

Comment

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This issue of the *Covenant Quarterly* includes four articles focused on the largest marginalized people group on earth—individuals living with disabilities. In these essays readers will learn how at least one in four people globally are disabled and often ostracized in ways unrecognized by society. Through narrative and theological examples, these authors describe the role that church members and structures have played in that process, and how they can be instrumental in bringing about change.

In his article, “We Wanna Dance with Somebody: Three Aspects of an Ecclesiology of Disability for the Evangelical Covenant Church,” disability theologian Michael A. Walker uses dance as a thematic “hook” to assert that the Evangelical Covenant Church has integrated, and can more fully embody, three important ecclesiological aspects of ministry with people with disabilities: *perichoresis*, communication, and attitudinal access. Kathryn Porten, technical consultant and disability specialist, describes in her article, “Many Members: One Body,” the numerous challenges people with intellectual difficulties (ID) face within ecclesial communities. Disability advocate Pamela Christensen’s “Wholeness: Recognizing the *Imago Dei* in Disability,” challenges the reader to return to a biblically and theologically grounded definition of human wholeness that will expand the church’s understanding and practice of full inclusion of disabled people. Finally, my contribution to this topic, “From Commodity to Community: Lessons and Confessions,” narrates my personal pilgrimage in recognizing and repenting from the ways I have participated in the exploitation of disabled people in entertainment, segregated social structures, and even ministerial mistakes.

Each article encourages the reader to seek ways to participate as com-

munity with disabled persons. You will be encouraged to learn appropriate language and terms preferred by your disabled friends, realizing that what is acceptable for one group may not be for another. Together, let us celebrate that God's enriching gift of diversity comes to us in many different forms, colors, bodies, and conditions.

Thanks to all who contributed to making this issue possible. This list begins with all those who willingly shared your stories here; we are extremely grateful for who are you and how you make us more complete in the body of Christ. Thanks also to the several authors and those behind the scenes who encouraged their writing. Thanks to the North Park University Library and Publications Committee and to Develop Leaders, a mission priority of the Covenant Church, for their financial support. Many thanks to the supportive (and patient) Covenant Marketing and Communications team for your work in formatting and publishing this and every other issue. Special recognition to Will Barnett for organizing the included book reviews. Finally, a word of grateful appreciation to Assistant Professor of Old Testament Dr. J. Nathan Clayton for his dedication and service as interim editor of the *Covenant Quarterly* since 2020. Most important, thanks to you, the reader, who will take these words from the page and put them into practice.

With hope in the One who is making us into a new community,

Paul H. de Neui