



TESTIMONY MAGAZINE | Where Our Story Intersects Faith and Culture



PRAYING FOR BURUNDI  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE HEALED?  
IN SEARCH OF AN EVERYDAY PRAYER GROOVE

## AN EXTRAORDINARY VIEW

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## YOUR STORY

### AN EXTRAORDINARY VIEW

Disability and the body of Christ  
by *Andrea Foster*

“Extraordinary” and “courageous” are words people use when they talk about Andrea Foster. They are not words she uses to describe herself. In her words, this mother of four children—the younger two of whom are twins with special needs—is simply “a Jesus follower being helped by the Holy Spirit and supported by the body of Christ.” More important than what is said about her, though, is what she has to say. We invite you to consider her extraordinary view of people with disabilities and the church.

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### PERSPECTIVE A DISTINCTION TO CONSIDER

What does it mean to be healed?  
by *Randall Holm*

Praying for the sick has always occupied a prominent place in Pentecostal theology and practice. That’s not to say we all think the same way on the subject. Differing positions can be debated with deep conviction and passion. But after the Scripture verses have been quoted and the stories told, the questions that sparked the debate remain unanswered. Randall Holm had a friend who helped him consider another way of looking at divine healing. He invites us into the conversation.

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### EVERYDAY THOUGHTS A PATTERN OF PRAYER

In search of an everyday groove  
by *Lindsey Gallant*

We eat breakfast in the car on the way to work and lunch in the car on the way to an appointment—or we skip them all together. We’ve barely cleaned up after one meal and it’s time to start preparing the next one. We bring work home from the office, and a steady stream of texts and emails means that we are always “on call.” Life can get so crammed with the things we have to do that we can’t find room for the things we know we need to do. Like pray. How on earth do we find time in our day to pray? Lindsey Gallant is searching for an answer to that question.

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### ON THE ISSUE WE CAN’T ABANDON THEM NOW

Christians in Burundi are asking us to pray  
by *Lisa Hall-Wilson*

Most of us would need Google even to know what continent the country of Burundi is on. This small landlocked African country of 10 million people has been in the news a lot lately. But then we read or hear about hundreds of crises and tragedies from around the globe every day. Sometimes it’s tempting to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear. Here’s a story that reminds us why we must not do that.

### 16 YOUR STORY MY JOURNEY WITH AN ENEMY

Learning to walk with rather than away from  
by *Julia Martin*

You’re a Christian. You’re pretty easygoing and get along with most people. In fact, the idea of having an enemy is not even on your radar. Then one day all that changes and you are at serious odds with a fellow Christian. That’s where this writer found herself recently, and this is part of the journey she’s been on.

### 18 LIFESTYLE TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF

Saying enough without saying too much  
by *Carol Ford*

With the insecurity of today’s job market, people of all ages and work experience are writing resumes and sitting in job interviews. Downsizing, plant closings, the scarcity of full-time positions—these are the new realities of the modern workplace. So, if you are job hunting or know someone who is, Carol Ford has some valuable advice for when a potential employer looks across the desk and says, “Tell me about yourself.”

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## YOUR STORY



# AN EXTRAORDINARY VIEW

Disability and the body of Christ

by Andrea Foster

“ There have been some complaints.”

The kind usher was caught in the middle and delivered the words with some hesitation. When I realized we were being asked to leave, my throat tightened and hot tears filled my eyes. My heart began to pound, and I wanted to fight back. Then utter sadness took over. My beautiful 11-year-old twin girls were an annoyance for some churchgoers that night. In disbelief and with unsteady hands I gathered our things—a diaper bag, their snack bag and iPads. As we left the *healing* service, I couldn't stop the flood of tears. The sting of this rejection was like nothing I had ever experienced before.

