

inTouch

Official Magazine of The Leprosy Mission New Zealand

Issue 440 / Autumn 2017

Your gifts change lives
in Bangladesh

Reflections from a
Youth Advocate



The Leprosy
Mission
New Zealand

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The Annual Review 2016 will be published in Spring *inTouch*.

The full Annual Report will be available on our website at the end of May at leprosymission.org.nz/annual-reports

Welcome

Welcome to your Autumn edition of *inTouch*!

In the past few months I have led groups of Leprosy Mission supporters and Youth Advocates to view our work first-hand in India and Nepal. It is always so rewarding to be reminded through these supporter trip experiences of what we are achieving together. It is at these times that I appreciate once again that each of us has a vital role to play in bringing an end to leprosy.

Here in New Zealand, generous supporters like you provide financial support, join us in prayer, or volunteer your time and skills to raise awareness and funding for our work with people affected by leprosy. In our hospitals and projects, the tireless work and commitment of the staff is inspiring, and your prayers encourage them on a daily basis knowing that they are part of our Leprosy Mission global family.

It was wonderful to see Anjali again. Now that her feet have healed, she is feeling much stronger and happier about her future. Our supporter group was humbled to be invited to meet her, and Anjali's family were delighted to know that so many New Zealanders were thinking of them.

I hope that you enjoy reading your *inTouch* magazine and also being reminded about the real transformation your support is bringing into the lives of people affected by leprosy.

Thank you for all that you do to make lives better every day.

With blessings,



Gillian Whitley
Executive Director



Gillian sitting with a patient at Muzaffarpur hospital, India.



Cover photo: Courtesy of Eloise Johnstone visiting our project in Bangladesh.

The Leprosy Mission New Zealand Incorporated is a Registered Charity Number CC37638

*The Leprosy Mission New Zealand, relying on the grace of God and motivated by Jesus Christ, exists to join in mutual partnership with individuals, families, communities and organisations to share resources, experiences and learning in order to eradicate the causes and consequences of leprosy, and actively supports the right to a life of dignity for all people. *inTouch* is published twice a year by The Leprosy Mission New Zealand.*

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Anjali's Cure One journey

Daily physiotherapy will help prevent Anjali's hand becoming more clawed.

Cured by you!

Anjali's story was filled with sadness, however because of our incredible Cure One supporters there is new hope and promise in her life.

Anjali found out she had leprosy when she burned her feet horrifically by the fire. Confused and scared she was turned away from her local hospital because she had leprosy. Our hospital in Muzaffarpur took her in and she began her journey to recovery.

After taking a long course of antibiotics, she is now cured from leprosy.

Cared for by you!

The burns on Anjali's feet were shocking, they needed to be cleaned and dressed every day to prevent infection. This meant many months in hospital.

The trauma of burning her feet and finding out she had leprosy was huge for Anjali and she was often reduced to tears when her situation was discussed. The counsellor at the hospital helped her to understand the disease and slowly she started to see a hopeful future without leprosy.

Leprosy was causing Anjali's hand to claw and daily tasks became difficult.

'School was hard because I couldn't hold a pen,' she reflects, 'It was more and more difficult.'

While Anjali was at hospital she was taught physiotherapy to ensure her hand doesn't claw further.

'My hand is much more comfortable now,' she smiles.

Anjali's next steps

Anjali's feet are numb meaning she is at risk of injury which could lead to ulcers and possibly amputation. She has received protective sandals so her feet don't become more damaged.

'It is much more comfortable with my sandals and easier to walk,' she explained.

The hospital provided lessons so she, and the other young people, can keep up with their studies. These lessons are held in the hospital grounds so the young people don't have to miss out on their vital hospital care while they are learning.

Thank you for being part of Anjali's story. It is wonderful to share her progress with you; it is because of you and people like you that we are able to bring light and hope to her life.



Anjali has been fitted with protective sandals to prevent ulcers.



