



TLM Daily Devotions

February 2017





Pars pro toto

This new set of “The Bridge”- the 15th one already! - is a “pars pro toto”: part of the whole. Written by a small number of TLMers, but expressing the spirituality, dedication, faith and prayers as main values of the whole of our folks. That makes a mission incredibly more than an organisation.

Thanks to each one of you for your contribution: those who write regularly and the newcomers, retired or active, woman or man, young or older, those giving their „This is my story”- testimonies (future pages of the History of the Spirituality of TLM!) , or grammar proof, or theological review .

All together we are what is called: TLM worldwide. Our beloved family. Praise the Lord.

Marta Risko



'Awake... Arise ... and Christ will give you light'

'Therefore He says: "awake you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light" (Ephesians 5:14) (NKJV)

The above quoted scripture, by Paul, is calling our attention as believers to key things we need to do so that we do not neglect our calling or the assignment God has given us:

'Awake'; our attention is called by the Holy Spirit to our neglected responsibilities due to spiritual slumber or sleep as the scripture said; I often need to examine myself if I am slacking in my spiritual responsibilities; have I been compromising the value and standard God requires of me according to the Scripture? It is obvious that in the state of sleep all activities are suspended and, therefore, it is impossible for us to contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the Kingdom and we may even become a hindrance to the gospel; therefore, God is gently waking us up from sleep so that we can complete the task He has given us, knowing full well that the time is limited.

'Arise'; God is not just waking us up for nothing; God expects us to actively engage in spiritual warfare and in Kingdom work. We therefore need to take a step to rise and do the work that God has assigned to us. Arise may sometimes mean to repent and turn away from dead works of the flesh that are not profitable and cause a lot of waste; like the prodigal son who said to himself that 'I will arise'. Which condition do we find ourselves in now? If we are outside Christ and busy with dead works of religion, we need to 'arise' and turn to Christ so that He can clothe us with His glory again. Or have we lost our first love because we've been busy with the cares of this world at the expense of our spiritual responsibility; we need to arise and return to our first love of God

'Christ will give you light'; God has offered to illuminate our lives and ways if we have taken the spiritual initiative to wake up, and arise. As we respond to this command we will then be able to walk as children of light and the glory of Christ will give us light and guide our path/directions. When the light of Christ illuminates our paths, we will surely never stumble. I am confident in this truth that, when I am awake and arise to respond to the call of God on my life, God will give me His light and I will not stumble. (Psalm 121:3-8). God is ever faithful to His promises!

Can we therefore in this year 2017 be determined to:

'Awake' to study His word, His ways and listen to His instructions.

'Arise' and walk daily by following His direction and fully obeying His words.

So that **Christ will give us His light** and that His glory can be seen in our Ministry and family.

May God help us to be wise in responding to His commands so that we can redeem the time that we have lost because these days are full of evil (Eph 5:15-16)! Every blessing!



Thoughts for a new year

I lift up my eyes to the hills - where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip - he who watches over you will not slumber; Indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Psalm 121: 1-4

This psalm, a song, is wonderful. It describes a trust in someone who always is there for you and me, who always watches over you and me. These words give me hope for the future, also for this new year.

Almost daily during the last year we heard about war, about disturbances, about people running away from home because of bombs and shootings. A world where a large group of people are suffering and crying. A world where many people are longing for only one thing: peace. It is into this world, that seems so dark, that the Lord has called us *to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* (Mica 6: 8 b)

Every week I'm seeing some refugees, three boys younger than 15 years old. They had never heard about our country here up in the north, but here they are, trying to adapt to a quite different culture. They have no idea why or where the smugglers took their parents. My prayer when I'm meeting them is that I should *act justly and love mercy* and show them that the Living God gives hope for the future, because these boys have lost their hope.

In The Leprosy Mission we are used to meeting people in need, who suffer. We always try to do our best to support those in need with medical, with social and economic help. We also try to give spiritual support through love and concern and show the hope that only God can give. I believe that this is the key stone of our Mission!

I will never forget the first time I visited a leprosy hospital. It was Saldoha Hospital in the state of Jharkand in the north east of India; a remote place with no electricity. But what it *did* have was loving, caring, dedicated people who worked there with great passion. Their respect for the leprosy affected people, who often were judged as worthless in the society, was outstanding and unique. They were really acting *justly* in the daily work! Where did they get their strength to do this day after day?

I think that the secret was their daily morning prayer. Early in the morning the staff and some of the patients came together in the church on the compound. The prayer there became their source of strength. The Lord, who does not sleep or slumber, was there and encouraged them for another day. They trusted Him.

Maybe you have worked for The Leprosy Mission for many years. Maybe you are tired and have lost some of your strength. Maybe you are feeling unsure about the new year and the future; you have no idea what is going to happen. Feelings that we can all experience in our lives. I would like you to remember this: your help will come from someone who is The greatest, The strongest, The Maker of heaven and earth! Remember, when you are too tired to pray, there will always be someone carrying you in prayer!

The Psalm 121 tells us: *The Lord will keep you from all the harm - he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and for evermore.*



Circus navigation

“And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand?” Exodus 4:2

A few days ago, when my daughter Emma and I went paddling on our kayaks, we sought refuge from the fierce wind by exploring the local harbour, where we discovered a bright yellow yacht moored at the entrance to the small-craft basin.

A French couple appeared on deck and announced that a circus show was about to start and using the mast and its stay-wires as their trapeze system, they entertained us with a high-wire act. It's the strangest thing that Emma and I have encountered on our paddles, making a change from the seals, whales and penguins that usually pop up around us on the bay.

The French couple explained that for the past eleven years, they've been “circus navigating” the world.

I found it rather Biblical, Jesus pushing out on a boat and using it as a platform to teach people through images they could immediately understand – sowing, seed and harvest. Using mime, the voyaging artistes have been entertaining a wide range of nationalities for more than ten years, and, judging by the condition of their yacht, they've been making a handsome living from it!

Take a look around you today. What are the tools that Jesus has entrusted to you to communicate His love for a broken world? I've been messing around with boats for longer than I care to remember, but I'd never thought of using a boat as a platform for a circus – although my mates at the clubhouse assure me that I sail like a clown. Having seen a yacht used in this way, it makes so much sense – it almost seems obvious. Is there something you could use in an unusual – maybe even startling – way, that would engage with people, get them thinking and probing? Think of prophets like Ezekiel – who ‘spoke’, despite his tongue being stuck to the roof of his mouth. Shocking hardly does justice to the ways in which Ezekiel ‘talked’ – his audience must have been terrified and horrified in equal measure. Now we may not want to go around alarming people, but we do need to remind ourselves that God used vivid images and astonishing methods to communicate with His people.

He has given you a unique ability to communicate with someone no-one else can reach. Let's stir up those gifts in each other today.

“Father, you have placed so much in my hands. Moses had only a staff, but that was enough. Help me to use what I have, to look for that unique image that will speak into the heart of my listeners.”

