COVER: LEPROSY CASES UP IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA
25% are Children

The cost of a mother’s love

See the protective shoes you bought

Meet the mums with leprosy in Nigeria

The Leprosy Mission Australia
In your ACTION magazine

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We see Transformation: People healed and living in community with dignity, opportunity and hope
MISSION: Following Jesus Christ, The Leprosy Mission strives to break the chains of leprosy, empowering people to attain healing, dignity and life in all its fullness.
VALUES: Because we follow Jesus Christ, we value Compassion, Justice, Integrity, Inclusion and Humility.

Cover photo by Bruce Millar

Message from the CEO

As the CEO of The Leprosy Mission Australia, I want to extend to you a heartfelt thank you for your generous ongoing support.

Because of loyal supporters like you, we’ve continued to fight leprosy head on. I’m excited to see the significant impact we’ve made together on the frontline rescuing people from the cruelty of the disease.

MY OWN INSPIRATION

This edition of ACTION features several stories about mothers with leprosy or who have children with leprosy.

This made me think of my own mother. It’s been a year since she died. This wonderful woman had a great spirit of self-sacrifice. Many times she went without so that we, her three children, could have what she thought was important.

For as long as I can remember, right up until she was 89 years old, she had incredible strength and concern for our wellbeing. For as long as I can remember, whenever I walked in the door her first question to me was, “What can I make you to eat?”

Helping mothers be carers

Similarly, the mothers we help also have the same desire for their families to have the very best.

One example is Sarmila in Nepal. Within two weeks of giving birth, this young mum found out she had leprosy. She was left ostracised and in distress. You can read her story in the letter inserted into this magazine.

I can imagine my own mother fighting tooth and nail to hang onto and care for her children. I see the same love in Sarmila.

You can also read about Jyotilaxmi from India. Her mother could not bear to be away from her daughter—even though she had leprosy.

Then there are the dreams of the mums with leprosy from Nigeria and Gouwo from PNG who could so easily be shamed into hiding. Instead she’s now a leprosy ambassador!

These mothers of The Leprosy Mission are such a precious gift. Thank you for joining me on God’s mission to help them be all they can be. Leprosy and poverty does not have to define them... with your help.

Sheldon Rankin
CEO, The Leprosy Mission Australia

Mothers affected by leprosy

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Along with your kind gift, please add some words of encouragement for children in PNG like Rebecca.

Encourage your neighbours. Love your neighbours. Your generosity will help stop leprosy’s rise in PNG. It will stop other children from suffering with a disability. Imagine the huge impact of sending $45. It will enable us to screen a child for leprosy and prevent disabilities like Rebecca’s clawed hand and horrific leprosy ulcers.

$95 provides leprosy treatment for a child. You can ensure that remote wilderness clinics will get the Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) medicine they need to cure leprosy. MDT needs to be taken daily without interruption for 6-12 months. If supply is interrupted, leprosy can relapse.

$200 will train a Healthcare worker to recognise a person’s skin patches as leprosy. They will also learn how to provide correct treatment and protect communities from leprosy.

What you’ve helped achieve

The good news is that over 16 million leprosy cases have been cured over the last 20 years! But leprosy is still prevalent in many countries… in fact, every 2 minutes, another person is diagnosed with leprosy.

Slowly we’re finding and treating these people. They’re in countries such as India, Nigeria and Nepal. In some countries like Papua New Guinea, where leprosy was “officially” eliminated as a public health problem, leprosy cases are rising again.

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What you’ve helped achieve

Take ACTION and Cure One today! You can join the fight against leprosy with a regular gift to provide someone with total leprosy care. Through diagnosis, treatment, rehabilitation and financial independence, your ongoing care helps one person with leprosy through all stages of their journey.

Tick Cure One today on the coupon on the back page and send it back with your details!

Take ACTION on 3 fronts

1. DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

This means Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) provided as early as possible. It may also include training in self care to prevent wounds from festering and resulting in permanent disability. In the worst cases, patients may need physiotherapy or surgery to restore the use of limbs.