Anjali receives regular classes at the hospital so she doesn't miss out on her education.

Mr Meah gets life changing support – thanks to you!

Last March we wrote to you about Mr Meah who was facing a difficult journey with leprosy - but thanks to your support of our Government Match Appeal, his quality of life has improved.



Mr Meah and his family have food and shelter thanks to you.

55 year-old Mr Meah lives in a hut with his wife and children in an impoverished part of Bangladesh. He associated the pains in his arms and legs with his rickshaw business, but in fact he was suffering from leprosy.

Mr Meah consulted many doctors, but wasn't diagnosed correctly until it was too late. He tried to keep his business going, but his pain and disability simply would not let him. With the little income his family was earning, he says "I starved myself for my family."

While he was being treated for leprosy he also developed an ulcer in his leg, which became at risk of life-threatening infection.

"After I lost my leg, an artificial leg was given to me by the Leprosy Mission," he said, "My quality of life has improved."

Thanks to your incredible support, self-help groups were set up in Mr Meah's community. These groups provide a saving scheme for the members and loans to help people start small businesses.

Through the self-help group Mr Meah was able to build a new house for his family.

"It was a day of joy when I moved here. I never thought I would have a house," he declared with glee!

Because Mr Meah is severely disabled he could not go back to work as a rickshaw driver, so he took out a 8000 Taka (NZ\$140) loan and built a shelter near his home. He rents this shelter out and makes a small income.

Mr Meah now leads the 11 member-strong group. He enthusiastically tells us about the great success that the members have experienced from the group.

"Our group members have all benefitted. They are all running small businesses, using their loans," Mr Meah says.

The people in his community now have more dignity, and there is vastly reduced stigma towards people affected by leprosy.

He exclaims "Community people love me! I am accepted very well. No one gives me any discrimination, I am very thankful."



Mr Meah was given an artificial leg by the Leprosy Mission.



A family is back on their feet!

Thanks to your incredible support of the Leprosy Mission, Ismail's family are now very happy.

Ismail's story began 19 years ago when he was extremely sick with leprosy. Ismail could no longer work and carry out daily activities, as his hands were clawed.

Thanks to your loving support, Ismail was cured of leprosy and received hand surgery.

While the family were grateful for Ismail's full recovery, they were still facing desperate poverty. They worried about whether their twin boys, Forhad and Jihad, would be able to go to school.

Self-help groups helped free Ismail's family from poverty.

Thanks to your support, the Leprosy Mission established a new self-help group that Ismail joined. The group helps those affected by leprosy to create small businesses. Ismail took an initial loan of 5,000 Taka (NZ\$90) to cultivate vegetables and thanks to this income, the twin boys were able to go to school.

Ismail also received training on vegetable cultivation and took additional loans to expand his vegetable growing. Now Ismail can repair the family house as well as provide clothes and books for his children to use at school!

The twins are very happy and highly motivated at school. They are so proud to attend school with sturdy school bags and all of the school supplies they need to do well.

Your gifts continue to support the family's new livelihood.

Through the self-help group Ismail gained sheep rearing training. He used a loan to buy three sheep and he hopes to earn extra income by selling the wool.

The self-help groups provide vital support and skills training to more than 2,800 people living with leprosy and disability. These groups give leprosy-affected individuals a powerful collective voice and provide the support they need to care for their families.

The twins give thanks for your support.

The twins are now exemplary students at school. They are very happy and grateful for the opportunity to get an education. They regularly attend school and are getting good results.



Ismail and his wife work to grow nutritious vegetables for the family and to sell in the community.



"Thanks to LMNZ," Forhad writes a message for Kiwi supporters in his new notebook.



Messages from New Zealand bring hope to the lives of children in PNG.



Your love, support and prayers means the world to many people affected by leprosy.

PNG and Bougainville

Your support means we have trained community members to detect leprosy and provided training on the treatment of the disease. These wonderful village health volunteers then go into communities and ensure those who are diagnosed with leprosy complete their treatment.

