

inTouch

Official Magazine of The Leprosy Mission New Zealand

Issue 448 / Autumn 2021

Your Love Changes Lives

Cure One Update

Petition #130ToGo



The Leprosy
Mission
New Zealand

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Welcome

Welcome to your Autumn edition of *inTouch*!

I hope this edition of *inTouch* finds you well and I'd like to wish you a healthy and peaceful 2021.

May you be blessed with our Lord's love and peace this Easter season. Let us remember the miracle of Jesus' resurrection and His endless love.

It is with great sadness that I write to you about the passing of Lily from Papua New Guinea. I know many of you will remember her as the little girl with the amazing artistic talent (an image of one of her drawings she shared is below). I will always remember her beautiful brown eyes as I spoke to her those years ago.

Orphaned when she was just a child and living in a slum area of PNG, Lily's young life was made even more difficult because of leprosy. When we met she had already developed a deep ulcer on her foot, and it was thanks to your support that leprosy treatment and care was given to her but eventually her foot required amputation. The last report we received was a happy one. We'd been able to organise a prosthetic leg and Lily was walking again.

Sadly, news came in that Lily had taken ill and wasn't getting better. The news came on a Friday, and on the Sunday she had passed. Questions remain and it is not clear whether it was Covid-19 or some other disease. Lily was just a young teen and she had an impact on all of us. There is deep sadness in her passing. We pray for and celebrate Lily's life and honour her lasting legacy in the many people saved from leprosy because of sharing her story.

Updates from our projects around the world is a reminder that the Covid-19 pandemic is far from over but there is hope. As you read this latest edition of *inTouch* magazine I trust you will see the hope that you bring into the lives of people affected by leprosy. Thank you for all that you do to make lives better every day.

God bless,



Gillian Whitley
Executive Director



The Leprosy Mission New Zealand
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Following Jesus Christ, The Leprosy Mission New Zealand seeks to bring about transformation; breaking the chains of leprosy, empowering people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness.

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CONTACT US

For all enquires, please contact:
The Leprosy Mission New Zealand
PO Box 96262, Balmoral,
Auckland 1342, New Zealand
Freephone: 0800 862 873
Email: enquiries@leprosymission.org.nz
Website: www.leprosymission.org.nz
Facebook.com/leprosymissionnz

Thank you to Bruce Millar, Bhupinder Singh, Hannah Davey, Matt Fowler and Michael Bradley for the amazing photos we feature.

Shabnam's Cure One Journey

Cured by you!

Last year, we introduced you to Shabnam from India.

Shabnam was terrified when she found out she had leprosy. She has already had a hard life... it became even more difficult with the diagnosis of leprosy.

Shabnam faced rejection from family - feeling alone, afraid, crushed.

Thankfully, Shabnam was brought to the Mission's Shadhadra Hospital in Delhi. She was in the safe hands of the doctors and nurses and received leprosy medication and care that she desperately needed.



While she was in the hospital, Shabnam was also taught to do daily physiotherapy which will help prevent her hands from becoming more clawed.

It is thanks to your kindness that Shabnam was able to be put on multi-drug therapy to cure her leprosy.



Shabnam's next step and the impact of Covid-19.

Your love and compassion means Shabnam was given the opportunity for a scholarship at the Mission's Faizabad Vocational Training Centre. This is a residential programme with all expenses paid. **Shabnam was able to learn how to sew and tailor.**

However, because of Covid-19, the students were sent back home before Shabnam could complete her full year of training. Even though the vocational training centre tried to teach the students online, without access to the residential support it was very difficult.

Shabnam is now living at the Missionaries of Charities. The Mission Sisters told us that Shabnam is doing better and that her foot ulcer that developed in December last year has completely healed. She is taking regular medicine, provided by the Leprosy Mission Hospital.

Thank you for being part of Shabnam's journey.

The regular commitment of supporters like you allows us to follow up and ensure that despite Covid-19, people affected by leprosy are not forgotten but instead even more is done to support them during this vulnerable time. Thank you!

If you would like to become a Cure One Supporter, please visit cureone.org.nz or contact Janesse on 0800 862 873 or email janesse.mendoza@leprosymission.org.nz



Cover Photo: Image of a child in Bougainville.

