

GO NEWS



DECEMBER 2019 | NEWSLETTER

Strength in Weakness



Mike's Reflections

2 Corinthians 12:7-10

'Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.' (NIV)

Theologian Justin Popovic once said that "pride is the ultimate sin. [That] every sin, through its life force, comes from it and holds to it."

Pride is the sin that corrupted and turned Satan from an angel of light into the prince of darkness and it is the root sin that corrupted Adam and Eve in the garden. Pride, even the smallest hint or the tiniest inkling of it, left undetected or unchecked will destroy us. It'll

destroy our relationship with God and it'll destroy the relationships around us that we love and treasure.

And in case you think I'm being over dramatic, then re-reading Paul's words to the church in Corinth should sober our hearts to ever think that pride isn't that big a deal...

"So to keep me from becoming conceited [to be exalted, to be haughty ... to be proud] because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to harass me, to keep me from becoming conceited. Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Corinthians 12:7-9 ESV)

God was so concerned to not let pride (conceitedness) take a hold within Paul's heart, that God directly (or indirectly.... depending on your theological view) allowed Paul to be harassed by a messenger of Satan.

This harassment was for Paul's benefit

not his detriment. This thorn in his flesh would push Paul even closer into Jesus and the grace he freely gives.

As I've been reflecting on the journey I'm currently on where this season of life seems to be full of chaos – full of illness, stress, exhaustion, uncertainty (just to name a few), this verse reminds me that everything is Father filtered.

So yes, I should continue to ask God to remove the hurt, sickness and pain away — Paul continued to pray and ask for similar relief until God answered him. But also and more importantly, it is to then see this season as a time to press into Jesus and receive more of His grace. That this season is a time where God is removing the toxin that is my pride, that has built up in my life. His ultimate goal is for me to reflect the image of His Son Jesus... rather than my comfort and ease.

I challenge you to re-examine your difficult situation and ask God where He is removing pride and how you can press closer into Him in that season.

Go well for Jesus!

Mike

Interserve partner in South East Asia

From the National Leader | Mai i te Tumu Whakarae



Susie

Mai i te Tumu Whakarae
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā
koutou katoa.

"My grace is sufficient for you, my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor 12:9)

These words are not only a promise by God to us but also a challenge to each of us personally, and us as a community. Not only does He offer us to know His grace but He challenges us to lay down our need for power and pride, and embrace our weaknesses so the world can see His power.

"... Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardship, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor 12:9-10) Since becoming the National Leader of Interserve NZ, I am reminded on a daily basis, that it is not I but Christ in me who runs the show; who leads in this season.

I arrived in Auckland on Sept 9, 2005 not knowing what our Father had planned for me in Aotearoa New Zealand ... in fact, I didn't even know Him yet!

None of my family had any religious affiliation. In fact, my grandparents are and always have been very 'suspicious' of the church. Growing up in East Germany, it wasn't very common for people to

go to church either. Jesus met me here in Aotearoa. My first 'exposure' to Him was when I met my (now) husband and his family... I was intrigued to hear that Jesus was the reason they had packed up their lives in the States and went to live in a war zone in Central Asia. Joining Interserve in 2013, was an exciting step in my faith journey and I had no idea what I signed up for. Johannes didn't either ... why else would he have employed a new Christian who has no experience in mission herself, who comes from a broken family, and hadn't even had any theological training? He was taking a risk, having been led by God.

**"... Therefore I will
boast all the more
gladly about my
weaknesses, so that
Christ's power may
rest on me."**

— 2 Cor 12:9-10

Over the seven years as the Director of People Care, have I seen God's grace work out in people's lives? I sure have! Have I been bold and challenged prospective partners to embrace their feelings of inadequacies and trust God to make up for them? I sure have! My faith in Him has grown in leaps and bounds. I was good at my job, I loved it and was comfortable doing what I do best. My German efficiency, my pragmatism and straightforward approach came in handy and offered a sense of security ... in a way, I knew what I was doing.

Five months in my role as National Leader, I don't know what I am doing. Almost six years in the role of

a mum of two gorgeous girls, I don't know what I am doing. Ten years in the role of wife, I know somewhat what I am doing. Speaking in front of a church to excite them about global mission, I don't know what I am doing. Leading a team of people who are (almost) all older and more experienced than me, I don't know what I am doing. Am I relying on God's grace and other people's grace to get me through the day? I sure am! Am I being challenged to embrace my feelings of inadequacies and trust in God? I sure am!