Early detection works miracles

Lavu was only 4 years old when he first developed white patches on his face. It is devastating to see such a young child suffering from leprosy.

Thankfully - with help from Robert Kauga, a village health volunteer, Lavu was transferred to the local Health Facility to be examined by the Health Worker.

Lavu was given a six-month course of multi-drug therapy, the cure for leprosy, and his progress was monitored by Robert.

By completing the treatment and receiving care and support from Robert and the Leprosy Mission, Lavu is now completely cured of leprosy.

Because of early detection, Lavu has not developed any disability or noticeable problems.

He is able to go to school and play with his friends. There is so much to celebrate!

Working together in the future

Because of your ongoing support, the Leprosy Mission has been working alongside the community in PNG and Bougainville on long term projects to create lasting change. The impact of the work has impressed the New Zealand Government who have also been supporting our work in PNG. Thanks to you we will be able to build on this work, training more village health volunteers and reaching out to more innocent children like Lavu to give them a brighter future.

Together we can make sure no one is missing out on the cure for leprosy. **Thank you for your continued support and trust in our work.**



Lavu can go to school and play with his friends now he is completely cured!



You are doing extraordinary things

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." – Jeremiah 29:11

Your prayers, support and donations have touched so many lives in PNG. People are being healed and they know your love is reaching them.

Thank you to everyone who sent a card to be given to people affected by leprosy. The team in PNG were overwhelmed when they received these cards. It was such a delight for them to understand how much people in New Zealand truly care for them.



New Homes and New Hope in Ethiopia

Over the years your kind gifts have supported the Grain Mills Project in Ethiopia. This project gives people the opportunity to sell grain, with the profits used in the community to help leprosy-affected and disabled people.

The project has been so successful that people in the community have had homes built for them.

Mulu's second chance

Mulu's husband left her and their children when he found out Mulu was diagnosed with leprosy.

Mulu's life was very difficult. Because of delayed treatment, she became disabled. She could not find a job and became a beggar.

Thankfully, because of supporters like you, Mulu's life has been completely transformed!

Mulu and her family were provided with a house with clean water supply. She also received vocational training and was able to set up her own small business to sell handicrafts. This meant her children were able to go to school.

Your generosity means families like Mulu's can be self-sustainable and have hope for the future!



The project impacted Mulu and her community in a great way!

"I am very grateful! I feel a sense of belonging and support again!"



Merga's story

60-year-old Merga felt very scared and helpless when he first discovered he had leprosy. He didn't know what to do. He believed the disease was a curse from God and he needed holy water to wash his sin away. This did nothing to cure his leprosy and he continued to get worse. He became very depressed and isolated.

Merga's life was very hard because of leprosy.

Yet, thanks to your support, the Leprosy Mission was able to build him a house. He now rents out rooms to other people and this has become his main source of income.

"I got ill in my old house, the rain came in and it was cold. Now I rent to people and they talk to me. They help me and support me," he says.

We cannot do it without supporters like you!



Your love and generosity have given Merga back his smile and hope for the future.

"I'm very happy that I have someone to talk to now!"

Merga is very thankful for the help from the Leprosy Mission. Thank you for supporting our work in Ethiopia over the years. Your gifts have transformed lives.

Reflections from a 2016 Youth Advocate...

Katy Edwards is one of our wonderful group of 2016 Youth Advocates. In November last year she spent a few weeks in our support office as an intern.

During this time a powerful 7.8 earthquake shook New Zealand and it brought up memories of her time in Nepal. Katy wanted to share them with you.

Thank you for supporting leprosy-affected people in Nepal

As I write this article, New Zealand has just been struck by another earthquake which has hit Kaikoura and Wellington particularly hard.

This sobering event reminded me of the destruction I witnessed in Nepal nine months on from another 7.8 magnitude earthquake that had taken more than 9,000 lives in April 2015.