You Are Bringing Lasting Change in *Bougainville*

New Zealander Matt Fowler was volunteering in Bougainville a few years ago when he had the opportunity to visit one of the villages in the Mission's Bougainville Healthy Communities Programme. Inspired by his visit, Matt then joined the Auckland staff team for a year to develop this programme in other locations.

Matt shared his story with us; we hope you enjoy reading about his time in Bougainville.

Facts about Bougainville:

- Population: approx. 300,000
- 95% of the population covered by the Bougainville Healthy Communities programme.
- Majority of population live rurally, with most relying on subsistence agriculture.
- Community development is focused around sanitation, clean water supply, good health and wellbeing.
- 25% of all leprosy cases are children.

Having lived in Bougainville for 18 months, I was lucky enough to travel right around the island... however, even though I had spent quite a length of time in Bougainville by this point, I had heard but did not know a lot about the Bougainville Healthy Communities Programme from the Leprosy Mission.

Until one day... I met a few kids at a local waterfall. They invited me to meet their family as their village was only a 10-minute walk away.

They took me immediately to their house and introduced me to their family.

I was overwhelmed by their kindness and hospitality. It was wonderful to be able to spend the afternoon with this lovely family.

The family then showed me around the village and took me up some well-looked-after and tidy bush tracks which had beautifully planted flowers on the sides.



Matt on a canoe with some locals in Bougainville.

They took me around the village to beautiful lookout points as we observed homes that were built on cement foundations with power lines connecting to them.

The village had utilised their local water source as a fresh water source for their homes, and had installed a hydro generator that was providing electricity to what looked like a majority of the homes.

I was completely blown away at the tidiness, the development and how well managed and looked after the village felt!

Most homes had solid cement foundations, electricity and a clean water source. The village just looked absolutely beautiful with flowers and plants everywhere.



This might not seem much for us in New Zealand, but it is very uncommon to see in remote places in Bougainville. **Thank you for making this life-changing work possible!**

Since 1999, supporters like you in New Zealand have been supporting this successful community health programme in Bougainville. Matt was able to visit one of these villages in the programme which is known as a 'model village', an example and inspiration for other villages.

Thanks to incredible supporters like you, the Bougainville Healthy Communities Programme now covers 95% of the Bougainville population.

Thank you for transforming lives in Bougainville!

Do you remember Philomon and Philomena?

Philomon and Philomena live in a leprosy hotspot area in Bougainville.

These beautiful children had already started showing the telltale signs of leprosy with patches on their faces and bodies.

"I just want leprosy to go, and go for good," said their mother.

David, who you may have read about in our latest Bougainville appeal, was one of the village health volunteers who ensured Philomon and Philomena received the full course of the cure for leprosy.



Philomon and Philomena are cured of leprosy - all thanks to you!

Praise the Lord! Because of New Zealanders like you and the commitment of village health volunteers, the twins are now cured of leprosy. Children like Philomon and Philomena in Bougainville can enjoy a brighter future, free from leprosy - thanks to you!

Together, we can see no child with leprosy in the world, by 2035.

130 To Go!

New Zealanders are all looking forward to the removal of the restrictions we are currently under with the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic – but people affected by leprosy have been waiting for the removal of restrictive laws for decades.

Because of leprosy, a person can be legally banned, detained, forbidden, separated, segregated, expelled, divorced.

Leprosy is a mildly infectious disease that has been curable since the 1980s. Within 72 hours of Multi-drug Therapy treatment, the person is no longer infectious.

Yet leprosy-related discrimination, stigma and prejudice are the most powerful barriers to ending leprosy for good.

Did you know?

There are still **130 laws in 29 countries that deny the fundamental human rights of people affected by leprosy**, meaning that a leprosy diagnosis itself can strip a person of their basic rights.

In fact, these discriminatory laws are in, many cases, just as damaging as or even worse than the disease itself.

"We know of continual family stigma, with the children of parents with leprosy expelled from school. Those children, when they are grown and have children of their own, then find their children are also excluded from school. So it is inter-generational; they carry a deep shame even after they are cured," says Gillian, LMNZ Executive Director.

These attitudes stem from the misconceptions around leprosy and laws that discriminate against people affected by leprosy.

People with leprosy-related disabilities are perhaps the **only remaining people with disabilities who face legal discrimination from such laws**, and are denied basic social rights as well as the right to political participation and equal recognition before the law.