Peter Laubscher - Country Leader, Southern Africa. Peter and Elizabeth Laubscher have worked with the Leprosy Mission since 1981. They are blessed with three children. Peter cruises the waters of False Bay when he's not trying to polish scratches out of telescope mirrors.



The Blessing of Affliction

When He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold. – Job 23:10

Affliction can be a means of refining and of purification.

Just as ore must pass through the refiner's furnace before it can yield up its gold, so our lives must sometimes pass through God's furnace of affliction before they can bring forth something beautiful and useful to Him.

We might never have had the songs of Fanny Crosby had she not been afflicted with blindness.

George Matheson would never have given the world his immortal song, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go," had it not been for the pain of personal tragedy and heartache.

The "Hallelujah Chorus" was written by Handel when he was poverty-stricken and suffering from a paralyzed right side and right arm.

Affliction can also make us stronger in our faith and develop our confidence in God's watch care over us. It may also drive us back to the right path when we have wandered.

David said, "*Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep Your Word*" (Psalm 119:67).

Whatever the reason, if God sends affliction your way, take it in faith as a blessing, not a curse.

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Excerpted with permission from *Hope For Each Day* by Billy Graham, published by Thomas Nelson.

Jeffrey Tan – Regional Assistant TLM Southeast Asia (1999-2004)



The question of the day

When you look at the inner workings of electrical things, you see wires.

Until the current passes through them,

there will be no light.

That wire is you and me.

The current is God.

We have the power to let the current pass through us,

use us, to produce the

Light of the World,

Jesus,

in us.

Or we can refuse to be used and allow the darkness to spread.

Mother Teresa



A former chapel for “lepers” become a place for foxes!

If you walk in the forest of Brichy, just out of my village of Gollion, you wonder about the meaning of this circular headland. When you walk on it, you have to mind the foxes' holes. This favourite place for foxes was by the past a meeting point for people affected by leprosy. Indeed, by 1427, people affected by leprosy from this district could come here to gather together. A small chapel had been built for them. This witness of the past shows us that we were also confronted to leprosy in our country of Switzerland.

In 2010 I had the visit of Dan Izzett and his wife Babs, well known for each of us. This couple lives in Zimbabwe. Both have an European origin background. They are of the third generation which emigrated to Zimbabwe. TLM Switzerland invited them to come to speak about their unbelievable story. Dan catches leprosy when he was a child. But it was only when he was 25 years old when we discover that he had leprosy. At that time Dan had just got married. He suggested to his young wife to break their relation. “I took a commitment,” she said, “to stay with you for the good and the bad days. I shall not leave you.”

The disease of Dan, then young engineer in civil engineering, deteriorates. His leg has to be amputated. One year after their marriage, Babs catches leprosy as well! Fortunately she was discovered on time. She developed no infirmity. Because of his disease, Dan lost his job. His own suffering makes him sensitive to that of the others. He decides then to become a minister.

Da and Babs through their uncommon experience of life and nevertheless through their overflowing joy, are real messengers of hope for all those whom they meet. When Dan gives testimony in schools, churches or through media, he always pleads with strength: “Please, do not wait till it is too late! Because I did not dare to share my sufferings when I was young, I lost my leg. Whatever is your suffering, share it with somebody whom you trust!”

I took Dan and Babs in the forest of Brichy. I wanted to show them this place, witness of the past, when “lepers” could meet and share their burdens.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11,28

Eric Chollet - I'm retired since three years. I used to work with TLM Switzerland for 32 years. During that time, I have had the privilege to stand in different committees (e.g. executive committee - directorate) with TLMI, which has been very rewarding. All along these years of service, I have met a lot of wonderful and dedicated people. May God continue to bless the mission for His glory.



“This is my story...” – 3.

Gen 28.15. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.” NRSV

Are you old enough to remember the black and white missionary films, with lots of dancing and drums? The speaker often had tea with us at the Rectory. After one such talk, I announced “When I am big I am going to go and teach the savages to be less wild.” My Mother was not so keen, she thought I needed taming first. I was about 5 or 6.

A few years later I was fascinated by a TV programme about Albert Schweitzer. Musician, Pasteur and then when he was over 30 he returned to University to study Medicine so as to join the Society of Evangelist Missions of Paris. Then he went to the Gabon. I enjoyed music, but medicine, studying as a doctor, that wasn't for me.

At secondary school we had talks from the *Mission to Lepers* representative. More black and white films. How could I go, no feeling towards nursing, and no language skills. My English was bad and I stopped French and Latin at the earliest chance. Just before my interview with TLM a friend reminded me “When you were 13 you said you would work with leprosy patients. - At 15 or 16 the big question was what are you going to do next? Difficult when I had little chance of getting an English O'level? Could I find something interesting? By chance, when clearing out the Careers Room I came across leaflets for health workers - Physio no good as needed Physics A'level, *my teachers had little hope of my passing any O'levels, as the Examiners wouldn't understand my English and spelling*, Speech Therapists too academic, then Occupational Therapy, O.T. interesting, and **only needed 5 academic O'levels with no mention of English**, a plus it looked practical. The qualification was recognised world wide, a chance to travel, and no night shifts! In 1968 I started at Northampton School of Occupational Therapy.

While at college I met Beth Wilson. We had a day on Occupational Therapy applied to leprosy. She was a colleague of Dr Paul Brand in India. In the evening she spoke to the small Christian Union. 2 of us were interested; Beth's advice was to get some general experience before you apply to a mission.

7 years later I was brownd off with my work, if I was going to do something different it should be now, I was under 30, younger than Schweitzer when he took a turn in his life. I contacted CMS, USPG¹ and the Leprosy mission. I visited USPG the same day as my first of many visits to the International Office. There might be a post in psychiatry or something at the Christian college and Hospital in Ludiana, Nth India, however the clergyman I met knew about Occupational Therapy and he thought TLM would have more opportunities for me. I crossed London to Portland Place. I had read many missionary stories; including Paul Brand -Ten Fingers for God and other books by Dorothy Clark Wilson based in Vellore including the biographies of Dr Ida Scudder², and Dr Mary Verghese³. I knew there was a need for O.T. in the treatment of leprosy patients. After more letter writing, meeting Dr R.H.Thangaraj, the then Director for South West Asia, I was accepted and started Missionary Training. 18 months later on the 4 September 1979 I flew to Bombay, *Mumbai* on my way to Karigiri⁴, near Vellore, Sth India for Leprosy training.

Years later I learnt the young Indian OT I had met when on placement as a student near London had had leprosy, and came from Karigiri!. We were told he had an unusual tropical disease which caused paralysis of his hands and feet. The world is small, and the Leprosy world smaller still.

My interest in missionary work and leprosy was planted when I was young, nurtured and developed; I coped with Telugu, then Indonesian, and today French. On one application form I was asked who had influenced me. Today, I think a more interesting question is who fascinated me to find out more about Leprosy, Albert Schweitzer, Beth Wilson, Paul Brand or of course the old anglican priest who came once a year to my school in Devon.