2. COMBATING STIGMA WITH EDUCATION

From Biblical times to today, the stigma of leprosy lingers. People with leprosy are commonly ostracised or abandoned by their family, friends and community who are afraid of catching the disease. This is why The Leprosy Mission Australia is actively involved in educating communities about leprosy. We need to get the message out—how to detect leprosy early, how it’s transmitted, how to treat it—and that it IS totally curable!

3. DEVELOPING FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Microenterprise initiatives such as raising goats or chickens promotes self-sufficiency and provides income. Many a leprosy-affected person transforms from sitting all day on the floor of their hut—shunned and hidden away—to becoming a happy and productive member of society. Some even join the cause of TLMA, helping others with leprosy!

Because Christ loved us first

What an amazing love Jesus had for humanity. At the Leprosy Mission Australia, we try to emulate His example in loving those outcast in society.

Jesus showed love to people with leprosy, curing them and accepting them. Together, we can do the same!

It’s your love and generosity that enables us to take Multi Drug Therapy to those with leprosy—offering them a modern-day cure. It’s your prayers and compassion that mean we can find those who hide away due to the shame and stigma of their disease—giving them love and acceptance.

Together we can be the eyes and ears and hands and feet of Christ and follow his example by touching the life of a person with leprosy.

Thank you for fighting leprosy… in Christ’s name

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A mother’s love

Leprosy could not dim a mother’s love... even when everything else was gone

At 65, Jyotilaxmi should be a mother—even a grandmother! But leprosy took that chance away from her.

Jyotilaxmi came from a rich family in India where she had everything she wanted. But she was diagnosed with leprosy at age 17... just as she was about to finish school. By then, she had clawed fingers on both hands. Not understanding that leprosy could be treated, her family asked her to leave home. They feared for their reputation if it was known their daughter had leprosy.

Jyotilaxmi’s mother pleaded on her behalf. It was no use. One day, her father drove her to a faraway place and dumped her on the side of the road.

She met a couple with leprosy who helped her get treatment. But she could not return home. So this girl, who once had everything to live for, was reduced to begging. She slept on pavements. She felt shame and humiliation. Jyotilaxmi lived like this for 38 long years.

The best years of her life... gone. Education, marriage, motherhood, grandchildren... it all passed her by.

But leprosy took that chance away from her.

Jyotilaxmi began living in an abandoned bus shelter. Her mother could no longer bear to be separated from her dear child and came to live with her.

This sacrifice was to cost her mother her life. When major floods hit Tamil Nadu on 8 November 2015, Jyotilaxmi and her mum were trapped in the bus shelter.

For four days, they had no food or water... and Jyotilaxmi’s beloved 80-year-old mother had a seizure and died.

When The Leprosy Mission rescue team found them, Jyotilaxmi was hungry, shivering and overcome with grief.

“My mother died in front of me of fear and hunger. I could do nothing…"

A mother’s sacrificial love

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Jyotilaxmi and her mum were trapped in this bus shelter for four days without food or water. Jyotilaxmi’s beloved 80-year-old mother had a seizure and died.

What a blessing to see a smile on Jyotilaxmi’s face. Working with wood has given her the first chance she’s had in 48 years to become independent.

Take ACTION!

Your generosity means we can find, treat and develop livelihoods for people with leprosy like Jyotilaxmi. Let’s do it before they lose the best years of their lives!

Tick My Gift on the coupon on the inside back page, tell us how much you want to donate and send it back with your details!
Who misses out when relief starts coming in after a natural disaster like the India floods in November 2015?

It’s the people with leprosy who are abandoned and forgotten. Already ostracised and shamed, they’re often the last to receive help—although they need it the most!

That’s why we want to send a big THANK YOU to supporters all over the world—including Australian supporters like you—who have been so generous. Without your support to the work of The Leprosy Mission in India, many leprosy-affected people could have missed out on life-saving aid.

Take Nagammal. Her husband had abandoned her because of her leprosy deformities. Field workers of The Leprosy Mission Trust India found her post-flood. She was huddled in a collapsed goat shed, which had been her home for 17 years.