It is incredible that the earthquake in New Zealand was the same magnitude. How fortunate we are that our building codes have meant the damage and loss of life has been so considerably less.

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the Leprosy Mission's Anandaban Hospital provided emergency care to the masses of injured people who were rushed in from the city and surrounding villages.

Your support ensured Anandaban Hospital was able to provide aid, not just to its own leprosy patients, but to the wider community after the earthquake.

It was humbling to hear Dr Indra, the head surgeon at Anandaban, relate how he and other staff had slept outside for weeks in the midst of continuing aftershocks whilst continuing to care tirelessly for the waves of patients coming in.

Anandaban's involvement in the wider community is helping to reduce the stigma surrounding leprosy-affected people in Nepal as Nepalese see the love and care our hospital's staff have for all people.

The scale of the earthquake

On our two day trek, hundreds of metres above the city of Kathmandu, the tiny mountain villages we walked through were reduced to rubble.

We had heard that the usual accommodation for the first night of the trek was damaged so we would be staying somewhere else. However, we were not prepared for the total decimation that faced us as we came down the valley into the village of Chisipani.

No building was left unscathed. The hostel where the Youth Advocates usually stay was on an eerie lean, the bottom floors completely collapsed.



The hostel where previous Youth Advocates stayed



This sight was particularly emotional for our team leaders Gillian and Brent who had stayed in this hostel for the past 6 years.

That night on top of the mountain is one I will never forget, looking out on the stark silhouette of the hostel where we should have been staying and watching the sun rise over the rubble of the village the next morning.

The effect of the earthquake on the leprosy-affected patients

During our stay at Anandaban we talked to Ruth Strestha, the counsellor at Anandaban hospital.

Ruth reminded us of the effect of leprosy on patients' mental health.

During the earthquake, because of the physical disabilities of some of the leprosy patients, they were not able to move themselves to shelter. This traumatic experience had taken a highly emotional toll on some of the patients.

Nine months on, Ruth told us how some of the patients still believed that they were feeling aftershocks even when she reassured them that nothing was happening.

She told us how some of the families of the patients had asked for their family member to be put next to a window so that if there was another big earthquake they could have some way of escaping.



Protective shoes prevent further damage to numbed feet



A patient with a clawed hand resulting from leprosy

Ruth has been playing such a vital role in the healing process of the patients and staff in the months after the earthquake.

Thank you for your support of the Leprosy Mission and those who work at Anandaban Leprosy Hospital.

Your support is helping to eradicate leprosy

We met some incredible characters during our time in Nepal who were a testament to the life changing support and love they had received at Anandaban Leprosy Hospital.

Thank you for supporting the Leprosy Mission. It was a privilege to watch the lives that are being changed because of supporters like you.



Katy with a patient who knitted beautiful gloves to sell



The 2016 Youth Advocate team

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Youth Advocate please visit leprosymission.org.nz/youth-advocates or email youthadvocates@leprosymission.org.nz

Supporters Corner...



Supporters were delighted to meet our first Cure One ambassador Nutan. It was wonderful to see she was doing so well and her smile lit up the room.

Come on the supporter tour – you will be amazingly looked after, the food is brilliant and the people are even more brilliant.

– Jayne Watkins, Wellington

Each year we take a group of supporters like you to visit our projects in India. They meet people being helped and hear their stories. You could see the work that you support changing lives.

You can see in a tangible way how God is bringing healing and hope to some of the poorest people in the world.

Being on the supporter tour has been just the greatest experience. I thought I was coming to be a blessing to others, but have been totally and utterly blessed by the appreciation of the hospital and all the folk here.

– Margaret Tegg, Dunedin

We are taking enquiries now for 2017, so don't miss out. For an incredible, authentic overseas experience join our supporter tour now.

For more information contact Gillian Whitley on 0800 862 873 or supportertour@leprosymission.org.nz

Little Angels Knitwear

You have a great opportunity to purchase some beautiful pure merino baby garments from the Little Angels Knitwear and support the Leprosy Mission.

