

Love in Action

Winter
Edition
2020



‘Light’ shines from out of the darkness

“Jothi means ‘light’ in the Tamil language and she truly is a light to everyone here at the vocational training centre. Her struggle for survival is real and her effort to come out of poverty is so inspiring that we often share her story with other women in the program to motivate and encourage them.”

- Sidda Gangamma, a teacher at one of BCM's Vocational Training Centres.

See inside for Jothi's story...



COVID-19 Update

All of our ministry partners are currently responding to the COVID-19 crisis and the impacts of lockdown. We are in constant contact and are supporting them to adapt their programs to provide critical care and support for the most vulnerable in their communities. Your ongoing prayers and financial support are so appreciated as they show love in action like never before.

*Together,
restoring hope
and life to the outcast
and forgotten.*

Finding belonging in God's family

Merveille, from the Democratic Republic of Congo, was only four years old when she lost both of her parents.

She was taken in by her aunt, who was already struggling to support her own four children both financially and emotionally. "I was too young to fully understand it", recalls Merveille, "but I felt that I didn't belong there at all. The other children treated me differently from each other and so did the parents, especially when it came to me expressing my thoughts or needs".

After a few years, this family dynamic began affecting her life outside of home as well. "One day I was sent away from school because no-one had paid my fees that month." This happened a few times before Merveille realised that her aunt

would only pay her school fees if she had enough left over after paying for her own children and this was increasingly becoming a problem.

It was only after starting to attend her local church that Merveille found a sense of belonging. "I would stay behind after the service each week and talk to the pastor. One day he asked me about my life. I told him about my family situation and it was clear that he cared for me. It was the first time I had ever felt like anyone cared about me. After listening for a while, he offered to pray with me and after we prayed I felt a huge burden come off my shoulders."

After counselling her each Sunday for two years, one day the pastor arrived at her home with someone

from HEAL Africa. They explained that she could be part of their sponsorship program and that would ensure that she could consistently attend school without fear of being sent away.

As a result of her sponsorship, counselling through HEAL's chaplaincy program and her growing faith in Jesus, Merveille's relationship with her family is getting better every day.

"I now know that I belong in God's family and I am starting to belong in my own as well."



Merveille (centre in the red dress) with her aunt (far right) and foster sisters

Arthur and Betty – Celebrating 50 years of child sponsorship

Earlier this year we discovered that our long-time supporters Arthur and Betty Nicolson had been sponsoring children for 50 years so we got in touch to celebrate, say 'thank you' and find out what child sponsorship means to them.

"We first heard about WorldShare (or CNEC as it was named at the time) when Angus and Glad Barr visited our church, Glenorie Mission Church, in 1969.

"During that church visit in 1969 we felt led by the Lord to sponsor a child, and we have been doing so ever since. We've had 33 sponsor children so far (pictured right).

"In 1984 we went with CNEC to Singapore to visit our sponsor

children. It was wonderful to see them in person, see their living conditions and the positive impact the child sponsorship program was having in transforming the children's lives.

"We consider it a privilege to be transforming lives through WorldShare! We couldn't go and be missionaries as we had a fruit farm we had to run. But as God blessed our business we were able to participate in the call to mission through sponsoring children and supporting missionary work overseas."

If you would like to learn more about sponsoring a child yourself, please get in touch.



Arthur and Betty have had 33 sponsor children!

Creating beauty from the brokenness



With two young kids in our home, things often get broken! It's just the way of life as little fingers try to grasp plates and learn about the properties of glass.

I try to repair the broken items with superglue, but I just don't know how to fix them to be worth using again. They usually end up in the bin.

Thankfully, our Father does not take this approach. He is the master of Kintsugi, a Japanese art form of restoration. I've learnt Kintsugi translates as "golden repair", and is the art of repairing broken pottery with gold lacquer. The result is a new creation, more beautiful and more valuable than it was before.



We're not perfect and are all in some way broken. But our brokenness does not mean we're worthless, and our healing God picks each of us up, restoring our brokenness and transforming us into something new and beautiful. "He heals the broken-hearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalm 147:3). We saw how Jesus gravitated towards the broken during His time on earth. This is what God does – binds us back together and lets His beauty and power shine through our cracks.

