



Roll On...

This month, Webwatch looks at disabilities in a new light.

Heidi Griep **T**he National Organization on Disability (www.nod.org) estimates that fifty-four million Americans have some kind of disability. This month's Webwatch takes an online look at disabilities—with sites that look at the world from the point of view of people with disabilities and resources to help make our churches more accessible.

www.bbc.co.uk/ouch

“Ouch!...it’s a disability thing” is a well-written and interesting blog from the BBC. The name was coined by site editor Damon Rose: “It reflects everything, perhaps from that pain of first becoming disabled right through

to the looks you get on the street.”

Areas of the site include Columnists, Life Files, Ouch Writers, Down’s with the Kids, Close Up, and more. Ouch is written from the point of view of people with disabilities. It’s not a “help and support page,” Rose explains on the site’s “About” page. “We’re about personal stuff, minutiae of everyday life and that fantastic dark sense of humour and inevitable cynicism that we disabled people tend to have.”

Possible Uses: Many disability websites are created by able-bodied people who write about people with disabilities. This site gives a different point of view and is an entertaining and enlightening read.

Rating: A well-designed website with high quality and accessible content. ★★★★★

www.mtv.com/thinkmtv/features/discrimination/murderball/index3.jhtml

While researching this subject, I was surprised to find that MTV, a music video channel, has great content on disabilities. MTV's disability section is well-designed and informative, and is designed to engage young adults in a discussion about disabilities. This section was written around the documentary film *Murderball* (www.murderballmovie.com), about the U.S. wheelchair rugby team. (Murderball is the nickname for wheelchair rugby.) One of the best parts of this site is called: "Everything you've always wanted to know (but been afraid to ask) about interacting with people with disabilities." Other information you can find here: What is a disability? Get the facts about disabilities. Get support or get involved.

Possible Uses: This could be a great discussion starter for your college or youth group on disabilities.

Rating: A website with content worth reading for adults as well as young adults. The fact that the site is organized around a movie adds to its appeal. ★★★★★

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disability_etiquette

This section of Wikipedia deals with disability etiquette and debunks common assumptions that able-bodied people make when interacting with people with disabilities. A few key "do not assumes":

"Do not assume that a person with a disability either wants or requires assistance."

"Do not assume that disabled person is dissatisfied with her quality of life, and is thus seeking pity."

"Do not assume that a person with a disability is easily offended."

On this page you can also find a link to a list of disability-related terms with negative connotations, and a list of terms sometimes used to describe disabled people or their disabilities, but are regarded as offensive or inappropriate.

Possible Uses: Do you know anyone who is disabled? This may be a good read for you.

Rating: Comprehensive overview of disability etiquette and terms with potential negative connotations. ★★★★★

www.nod.org

I first learned about the National Organization on Disability from their excellent booklet, *That All May Worship*. NOD has a number of helpful resources in the religious participation link on their website. The most popular resources are three guides for improving spiritual and physical access to churches, which can be ordered from the website.

Possible Uses: This is a good place to start if you are thinking about making your church more accessible for people with any disability. Click on "religious participation" on the left side of the site.

Rating: Great content but the design could use an upgrade. I also wish that the content of *That All May Worship* was available online. ★★★★★

www.joniandfriends.org

Founded by Joni Eareckson Tada in 1979, Joni and Friends exists "to communicate the gospel and equip Christ-honoring churches worldwide to evangelize and disciple people affected by disability." Tada, who was paralyzed as the result of a diving accident in 1967, has become an author, speaker, and disability advocate. Information found on this site includes: national and international ministries, devotionals, newsletters, radio ministry, sports camp, wheels for the world, and more. The site also has a substantial collection of resources and links on everything from adoption to wheelchair mobility.

Possible Uses: A good place for inspiration, resources, and devotions.

Rating: I was pleased to see that the site was not only well-designed but it also includes a lot of content and resources. Joni is fairly well-known in Christian circles and so this might be a good place to start if your church is thinking about starting a ministry. ★★★★★

Don't see a great site you think should be here?
Tell us about it—email heidi.griep@covchurch.org

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