Shivering, drenched and terrified… Nagammal told a harrowing story of torrential rains that battered the roof of her flimsy shelter… how rising waters washed away the goats—her only livelihood… and hunger…

“No-one came to help me all these four days. I haven’t eaten even a spoonful of rice.”

If not for your support, it could be that Nagammal would not have received the food packets, bed linen and medicines she needed at this time. Workers dressed her leprosy ulcers and fixed a temporary cast to her hand to prevent further injuries.

Nagammal and hundreds of other leprosy-affected people are now going through the rebuilding process. As many as 265 households have at least one person with leprosy with special needs.

A Leprosy Mission Hospital, a Vocational Training Centre and a community development project in India were all affected by the floods.

Donations in action after the floods
Support from people like you has meant people with leprosy were not forgotten after this disaster! Thank you for helping to provide:
• Medicines, bandages, soap
• Food items such as oil, rice, powdered milk, salt
• Household items such as mats, bedding, kerosene stoves, utensils, clothing and other basic needs
• Assistance with mobility and daily living activities so people with leprosy are included in relief efforts.
• School support so children with leprosy can continue their education
• Counselling and encouragement after the trauma
• The means to rebuild ruined homes for leprosy-affected families
• The chance to rebuild livelihoods after losing livestock

Take ACTION!

Flood victims are now going through the hard work of rebuilding their lives and livelihoods. Thank you for helping those who are most vulnerable.

If you wish to help people affected by leprosy and disability, tick My Gift on the coupon on the inside back page, then tell us how much you want to donate and send it back with your details!

Thanks to you, Nagammal received practical aid—with much-needed TLC—after the floods in India. Abandoned and forgotten by her husband due to leprosy, livelihood assistance means she’ll be able to live her life with dignity.
Have a cuppa for a leprosy cure

What do prayers and cups of tea have in common?
Both were in abundance on World Leprosy Day on 31 January!

Thank you for praying! Prayer warriors like you around Australia joined together to commemorate World Leprosy Day and lift up the ministry in prayer.

We truly believe your prayers for our work provide much-needed strength, wisdom and funds in reaching and changing the lives of people with leprosy—the ones most affected by poverty and this disease.

Thank you for hosting a Cuppa for a Cure morning or afternoon tea

To everyone around Australia that hosted a Cuppa for a Cure event to raise funds for the mission… thank you so much for your heart.

Gisborne Church of Christ was the first to book a Cuppa for a Cure event. Many other churches, groups and individuals followed suit.

Thanks too for sending in your photos of your tea tables. It was great to see you drinking the Fairtrade tea and coffee sourced from our Cure One Catalogue. Proceeds go towards helping people affected by leprosy and disability.

Many of you also hosted Cuppa for a Cure events in your own home. What an encouragement to see friends united over cups of tea and warm scones to help people with leprosy.

Cuppa for a Cure events help to create awareness about leprosy. Many Australians simply don’t know the disease still exists today. They are unaware of the cruel impact of leprosy in people’s lives. The aim is to show leprosy is curable and how those affected by the disease can go on to live better lives… with just a little help from supporters like you.

Call 1800 617 679 to register your Cuppa for a Cure morning or afternoon tea

Your Australian support in ACTION!

The shoe is on the other foot… the leprosy-affected foot!
Thank you for making it a merry Christmas… with shoes!

Because of your generosity, over 9000 people’s lives have been changed through our Christmas Shoes Appeal! You’ve given 9000 pairs of protective shoes to vulnerable people affected by leprosy. They previously had no way of protecting their feet from permanent damage.

It’s amazing to think how a pair of $15 shoes can change a person’s entire future for the better.

Sanak Batadur in Nepal was one delighted recipient of a pair of sandals. No longer will he have to risk permanent injury because his leprosy-affected feet remain unprotected.

With your help, we can provide a range of shoes to meet the needs of different people with leprosy. Some prefer sneakers, while sandals are better for people like Sanak.

Some shoes have even been specially made to fit feet with deformity due to previous damage.

So what does a pair of protective shoes really mean for a person with leprosy?

