

## Through your prayers God renews Manimegala's mind.



**Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.**

**—Romans 12:2**

You know this is great advice! Godly advice to live more aligned to His ways. It is advice not just for you as an individual, but to encourage communities to help each person live their full life, at peace in mind, body, and soul.

The Leprosy Mission always works to ensure that people affected by leprosy, including their families, are supported to live their best lives, and to find inclusion in the community.

For Manimegala, this support turned her life around. "In my first year at the VTC (Vocational Training Centre), I was very depressed, and I had a lot of problems with my family. My father and mother were fighting, and at that time I wasn't interested in my education."

The Principal at the VTC in Vadathorasalur, Manaksha, could see Manimegala was struggling. "I used to see her eyes and she wouldn't laugh. She was very rigid...she said that she didn't want to receive education." Manaksha spent a long time listening to Manimegala's family problems, encouraging her to make the most of being part of the VTC community.

She helped to renew her mind saying, "you are [like] my daughter, [and] if you get an education, you can get a good government job." Since then, Manimegala has changed knowing her future will be different. Reflecting on that time she recalls, "I received life skills classes and counselling from Manaksha. In the first year after the counselling, I felt much better."

Manimegala only learned in recent years that her mother was diagnosed with leprosy in 2007. Since she learned about leprosy, Manimegala has advocated for victims, raising awareness about the disease in her community through acting and performing. Several thousand people have watched their program. Praise God for changed lives!

**Pray for Manimegala as she studies and dreams of a different future. Pray she will continue to find her place in the community, supporting and encouraging others.**

**Give thanks for Manaksha and other staff at the VTC as they show love and compassion towards people affected by leprosy and their families. Pray students will not only receive a quality education but find peace, community, and feel whole.**

You can bring wholeness to another person like Manimegala through the Vocational Training Centre.

<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/vocational-training-centre-project-kit6>



# Your Impact in 2023

## In Australia:



## Overseas:







You know how vital prayers are to the work of The Leprosy Mission around the world. Each day, each month, and each year, people just like you equip the mission through your faithfulness in bringing to God in prayer the needs of people with leprosy and the people who serve them.

Your compassionate heart, given over to prayer, has changed the lives of many people, bringing dignity and a future filled with possibility.

Now, we invite you to see the impact that you have made, both here in Australia and around the world. Please take some time to read of the ways in which you have made a difference and be inspired to continue praying.

Below are prayers giving thanks for what God has done and asking Him to continue this work through people like you until leprosy is a thing of the past.

**Thank you, God, for the rich blessings you have given to The Leprosy Mission through the many Australians who have shown great love and kindness to people affected by leprosy, disability, and discrimination. We pray that these blessings will be multiplied to bring healing, dignity, and new life.**

**Thank you also for the opportunity to be part of your great work of restoring your creation. We pray that as we follow in the footsteps of Jesus that we will be encouraged and excited by all that you are doing through people like us.**

**We give thanks for the many thousands of people with leprosy and other diseases, people with disabilities, and those suffering from discrimination who have been supported in the last year. Access to healthcare,**

**education, livelihood training, advocacy, and so much more has created more inclusive communities.**

**We pray that this will ultimately lead to zero transmission, zero new disabilities, and zero discrimination.**

**We know there is still so much to do before we reach this point. We rely on you, Lord God, for your vision for the work you have called us to support. We pray that more Australians will feel called to join in making a world without leprosy. Inspire us, and them, to pray, advocate, and give of the talents, time, and resources that you have blessed us with.**

**Amen.**

You can continue to make an impact and bring dignity and new life to people affected by leprosy.

<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/where-needed-most-kit6>





Above: Rev. Valerie (Val) Bock

# Leprosy Mission



## Australia

# HEROES

**In the 150th year of The Leprosy Mission we are taking some time to remember some of the many people who have contributed to our goal of a world without leprosy.**

**We are thankful to God for inspiring people like Val to provide love and healing to people affected by leprosy.**

## REV. VALERIE (VAL) BOCK

Val Bock's first official involvement with The Leprosy Mission Australia came in 1961 as a nurse serving people affected by leprosy in Papua New Guinea. She then went to work in India in 1966, later moving to Thailand in 1970 where she worked for 13 years alongside Dr Trevor and Mrs Heather Smith at McKean.

Initially Val's role in Thailand involved setting up a medical program in McKean's leprosy rehabilitation villages situated in various parts of northern Thailand. Travelling by Land Rover, Val and her team navigated narrow mountain roads and dirt tracks often in remote, inhospitable terrain, to bring medical care to former leprosy patients and their families; sometimes bringing back a few patients in need of specialised ulcer care or surgery.

This was pioneering work for Val and her team.

Val helped set up McKean's Vocational Training and Handicrafts Program; and later she headed up McKean's new Department of Communications and Health Education.

In 1983 the American Leprosy Mission sponsored her further education at Fuller Theological Seminary where she gained her MA in Missiology. The next year she was appointed Editorial Secretary for TLMA and helped establish the various State Advisory Committees around Australia.

Val continued her involvement with an appointment to the Executive Committee in 1988 but moved on to do theological training. She was ordained in 1989.

When she returned to Perth at the end of 1998, she joined the West Australian State Committee she had helped establish and was secretary for many years. Actively sharing in all committee activities, speaking engagements, street appeals, stalls, including the Royal Show and Hyde Park Fair, State Conferences, dinners and helping in the Overseas Aid shop.

In 1999 Val was elected to the National Council.

In 2012 Val retired from The Western Australian State and

National Council after 53 years of outstanding service to The Leprosy Mission. However, she continued to serve The Mission, going back to Thailand twice to work at the McKean Hospital in Thailand, again assisting Heather Smith.

Val was presented with Life Membership in 2013 in Perth, Western Australia at an event marking the centenary of The Leprosy Mission in Australia.

Val wrote a variety of books from her field experience. She was commissioned to write a book on the history of The Leprosy Mission Australia. The book "Praise be to God" would be her last. The draft was sent away for final proof and printing just 2 days before the accident that took her life. Even in death, Val still gave to help those with leprosy— her final gift in her Will. Thanks be to God for Val.

**Give thanks and praise to God for the faithful dedication and compassionate love of Val for people affected by leprosy.**

**Pray for staff and volunteers working across the many countries that The Leprosy Mission work in. Pray for the wisdom and energy to achieve our goal of a world without leprosy.**