The effect of such devastating social stigma is that it helps to keep leprosy alive – because people affected, typically living in poverty, see the discrimination against others and elect not to go to the doctor to have treatment.

One of the Leprosy Mission's key goals, along with other partners, is to reduce the number of countries with legislation allowing discrimination on the basis of leprosy to zero. These laws are offensive and need to be repealed or amended.

Hence, the Leprosy Mission is presenting this petition to the Human Rights Council of the UN to repeal these 130 outdated and discriminatory laws in 29 countries.

The petition will be presented in September to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

We want to see people affected by leprosy having equal access to political rights, economic equality and social justice.

Since we launched the petition in February, over 1,400 people from all around the world have signed it. Thank you!

As a supporter of the Leprosy Mission and a friend to those affected by leprosy, will you add your voice calling for the UN to help end 130 outdated and discriminatory laws against people affected by leprosy?

"We want to show love to people with leprosy. Helping them to be able to live without discrimination is one way of doing that."
Rose, New Zealand

"As a Christian, I feel that it is important to follow Christ actively, by speaking out against all injustice against those with leprosy."
Ruth, Ireland

"No one should be discriminated against on the grounds of their health condition."
Chinwe, Nigeria

Sign the petition today!



Alternatively, you can use your smartphone to scan this code to sign the petition.



There are 130 legislations and 29 countries that discriminate against people on the grounds of leprosy. We call on the UN to use their human rights mechanisms to ensure that all Member States live up to the commitments they have made to international human rights conventions.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number/ email: _____

Please fill in this form and send back to us in the freepost envelope to:
The Leprosy Mission New Zealand, PO Box 96262,
Balmoral, Auckland 1342.



Cut along dotted line.

World Leprosy Day 2021

72

churches

5,066

New Zealanders

100,000+

supporters worldwide

joined with us for World Leprosy Sunday to raise awareness of leprosy and remember people affected by leprosy in prayer.

As the world has been impacted by COVID-19, the needs of people with leprosy are in danger of being forgotten.

At times like this, we thank God for wonderful people like you. We are truly inspired by your love and kindness towards people with leprosy.

Thank you for joining us in this global movement towards ending leprosy.

Thank you too for demonstrating love in a practical way to people affected by leprosy, to show that you care.



Save the Date
Global Prayer Day
12 May

All 30 countries within the Leprosy Mission Global Fellowship are setting aside 12 May in a united day of prayer.

We will lift up and pray for all people affected by leprosy, the global team who serve them and our faithful supporters around the world. We encourage you and your church community and groups to join us in prayer on the day.

Hebrews 12:1-2 is the central scripture verse for the day. Please meditate on this word and devotionals and prayer can be centered on this scripture.

Please contact Nadia if you would like to participate in the Global Prayer Day at 0800 862 873 or email nadia.paul@leprosymission.org.nz



One of our youngest supporters at the Leprosy Mission NZ.



"A Living Bequest It Just Makes Sense"

A visit with Graham, a friend and committed lifelong supporter of people affected by leprosy found us joining him on his remarkable journey. Graham fondly recounted his association with the Leprosy Mission from a young gentleman of age 22 until now.

Pulling out an album that dated back almost 40 years, Graham told us how his journey began.

In 1982, at age 22, Graham had volunteered to share his newly acquired engineering skills to teach young men who were affected by leprosy, at a Leprosy Mission Vocational Training Centre in India. His experience living with people affected by leprosy at the Vocational Training Centre in India was the catalyst that would change his life forever.

Graham recalled his many wonderful experiences with much passion and conviction, retelling how he witnessed such hopelessness turn into hope.



During our visit with Graham, he took the opportunity to explain the reason why he and his wife had made a decision to support people affected by leprosy by giving the Leprosy Mission NZ 'a living will'. **"This is in place of leaving a bequest in our will", he said.**

Graham went on to explain that doing it in this way he believed would benefit both parties:

- The charity gets the bequest now, a known amount.
- The donor gets their tax rebate while they are still alive, an obvious benefit.
- The donor knows their money is making a difference now.
- Makes writing a will easier, can't be contested, no family arguments, etc.

"At least that's how we see it, said Graham. "It just makes sense."

Cheque Alternative



Thank you to wonderful supporters like you. Your kindness and gifts given over the years for people affected by leprosy are invaluable.

You may be aware that banks in New Zealand are moving towards eliminating cheques from their services. Your support is a blessing and vital to the mission we all share.