In September and October I met with fellow Interserve leaders and what struck me was that we all are grappling with the embracing of weakness, and powerlessness.

There is a real sense that we have work to do in this area. We must let go of our pride, embrace our limitations ... our thorns in the flesh, our handicaps. During the gatherings, we as leaders have been given a picture. A picture of a blind child learning to walk. The child steps onto the feet of a seeing person (left foot on left foot, right foot on right foot). The child holds tightly onto the person's hands (left hand on left hand, right hand on right hand). The seeing person makes one step at a time, slowly ... the child holds on tightly. If the child lets go of the hands, it falls to the ground. We all have our blindness, and weaknesses. Instead of covering them up or pretending they don't exist, let's bring them to God. Let's hold on tight to His mighty hands to direct us one step at a time.

Susie Couch

National Leader, Interserve NZ

Te Riu Whakaoreore

**Our gifted Te Reo name
was graciously given
to Interserve NZ by our
Kaumatua, Fred Astle.**

Te Riu Whakaoreore.

This name is born from our pūrākau (story). Pū means 'origin' and 'rākau' is the fully-grown tree.

Te Riu is the hull of an ocean-going waka. It represents our people journeying by faith into the hard places of our world.

Whakaoreore refers to generating a movement, awakening or mobilising others, attuned to the call of the Holy Spirit

For a fuller definition on the meaning of our gifted name and the three taonga (gifts) bestowed on Interserve Day 2019 please go to our website: www.interserve.org.nz

ON TRACK NEWS: 'Play Talk'



MAKING FRIENDS: Sreyny Sorn greets a child from the ABLE project, a community-based initiative focused on caring for children with disabilities.



Sreyny Sorn (pictured top) is the manager of the ABLE project within the NGO Children in Families, a local, Christian organisation that provides ongoing extended-family and foster care for children, where Bridget has been working during her time in South East Asia. At a UN Human Rights Commission event held earlier this year in Geneva, Sreyny Sorn spoke about the ABLE project run by Children in Families and how they support the inclusion of children with disabilities:

“Community attitudes can be one of the biggest barriers to inclusion for people with disabilities. In any community there are people who think differently ... when we support these people to care for children with disabilities, they become community advocates. We have seen communities become more open to people with disabilities, because of families like this.”

“Sok sabai?” (Are you good?) I greeted my workmate Chanty. “Sai sabok!” she replied. My forehead creased into a furrow. What did she mean? We hadn’t covered that one in language class. We had only learnt the standard answer, which is to say “Ja, sok sabai” (Yes, I am good.) Seeing my worried expression, Chanty laughed — “Sok sabai, sai sabok!” she said. Then I understood that my language teacher wasn’t to blame. Chanty’s answer was a play on words meant as a joke. I relaxed and smiled.

Working in a setting where most of the time I am the only non-local in my part of the office isn’t always easy. When others talk too quickly for me to understand, and then everyone laughs, I feel frustrated that my language skills aren’t good enough to be able to join in. Sometimes I hear my name mentioned and I wonder what is being said about me. (On a recent occasion, it turned out they were discussing hair colour and how they liked mine. To me it’s boring brown with plenty of grey, but to my workmates it’s a contrast from universal black). In New Zealand, I’m used to being able to contribute, not only to the office banter but to important discussions too. Suddenly

here I find myself the newbie with so much to learn.

That’s why Chanty has become such a precious person to me. Some of the time I still feel like a bystander watching on, but Chanty has invited me in, through the use of humour and teasing. Local people actually have a word for this, “Niyeileen” which literally means “play talk”. Sometimes my attempts at humour haven’t gone so well, like the morning I put on a pretend stern face and asked “Why are you late?” to discover that she had worked late into the evening the night before, supporting a family in crisis. But Chanty has always been gracious with me. Breaking down the awkwardness of language and cultural differences through humour has opened the door to deeper conversations too.

Recently a new staff member started at work and so there was a round of introductions. I was sitting next to Chanty and when it was my turn, I said my name and that I have three children, like my close friend Chanty. Afterwards she asked, “Do you know what that word means?” as I had used the word for close friend, rather than the word for acquaintance. “Yes,” I said, “I do know what it means.” Her face broke into a smile. I don’t think Chanty knew how much I appreciate her friendship until then. I’m very grateful for the provision of a friend and fellow believer like Chanty.”