My message is don't give up on a returning idea, maybe that is where God wants you to be.

Elisabeth Liz Hichens épouse Barnett, Occupational Therapist worked with TLM at the Philadelphia Leprosy Hospital, Salur, AP India and at RSK Sungai Kunda, Palembang Sumatra, Indonesia. 1979-88. Today, she is retired living in South West France; with her husband James, she is joint secretary of la Mission Lèpre, France.

¹ CMS Church Missionary Society, USPG, United Society for the propagation of the Gospel.

² founder of the Christian Medical College and Hospital, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, Sth India

³ who after serious injuries in a car accident developed the rehabilitation unit at CMC Vellore.

⁴ the Schieffelin Institute of Health - research and Leprosy centre Karigiri founded in 1955 near Vellore



The Word

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

Why do we want as many Bibles in the hands of people? Why do we believe and trust God to provide us with His Word to give out and teach to others?

Could it be because in a world that is so full of darkness people need The Light to shine through? This portion of scripture from the “Word, the commandments, the law, the statutes, the decrees...” psalm brings Light in a dark world. Two directional light: at my feet so that I can see where I am walking and light to where I am going!

Psalm 119.17-24

The title to this portion is “Gimel” symbolizes a rich man running after a poor man, the next portion verses 25-32 are titled “Dalet”, to give him charity. So you need to connect the two portions together. They will come to you as separate thoughts.

Build this picture in your mind: “Gimel: a rich man running after a poor man” – Could we relate this to our Heavenly Father” wanting to give us His riches, wanting us to be more and more like Jesus.

*Verse 17 & 18 Do good to your servant, and I will live; I will **obey your word**. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in **your law**.*

Obedience has always been the key that unlocks whatever God has for us.

*1 Samuel 15.22-23 But Samuel replied: “Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the **Lord**? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams. For rebellion is like the sin of divination, and arrogance like the evil of idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the **Lord**, he has rejected you as king.”*

*Verse 19-24 I am a stranger on earth; do not hide **your commands** from me. My soul is consumed with longing for **your laws** at all times. You rebuke the arrogant, who are cursed and who stray from **your commands**. Remove from me scorn and contempt, for I **keep your statutes**. Though rulers sit together and slander me, your servant will **meditate on your decrees**. **Your statutes** are my delight; they are my counsellors.*

It is accepted that King David wrote this Psalm and it seems as if there is a deep heartfelt and desire to **obey God and His Word**. Even with his enemies clamouring for him, slandering him he hid himself in **God’s Word!**

Wherever you are today, tomorrow, until Jesus comes; obey, hide inside and meditate on **His Word!**

Dan Izzett - Zimbabwe. Retired pastor. I was diagnosed with lepromatous leprosy in 1972. Served on TLMI board for eight years and on the Zimbabwe board for 15 years. I now serve on the ALM board and do advocacy for them.



Shepherd your people

“Shepherd your people with your staff, the flock of your inheritance, which lives by itself in a forest, in fertile pasturelands. Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead as in days long ago.

“As in the days when you came out of Egypt, I will show them my wonders.”

Nations will see and be ashamed, deprived of all their power. They will put their hands over their mouths and their ears will become deaf.

They will lick dust like a snake, like creatures that crawl on the ground. They will come trembling out of their dens; they will turn in fear to the Lord our God and will be afraid of you.

Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. You will be faithful to Jacob, and show love to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our ancestors in days long ago.” Micah 7:14-20 (NIV)

Micah prophesied God’s judgement of his people’s actions and now under the shadow of the Assyrians the people cry out. ‘Gather us up, lead us to the fruitful pastures of peace, take us back to the Promised Land they pray’. “YES!” is God’s reply, I will rescue you, I will remember my promises of old. It would be as it was when God rescued them from Egypt – the nations would see God’s power, mercy & love for his people but more the nations would acknowledge their powerlessness and turn to worship God. Here we remember *Phil 2:10*; ‘*At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow...*’ God delights in mercy, he is faithful when His people recognise the error of their ways and repent. He takes their sins and crushes them underfoot, casting their sin out of sight and out of reach remembering it no more (see also *Psalms 103:12*).

There is none like our God! He is no cosmic pushover - His hatred toward sin is burning, consuming, destroying, he stands as judge over all BUT he is merciful, faithful and loving. And so Jesus came to save us accepting judgement in the sinner’s place. Jesus the Saviour of the world came to die, so that all people might have the opportunity to know their sin cast out of reach and enter into a relationship filled with promise, power, mercy, love and expectation with the Most High God. *Micah* says in *6:8* that we are to walk humbly with our God. Let us then come humbly before God and allow confession and repentance to be our key to renewing a right relationship with our incomparable God.

A prayer

Redeeming God I come before you acknowledging my sinful ways...

Pause & confess.

Lord thank you for casting my sin so far from me that it cannot be seen.

Lead me, so that I may live every hour of my days in your forgiving, merciful grace.

In Jesus holy name, Amen



“This is my story....” 4.

At times, God wants us to do things that we do not want to do.

“Someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” John 21, 18

I was born and brought up in a Christian family and was always a regular church member. During my university days in the early 70s, I developed a strong thinking that all those Christian students who are not good in studies go to seminary to become pastors and some of them join Christian organizations. I thought that working in Christian organizations was the rehabilitation of such students who are not good in studies. Therefore I was not interested at all to become pastor and to join Christian organization. - In my hometown Almora (Uttarakhand, India), there is a Leprosy hospital & home which was run by Methodist church in those days and then taken over by TLM India in late 1970. This was very first leprosy Asylum in India, started by British officer, Sir Henry Ramsay in 1836, much earlier than TLM formation in India in 1874. We used to visit this institution during my college days and I was aware of some of their services. My Uncle, Late Elwin Lawrence, manager of the hospital asked me to join the service of TLM after I completed my Master degree (Economics) in mid-1975. I strongly objected to his proposal and very proudly (later understood it was false pride) said to him that I have completed master degree, not to join Christian organizations as I dreamt to become a lecturer in a university.

My first job was in a local Christian college, but was appointed on a temporary basis for 3 months only. Meanwhile, my results were declared and my marks did not qualify well enough to become a Lecturer. I had an option to do a PH.D, but due to lack of finance to pay registration fees, books and to spend 3-4 years, I dropped the idea as I wanted to start working full time. For the next 3 months, I was at home without a job in hand. It was hard for me when people raised questions 'still no job' as then it was like a 'stigma' (jobless) to not have a good job, **which later helped to understand the severity of stigma against leprosy effected persons.**

In Nov 1975, without disclosing it to my family, I applied to the Director of TLM South Asia (now TLM India Trust) at Delhi for a job. Few days later, I received a huge magazine - TLM South Asia jubilee souvenir as they completed 100 years' service in 1974. My father asked me about it and after my explanation he made a comment that as I did not inform him earlier while applying, therefore they had sent the magazine only. The very next day another letter from the Director of TLM South Asia, Late Dr V.P.Das came, asking me to come to Delhi in mid-December 1975 for the interview of the job. The interview went well and was asked to join TLM Hospital at Salur for orientation by 16th January 1976 and was informed that I will have to go to Bhutan to work in TLM Hospital (at Gidakom, near capital Thimpu), as an administrator. I really never wanted to be in administration, which involved in complicated issues, dealing with money & finance, staff problems, arranging tickets, looking after supplier & services, transport dealing with Government departments among many. Even though the nature of this job was not much to what I wanted to do, but I wanted a job desperately at that time, so I accepted this offer of TLM. With a lean physique then, I had a thought that no one will listen and follow my instructions in administration.

