

# HEROES OF HOPE

INSPIRED  
BY YOU!



**WORLD  
LEPROSY DAY**  
**29 JANUARY**



The Leprosy  
Mission  
Australia

**I MAY WALK THROUGH VALLEYS  
AS DARK AS DEATH,  
BUT I WON'T BE AFRAID.  
YOU ARE WITH ME,  
AND YOUR SHEPHERD'S ROD  
MAKES ME FEEL SAFE.**

PSALM 23:4 (CEV)

You might find the stories in this World Leprosy Day booklet tough to read.

The people you meet have suffered in ways hard to imagine. The hurt of leprosy. The pain of rejection. The brutal loss of family members.

Maimuna. Lowali. Suley.

Mother. Husband. Brother.

Farmer. Motorbike taxi driver. Fisher.

You'll meet Pius, who sets out in prayer each day to take your help to people with leprosy in Nigeria. Whose courage in caring depends on your courage in kindness.

Most importantly, you'll see how people like Maimuna, Suley and Loweli can hold onto hope when they know there is someone who can help.

In each of these stories, that someone is you.

You are the 'shepherd's rod' that can make people with leprosy 'feel safe' even when their journey takes them 'through the valley of death'.

**This World Leprosy Day,  
The Leprosy Mission gives  
thanks to God for sending  
you to be a Hero of Hope!**



## **MY PRAYERS ARE WITH YOU**

**For Maimuna Moussa, leprosy was just the first of threats that few could endure. Your kindness answered her prayers ...**

When I was a young girl, I started to notice patches on my left arm.

Gradually I lost feeling in my left hand – I could touch fire and not feel any pain. Then I lost feeling in my feet also and developed ulcers.

My family and I did not know what was happening. We put antibiotic powder on my ulcers, but it didn't help. Then, when I was 15 years old, we came to the leprosy clinic.

We were relieved to find out it was leprosy, because we thought it was cancer.

I was comforted too when I saw there were many other people affected by leprosy, and I was not the only one, and that I wasn't as sick as others.

**I was assured I would be cured so this was greatly comforting.**

When I came to the leprosy clinic, the ulcers in my left foot were so severe, I my leg had to be amputated to save my life.

I had severe pain in my leg, so it was a relief to have the amputation. I was given a prosthetic leg, and also started on MDT.

My husband was also physically disabled. We didn't want to beg, so we decided to return to our village and start farming to earn a living.

We were in our village when the insecurity started. Fulani herdsman came to my village and started shooting with a machine gun. The bullets came through the walls of our house. They killed my father, mother, and two brothers all in the same day.

**“They locked my younger brother and his children in their house and then set fire to it.”**

MAIMUNA

Then they came back two weeks later and killed my husband. They slaughtered him in front of me as if he was an animal by cutting his throat. He couldn't run away because of his disability.

We called for help, but it was several days before soldiers came. It was too late. We don't know how many people were killed. We don't know why these men did this. It doesn't make any sense to us.

I was pregnant at the time, and I had four young children.

The terrorists were killing the men and boys, so I dressed my three boys as girls, and we ran away. When we were fleeing our village, my prosthetic leg was damaged, and I stepped on a large thorn with my left foot.

**Because my prosthetic leg was damaged, I was only able to walk with crutches...**

**Through The Leprosy Mission, I was able to get a new prosthetic leg, and it fits me perfectly.**

I much prefer using this prosthetic rather than crutches – the crutches used to cause my arms pain.

The Leprosy Mission also provided me with shoes to protect my feet.

I have now remarried, and am living in a different village.

My children are all in school. I have a 16yo boy, an 8yo girl, a 4yo boy, a 3yo boy, and a girl who is almost 2. I met my second husband at the Leprosy Mission hospital in Sokoto.

I am enjoying my new prosthetic leg a lot. I can even do farming now!

I am part of The Leprosy Mission Self-Help Group, and am able to support my five children through goat-rearing.



## MAIMUNA'S MESSAGE TO YOU

**“Thank you for supporting me to access the healthcare and the drugs that are beginning to cure me. I want God to heal me, and for me to stay in one piece. When this happens, I know all will be well.**

**Truly I thank you. May God bless you and your family! Thank you!”**

# NO NEED TO BE A BEGGAR

Suley Abubakar worked in a fish business until leprosy clawed his hands. Your kindness offered Suley a new life ...

When I was 34 years old, I was working in a fish business. I would work in the cold room.

I started to notice nodules on my face. My face became swollen to the point that I couldn't open my eyes. I lost feeling in my hands and they became clawed. I didn't know what was happening.

I started taking different types of traditional medicine, but it didn't work.

I was getting worse and worse.

**“Before this people would laugh at me when they saw me, so I became afraid of going near people.”**

SULEY

One day, about two months after my symptoms started, I was sitting at a gas station and some people came through to get fuel who were in a wedding party.

Shehu S Fada was with them. He came over to me and told me that I should come over to see him at the Gusau leprosy clinic the next day.

When I came, I saw Shehu giving lots of other people medicine and then he gave me medicine as well. He asked me if I knew what was happening to me and I told him no.

He told me I had leprosy.