Kathy Tanner and Helen Newbrook are the managers of the Little Angels Knitwear. Knitters throughout New Zealand voluntarily knit for the Little Angels knitwear. Every year the profits go towards supporting people affected by leprosy.

'The Little Angels Knitwear gives knitters the opportunity to support others who have leprosy. It is a win-win-win business. Knitters love to knit, babies benefit by having pure merino garments to wear and the Leprosy Mission uses the funds raised to help people with leprosy. We like being part of making this all possible,' says Kathy.

We are truly grateful for the love and support that Kathy, Helen and knitters have towards leprosy-affected people.

A range of pure merino baby garments is available

for purchase: Shoettes for \$8. Cap, mitten and shoette sets for \$20. Matinee jackets or Cardigans for \$25. Matinee jacket, cap, bootee and mitten sets for \$40. Fine 2 ply Heritage Shawls for \$135, plus packaging and postage costs.

Please contact Kathy on kathytanner@extra.co.nz to email your order, or to ask any questions.



Matinee jacket set \$40



Shoettes \$8



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.

Request your Prayer & Praise diary today from Ngaira Lynch on 0800 862 873, or at ngaira.lynch@leprosymission.org.nz

The lasting legacy of bequests

We are extremely grateful to the following supporters who remembered the work of The Leprosy Mission New Zealand in their Will.

Leonie Foster	Hamilton
John Ronald Coster	Dargaville
Kathleen May Shepherd	Hamilton
Betty Ethel Cooper	Auckland
David G Bolitho	Nelson
Pauline Garde Shephard	Christchurch
Lucy Grace Findlay	Wellington
Gwendyth Ringer	Hamilton
Ruth Marjorie Rowe	Feilding
V Wickham	Hamilton
Allan Chamberlin Moodie	Auckland
Barbara Murley Dixon	Havelock North
Phyllis Sarah Eyre	Hamilton
Ruth Monica Carryer	Tauranga
C A Smith	Dunedin

Allan Garfield Russell	Rotorua
M J Macaulay	Dunedin
Flora Irene Ward	Hawera
Elsie May Grant	Dunedin
Kathleen Joyce Williams	Porirua
Ashton Craig Crawford	Whangarei
David Johnston Barron	Tauranga

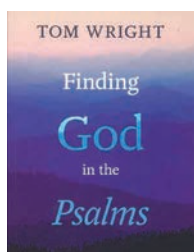
Bequests / In Memory

Thank you for generous donations received in memory of:

Tony Boeyen	Gisborne
Jean Cox	Papakura
Ghislaine Cornille	Hamilton
Claire Mitchell	Auckland
Joan Nelson	Dunedin

If you would like to include a bequest in your Will please contact Gillian on 0800 862 873 or gillian.whitley@leprosymission.org.nz

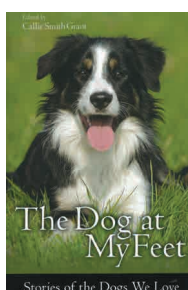
Books



Finding God in the Psalms

Sing, pray, live. This book will be of enormous help to Christians who want to know how to make fuller use of one of the greatest scriptural resources for prayer. A characteristic blend of learning, personal insight and spiritual perception.

\$35 includes P&H



The Dog at My Feet

A heart-warming collection of true stories that celebrate the love and loyalty that dogs bring into our lives. Warm, captivating, and ideal for a cosy curl-up-and-read session. You'll meet a three-legged survivor who heals a broken family, a funny mutt who brings laughter in the midst of anxiety and many other pups that prove God created our canine friends for a unique purpose.

\$22 includes P&H

Buy a book and help eradicate leprosy

To order your books today, please visit www.leprosymission.org.nz and order your copies at our online bookstore.

Alternatively, contact Carolyn Currie on 0800 862 873 or at 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.



After receiving much needed medical care, Belmati is now happier.

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 really 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



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