I completed my training at TLM Salur hospital in Andhra Pradesh (south India), which was a pole apart from my hometown. There was huge difference as I came from a cold climate with mountains while Salur had extreme hot weather; the culture, language and food were very different. I enjoyed the orientation programme which was excellent and the staff members of TLM hospital were very kind and friendly. Finally, I went to Bhutan in April 1976 to join TLM Hospital at Gidakom at the age of 22. I was very clear in my mind at that time, thinking that I will take up this job and leave this job of TLM as soon as I will get another good job (because I had already applied earlier to many other places earlier).

I want to share very clearly that at this time I never experienced 'a call' from God to work for TLM.

Pradeep & Sarah Failbus Worked for 39 years and 29 years with TLM(most at Anandaban,Nepal) Now retired and settled at: Kathgodam, District Nainital Uttarakhand, India M - 8853551227



“This is my story....” 5.

God’s plan for me: Not the same to what I had planned!!

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.” Isaiah 55,8

While I was working in Thimpu (Bhutan), Postal written communication was the only medium which also was slow. A letter from India would usually take minimum 20 days to reach me and so I missed all interview opportunities for the other job and so had no choice but to continue my work in Bhutan. Bhutan for me in the beginning was – 3Bs – Boring, Backward and Beautiful. The hospital was in very isolated place in jungle, with no neighborhood and no shops nearby – unlike to the social life I always enjoy!

The TLM hospital in Bhutan had few Christian employees from Nepal, Darjeeling, South India and a German expat; and we met for our regular Bible studies and fellowship. I lead the Christian activities mostly with the help of Methodist hymnal that I brought from home. Two similar instances in my life in Bhutan made me think of my purpose of being there. A baby dies very soon of my joining there, in a Christian home where the question came up to who will conduct the funeral. I was asked to complete the burial service, which was very new to me and difficult at the same time. I performed this first burial service again with the help of my Methodist book-order of service. Again conducted another burial service few months later - A Christian worker from south India died at Government Hydro Electrical plant. The Director of this project requested me and our team to come there to conduct his funeral with Christian traditions. Staff members there started treated me with much respect as pastor or Christian leader which made me think, what is God’s purpose to my life. They started bringing their personal & family problems to me for suggestions and settlement. I kept asking God then- this is not my job, I did want not to do all this work, I did not come here to do all this, why you are giving me this Christian leadership work here?

I enjoyed the Christian fellowship there with the staff and patients; this used to be in Nepali language. In the meantime one of the Nepali staff (from Nepal) was converted (by taking hidden baptism in nearby river. I was also asked to join Christian fellowship of Nepali workers (involved in road work) outside our hospital area. This was secret Christian fellowship there, where we crawled to a small bamboo hut where we used to meet for fellowship as the police was not supposed to know about this.

Pradeep & Sarah Failbus Worked for 39 years and 29 years with TLM(most at Anandaban,Nepal) Now retired and settled at: Kathgodam, District Nainital Uttarakhand, India M - 8853551227



“This is my story....” 6.

After working in Bhutan for a year, I wrote to my father that I was getting convinced that is my place, God wants me to work for TLM. He replied that I must pray about it and take some more time.

In the beginning, it took time for me to enjoy my professional work. I really like the spirit of The Leprosy Mission & enjoying working for leprosy affected people and also the Christian fellowship in Bhutan. During one of the bible study in November 1977, we had pray especially for our German nurse- Loni Grosshans as she was traveling to Nepal for trekking. At the end of this meeting I told as a joke to all members that one day I will also go to Nepal. Loni must have remembered this statement of mine. She wrote to me from Kathmandu, Nepal, that there are many missionaries in Nepal and I must plan to stay in Bhutan, and not to think to go to Nepal.

God’s plans are mysterious

In Feb 1978, I was transferred to Anandaban Leprosy Hospital, Nepal (I did not asked for this, this was the decision of the Director at Delhi) where the work was more challenging with responsibility of a manager. Our main task was to develop good relations with the Government and to rebuild the team to improve the service of the hospital. There were huge problems, TLM agreement work in Nepal expired two years ago, TLM expatriate staff had no visa for Nepal to work and the relationship with neighborhood villages very bad. Few other trained staff members with Dr Victor Babu were also sent from TLM India to work here. I started my work with 28 staff and when I left as a Country Representative, there were 115 staff members. I thoroughly enjoyed my work in this hospital. I got married few years later and my wife, Sarah (also from my home town) joined me where she worked in the Microbiological Research Lab of the hospital. We made good memories, also had difficult times at work, yet I was fully involved, satisfied and happy with the work of TLM at Anandaban, Nepal. I completed 28 years and my wife, Sarah completed 22 years of service here. Our two daughters, Tanya and Lara were born and brought up in Nepal. My family had wonderful memories of our times/ work relationship with staff and patients there.

Personally I am very thankful to God that He gave us chance to work with TLM and I overall spend 39.5 years with Leprosy Mission, majorly in contributing the development story of Anandaban Leprosy Hospital and related programmes.

The very main important part of my story is that God took control of my life to fulfill His will and His work. He gave me opportunity to work for Christian organization – TLM - in spite of my earlier hesitation. He used me for my life long service period 39.5 years for TLM work. This has been the biggest satisfaction, happiness and achievement of my entire life.

Pradeep & Sarah Failbus Worked for 39 years and 29 years with TLM(most at Anandaban,Nepal) Now retired and settled at: Kathgodam, District Nainital Uttarakhand, India M - 8853551227



Moving House

Matthew 4:12-17 & v 23

When Jesus heard that John had been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee. Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali – 14 to fulfil what was said through the prophet Isaiah: ‘Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.’ From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’

...

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and illness among the people.

Moving house. It can be a difficult and stressful experience. It often marks the end of a certain season in our lives, and the beginning of a new one. It tends to be expensive, physically demanding, and dramatic.

Matthew tells us that Jesus moved house. He left Nazareth, his home town, and went to Capernaum, prompted by the imprisonment of his cousin, John the Baptist. Jesus moved north, a distance of 20 miles. This, of course doesn't seem very far to us today, but imagine, without modern means of transport, how this might have happened. Did Jesus gather his belongings and set out with a heavily laden donkey? Did he leave in more haste, afraid that he, like John his cousin, would be put in prison? Did he even have to flee in the middle of the night?