I was so worried when I didn't know what was happening to me, so it was a great relief to finally have a diagnosis. I also had hope because I saw that Shehu's skin had cleared, and Shehu comforted me by telling me that he had been through the same situation.



Within one week of starting treatment, my skin had cleared, and I could open my eyes again. I was so happy.

Now people don't treat me any differently to others.

I wasn't married before treatment, but I was able to get married after and now I have four children – two boys and two girls!

My wife and children are not people affected by leprosy.

My children are in primary school. I have a business selling fuel. I had a grant from the project to start my business. The money I earn from my business means I can pay for my children's school fees and I can buy toys for them.

## SULEY'S PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU

“I'm very grateful I've been cured. I didn't know what was happening to me. I am so thankful for your support of this project which means that I could get cured.

Because of your support I wasn't reduced to begging, and there are many others like me who have been supported to start their own businesses.”

# BULLETS TO BLESSINGS

When Lowali Yussuf was shot by bandits, his life changed. It changed again when you reached out to help ...

Three years ago I was at home with my family (my wife and four young children), when armed men attacked our village.

They stole the cattle from our village, and killed two of my neighbours.

They broke into my house and shot me.

The bullet went through my left thigh, and passed through to the other side of my leg. I was taken to a small hospital near my village where they sewed me up.

**“But after a few days, my toes started to dry out, and looked dead.”**

LOWALI

So, I went to a bigger hospital, where they told me that the bullet had damaged my artery and my foot was necrotic.

So, they had to amputate my foot.



Here you see the scar left by the bullet wound to Lowali's leg. The damage was so severe that Lowali's leg had to be amputated to save his life.



I used to work as a motorbike taxi driver, but now I can't ride a bike because of my foot. I can't change gears.

So now I work selling mobile phone credit.

My children are in school in my village, but the teachers do not show up to the school very often because of the security issues.

**Thanks to the kindness of people like you through The Leprosy Mission, Lowali was provided with new crutches. Because Lowali is unable to weight-bear through his left leg, project staff plan to refer him to the Chanchaga workshop you support, for a possible prosthesis.**

## LOWALI'S PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU

“Many thanks for your help and I pray that God will bless you.”

# YOU ARE A LIFELINE

Pius Ogbu Sunday leads your life-transforming ministry to people with leprosy in Nigeria. He shares the blessings you bring in the face of great danger ...

Greetings my friend!

Here in Nigeria, we are very far from you ... but your kindness and love bring you close. I thank God for you, because you are a comfort when we face so much challenge.

Each year 3,000 new cases of leprosy are reported. 10% are children – a child newly diagnosed with leprosy each day!

That's why you and I are needed here.

As I worshipped God this morning, I thanked Him for the privilege of serving people who have leprosy, and those who are cured but permanently disabled by the disease.

We have a wonderful church here in Minna, where I live with my family.

**I love to come to church to praise God and hear the Word, but I also find it sad because we have to have so much security on the door.**

**It can be dangerous for front-line workers here...**

In Nigeria, as across the Mission, we serve everyone who is affected by leprosy, regardless of their religion or tribal background.

But we must be careful in some places we travel with The Leprosy Mission because of religious tensions, and the threat of attack from extremists and terrorists. Sometimes we take an armed escort when travelling to a particularly dangerous area.

**“Life is far from easy here, but people affected by leprosy have more to contend with than I do.”**

PIUS

People often live in extreme poverty, not knowing if they will eat the next day, or if they will be able to feed their children.

How can you grow food if your hands and feet are deformed and disabled by leprosy?

Doctors and medical care cost money, and people are usually far too poor to afford this.

What hurts most though is when I see people with the worst poverty of all - being cast out by their friends, families and communities. I can seriously imagine nothing more devastating than this.

This is why The Leprosy Mission is a lifeline.

I am honoured to be part of a team giving practical help, medical care, love and acceptance to people suffering so much.

I am ready to go out again today to serve God's people. As I depart, I pray for safety. The Leprosy Mission team always pray before each journey we make and thank our Lord for our safe arrival.



## LOWALI'S PERSONAL MESSAGE TO YOU

“I thank you for your prayers, and for your kind support. Please know God is using you to bless those who feel so lost.”

# WORLD LEPROSY DAY 29 JANUARY

## YOUR PRAYERS ARE PRECIOUS

**SAFETY** Pray that frontline workers like Pius will be protected as they work in regions where Christians may be attacked by bandits or terrorist groups as in the name of God they seek to bring healing to people with leprosy.

**HEALING** Pray that supply lines stay open so leprosy-healing MDT (Multi-Drug Therapy) can reach people like Maimuna without interruption, so their healing from leprosy can be complete.

**WISDOM** Pray that medical staff have clear insight into the practical surgical intervention needed for people whose leprosy has left limbs unable to be saved.

**COMFORT** Pray that God's loving arms may lift up and hold all those who have suffered discrimination because of their leprosy, or who have lost loved ones to violence in dangerous places like Nigeria.

**HOPE** Pray that people with leprosy who feel they 'walk through valleys as dark as death', may know they are not alone. That God is with them, and they need not be afraid.

1800 537 767  
LEPROSYMISSION.ORG.AU



The Leprosy  
Mission  
Australia