



A message from Steve Meredith

The Leprosy Mission Australia Board Chair

God's abundance through your prayers.

The recent years in the life of the mission have been extraordinary. International current affairs and health events have truly tested the capabilities of our organisation on a regular basis.

We have been truly blessed with God's provision and guidance during this period.

Those in positions of management and governance have felt the power of prayer in helping to sustain and guide decision making at times of great need.

I'm reminded of the term used by Billy Graham that prayer is our 'faith strengthener'. That is the most important spiritual exercise that a Christian can have. Jesus seems to have devoted Himself especially to prayer at times when His life was full of work and excitement. The bible reminds us to pray at all seasons (Ephesians 6:18). **A big thank you to our prayer partners!**

My term as TLMA board chair draws to a close, along with my service to the board. I want to praise God for the amazing group of people that sustain the organisation across so many valuable roles. Donors, volunteers, churches, members of the National Council, management or the board itself — **God bless you all.**

I feel truly blessed and privileged to have been given the opportunity to represent the organisation and help build a small part of its future as it moves to eliminate leprosy in our lifetime.

I believe God has given us everything we need to fulfil our mission. We have been blessed with an 'abundance' of financial resources during a time when many other organisations have suffered. However, it remains a world where leprosy still exists in many communities.

Individuals and families still face significant loss of hope as they deal with the disease, its stigma and disability.

This is our biggest operational challenge - to move with urgency! Keep stretching our efforts to eliminate leprosy. Make sure the financial resources entrusted to us have reached the 'front line' in a timely way. Aggressively combat leprosy transmission. Scripture says, **'While it is day let us work because the night is coming' (John 9:4).**

I am a keen student of world history and that of the United States. George W Bush's Inaugural address delivered on Friday January 20th, 1989, still resounds today.

"And so, there is much to do; and tomorrow the work begins. I do not mistrust the future; I do not fear what is ahead. For our problems are large, but our heart is larger. Our challenges are great, but our will is greater. And if our flaws are endless, God's love is truly boundless."

Please continue to pray for wisdom and guidance. There are many competing priorities across multiple geographies. We grapple with investment decisions relating to the research and operational needs of the mission. In many situations we need to coach others how to make effective and responsible financial decisions as responsible stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

My prayer is that we take heed of the example of the Apostle Paul in the passage Ephesians 3:14-21. We are encouraged to comprehend the love of God (3:14,18), experience the love of Christ (3:19) and be filled with God (3:19). God will continue to do 'exceedingly abundantly' above all we ask or think.

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The Leprosy Mission Hospitals need your prayers & support.

Your compassionate heart could make all the difference for people like Prisha and her family.

When a pale patch first appeared on Prisha's face her family were not worried. These patches sometimes appear and then spontaneously disappear (attributed to relative vitamin deficiencies during a growth spurt). Yet new, expanding patches began to appear on other parts of her body with loss of sensation. Still, Prisha wasn't in any discomfort, so her family waited. But when a patch suddenly became red and swollen, they consulted a local doctor. The doctor referred them to Purulia Hospital, about 50kms from home.

Prisha was diagnosed with leprosy at about age 6 and given Multi-Drug-Therapy (MDT). Other conditions meant that as well as MDT Prisha would need a course of steroids and physiotherapy for her hand which has weak fingers. She would need to be admitted to hospital to manage symptoms and learn to care for her weak fingers.

Both Prisha's mum and older sister were diagnosed with leprosy. Fortunately, her sister's leprosy was detected early and is unlikely to have any complications. However, Prisha and her mum will need to have monthly check-ups and regular medication. They will also need to visit the hospital at least twice a year for follow up for five years.

The pale patches on Prisha's face will likely always remain visible.

This may lead to stigma and discrimination later on. Prisha receives counselling to help her face these issues.

Prisha had been due to start school when COVID forced schools to close or move online for the best part of two years. For many like Prisha's family the cost of technology means online learning is not an option. Prisha is keen to learn and welcomed a picture book given to her while at the hospital to learn her numbers and alphabet.

Pray for Prisha to continue her recovery from the effects of leprosy. Pray for her mother and sister to recover and for the family to support one another. Pray that as schools re-open Prisha and others like her will be able to catch up on their education.

Thank God for hospitals like Purulia which provide medical and personal support to people suffering from leprosy and disability. Pray for the Salur and Kothara hospitals supported by kind-hearted Australian donors. Pray for healthcare staff training and for outreach clinics to reach more people for testing and treatment.

Thank you for your compassion! It is needed now as much as ever. You can show your compassionate heart by giving to the work of our hospitals here: <https://leprosymission.org.au/projects/save-our-hospitals>



Myapelli (second from left) enjoying a game of carrom with friends from the VTC.



Arjun has come through stronger thanks to your faithful prayers and support through the work of The Leprosy Mission Nepal.

