

# PRAYER UPDATE

*A monthly offering of prayers for people affected by leprosy and for those in their service*

June 2009

## *The Long Journey of K V Shetty*

*Winner of 2009 Wellesly Bailey Award*

The Wellesley Bailey Award was created in 1999 to celebrate the life and work of Mr. Wellesley Bailey, who founded The Leprosy Mission (TLM) in 1874. The awards, presented every two years, are unique in that they recognise the courage and achievements of people who have overcome the significant challenges of leprosy. There is no other international award which acknowledges the accomplishments of those who have been affected by leprosy. Nominees must have been active members in their community for at least five years and champions for the cause of leprosy through their achievements.



His credentials are impressive. KV Shetty is one of the founders of Bright India, an organization that helps rehabilitate people affected by leprosy. He has given numerous lectures on leprosy at high schools and colleges in districts close to his home. He is an active member of the Hind Kusht Nivaran Sangh, the national leprosy organization. He has also written many books on the disease. His first was *The Untold Truth About Leprosy*, published in 1980, and distributed to all leprosy medical officers throughout India.

On June 1, KV Shetty will be arriving in Toronto to be honored as one of the two recipients of the 2009 Wellesley Bailey Awards during TLM's International Assembly in Niagara Falls. This trip is of particular significance for him as it also represents a culminating point in a long journey against impossible odds. It has been a journey laden with fear, pain, hope and crushing setbacks, but has ultimately been a triumph of the fulfilment of a greater purpose.

KV Shetty was just 10 years of age when he developed blisters on his left leg and on both elbows. It was eventually diagnosed as leprosy. At the time, in the 1940s, modern drugs like Dapsone and Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) were still decades away from development. Superstitions and ignorance prevailed. As Mr. Shetty recalls, "Many godmen and astrologers were approached for a cure as the popular belief that prevailed in society at that time was that leprosy was the curse of an angry god and that it was incurable and hereditary." His initial treatment consisted of injections of *chaulmoogra* oil which were so painful that KV Shetty eventually refused to take

*see KV Shetty, page 4*

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*"You are the light of the world ... let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Matthew 5:14, 16

# Prayer Requests From Around The World

## ■ India

**Staff:** The out-patients' department at **TLM's Barabanki Hospital** in Uttar Pradesh sees about 250 patients a day. Pray particularly for two new doctors, nursing staff and helpers in the out- and in-patients' departments. Remember also Dr. Jay Palla, the hospital Superintendent, as he oversees the running of the hospital.

**Health care: The Integrated Community Development Programme** in Delhi aims to merge leprosy-related work with mainstream health and disability services. The project has recently started working in four new communities. **Pray** that the enthusiasm of the workers in these areas will help to generate good community development activities.

**Training: Wellesley Bailey Vocational Training Centre in Faziabad, Uttar Pradesh,** would like more girls to take up places at the vocational training centre. **Pray** that attitudes towards female education held by many families in nearby villages will change. **Pray** too for the staff, that they will continue to gain knowledge and develop their own skills.

**Surgery:** Last year, a surgical workshop held at TLM **Shahdara Community Hospital,** Delhi, gave 11 surgeons the opportunity to improve their technical skills in hand surgery. **Praise** God for this and **pray** that it will have real impact on the care given to leprosy patients.

**Patients:** TLM's **Naini Hospital** in Uttar Pradesh registers about 2,000 new leprosy patients, and sees about 16,000 leprosy-affected and 38,000 general patients each year. Thank God for Dr. Premal Das, the hospital Superintendent, as he runs and manages this busy hospital. And **pray** for good working relationships among all staff here.

**Awareness:** Staff at TLM's **Muzzaffarpur Hospital,** Bihar, will be joining with other NGOs and

government staff to hold monthly health camps in surrounding villages. As they raise awareness of health issues, including leprosy, pray that more people will come forward for treatment, and that those with disabilities will be willing to access the reconstructive surgery available at the hospital.