We are not told, but we can imagine that this would have been a fairly stressful move!

With this house move, we see that Jesus begins to minister with great freedom. He is now 20 miles further away from the people who oppose him in Jerusalem. We are told by Matthew that Jesus brought with him light and hope that Isaiah had prophesied for this area 100's of years previously. Verse 23 notes that Jesus healed every kind of sickness and disease, one of which, chapter 8 tells us, was leprosy.

One remarkable thing about this passage is that it shows us that the house move of Jesus was not planned, but forced upon him by circumstance. It was this circumstance that also led to Jesus beginning his public ministry. Forced from the familiar surroundings of his home town, wanted by the authorities, Jesus shows great courage to act as he did, and begin to preach the good news.

Big changes in our lives like moving house, changing job, or other change that is forced on us by circumstance, be it health or a family issues can be stressful, tiring, scary, unfamiliar and unwelcome. Perhaps you have experienced unexpected, or unwelcome change, and can relate to the experience of Jesus in this passage?

It is good advice to follow Jesus' example and commit such times to God. Ask Him for courage as your face change. Ask His also to lead you and guide you to do his will, and bear his light into the darkness and the unknown.



Difficult questions 1.

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" ³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" ³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon. John 1:35-40

Are you given to asking God difficult or even dumb questions? You are in good company. I notice even some of the Bible characters did this. This question seems to be an embarrassed response not really what they wanted to ask. It reminds me of myself as a small child waking up and asking my dad for a glass of water when the real question I wanted to know was; was he there?

At the beginning of John's Gospel we see the disciples of John the Baptist meeting Jesus for the first time. They had already been told that Jesus was the Lamb of God by John. Yet despite the testimony of John who they had previously followed, they wanted to know more. As they started to follow Jesus He turned to ask them what they wanted and this was their question. *"Where do you live?"*

What a funny question. If Jesus had asked you "what do you want?" Would you ask Him where he lived? Of course, where we live does give a clue as to the sort of person that we are. For example some places are known to be poor areas, or the areas where workmen live rather than the rich and prosperous. Did they just want to know Jesus social standing? What were they really wanting to know when they asked Jesus *"where do you live?"* I think it was more about who He really was than a mere cultural identity. There's no doubt if you share a house with someone you learn who they really are. Jesus reply was so open to them; - *"come and see"*. He wasn't hiding anything from them at all. He wanted them to come and live where He lived. The Bible says that it was late and that they stayed with Him overnight. That must have told them more about Jesus than anything else and they continued to follow and stay with Him. Not only that, but Andrew whizzed off and told his brother and Nathaniel because he was so excited at sharing and living with Jesus.

Do we want to know who Jesus is? Well then we must ask Him where He lives. Not such a dumb question after all. Particularly if we take up His answer and stay with Him. He still invites us to be with Him; - to *"come and see"*. What an answer for all our 'dumb' questions.

June Nash

I have worked for the Leprosy Mission for 35 years. At first I was on the mission field in Papua New Guinea and then Ethiopia. In the beginning I did leprosy control but then moved into the training of health workers. It was a privilege to serve overseas with TLM for 20 years. I returned to be part of the team in Brentford, firstly as global training adviser, then HR Director and lastly as Knowledge Management Director. I am now retired but being a part of the Leprosy Mission never really leaves you. I continue to hold the work in my heart through prayer and visits to Brentford.



Difficult Questions 2

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

This prompts me to think of my own difficult question and that is, "why?" Why does God love this world? Atheists and agnostics find it hard to believe in God because people suffer. How can a loving God let children die or people be sick, they ask?

For me, as I look at the world of injustice and unscrupulous governments. Where the meek certainly don't inherit the earth, rather they are at the bottom end of every bit of suffering. I remember in Mozambique asking a blind person with leprosy how he lost his sight. He told me that during the war one of the soldiers beat him up with the butt of his gun just because he was poor and helpless. That story and the news reports makes me ask the question; - why on earth does God love us?

Certainly, if he was human, by today's standards he'd blast us out of existence. It seems to me that the value of so many people today appears to be; - if you don't agree with me I'll shoot you. There is so much hurt and anger about that leads to violence and oppression. We have replaced love and peace with hate and terror.

Yet it is in that state that God loves us. For us, as awful as we are, He gave his only begotten son. There is such tenderness in that phrase. It reminds me of Christmas, even though this is not a verse that we particularly associate with Christmas. God sent His son as a baby. Look at a baby and what do we see but beauty and perfection. Babies are perfect but also vulnerable.

God sent His son in that way so that we might recover our perfection and vulnerability. What grace to love the unlovely. He first loved us. He doesn't love us because we are good. No, it's not about us it is about Him. He loves you because of who He is not who you are.

And he loves to bring us life. Love and life go together as much as hate and death. The amazing thing is that our God is a God of love who brings life and that life is everlasting. It makes me fall on my knees, first to ask for forgiveness for the hate and fear that I have and second, to worship God, our Father. He came to bring us into the family and I must have the family likeness and habits. That is, I must love as He loves and be full of mercy and grace. Now there is a challenge.

Lord, take from me hate, intolerance and darkness and fill me with your love and light. Let me see people and situations with your eyes. Fill me with your compassion and forgiveness. Teach me to pray and act the way you would.

June Nash

I have worked for the Leprosy Mission for 35 years. At first I was on the mission field in Papua New Guinea and then Ethiopia. In the beginning I did leprosy control but then moved into the training of health workers. It was a privilege to serve overseas with TLM for 20 years. I returned to be part of the team in Brentford, firstly as global training adviser, then HR Director and lastly as Knowledge Management Director. I am now retired but being a part of the Leprosy Mission never really leaves you. I continue to hold the work in my heart through prayer and visits to Brentford.



“This is my story...” 7.

I became a Christian in my mid teens through the witness of a colleague. Soon afterwards I started my nurses training and began to attend the Nurses Christian Fellowship meetings. Once there was a speaker from what was then The Mission to Lepers! (My story goes a long way back)! The story of ulcers, smells and deformities put me off completely! Not for me, was my thought! As I continued my training, I began to get a quiet assurance that God was calling me to do mission work, and it was to be The Leprosy Mission eventually. Then I went on to do my midwifery training, and also started looking at other possibilities, hoping the Lord might have something different for me to do!

While I was practising midwifery for a few months I went to hear a missionary from AIM speaking at a meeting. He spoke on *Nehemiah 4 verses 19-20* "*The work is great and extensive and we are separated far from one another on the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, come to us there. Our God will fight for us.*" I knew that was for me! A few days later the minister asked me what I was doing and then asked what God wanted me to do! For the first time I voiced it and told him that He wanted me to work for The Mission to Lepers. In spite of my protests he more or less told me to get on and apply! So I did!

During the application process I trained in tropical diseases and also went to Bible school. Another verse I felt the Lord gave me was from *Revelation 3 verse 8* "*See I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it.*" Then at my valedictory service the minister spoke on 1 Cor 16 verse 9, an open door with many adversaries.

