

# CURE Provides a Practical Theology of Disability to Communities Across its Network of Hospitals

Mar 18, 2022 · By CURE International · [Hospital Updates](#)



Pastors from CURE Zimbabwe teach local pastors the Theology of Disability curriculum outside of Bulawayo

In many regions of the world, physical and mental disabilities are viewed in negative, harmful ways. Many people — especially those living in regions where CURE International operates — see disabilities as a justified curse or punishment from God caused by the sin of the person or their parents. Many believe disabilities are the result of demons or witchcraft which cause people with disabilities to be treated as outcasts from their community.

*“Only 5 to 10 percent of the world’s disabled are effectively reached with the Gospel, making the disability community one of the largest unreached — some say under-reached — hidden people groups in the world,” -Joni Eareckson Tada Founder and CEO of Joni and Friends International Disability Center.*

This negative social stigma can cause dramatic challenges to the person living with disabilities and their family. It can also deter people from seeking treatment because they have been made to believe that the disability is somehow deserved.



Earnest Kioko teaches the curriculum at CURE Zambia

CURE International does more than “heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God” in eight countries around the world. It also regularly sends staff and volunteers to go beyond the walls of its hospitals and into the local community to develop relationships with the people and their local church leaders. These relationships are helpful for spreading the Gospel and identifying individuals who might benefit from medical attention.

These relationships have also been used to counter misunderstandings of medical procedures. Most recently, CURE has embarked on a mission to communicate a theology of disability to the churches near where it serves in order to reduce the social stigma surrounding those with disabilities.

A standardized Theology of Disability Training is currently being offered by CURE staff to local churches near its hospitals using resources from [Joni and Friends](#) and [Kupenda](#). The central premise of the message is that God’s Word has revealed that each human is made in the image of God and that each of us is called to follow the example of Jesus Christ who loved and healed those with disabilities.

*“With the trainings we have conducted so far, I can humbly confirm that the Theology of Disability Training has become an eye-opener to many church leaders, prompting them to reconsider how they engage people with disabilities in their localities as another way to elevate the name of Jesus in practical ways,” said Earnest Kioko, Senior Director of Spiritual Ministry for CURE International.*



Pastors attend the training in Thyolo, a district in Malawi

Far from seeing people with a disability as a challenge or problem, the Church is called upon to serve those with disabilities. CURE's trainings empower local church leadership to cultivate an environment that treats people with disabilities with respect, kindness, and patience so that they are seen as beloved, worthy, and made in the image of God. Practical, real-world lessons are taught at these trainings such as how to best help, learn from, and communicate with a person with a disability in order to become communities where people with disabilities belong and are allowed to flourish.

[Ada Bible Church](#), based near CURE's headquarters in Grand Rapids, Michigan, partnered with CURE to develop the training materials and conduct the first training of church partners across Africa. Their vision for a Gospel-focused theology of disability made this project possible.

CURE hopes that the Theology of Disability trainings will encourage a better understanding of persons with disabilities around the world. Last December, CURE President / CEO, Justin Narducci, authored a [column](#) in the Christian Post that included six ways Christians can support those with disabilities near and far.

CURE International will continue to be a voice for those living with disabilities, especially children, regardless of where they live because every fellow Image Bearer deserves our love, resources, and respect.