And at times like this, when there is so much brokenness and pain in the world, as COVID-19 rages on, how much do we need this reminder. That God is at work even in the midst of brokenness to bring restoration and healing. This is when He does his best work. He is the source of the ultimate restoration of each of us and the entire earth. One day God will make all things new – and like a beautiful Kintsugi piece of pottery, it will be more beautiful than it ever was before.

Our ministry partners have their eyes fixed on God and this truth, even as they stand in the midst of the COVID storm and its devastating impact on their communities. Our ministry partners are making the most of this opportunity to be Kintsugi artists for Christ, shining the light and love of Christ to those who are vulnerable and forgotten, giving them the chance to be healed and made even more beautiful than before.

Thank you for empowering them to do this. It is through your partnership that we can be united in working for God's restoration throughout the world and allowing people to be made whole and new in the name of Christ. I've been so encouraged by your response to our partners as we asked you to stand with them in recent months – thank you. You're part of the practice of Kintsugi. And if you happen to know how to do Kintsugi (in the actual sense) – please get in touch, as I'd love to learn!

With peace and blessings,

Joanna

A new look newsletter!

As you might've already noticed, this edition of our biannual newsletter (formerly known as Partners Review) looks a bit different from what you may be used to.

We are always looking for ways to strengthen and deepen the connection between WorldShare, our supporters and our partners.

As a result you will now find inside some new features that highlight the ways in which we are supporting our partners, the unique context that they are working within, as well as stories from supporters like you.

To reflect this increased focus on the activities of all three groups in our community – partners, supporters and WorldShare – we have a new design and a new name: Love in Action.

We believe that it tells a better story of what we are all here to do – to love like Jesus, not only in our words but in our actions.

I'd love to hear your feedback, so have a look through, read over the new features and let me know what you think.





Spotlight on India

Despite India's significant economic growth in recent years, there are still 880 million people living on less than \$2.50 a day. Almost 50% of Indian children up to the age of three suffer from malnutrition.

Right now, they are being hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the world's third-highest number of reported cases – over 2.6 million and rising – and the city of Bangalore, where our ministry partners serve, is likely to soon become the country's epicentre with around 7,000 new cases being recorded daily.

'Light' shines from out of the darkness

Losing her sister to cancer three years ago threw Jothi into a deep depression. At the same time, her sister's medical bills forced her father to take out a number of loans and pushed her family even further into poverty.

So, at age 15, Jothi found herself working alongside her younger brother on construction sites to help pay off the family's debts.

It was hard physical labour under the blazing sun, so when she heard about the vocational training program in sewing run by Bangalore City Mission (BCM) nearby she immediately tried to enrol. Her parents refused at first. Even with both of them working, the loan debts were so overwhelming that her family's survival depended on her income. But Jothi persisted, convincing them that with the higher potential income she could help pay the loans faster by doing the training.

The belief that her sister could have had better health care, and perhaps been saved, if their family

had been wealthier provided Jothi with incredible motivation and she was soon the hardest worker in the program. She excelled in her exams and even before she graduated she was working out of her home and had paying customers lined up outside her door each day.

"Jothi means 'light' in the Tamil language", explains one of her teachers, "and she truly is a light to everyone here at the vocational training centre (VTC)... she is loved by everyone. She is passionate and dedicated and her struggle for survival is real. Her effort to come out of poverty is so inspiring that we often share her story with other women in the VTC program to motivate and inspire them".

Upon graduating this year, she used her certificate to get a small bank loan to open her own shop. Now, at only 18, she is running her own business, employing two women in her shop and is well on her way to paying off her family's debts and building wealth for their future.



"Jothi is one of the youngest girls at the vocational training centre. She is passionate, dedicated and loved by everyone. Her struggle for survival is real and her effort to come out of poverty is inspiring."

– Sidda Gangamma, a teacher at one of BCM's Vocational Training Centres.

Coming up: Journey 2020 Online



This September, you're invited to connect with our partners in a whole new way.

From 21 Sept. – 2 Oct. we will take a two-week mission tour of BCM & HEAL Africa. We will dive deep into the world of India and the DRC as we explore the ministry overseas in

a series of exclusive online events. On this journey we will explore the daily life of our ministry partners with an itinerary of live videos, field conversations and special guests.

Faces of the pandemic

Kassynder was only one week old when his parents separated and both moved away, leaving him with his 81-year-old grandmother.