Some people feel it takes special parents to raise special kids. Others say, “I don't know if I could do what you do.” No doubt the past decade has stretched me beyond my own capacity. But is it really because I'm someone extraordinary? I don't think so. Raising twins with special needs has caused me to need God in ways I never did before. It has made me aware of my weakness and my inability to cope on my own with monotonous tasks, uncontrollable seizures, aggressive behaviours, my own loss of dreams, and what author Susan Roos calls “chronic sorrow.”<sup>1</sup> I need the Word of God more than anything else. It's there that I find answers, peace and balm for my wounded heart.

The spring of 2014 was an especially difficult season for our daughter Annie. Tuberous sclerosis complex is an illogical disorder that requires continual troubleshooting. Annie and Audrey's brains are full of inoperable, benign brain tumours that cause epilepsy, autism and global delays. Annie was having up to 40 seizures per day, and her aggression was volatile. After dialoguing with her neurology team, we took her to SickKids Hospital, where she was admitted and stayed for four nights.

Our stay at SickKids this time was short, especially compared to what many other families there were experiencing. Though our stories were different, we all shared the same pain and vulnerability. The few minutes we

spent together making toast and coffee or preparing special meals for our special kids turned Mother's Day weekend into something truly memorable. I came away knowing there was nothing extraordinary about me or my situation at all.

Sure, my life is unique. And, yes, it's one I might trade for an easier one some days. But it certainly isn't something I've been

“ I see my girls—and all people with special needs—as God's image bearers. ”

given because I'm someone special. If anything, this life of chronic illness has shown me my need for constant support and my dependency on Someone greater. Just as my 11-year-old old girls—who function at the level of a toddler—are constantly dependent on those who care for them, so I depend on my heavenly Father every minute of every day. Watching my children suffer, knowing they are unable to communicate their needs, pains and feelings with me, breaks my heart. Imagining their future without me and wondering who will care for them is frightening. I suspect God knows this heartbreak too as He watches people suffer and struggle through on their own without turning to Him.

For a while after that Mother's Day weekend I found myself close to despair. I felt the Lord urging me to “take courage,” but I needed to understand what that meant. So I began to dig into the Scriptures. In Matthew 14:27 I read these words: “But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.’ ” Courage, according to Jesus, is something we are to *take* as we journey through this life. When I allow my circumstances to dictate my feelings and reactions, my courage starts to melt away and my prayer life suffers. Sometimes the words won't come or I don't have the energy even

to try to pray. But Jesus understands. That's why He gave us His Holy Spirit and placed us in the body of Christ. My church stands when I must sit down. They pray when my mouth is dry. They *en-courage* me when my heart is heavy. They speak to me forthrightly and with confidence. They display courage.

So what happens when the body of Christ lets us down?

God quickly helped me understand why the incident at that healing service happened. My passion for disability ministry needed to be refuelled. I needed to experience firsthand what many other people have felt in similar situations. Earlier that week, as I sat in the pew all alone, I did something I rarely do. I asked God for a sign. I needed to know whether people really needed education and

equipping for disability ministry as much as I thought they did. Or was I doing all this studying and training for nothing? Sometimes signs and answers to prayers come in unexpected ways. Sometimes they hurt.

I'll say it again: I am not special. I am a Jesus follower being helped by the Holy Spirit and supported by the body of Christ. There will always be those who don't want to understand. That causes me to pray harder for their hearts to change. The community of Christ must be a place where everyone can belong. I am well aware that my girls can be distracting. At times I find it difficult to find that daily quiet moment with God—but I do find it. My perspective has changed. I see my girls—and all people with special needs—as God's image bearers. When I look *at* them rather than away, I see Jesus more clearly. And I count myself honoured to have such an extraordinary view.

**Andrea Foster** lives in Brampton, Ont., with her husband, Kirk, and their four kids. She has a diploma in early childhood education and a B. Th., and is currently pursuing her MA in disability studies. Andrea is passionate about disability ministry.

<sup>1</sup>Susan Roos, *Chronic Sorrow: A Living Loss* (New York: Routledge, 2002).