I eventually sailed off to India and arrived in Purulia. Yes I saw dreadful ulcers and smelt horrible smells. I also saw despair, pain racked faces, terrible disabilities, people who were ostracised and sometimes hated because of their disease. The need was great, they needed acceptance, care, treatment and love. After a very short time I couldn't think of anything I would rather do.

I saw children carrying the stigma of leprosy, many times upset and confused, separated from their parents, but being given a chance to go to school and get an education in the hospital. I saw patients very disabled from the effects of leprosy, with hardly any hands or feet and some also blind being cared for in the Mercy Homes. They were wonderful people, who built up my faith by sharing theirs. The Lord gave me a great love for them, and I longed for the day when there was something other than Dapsone to treat them with, and a cure could be found. This all happened when I worked in Bhutan, with the advent of multi drug therapy.

So from being the most reluctant person to join TLM, I feel very privileged to have spent about 35 years working with them, and rejoice for all the progress made over the years in the treatment and care for patients around the world.

Mollie Clark

English. Went to India in 1961, worked in Purulia for 8 years as a nurse, before being transferred to Bhutan. Worked for 18 years in four different areas in Bhutan until I was transferred to the international office in London as personnel director. I was there for eight years until I retired.



Do love Me

read John 21 (or at least the verses 15-25)

Half an hour ago the boys, members of our home-catechism group, went home on their bicycles. They are 15 years old and because of meeting with them every week we have started to feel more and more at home in the village we have lived in for the past year.

The study material is chosen by the elders of our local church and we find it heavy in the way it is presented and in how much is presented for each home-catechism hour.

Today it was about Jesus our Redeemer. Last week we read about the suffering of Jesus and we tried to make sense of this suffering, the purpose: "why Christ for me, for us, for this world?"

We realise with the boys how difficult it is to understand that Jesus died for our sin; that He did this for us while we ourselves tend to act as if two wrongs make a right. We laughed (probably embarrassed) about the bad examples of behaving in that way in our own lives.

I used an example: 'A lonely man was prepared to be jailed in order to set a man free - a father with three children at home.' One of the boys started to choke. This was ludicrous according to him. 'No-one would be prepared to do that and this is absolutely impossible by Dutch law.' I did not check whether it was impossible, but I do agree that this was a purely hypothetical case!

How do you talk with young people in The Netherlands about what God has done for us? They are busy with family and friends, home-work and school-tests, watching TV and helping in small businesses by selling flowers or fruit door to door in the early evening.

As we did last week, we turned to a specific poem written by a Dutch poet, Martinus Nijhoff. Let me try in Dutch and translate in English:

Wij sloegen Hem aan 't kruis.
Zijn vingers grepen wild om den spijker toen 'k den hamer hief.
Maar Hij zei zacht mijn naam en: "Heb mij lief".
En 't groot geheim had ik voorgoed begrepen.

We nailed Him to the cross.
His fingers grabbed the nail when I raised the hammer.
But He spoke softly, when He mentioned my name, asking me: "do love Me"
and ever since I understand the great secret.

We finished our home-catechism by calling ourselves by name: "Jesse, do love Me", "Job, do love Me", "Piet, do love Me", "Thom, do love Me",

Now, since they have left, His secret sticks with me, speaks to me and touches me.



„Mud“

„For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.“ Luke 6,38

Years ago our children and some friends were playing on the banks of a wide, shallow stream. The shrieks, yells and general animation prompted an investigation on my part.

I discovered that they had decided to have a mud fight. As the soft, watery mud did not represent a major danger to their swimming costumes... or bodies, I stood a short distance away and contemplated the spectacle of mud flying in every direction.

The oldest child was clever enough to stand far enough away from the rest, so that their throws could not reach him, while he cheerfully pelted them. The interesting thing is that he was at least as covered in mud as the others.

I approached him and asked why he was in such a mess. His reply stated the obvious.

„Dad, you cannot throw soft mud at others without getting yourself dirty.“

If only I could remember that more often before yielding to the temptation of speaking negatively about others.

Silvano Perotti

Secretary for Europe then Deputy International Director and Director for Support and Development TLMI
Born in Italy - retired in Switzerland.
Worked with TLMI until 1990



Psalm 4

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

¹ Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

² How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods^[b]?^[c]

³ Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.

⁴ Tremble and^[d] do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.

⁵ Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.

⁶ Many, LORD, are asking, “Who will bring us prosperity?”
Let the light of your face shine on us.

⁷ Fill my heart with joy
when their grain and new wine abound.

⁸ In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, LORD,
make me dwell in safety.



Keep the flame on your crest (stick to your calling)

Act 4:19 'But Peter and John replied, 'which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! (NIV). I would like to challenge myself and you, who has the right judgement, God or everyone else who want to defined me so that they can confined me regarding God given gift, abilities and calling in my life?

Legend has it that the fox used to be extremely scared of the cock. Anytime a cockerel was in view, the fox would make a frenzied dash in the opposite direction. One day, as he made to run, the cock called out to him, 'Hey fox, why are you always running away every time you see me? I'm completely harmless as far as I know'. The fox replied, 'You harmless? With that ball of fire you carry on your head, it's not safe for anyone to be your friend'. 'Fire?' retorted the cockerel ; 'There's no fire on my head, it's just a crest – and it's all flesh for that matter! Here, you can touch it!' 'To believe that is to believe that the sun rises from the west!' said the fox and took off as usual. This happened a couple of times until one day, when, upon the insistence of the cock, the fox decided to summon enough courage to actually touch the crest on the cock's head. What he found was pleasantly surprising. It was all succulent flesh after all, not a ball of fire! Within seconds, the cock ended up in the fox's belly!

Lesson? God has placed something in you that commands people's respect. No man can devalue you until you agree with the price he set. Do not sell yourself cheap because you want to try and make everyone your friend. The more of a people-pleaser you are, the less of yourself you become. The unique dimensions of your life are to be celebrated, not despised.

One of the most humbling lessons any man can learn in life is that not everyone can be his friend. In trying to make everyone your friend, you risk losing the respect and dignity reserved for your uniqueness. Remain the enigma you were created to be. *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesian 2:9).* You do not have to explain your uniqueness to everyone. For the simple reason that not everyone who greets you 'Good morning' actually wished you woke up that day! If you keep explaining yourself to everyone who questions your uniqueness, you will not finish till you drop dead. There are many people around you who are looking for every opportunity to define you so that they can confine you. It gives some people pleasure to know things about you for the purpose of simply having a weapon to nail you. Do not oblige them. Keep the flame of your crest. The more enigmatic you are, the better for your public profile. It's the only thing that is guaranteed to consistently win you respect.

May the flame on your crest 'burn' brighter!



“This is my story...”

Psalm 136: 1 “Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures for ever.”