When leprosy attacks the nerve endings in a person’s feet, they lose sensation. So a man like Sanak would not feel it if he walked barefoot in the fields and cut his feet on glass, rocks or nails.

The result is horrific sores, cracks and ulcers that become infected. If left untreated, feet can become damaged permanently… or may even need to be amputated.

So your generosity helps people like Sanak to prevent these debilitating injuries… injuries which stop them from doing the everyday things that you take for granted.

Like going to the toilet. Or caring for your children. Or going to work so you can put food on the table.

Not only that, you help them avoid the rejection and stigma that comes from having deformities as a result of leprosy.

What a blessing a pair of protective shoes can bring… thanks to you!

Shoes can prevent ulcers, severe injuries and deformities in the feet of people with leprosy.

Sanak is all smiles when Shovakhar Kandel, The Leprosy Mission’s Country Leader in Nepal, presents him with a pair of protective shoes!

It’s not too late to buy shoes! Tick Protective Shoes on the on the inside back page if you’d like to give someone like Sanak a much needed pair of shoes. This protection for their feet will give them a brighter future.

Take ACTION!

Your Australian support in ACTION!

Take ACTION!

You can still host a Cuppa for a Cure...
Tick the Cuppa for a Cure option on the inside back page. We will send you a host pack with posters, DVD, coasters, prayer diary and information about leprosy.

Call 1800 617 679 to register your Cuppa for a Cure morning or afternoon tea

ACTION Edition 1, 2016

Michelle and Zach enjoy morning tea at Cuppa for a Cure at Living Faith Church in Greensborough Victoria which raised $500.

Even your smallest friends can join in the mission to help people with leprosy.

Thank you for purchasing our Fairtrade tea and coffee! You’re supporting small tea and coffee farmers in countries such as Nepal, Vanuatu and Sri Lanka.

Thank you for praying!

World Leprosy Day and lift up the warriors like you around Australia

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Take ACTION!

Let’s help more mums with leprosy who are fighting for their children’s futures! Just tick My Gift on the coupon on the inside back page, tell us how much you want to donate and send it back with your details!

Nigeria: Mums enjoy the cream of success

Amina Garba in Nigeria is so grateful to supporters like you.

This mother with leprosy received the support and training she needed to make a small business venture a success.

Along with the other women in her livelihood self-help group, she makes Vaseline-type creams and car wash detergents to sell at the local market. They also buy and sell livestock.

They even raised enough capital to buy a car which is used as a taxi service in the local community.

These women have all been affected by leprosy. But they also have an enterprising spirit which is giving them an income to provide for their families. Their children have food and can go to school.

As a result, they can hold their heads up within their community. They are no longer shunned and ostracised.

Amina and her friends are now hoping to grow their business with others in his community… multiplying the blessings you’ve brought them!

Timor Leste: multiplying the blessings

Thanks to your support, hundreds of leprosy-affected people in Timor Leste now have mobility aids and proper toilets.

They’ve also had the chance to gain vocational skills and access small loans to start small businesses.

It’s your gifts and prayers—and 24 self-help groups set up as part of a 5-year-project—that have made it possible for these people to support themselves.

Cosme is a young dad who joined one of these groups. He received a toilet at his home through the project.

Now his two children, aged 7 and 4, no longer have to walk a long way to relieve themselves. That means better hygiene and less chance of getting sick.

Cosme has also joined others in the community to build a small business selling petrol.

Their example is inspiring many other families… they’ve shared their newfound knowledge and independence with loved ones. This means the impact of your generosity is multiplied!

Now the next 5-year project in Timor Leste is set to build on the successes of these 24 self-help groups to help even more people with leprosy! Thank you.

Cosme is sharing his newfound knowledge of small business with others in his community... multiplying the blessings you’ve brought them!

Nepal: Thanks for the great work!

Proof your support has been effective in Nepal—the Nepal government has approved The Leprosy Mission Nepal for another 5-years of work in the country.