For five years Kassynder's grandmother cared for him and worked selling local food at a street stand to support the two of them. She was able to put food on the table and meet most of their basic needs but as Kassynder approached school age, she was becoming increasingly anxious as she knew she couldn't afford for him to go.

By the grace of God, a member of their church introduced them to PMF and soon Kassynder was welcomed into their child sponsorship program and began attending kindergarten.

That was six months ago.

Right now, Kassynder and his grandmother are under lockdown

in their makeshift squatter home in Manila, Philippines.

Manila is still under one of the world's strictest, and violently enforced, COVID-19 lockdowns, which has people terrified of leaving their homes.

As a result, millions of people, including Kassynder's grandmother, have lost any means of providing for their family. Like Kassynder and his grandmother, most squatter families in the area were already living hand-to-mouth before the COVID-19 crisis and there are genuine concerns for their survival.

Even if they survive until the lockdown is lowered, Kassynder's grandmother, his sole provider and only family, is in the highest risk category of COVID-19 infection.

Despite the strict lockdown, PMF has been doing everything they can



to continue supporting vulnerable families. They are sending emergency funds to families at risk of starvation like Kassynder's, so they can purchase food and other essentials. They are also providing emotional support via phone, as well as COVID-19-related updates to remote families and families who cannot afford internet or phone data.

Please continue praying for our brothers and sisters overseas as they continue to be hit hardest by this pandemic.

A poem from lockdown



The following is a poem (originally in French) written by 12-year-old Kyakimwa Louange, under lockdown in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

This Coronavirus causes us many problems.

It attacks everyone; adults, children, it does not choose white people or black people.

We have no schools, no jobs, no sports, all activities are stopped.

Many people have lost the spirit of sharing because of this virus.

Today people do not visit others because of this virus.

Many people have lost their love because of this virus.

Many people have no food because of this virus.

Many people have no work because of this virus.

But I know, by the grace of God, and the power of our prayers we will win this battle and there will be an end to this Coronavirus.

– a poem by Kyakimwa Louange

Are you a Rotary member?



Even though we can't travel, we can still connect deeply with our partners, as well as celebrate and support their incredible efforts to serve the outcast and forgotten in this time of crisis.

We are trying to increase support for our ministry partners at this time through rotary grants – if you are a member of a Rotary club, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch!

Sowing the seeds of empowerment

At WorldShare we exclusively support locally-run and governed grassroot organisations that need support and strengthening.

We believe that this is the most effective and sustainable way to transform lives. Locals understand their communities – both the problems and the solutions – and they are with their communities for the long haul.

Our role is to connect them with supporters in Australia, provide spiritual and financial support, and empower them through capacity building and training.

This report, written by Christian Fellowship Ministry (CFM)'s operations manager, Sharon Amali, gives an insight into how our partners' projects are born, often out of necessity, and how WorldShare can empower them to make the biggest possible impact.

In the middle of 2019 CFM project staff were visiting one of our sponsor children, Rebecca Ajambo, in rural Uganda when they were saddened to see the conditions that Rebecca, her cousin and their grandmother were living in. They live in a simple mud hut (pictured right) where Rebecca sleeps on her grandma's old clothes on the floor.

Seeing this made them glad that CFM was able to support Rebecca to go to school but they began to wonder if there was a way CFM could be doing more to help families and communities in this area.

Like many areas of Uganda, Mafudu has been hit hard by HIV and there are a lot of families that are made up of elderly grandparents looking after their grandchildren. A lot of these families carry out subsistence farming but are struggling to feed themselves let alone provide an income for their family's other needs.

When Rochelle (WorldShare's International Projects Coordinator) visited us in November 2019, she worked with CFM staff to carry out a Needs Assessment, we ran structured focus groups and community meetings (pictured left) to determine what the community saw as their greatest needs, as well as their greatest strengths and assets.



Out of these discussions it became clear that the key areas that the community wanted to focus on were improving agriculture, education and increasing employment opportunities for the youth.

Even with the COVID-19 outbreak, and resulting lockdowns, the project is moving along well. We are currently gathering participants and I hope to be able to share more with you soon as we progress to the next stage.

Against the backdrop of COVID-19 we are so excited to see the progress CFM is making with their 100% community-led Mafudu project! We will keep you updated on their progress and how you can support them, both in prayer and financially, in coming months.



Get in touch



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Thanks for your support!