Away back in the 1960’s my mother attended a Prayer Meeting held in the Glasgow Office of TLM Scotland. There was also an office in Edinburgh and there was also a Prayer Meeting there. The Scottish Secretary of TLM at that time was Rev Wilfred Hough. One of the visions he had was to set up a group of young people who would be able to go out and speak to Youth Fellowships and Sunday Schools about the work of TLM. He gathered a group of about 6-8 young people and realised that he needed to give them some basic training on giving a talk. On afternoon at the prayer meeting that was one of the topics for prayer.

At that time I was involved in Seaside Mission and in leading Bible Studies throughout the year the young people of the town where the mission was conducted. To help me in both of these roles, I undertook some training with the Church of Scotland to become a lay reader – 2 evenings a week for three years at Trinity College, Glasgow which was a part of Glasgow University. It was super training and although a lot of hard work, I really did enjoy it.

I guess I was about 24 when my mother, at that prayer meeting, kindly volunteered me to TLM Scotland to carry out this basic training for the young people who were only a few years younger than I was. Part of that training included gaining a real understanding of TLM, Leprosy, People Affected by Leprosy and the current Treatment of Leprosy. Before I helped others to understand all this, I had to learn for myself and that really got me “hooked” into TLM and its work. We had some great times and we all ended up taking church services as well as speaking to young people about TLM. This was as part of another inspiration of Rev Hough – we had Blitz Weekends where he would arrange for the staff and the young people to go to a town where we would speak in every church in the town on the same Sunday Morning. We had some great adventures, met some remarkable people, and had some wonderful times of prayer and blessing. It was only when I moved back to Scotland and into my present home in 2000 that I threw out all the papers and materials I had from those days – nothing was computerised then so there was a lot of paper. I also became involved with the Glasgow Area Committee of TLM and enjoyed volunteering in various capacities with them as well as attending their evening prayer meetings.

Co-incidentally (is that a word to use when speaking of God’s timing and planning!!), a very good friend of mine from my SU camp leadership days (before I did Seaside Mission) had applied to work for TLM. Margaret Gilmour went to work at Karigiri Hospital and that gave me another link into TLM and its work. My mother died in 2003 and was still volunteering me for various tasks and to speak on various occasions (not all about TLM), including taking services in the Care Home where she was a resident. She never stopped to think if I wanted to do the things she volunteered me for and she certainly never asked me, I just found myself doing these things – that is not a criticism but rather it is reflective of the relationship we had all through my life. I always thank God for my parents, for the wonderful Christian upbringing I had and for the deep sense of Christian Mission – both local and worldwide that I gained from them. I thank God too for the many years of my involvement with The Leprosy Mission and for the many, many friends I have through TLM.

Christine Osman - retired International Treasurer, Scotland



Ordinary Men

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." At once they left their nets and followed him. When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. MK 1:16 - 20

Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. Mk 2,13-14

Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve--designating them apostles--that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means Sons of Thunder); Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him. MK 3:13-19

Jesus chose 12 men – what a group they were:

4 were fishermen – used to hard physical work - handling boats etc and also to more intricate work – mending their nets. (Peter, Andrew, James and John)

Philip from Bethsaida – possibly also fisherman, had missionary zeal from outset

1 was a tax collector – hated by the Jews because he worked for the Roman invaders. (Matthew)

At least one was a fanatical Jewish Nationalist (Simon). There are possibly three others who were Jewish Nationalists (James son of Alpheus, possibly brother of Matthew; Judas Iscariot – traitor and Judas son of James/ Thaddaeus)

Bartholomew / Nathaniel brought to Jesus by Philip

Thomas the doubter/ pessimist yet man of courage and man of great faith when his doubt was turned to faith

These are the men, (with the exception of Judas Iscariot), the ordinary men, to whom Jesus entrusted the missionary task to take the gospel not only to the Jews but throughout the world.

EPH 2:19-22 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

Yes, God wanted to use these 11 men as the foundation of the Church with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

What turned these men from being ordinary men, men with doubts, with fears, with ordinary feelings, with failings, (we see them quarreling, we see them wanting to be first) - but.....GOD.

What of us, we are all called to be Christ's servants and to take His gospel to the world – yes, we have all been called and we have all been given gifts from God. These gifts enable us to do His will wherever we are, whatever job He has given us to do.

Let us not forget that God has called us to be His witnesses and it is to Him that we must be obedient.



Everything is possible with God – 1.

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Marc 10:27

There are many things possible for us human beings. It’s amazing how many things that are possible today, but were impossible yesterday. If you could tell your father’s grandfather about modern cellphones and computers, he would not be able to understand. By television we can instantly follow what’s happening all over the world. Our excellent medical doctors can even change a person’s heart. We know that it has been possible to send a team to the moon, and they could find their way back! It’s amazing!

In spite of that, quite soon we reach the limit of our abilities and we have to admit: “I’m sorry, I cannot help you. I want to help, but it’s beyond my limits”. Even very skilled doctors and scientists sometimes have to confess their limitations.

Jesus said: “With man this is impossible” and this is true in our personal lives, in our churches and in our organizations. The situation can be too difficult and we see no solution and no way forward.

Jesus wants to remind us that with God everything is possible! God is the God of miracles and possibilities. He is without limits, he is the God of no impossibilities, no failures!

Apostle Paul had discovered this truth: *“I can do all this through him who gives me strength”*

It seems that God loves impossible situations because there he can really show his power and his ability.

“and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you will honor me” Ps 50:15

We can find this special expression “with God all things are possible” at two very special impossible occasions, in connection with the birth of two sons:

1. The birth of the promised son: **Isaac**: *Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child, now that I am old?' Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year and Sarah will have a son." Genesis 18:13-14*

Sara was too old. A 90 years old women couldn’t believe the promise of giving birth to a son. It was an impossible situation. But is anything too hard for God?

2. The birth of the promised son **Jesus**: *“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:34-37*

Mary was too young and she had no husband. How can the promise be true? Nothing is impossible with God!

Never forget: With God all things are possible in our situation and in our problems!



Everything is possible with God – 2.

“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” Marc 10:27

This strong proclamation of Jesus is amazing for a human being. We are always so limited and we face every day the borders of our possibilities. Then the statement of Jesus builds up our faith in an Almighty God. Everything is possible with God because:

1. God is the creator:

For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together Col : 16-17

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Hebr 1:3

The origin of the creation and everything is able to do anything. Of course everything is possible for him!

2. He is the victor:

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Matt 28:18
Through his death and resurrection Jesus opened up the doors of heaven will blessings and possibilities. Of course everything is possible for him!

3. God’s word is the truth:

Through the word of God we can learn about the power and boldness of God.

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God. 2 Cor 1:20

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. Eph. 3:20

Of course everything is possible for him!

I have in my office a nice textile picture which I got as a gift of TLM Myanmar during a visit. It has an important place close to my desk to remind me every day: “God is specialized in doing the impossible”. To believe in God’s power is not to be naive or credulous but to be realistic. Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel once said: “The person who does not believe in miracles is not a realist”. We want to be realistic and trust in Gods abilities and power in our lives and in our work!

Never forget: With God all things are possible also in our situation and in our problems!

