the other prisoners listened. Paul and Silas were missionaries and understood that every occasion was an opportunity to share the gospel. At midnight, God showed His mighty power and many people came to faith in Christ.

As a person with many limitations or challenges, it's easy to become focused on my huge obstacles rather than understand that God is just setting the stage for others to know Him. During those trying times, I'm thankful that He gives me the strength to overcome. Although my life is full of hills and valleys, I'm grateful that the Lord has blessed me in many wonderful ways. For one, He placed me in a wonderful Christian family. I loved living on a farm, preaching to the critters outside. Unfortunately, some people felt I should stay in my house. However, I wanted to experience life like my siblings.

Sometimes my determination to try things not associated with wheelchairs gets me into trouble. Perhaps, that's why my friends gave me the nickname TROUBLE. Seriously though, determination helped me earn two college degrees and part of another. No matter the struggle, I'm determined to embrace all that God has for me. He abundantly blessed me with a sweet girlfriend. God made it possible for me to own a van and a nice house.

Today, He provided an opportunity for me to work at the Special Touch National Office in Waupaca. One of my responsibilities is to develop and coordinate a biblically based curriculum for our Chapters that meet throughout America. These Chapters minister to precious souls with disabilities that may never enter a church building. For



example, I visited Jacksonville a few years ago to minister at the Chapter. We went to a group home in an extremely poor section of the city to celebrate Thanksgiving. Chapter leaders served meals to more than thirty residences with various type of disabilities. I was truly humbled to show God's love to a group who haven't heard the gospel in a way they could understand.

Last December, I had the privilege of visiting the Beaver Dam Chapter and shared a lesson about Christmas. The room was packed with people who have intellectual disabilities. Motivated by God's love, the Chapter leaders search for people with disabilities to invite them to the monthly meeting. I hope that one day we'll have a Chapter in GB and the Valley. Fulfilling God's mission for the church takes every believer working together to bring others to Jesus.

As a person with a disability who is middle-aged, I face a few more challenges than twenty years ago. Last summer, I had surgery and thought occurred that it would be nice to have a group of friends who understand my disability adventures. This year, my co-missionaries and I are planting a monthly online fellowship for people with disabilities. Guests who attend our camps can take part in the Bible study, share what's going on in their lives, and pray with each other.

Another way that I serve at Special Touch is by using my computer skills to develop mission-critical applications. Working for many years at Kikkoman Foods prepared me to write software for the ministry. Recently, I developed a web application that certifies church in disability friendliness. One of the problems that we encountered was families who had children with disabilities, especially autism, were asked to leave their church. The people at the churches where I attended has always made me feel welcome and did whatever they could do to help me. I want to train churches throughout the Assemblies of God to be a support for people with disabilities and their families.

While tasks at the office can keep me busy and out of TROUBLE most days, I escape via airplane a few times each year to minister at a camp, chapter, or church. Flying across the nation by myself with my wheelchair can be an adventure, especially going through security. Even with these challenges, I consider it a huge blessing to travel and witness God touch lives around the nation.

For instance, I fly to Flagstaff, AZ to minister at our Arizona Summer Get Away. While riding the zip-line is exciting, I most enjoy pouring into others like Kyle and Melissa who have physical disabilities. It's a privilege to teach them to touch heaven as Paul and Silas did in jail. The disability community doesn't need another complainer but men and women with a special touch from God. Although they don't have the joys of Wisconsin winters, Kyle and Melissa demonstrate God's grace as they overcome their challenges in AZ. There are millions of people with disabilities throughout the world who need to know Jesus.



In closing, I want to invite you to join me on a 5-day missions trip in August to serve as volunteer staff at the Wisconsin Summer Get Away. Your labor of love will make it possible for a person with disabilities to come and receive from the Lord.