



One, The Most Important Number

By Jim Pierson

Autism has become a household word in America. The increase in the number of cases since Dr. Leo Kanner described it in the late 40's and early 50's has been drastic. The estimate then was two to four cases in every 10,000 births. Today, it is one in 150 births. That means that a case of autism occurs every twenty minutes.

With the increase in the number of cases of autism, there is a lot of discussion about what causes it. It is known that the cause is injury to the brain and is considered a developmental disability. Some people have suggested that it is caused by the inoculations children receive. Medical researchers say it isn't so. A recent study noted that when the father was older, the chance of the couple having a child with autism increases. The last cause I heard was a father, whose son has autism, suggests that researchers should study the effect of children watching too much television in the early months of life. Citing that 61% of children under one year of age watch television, he believes their brain functions are affected and lead to autism.

The search for the cause of autism will continue. I sincerely hope that a cause will be determined so the number of cases can be reduced.

While the numbers are growing, CCFH Ministries adheres to Jesus' mathematical formula—one person is enough to motivate our helping him. What matters most to us is not the growing numbers but one person with autism. People with autism and other disabilities can be taught about Jesus' love and their families will be thrilled that the church cares.

Autism happens to real people and families that live in our communities and go to our churches. CCFH Ministries wants to help churches include these persons and their families into their programs. CCFH offers materials to assist the church in ministering effectively to people with autism. Please visit our Online Store at www.ccfh.org.

We rejoice with the family whose loved one with autism has learned about Jesus.

Access Ministry's Disability Summit 2007

By Jim Pierson

Access, the disability ministry of McLean Bible Church, Vienna, Virginia, sponsored its first annual Disability Summit in 1999. I have attended all but one. Every year I look forward to the event. It has become a regular in my schedule. If I were not on the program, I would still want to go.

A highlight for me this year was to hear the keynote address of McLean Bible Church Senior Pastor, Lon Solomon. He and his wife are the parents of four children. The youngest, a daughter, has severe disabilities. I was moved when he explained that he considered it a privilege to serve his daughter in their home. He simply stated that Jesus wants us to serve each other. It was worth the trip to hear such loving commitment.

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Let me list some reasons I enjoy going to the Summit:

First, I get to talk with a lot of people from all over the country (this year 28 states were represented) that are doing disability ministry. The fellowship is enriching.

Second, I meet with other disability ministry leaders. This year Access and CCFH invited a group of leaders to The Next Level Luncheon. Our purpose was to discuss what we do to keep disability ministry moving to the next level. It was a great meeting. We are going to do it again. The participants are sending topics to be discussed and a list of other leaders who should be invited.

Third, I am encouraged by the many positive comments we receive about CCFH's role in the field of disability ministry. In previous years, we had our materials available for sale at our exhibit space. This year we did not. However, Sylvia Hemphill and I did a Power Point presentation of our new *Exceptional Teaching Online*. We believe the online training puts information in the reach of churches of all sizes quickly.

Fourth, I get to observe the outstanding disability ministry of McLean Bible Church. The physical space is impressive. The team is headed by my great friend, Jackie Mills-Fernald. Without question, they have the largest disability ministry of any church in America. They have 17 paid staff and hire 50 plus to handle their summer programs.

Finally, the experience fills me with praise to God. I started in disability ministry 44 years ago. Since those early days, I have seen churches become more attuned to the spiritual needs of people with disabilities and their families. The growth has been more than I imagined. Being at the Summit is a time to reflect and to thank God for answering my prayers.

Celebration Sunday

By Sylvia Hemphill

We are ecstatic when churches tell us what they are doing to spread the word about their disability or special needs ministry.

Celena Barnes, Leader, Special Needs Ministry, Pentecostal House of God, Detroit, Michigan, emailed us a program from *Celebration Sunday* at her church and it is shown in its entirety on the CCFH Blog at <http://www.ccfh.org/blog/> under **Tell us About your Ministry**.

Celebration Sunday, what an appropriate title for the day. Mrs. Barnes writes:

Our "Celebration Sunday" event was a success because it gave people a better understanding of why we should reach out and share the love of Jesus Christ with individuals with disabilities and their families. This event honored and celebrated the achievements of people of all abilities from the congregation and community. Organizations and agencies that offer support to the disability community provided information and resources relating to special education, respite, assistive technology, etc at our Open House.

Mrs. Barnes' *Welcome* as printed in the program tells us about the development of their Special Needs Ministry. The acknowledgement of Bishop Quintin Wingate, Pastor, makes it clear that they are blessed with a supportive church leader who encourages them greatly. If you have questions about the event, Mrs. Barnes may be contacted by email at celenabarnes@hotmail.com.