Allan Ekstedt – country leader TLM Sweden



Everything is possible with God – 3.

*“Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”
Marc 10:27*

The overall message of the Bible is that God is Almighty and Omnipotent. Our human resources are so small and limited but God resources are unlimited and unrestricted. God is the God of miracles and the God of no impossibilities. God’s power has no borders or limits.

There are so many wonderful examples of God’s power in the Bible, from the first page to the last. Especially we can discover how the impossible is made possible in the life of Jesus in the Gospels. Let me give you some examples out of so many:

- Jesus outside the tomb of Lazarus (John 11) when Jesus challenged our ultimate enemy, the death. Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, and the impossible happened
- Jesus feeding the 5000 (Marc 6:30-44). The disciples tried to solve the situation by counting their money and explain to Jesus that it was unrealistic and impossible to feed the crowd. But after the prayer of Jesus “they all ate and were satisfied“.
- Jesus healing the man affected by leprosy (Matt 8:12) “I’m willing, be healed”
- Etc...

With God all things are possible:

- He offers us salvation and forgiveness of sins. That is the very greatest miracle
- He is able to break the power of sin in our lives and to help us to live a clean life in holiness
- He has the power to heal sick bodies
- He can heal troubled minds and make our inner personality whole again

So let us keep in your understanding: Everything is possible with God!

- Our personal situation, our health, our problems in relations with others, our family economy
- Our churches with limited resources
- Our country TLM organizations. I know that we often struggle with lack of resources and skills. We have so many weaknesses and we often face even impossibilities
- Our countries: so many needs (spiritual, economic, social etc.)
- TLM International: So many questions and challenges, so many question marks

And if we look globally it’s easy to see dark clouds and uncertainty.

- Wars and fighting, crimes and social injustices. But we know that the Prince of Peace one day will intervene and create peace and justice
- The global warming and changes in the nature. We are waiting a new heaven and a new earth through the power of God

Never ever forget that with God all things are possible! Let’s always keep that in our hearts and minds and God will be with us and walk with us!



Psalm 1

- ¹ Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.
- ⁴ Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- ⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.



Looking up

"I waited patiently for the Lord, he turned to me and heard my cry." Psalm 40 (NIV)

Since the New Year, I have been reflecting in my quiet times on looking more to God. The teaching has been walking me through how it is so easy to feel overwhelmed by life... general life. Before we know it, every day becomes a pity party or we get lost in worries and anxieties. The Bible teaches us though that this is not God's best for us. God wants us to rest in Him, to turn our focus from our worries to Him. At no point does God teach us that this is easy, but He does urge us to try and choose to look up instead of look down.

When we do look up and focus our gaze on Him He won't give us the answers or any magic message about what is coming next, but what He will do is equip us. If He is our travelling companion, if we stay in communication with Him we can hear His gentle whisper guiding us.

I was reminded of this again at the weekend. A Church I was speaking in gave me a choice of four passages to share, one of which was *Psalm 40*. We read in this Psalm that David waited on the Lord, he looked to God and cried out, and God not only heard him, he rescued him AND he made David see some of the many blessings around him.

You see, if we look up, if we focus on God, if we give our journey to Him, He in turn can broaden our perspective. God can reveal things to us and soften our hearts towards things that we would never hear, see, feel if we're always focused on ourselves and our woes. And let's face it, our woes can quite easily become a very addictive soap opera if we let them!

Victoria Granger – Regional Manager, TLMEW (since 31 October 2016)



Turning constantly to the Lord

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Acts 3:19 (NIV)

I have a Satnav in my car which I use for longer journeys and when I'm not sure of the route. Quite often, however, I disregard the instructions, thinking that I know a better way! On those occasions, there is a calm voice which says, very politely, "Turn around when possible." I wonder how often God has needed to say that to us!

For each of us there is the initial turn-around in our lives that happens when we repent of our sin and of living life our own way, and we turn to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. This is our conversion, when we are born again. However, God was reminding me that turning to Him is not something we do only once in our lives – it needs to be a daily experience if we are to live in the fullness of all that Jesus has for us.

As human beings, we seem to have a default mechanism in our carnal nature which keeps trying to turn us back to old ways - to living life our way, wanting to be in control, doing what we want, leaning on our own understanding, instead of trusting in the Lord. We seem to turn all too easily to things that will gratify our fleshly desires, looking for comfort in the 'quick fix' rather than in the Lord. But it is only as we turn away from those temptations and turn to God that times of refreshing will come from Him, as the verse in *Acts 3:19* reminds us.

God wants to supply all our needs in whatever circumstances we find ourselves. But we are often facing in the wrong direction to receive from Him! We need to turn away from all those things that distract and tempt us, including everything that offers us false comfort, and turn to the One who loves us unconditionally and who has good things for us.

As the old song by Helen H. Lemmel says:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face,
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
In the light of His glory and grace.*

Let's make this new year a time of turning constantly to the Lord to guide us!

Prayer:

*Lord, please forgive me for the times I turning away from You and look for comfort in the wrong places. I turn to You now and put my trust in You for all that lies ahead of me, knowing that You are my Good Shepherd to leads, guide and keep me on the right path.
Amen.*



Authors in Alphabetical Order

Textuarium

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|--|------------------|---------------------|
| Allan Ekstedt | 23,24,25 February | | Gen 28,15 | 7 February |
| Bunmi Oluloto Dr | 1 February | | Ex 4,2 | 3 February |
| Christine Osman | 21, 22 February | | Neh 4,19-20 | 16 February |
| Dan Izzett | 8 February | | Job 23,10 | 4 February |
| David, King of Israel | 30 Oct | | Psalms 1 | 26 February |
| Elisabeth Barnett | 7 February | | Psalms 4 | 19 February |
| Elizabeth Allen | 28 February | | Psalms 40 | 27 February |
| Eric Chollet | 6 February | | Psalms 119,105 | 8 February |
| Gunnel Ericson | 2 February | | Psalms 121,1-4 | 2 February |
| Jeffrey Tan | 4 February | | Psalms 136, 1 | 21 February |
| June Nash | 14, 15 February | | Isaiah 55,8 | 11 February |
| Mollie Clark | 16 February | | Micah 7,14-20 | 9 February |
| Mother Teresa | 5 February | | Matthew 4, 12-17 | 13 February |
| Nicky Ward | 9 February | | Matthew 11,28 | 6 February |
| Peter Hilton | 13 February | | Marc 10,27 | 23, 24, 25 February |
| Peter Laubscher | 3 February | | Luke 6,38 | 18 February |
| Piet Both Dr | 17 February | | John 1,35-40 | 14 February |
| Pradeep and Sarah Failbus | 10,11,12 February | | John 3,16 | 15 February |
| Silvano Perotti | 18 February | | John 21, 15-25 | 17 February |
| Victoria Granger | 27 February | | John 21, 18 | 10 February |
| Yousif Deng Dr | 20 February | | Acts 3,19 | 28 February |
| | | | Acts 4,19 | 20 February |
| | | | Eph 5,14 | 1 February |
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