

THE WORK OF HIS HANDS

By Dawn Zywiec

My mentor prefers to see things upside down. He views life from a unique perspective. He has a deep hearty laugh, sea-blue eyes, and an endearing smile. His hugs are the best around. Cold chocolate milk is his drink of choice. He loves spinning dizzily on the swing. Videos of African impalas and sleek speckled leopards hold his interest for hours on end.

The crisp crunch of dry autumn leaves lights up his face. A good foot massage is guaranteed to bring a cantata of contagious giggles. I hold my mentor in awe.

A Unique Perspective

I can carry my mentor in my arms, because he is only seven years old. Yet he is my guide, my inspiration, and my joy. Because of his cerebral palsy, Zachary uses a wheelchair and currently is nonverbal. He cries, laughs, and makes audible sounds, but has yet to utter a word. I often wonder what he is thinking. He likes to be held so he can stretch out his back and view the world upside down. Simple things like the blinking of Christmas lights and tinkling of toy tambourines brings him great joy. In his frailness, he simply trusts that the next burst of color or piece of buttered toast will come his way. It seems providential that his Hebrew name means "God is renowned."

Zachary has led me down the winding and turbulent road of acceptance. He is a patient and gracious guide. Had I not paid attention, I would have missed many points of interest he's tried to show me along the way.

He continually teaches me God's way. Psalm 25:9 says, "He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way." When Zachary first grasped my finger with his tiny hand, I felt grace. I humbly saw myself as he sees me, imperfectly perfect. His cherubic face radiates acceptance of my many flaws. He will reach out to anyone, rejecting no one.

He is my guide, my inspiration, and my joy.

A Unique Person

Whether sitting in his chair, lying on my lap, or being carried during an afternoon hike, Zachary's preferred field of vision is upward. He takes pleasure in checking out the treasures in the heavens. Some consider Zachary malformed, made the wrong way. When I hear insensitive comments about Zachary's uniqueness, I am reminded of Isaiah 29:16: "You turn things upside down, as if the potter were thought to be like clay!" "Who are you, O man, to talk back to God? Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?' Does not the potter have the right to

make out of the same lump of clay some

pottery for noble purposes and some for common use?" (Romans 9:20, 21).

God dealt with me through my gentle and tender mentor by slowly softening my heart, showing me unrestrained mercy and grace. I now revel in the sacredness and holiness of life. Zachary is a good and faithful servant, using his gifts in the comfort of his high-tech wheelchair. God uses him every day for noble purposes and common use. We just don't always understand what they are. Zachary has been a gift to me. I hope to continue showing him how much I love and appreciate him. He inspires me to serve.

God created the heavens (Genesis 1:1). The kingdom of heaven belongs to the little children (Matthew 19:14). Christ is in the heavens seated at the right hand of God (Colossians 3:1). The Son of Man will come on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30). Is it any wonder why my beloved and trusted guide is always lifting his eyes, smiling, and looking toward the heavens? ■

Dawn Zywiec is a freelance writer in Normal, Illinois.