

Do you love me?
Feed my sheep.

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Glen Coleman
Church Engagement Coordinator
The Leprosy Mission Australia

There is a reality to the death of a loved one that forces us to face life differently.

Often, we don't know how to do this. We are so full of grief that it can be hard to deal with life in the immediate aftermath. This is the beginning of facing life differently. Our whole life is sent in a new direction, ready or not.

Easter too is a time of facing life differently, taking us in new directions. No matter how we break down the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection we cannot escape the fact that nothing is the same once Jesus has died. The grief that threatens to overwhelm the disciples is palpable. Their hopes and dreams seem to be forever broken, smashed at the foot of the cross.

The resurrected Jesus takes those hopes and dreams and re-shapes them giving new life and direction. In John 21 we find Jesus walking along the beach talking with Peter, having revealed His resurrected self to the disciples through a miraculous catch of fish. As Jesus speaks about Peter's future Peter asks about John and Jesus replies 'If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.'

In other words, Jesus has plans for each of their lives and regardless of what those plans are each must choose to follow the path Jesus

lays out...or not. The choice to follow Jesus must not be made lightly, half-heartedly. It is a re-shaping of hopes and dreams to fit in with the plans of Jesus, not those of Peter, or John, of you or of me.

God is not ignorant or uncaring of our own dreams. Through the hope that resurrection brings, God aligns our dreams to his plans. Plans for the restoration of all creation, of human dignity, of nature, of relationships between God and humanity.

God asks us to follow and stirs our hearts to see the good that we might do. Jesus asked Peter to feed His sheep. What is God asking you to do as you follow the path laid out for you? For many of us who support the work of The Leprosy Mission Australia we sense God asking us to do all we can to complete the work that Jesus began when he healed those with leprosy during his ministry on earth.

Please pray for this work, that we will see interruption of the transmission of leprosy so that we can defeat this awful disease. Pray that lives may go in new, hope-filled directions.

Please share with those in your church and your groups about leprosy so that more people will know that together we can make leprosy a thing of the past.

If you would like to bring healing and hope to people affected by leprosy, scan the QR code or follow the link:

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



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The Leprosy
Mission
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Walking to end leprosy.

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Keeping in Touch • Issue 4, 2023

I have hope...but...I need your support.

This was written on one of many signs at a Walkathon organised by The Leprosy Mission Nepal (TLMN) to mark World Leprosy Day 2023. With the theme 'Act Now. End Leprosy' the event was an opportunity to highlight the work being done by The Leprosy Mission and other organisations to fight leprosy and other Neglected Tropical Diseases. (NTDs).

What a great day as TLMN staff were joined on the walk by students from three schools showing their support and encouragement to people affected by leprosy. Several dignitaries from both national and local levels attended the event.

The IMPACT project (Integrated Mobilisation of People for Active Community Transformation) also held a walkathon, the first time one had been held in the project area. This was a parade of banners with 250 government staff, public health students and teachers joining community groups and project staff.



These events are important opportunities to raise awareness and have conversations with the public, bringing further hope that there may indeed be an end to leprosy in Nepal.

Pray for the staff and volunteers of The Leprosy Mission Nepal who work so hard to make leprosy a thing of the past.

Pray for their partnerships with Government agencies in Nepal to break the chains of transmission, end discrimination, and reduce disabilities.

'Act Now. End Leprosy.' You can provide monthly financial support to make a real difference in the lives of leprosy-affected people. Scan the QR code or follow the link.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/tlc>



1800 537 767 • 37-39 Ellingworth Parade, Box Hill VIC 3128 • hello@leprosymission.org.au



“All of our dreams are shattered and there is no possibility of a fruitful life.”

This is the comment Reverend Godwin often hears from students when they first arrive for counselling.

The students at the Vocational Training Centre (VTC) in Vadathorasalur, India, have all been affected by leprosy either personally or within their families. They understand the physical toll it takes as well as the stigma placed on them by communities that are sometimes fearful about leprosy.

Reverend Godwin from the Lutheran Church knows the importance of the work of The Leprosy Mission in India. *“I’m so proud to be here because God’s ministry revolved around three things. It was the healing ministry, the teaching ministry, and the preaching ministry. And this campus provides all the three. We have the hospital which provides the healing ministry, the church which provides the preaching ministry and the VTC College, which provided the teaching ministry.”*

Reverend Godwin often counsels new students who have depression and are uncertain about what life has to offer. The VTC helps to change all of this, giving them a chance at a new life.

“I don’t know whether they are counselled by me, but I am much counselled by them and I am much blessed by their stories and much encouraged by the confidence that they possess.”

This is the difference that a quality education in a caring and supportive environment can make. *“The VTC College provides them a good opportunity for work that is a job security for them...[and] has given them a great encouragement to face a better future.”*

Reverend Godwin sums up the impact that the VTC has on students and communities, *“it is like a light that shines on them, and Jesus’ love expressed through them, and this is a beautiful place and where lives have been transformed.”*

Give thanks for the love of Jesus shown through the compassionate care of Reverend Godwin. Pray for him as he counsels students dealing with stigma and discrimination due to leprosy.

Pray for the VTC as they help young people to find dignity and hope for a better future. Pray that lives will continue to be transformed through the VTC.

Scan the QR code or follow the link to find out more and donate to the VTC in Vadathorasalur.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/vocational-training-centre-project>



The power of compassion to change lives!



Imagine the pain of being rejected by your best friend, and never hearing from them again!

This was Jutlen’s experience. Despite the stigma that exists in his village Jutlen decided to confide in his best friend just as you or I might do. Jutlen was devastated when his friend simply got up and left and has not spoken to or seen him again.

Jutlen and his older brother do their best to support their siblings as both their parents have died. Jutlen makes food to earn money but hides his leprosy out of fear that he will be treated differently, excluded, and lose his income.

Jutlen had not heard of leprosy before being diagnosed at a government hospital in India. He was given Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT) and now the physical pain he was suffering has gone. But the leprosy had already damaged nerves leading to his hands being clawed. Jutlen was referred to The Leprosy Mission Hospital for reconstructive surgery.

While in hospital Jutlen experienced the love of Jesus demonstrated through the compassionate treatment of the staff. This was such a blessing to him and helped heal him from the rejection of his friend. Jutlen gave his testimony at a church in his village which inspired the pastor to visit the hospital and ask staff to run a health camp in the village. This was a great success with more than 180 people attending and four new cases were able to be diagnosed and treated! **Give thanks for the love of Jesus to transform lives.**

Pray for Jutlen to continue his recovery and find sustainable income.

Pray for the hospitals in India, including The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Salur which you pray for and support.

If you would like to know more about the work of The Leprosy Mission Hospital in Salur follow the link or scan the QR Code.
<https://www.leprosymission.org.au/projects/save-our-hospitals>



Brian Stedman passed away last December following a long illness.

Brian was a much-admired man who was dedicated in his work for The Leprosy Mission. From the beginning of 2008 until the end of 2012, he was the Tasmanian State Director during which time he travelled around the state making as many contacts as he could and encouraging the supporter groups. Brian got along well with everyone and was in great demand as a speaker.

Brian will be sadly missed by all who knew him, and especially his wife and children.