The Leprosy Mission passed the government evaluations needed to continue the work in Nepal. Thanks to your generosity and prayers. Our Australian supporters are already funding the self-care unit at Anandaban Hospital and education for children with leprosy or from leprosy-affected families.

The new agreement extends the work of The Leprosy Mission into the Far West Development Region of Nepal. It includes assistance for people with both leprosy and disability as well as post-earthquake rebuilding works.

Take ACTION!

Let’s stop those cases of leprosy rising in PNG!

Just tick My Gift on the coupon on the inside back page, tell us how much you want to donate and send it back with your details!

Papua New Guinea: Leprosy cases rising

NEW LEPROSY CASES IN PNG
2012: 276
2013: 380
2014: 540
2015 figures not yet available.

As attention turned to other health priorities, the number of new cases of leprosy identified in PNG has been slowly rising again.

This shows the urgent need to remain vigilant about finding and treating new cases quickly.

Your generosity means more cases can be found as more health workers are trained to diagnose and treat leprosy.

Your support means these health workers can do the hard work of travelling over mountains and through the thick forests of PNG to reach remote areas.

They can visit and give community health talks in the 6 provinces with the highest numbers of leprosy cases. This helps spread the message that leprosy is treatable and that people with the disease don’t need to be shunned or ostracised.

And they can provide MDT treatment and education about how to care for leprosy-affected limbs to avoid further injury.

Without you, villagers in rural areas would not be able to access this help—they can’t afford to travel long distances for medical care.

We need your prayers and support more than ever.

ACTION | Edition 1, 2016
Ways you can take ACTION!

Throughout the world, mothers like Sarmila, Amina and Gouwo fight against the stigma and disability due to leprosy. You can help touch the lives of even more leprosy-affected people through The Leprosy Mission Australia’s healing ministry.

Tick the areas that interest you below and return this entire coupon with your gift, in the Tear-off Reply Paid Envelope in the centre pages.

I would like to:

**GIVE FINANCIALLY**

☐ My gift of $_______ to help people affected by leprosy and disability

☐ Protective Shoes – my gift of $_______ for shoes for someone affected by leprosy

☐ Cure One today – please debit $30 each month from my credit card

**PARTNER IN PRAYER**

☐ Please send me your monthly prayer newsletter Keeping in Touch (KIT) via ☐ Post ☐ Email

☐ Please send me the Ask Diary – international prayer guide

**Payment options:** (please tick)

☐ I enclose my Cheque payable to The Leprosy Mission Australia

☐ Please charge my Credit Card: ☐ Visa ☐ Mastercard ☐ Amex

Card Number: ___________________________ Exp: _____________

Name on Card: ___________________________

Signature: _______________________________ Expiry Date: _____________

OR, you can also make your gift in the following ways:

Phone: 1800 617 679

Online: www.leprosymission.org.au

Direct Deposit / Online Banking:
The Leprosy Mission Overseas Relief Fund account: BSB: 013225  No: 297114729

In the reference field enter: MAPR16 (and the 7 digit number above your address over the page)

Please email notification of payment to: tlmaust@leprosymission.org.au

Thank you for your gift. It will provide hope, healing and dignity to someone affected by leprosy.

Now please return this entire donation slip, with your gift, in the Tear-off Reply Paid Envelope in the centre pages. Donations $2 and over are tax deductible.
Deformed hands and feet from leprosy. Almost total blindness. Years of discrimination.

Yakub contracted leprosy more than 87 years ago as a boy—before any treatments were available. Now 95, Yakub clings to his Christian faith. His Bible is a prized possession. He sleeps with it under his pillow because “then I will not have bad dreams. I keep my Bible with me even though I cannot read it”.

Yakub received treatment for his ulcers through The Leprosy Mission in New Delhi. He is so very grateful.

Every day, 52 children around the world are diagnosed with leprosy. Many more children—kids just like Yakub once was—remain undiagnosed due to stigma, fear and lack of medical expertise.

Thank you for making it possible to help so many people like Yakub... and let’s continue the work to help them when they are 15, 25 or 35 instead of 95!

Thank you for showing God’s love to people with leprosy like Yakub.