You can bring change to people like Myapelli! Your kindness can transform the lives of young people in India.

Myapelli Asha knows how difficult life can be. Her father died when she was five years old. Her mother has an intellectual disability. As a result, Myapelli and her brother ended up studying in a hostel away from home. Myapelli finished school and moved to Hyderabad where she worked as a maid in a private house. This was where she first discovered a pale patch of skin and pain in her right leg. Her employers took her to a private hospital and she was then referred to Salur Hospital with suspected leprosy.

Salur Hospital began her treatment for leprosy and would later treat her for foot drop. The hospital also recommended that she attend the nearby Vocational Training Centre (VTC) to learn a trade so that she could have a sustainable income.

Having foot drop had caused Myapelli to be very depressed. The warden of the VTC girl's hostel shared:

"When she first arrived here, she was very weak. Initially, she did not know how to talk to others; would often have difference of opinion and it was difficult for her to adjust in the environment. Since childhood, she had no one to guide her."

Living on the VTC campus and developing new skills has changed her outlook on life. Myapelli is pursuing a one year training course in tailoring.

"Now she is mature; has developed a helping nature, participates in activities and give suggestions. She is always eager to learn and try new things. Her confidence has increased. After completion of the course we will try to support her as much as we can."

Myapelli Asha likes the VTC because it has a homely atmosphere. **Your faithful prayers can continue to play an important part in the lives of young people like Myapelli. Please help them to feel secure, loved and see a future for themselves.**

Pray for Myapelli to continue to develop into a mature and confident person. Pray for others like Myapelli who find it difficult to come to terms with the affects of leprosy on their bodies and lives.

Give thanks for Salur Hospital, supported by Australians like you. And give thanks for the VTC's in India including the one supported by Australians like you in Vadathorasalur. Pray that they will continue to bring hope to many people affected by leprosy and disability.

You can bring hope to people affected by leprosy and disability and show your compassionate heart by giving to our Vocational Training Centre Project: <https://leprosymission.org.au/projects/vocational-training-centre-project>

You can break the power of discrimination! Your faithful prayers and kind support transform lives and build stronger communities.

Mental Health Week each October is an opportunity to build awareness of the impact that a diagnosis of leprosy can have. The physical, emotional, and social consequences of this cruel disease can be devastating. While much has changed for people affected by leprosy, stigma and discrimination remain a heavy problem for too many.

Arjun has been dealing with the stigma of leprosy since he was twelve years old.

Can you imagine the pain and disillusionment he must have felt, at that impressionable age, to have his friends turn against him?

How confusing and upsetting this must have been at a time when he was also dealing with the debilitating effects of leprosy. At a time when you are just finding your place in the world, to be so rejected can affect your outlook on life.

Arjun has had ulcers, clawed hands and drop foot. He has gone through three reconstructive surgeries at Anandaban Hospital to recover the movement in his hands and foot. Following physiotherapy and recuperation, he will go home to his family.

Despite everything Arjun has come through stronger and more determined. A huge part of his recovery is due to the counselling, love, and acceptance he has been given.

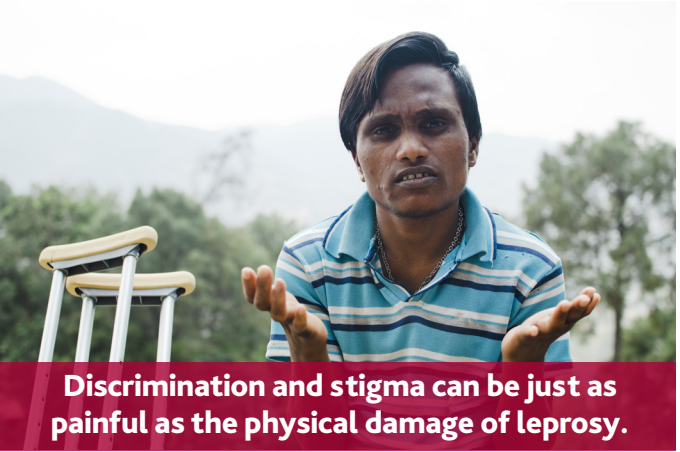
This type of support can mean the difference between hope and plans for the future,

and isolation, anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

Upbeat and content Arjun hopes one day to open his own vegetable shop and build a life of independence.

Pray for Arjun as he continues to overcome stigma and discrimination to live a full and healthy life. Pray for those weighed down with mental health issues to find the support needed to find hope and make plans for their future. Pray for healthcare workers, community leaders, and families. Pray they will work together to create safe, inclusive, and loving communities for all.

You can show love and support to people in Nepal by giving TLC. Total Loving Cure can make a real difference in stopping stigma and discrimination in Nepal. <https://leprosymission.org.au/projects/tlc-Nepal>



Discrimination and stigma can be just as painful as the physical damage of leprosy.