Important dates of banks removing cheques:

ANZ: 1 June 2021
Westpac: 26 June 2021
BNZ: 1 July 2021
ASB: 27 August 2021

We are here to make this transition as smooth and as easy as possible.

We're here to help you navigate these changes so you can continue to donate and help transform the lives of people affected by leprosy.

In this last year, the Leprosy Mission has been working with the major banks in creating a **cheque alternative**. It is a **paper based one-off direct debit** authority to the Leprosy Mission.

If you want to know more about this cheque alternative giving method or other secure ways to give, please contact Nadia on 0800 862 873 or email nadia.paul@leprosymission.org.nz

Board Member (volunteer position)

Are you the next Treasurer for the Leprosy Mission NZ Board?

We are seeking a volunteer Board member for the role of Board Treasurer and to Chair the Resource and Audit Committees for a minimum term of three years.

Interested? For the position description, please contact Gillian: gillian.whitley@leprosymission.org.nz

The Leprosy Mission Prayer:

Almighty Father, the giver of life and health, look mercifully on those who suffer from leprosy. Stretch out your hand to touch and heal them as Jesus did during his earthly life. Grant wisdom and insight to those who are seeking the prevention and cure of the disease; Give skill and sympathy to those who minister to the patients; Reunite the separated ones with their families and friends; And inspire your people with the task set before the Leprosy Mission, That it may never lack either the staff or the means to carry on its healing work. In accordance with your will, and to the glory of your holy name, We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen.

Thank you so much for standing with us in prayer.

If you wish to receive Prayer & Praise diaries, please contact Denise on 0800 862 873, or denise.herd@leprosymission.org.nz

Tax Receipt Changes - from 1 April 2021

We would like to advise supporters of changes to the process for receipts. To accommodate Inland Revenue changes, Leprosy Mission will provide a **single annual receipt for all donations**.

You will still receive an acknowledgement letter from the Leprosy Mission for every gift you give and a single annual receipt at the end of the year for all donations.

You don't have to do anything. This change will occur from the 1st April 2021 which is the beginning of this tax year.

Feel free to contact us on 0800 862 873 if you have any questions. We are more than happy to help.



Books



To Heaven and Back

A true story of the spiritual journey of Mary and what happened as she moved from life to death to eternal life, and back again. Detailing her feelings in heaven, her communication with angels... Mary shares the captivating experience of her modern-day miracle.

\$30 includes P&H



In Her Words

It is full of adventure, larger-than-life characters and exotic destinations - central to her story is the work of God in her life and in the lives of those she met. This is her story, told in her own words and in her engaging and gripping style.

\$35 includes P&H



Daily Strength for Daily Needs

A selection of prose and verse, with accompanying texts of Scripture, is intended for a daily companion and counsellor. It is hoped it may help to strengthen the reader to perform the duties and to bear the burdens of each day with cheerfulness and courage.

\$35 includes P&H



Chestnut Street

A short story collection by the Irish author Maeve Binchy. There is kindness, wisdom and insight into human nature. Each story centers around a different resident or family living on or connected to Chestnut Street in Dublin.

\$35 includes P&H

Buy a book and help end leprosy

The above are only a sample of the books available for purchase.

To view all books, please visit www.leprosymission.org.nz/book-store Alternatively, contact Carolyn Currie on 0800 862 873 or carolyn.currie@leprosymission.org.nz

Free postage throughout New Zealand.

"I am willing"

Use your Will to do God's Will



A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, make me clean." Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. (Matthew 8:2-3)

During your lifetime, the number of people affected by leprosy has fallen tremendously. Yet many remain. God cares for them deeply and we know you do too.

Use your Will to make sure there will be hope, light and life for those still affected by leprosy after your lifetime.

Your bequest costs nothing now, but in the future will have great power to transform the lives of the most wounded, rejected and poverty-stricken.

Call Gillian about your bequest

Gillian Whitley would love to answer your bequest questions, either on the phone or even better, over a friendly cup of tea.

Gillian will also send you a fascinating leaflet about bequests. It tells a beautiful story of how a lasting gift like yours can restore hope and family to those affected by leprosy. The easy process of including the Leprosy Mission New Zealand in your Will is also explained.

Call Gillian now on 0800 862 873 or
email: gillian.whitley@leprosymission.org.nz