Bridget

On Track in South East Asia

PARTNER NEWS: God's Love Language is Obedience

I've been asked to reflect on our family journey of becoming Interserve partners as a family with children with disabilities and what that has been like for me as a mum. Our call to go when it could be easier to stay.

When I was first asked, I felt a bit baffled. 'Called to go, when it would be easier to stay' just felt uncomfortable. Why would we stay if we were called to go and why would it be harder for us to go or easier for us to stay? Were we not just like every family? I guess that depends on how you view us. We feel like a normal family; so why wouldn't we go? If God is calling us, doesn't He know what He is doing? And why would our call be any different to anyone else's, why wouldn't we be called by God?

I discovered early on that not everyone saw things as I did. Having been told by the first mission agency that there is no way they would send us due to our youngest son having a disability.

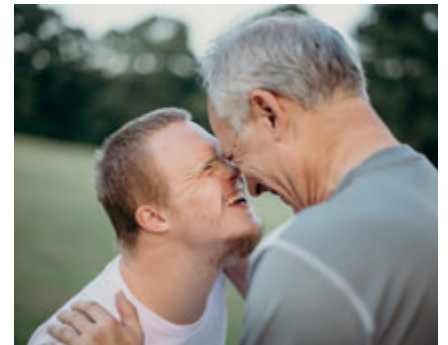
He isn't calling us because of what I or we have to offer but what He can do through us!

We carried on and along the way I remember being told by a friend that others were talking about how ridiculous it was for us to think we could go to the mission field. How quickly the enemy uses those thoughts and they spiral downwards: Could we go? Should we go? Would it end badly?



Would we just end up being a burden to everyone? Was it a waste of resources to send us? I discovered how important it is to take every thought captive, and that those things that accuse come from the accuser not the Lord. We had a wonderful champion in Susie Couch who did not see why we couldn't go and persisted in presenting us as a family called to go, while being knocked back, I suspect more times than she has ever told us.

During this time God has been working on me and encouraging me and speaking to me. He has taught me that it is not about me, or our family but that it is about Him! He isn't calling us because of what I or we have to offer but what He can do through us! He reminded me at one stage of Naaman, who was implored by his servants just to obey, not to miss this opportunity just because he wasn't called to do something mighty that would have been about his talents and abilities. This wasn't about what Naaman could contribute, it was just about obedience and a humble heart.



Someone once told me that God's love language is obedience. I think that is so true. God is teaching me that He is calling me not to success but to obedience. The less we have to offer the more room there is for Him to show Himself and His power.

Kathy

Interserve Partner preparing to go

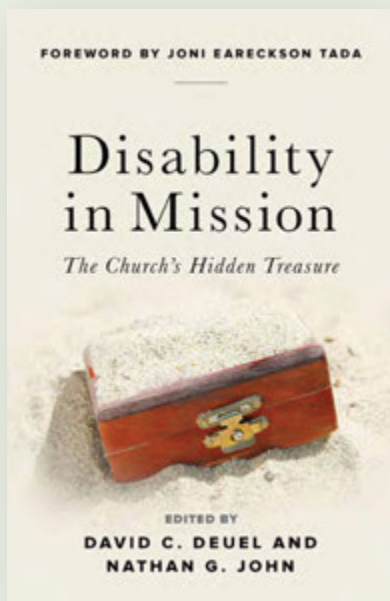
If you would like to join TK & Kathy's prayer and financial support team, contact us at talk2us@interserve.org.nz



TK and Kathy's youngest child, Cody, has Down syndrome.

In Kathy's words: "A team was found who wanted to have us, not despite Cody but because of Cody, who has Down syndrome. God often uses what others may see as our weakness. The team said that there were quite a number of children with Down syndrome in the town we're planning on going to who were often hidden away in backrooms because of the stigma and shame. They were excited about having a family who could demonstrate living a normal life with Down syndrome. The scripture 1 Corinthians 1:27 really spoke to us about how God takes the things that the world doesn't value and uses them for His purposes and glory."

Book Review



DISABILITY IN MISSION: THE CHURCH'S HIDDEN TREASURE

Imagine you are at the dawn of creation when the angels sang God's praises. Would it shock you to hear lyrics about God's plan to bring glory to himself by enabling persons with disabilities to lead the powerful across the stage of redemption history?

Now fast forward to the end of times, history's culmination when the Judge of the Universe sits to hear the testimonies of the faithful who humbly served him. Would it surprise you if some people with disabilities, trophies of God's sufficient grace, brought the greatest glory through their faithful service?

Don't be shocked or surprised. *Disability in Mission*, published by Lausanne Publishing and Hendrickson, aims to change our perspectives about disability in God's plan. It includes one story after another of how God sovereignly placed a person with a disability into a missionary family, and how God used that person to change human hearts and lives.

The contributors of *Disability in Mission* invite you to hear their stories and rethink what success looks like in God's kingdom. If congregations and churches and mission board leaders will consider these testimonies, we believe that churches will send out more people with disabilities as missionaries and that they will seek out called and gifted leaders, who by God's design also have disabilities, to lead their churches.

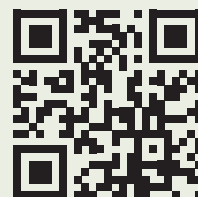


As written in The Cape Town Commitment, we need 'to think not only of mission among those with a disability, but to recognise, affirm and facilitate the missional calling of believers with disabilities themselves as part of the Body of Christ' (II-B-4). Are we ready to take up that challenge?

We sing lyrics like 'You use the weak to lead the strong' (from 'Your Grace Is Enough'). But how badly do we want disability grace? This is a tall order requiring transparent prayer.

[lausanne.org/
about/blog/
disability-in-
mission](https://lausanne.org/about/blog/disability-in-mission)

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talk2us@interserve.org.nz for more info



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SAT 9 MAY 2020 | SAVE THE DATE

Guest Speaker: David Watson

Director of Ministries, Interserve International

TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON ON EVENTBRITE AND OUR WEBSITE



Opportunities Available

TEACHERS (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

SE Asia (12-23 months, 2+ years)

A like-minded school running an American curriculum with the purpose of providing affordable, quality education for worker's families and providing quality education for refugee families as there is capacity. Currently a small school, pre-k through 12th grade with about 90 students from 30+ nations. Elementary and secondary teachers needed in all areas. Native English speakers are preferred. A person with flexibility and initiative is essential.

ENGLISH TEACHER

West Asia, (1-11 months)

ESL teacher (or a native English speaker) to give help to organization staff and leaders during work hours. This "ESL at the desk" is wanted by the staff to improve their capacity, and allow greater access to training, partnering, working with outside organizations, etc. ESL as ministry

is needed here. The hours would be flexible, depending on how many staff and how much work time they can give to ESL improvement.

SOCIAL WORKER Central Asia (1-11 months, 12-23 months)

This organization runs social and educational services for the community, specifically helping women in crisis situations. The social worker will assist in development of social programs, working with women in crisis situations and training local staff. The ideal candidate should have relevant qualifications and experience in social work.

YOUTH AND CHILDREN'S WORKER

Paediatricians in South Asia

Central Asia, 1-11 months +, salaried

Growing, international fellowship provides Sunday worship services and youth/children's ministry for expat community. We seek an experienced person to provide leadership for the youth and children's programmes in

the church. Outdoor enthusiasts will enjoy this location!

PAEDIATRICIANS

South Asia (1-11 months, 12-23 months, 2+ years)

This community health organisation includes a 150-bed hospital, and training and research departments. A holistic health approach seeks spiritual, physical, social and emotional transformation. The hospital has a busy paediatric department, with over 3600 deliveries per year, and a busy outpatient and inpatient unit for general paediatrics, as well as an inpatient and outpatient unit for disabled children. Looking for a second paediatrician or senior trainee to support long-term consultant in ensuring quality service for the rural poor and helping give clinical leadership to a team of 2 senior and 4-5 junior national doctors. Those with research interests will find opportunity to work on existing projects.



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By joining you commit to donating the price of a coffee (\$5) a week for 52 weeks, and to pray for the work of the Interserve NZ Hub team.

You're welcome to join us for morning devotions at the office and enjoy a free coffee! You'll also be connected to our 200 Club Blog and receive regular stories from the Interserve NZ Hub team.

If you're interested in finding out more about us [book a coffee date](#) or visit our website.



Interserve

Web Resources hold phone camera up to QR code to follow link



Inviting the Disabled to Church

Ministry among disabled persons is ministry to people.



Children in Families

Care for orphans & vulnerable children in Cambodia.



Steven Kunkel

Once mute, multilingual student says his autism is a gift from God



Born for This

Autistic child becomes missionary to Japan



Interserve

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