**Equipment: Praise** God that TLM's **Purulia Hospital,** West Bengal, is so well-equipped - there is a new recovery room, labour room and the out-patient department has been extended. **Pray** that Dr N K Nanda, the hospital Superintendent, will have wisdom as he oversees staff and departments.

**Elections:** India's voters went to the polls in five phases from April 16 to May 13 to elect 543 Members of Parliament. Give thanks to God for the peace and calm that marked these elections. **Pray** for the people of India that greater peace and progress will follow the elections. **Pray** too for all the TLM staff currently serving there.

## ■ Canada

**Thank** the Lord for His guidance and protection on Cathy and Jessica, two occupational therapists, during their time in Nashik, India. Jessica is now back in Victoria and Cathy has moved to Anandaban Hospital in Nepal where she's educating the patients on self-care and injury prevention. **Pray** for God's continued protection on Cathy. **Pray** especially for those patients at Anandaban hospital who come from abusive backgrounds or do not have anyone to care for them.

**Praise** God for the success of the Volunteer Leaders training seminar, which took place between April 29 - May 1 in Toronto, and for the fellowship during the course of the event.

\* TLM: The Leprosy Mission

\* TLMI: The Leprosy Mission International

a window to TLM's work around the world:

# India



The world's most populous democracy, India is a pluralistic, multilingual, and a multi-ethnic society. With over a billion people, it is also the second most populous country in the world. Over 80% of the population is Hindu. Islam at 13% is the second largest, followed by Christianity at two percent. Recent economic reforms have transformed the country into one of the fastest growing economies.

The Leprosy Mission's (TLM) work started in India in 1874 and it remains a key area for the Mission with over 50% of resources channelled there. Around 70% of all leprosy patients worldwide are in India.

In the recent past, TLM's work has moved away from providing purely medical based care for people affected by leprosy to a more holistic, integrated approach that encompasses healthcare, education, rehabilitation and training. Increased awareness about leprosy, coupled with socio-economic re-habilitation initiatives go hand-in-hand with advocacy work in India.

TLM runs 18 hospitals in India which provide a wide range of services from specialist leprosy treatment and care to reconstructive surgery for hands, feet and eyes. Through provision of medical and surgical care for non-leprosy patients, the hospitals help break down the stigma between leprosy and general patients. Based in areas of great poverty and rural deprivation, TLM hospitals are often the only health care providers in the accessible area. In addition TLM India has 5 Snehalayas (old age homes), 6 Vocational Training Centres, 22 community based projects and almost 52 Partner Institutes.

Currently TLM India has over 1000 employees and operations in 10 states of India. The Operation is headed by Dr. Jeyakumar Daniel, Director for India & Sri Lanka.



## Staff & Volunteer Corner

Introducing:

### John Clement


Chairman of the Board  
TLM



A quote inspired John Clement to effect change. He was conducting research at the University of Rochester during the mid 1970s when Margaret Mead uttered her exalted words: "A small group of committed people can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

It is displayed on the fridge at Mr. Clement's Aurora home, a testament to their way of life. In his capacity as Chairman of The Leprosy Mission International, he helps guide the charity in spreading hope and awareness to poverty stricken countries.

The New Zealand native has been a tireless community volunteer. "Caring for the world is a critical challenge and we must balance thinking globally with acting locally," Mr. Clement said. "An important part of each person is what they contribute to others and to society." That philosophy was instilled in him as a young boy. His father was a minister at their local Methodist church in Auckland and philanthropy became part of their day-to-day life in the New Zealand capital. In fact, good works in the Clement family can be traced back to his grandfather who billeted a mission rider who travelled the world on horseback to raise awareness and funding for leprosy. He has travelled to leprosy's front lines, including three visits to India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Africa, where he has heart-wrenching stories. As he sees it, "it's a privilege to try to change the future for people faced with problems."

Mr. Clement and his wife Irene moved to Aurora in 1977. He actively supports Aurora's arboretum, the town's leisure services committees and Aurora United Church, where he sings in the choir. 

*KV Shetty, continued:*

them. In the end it was Dr. Coelho, an eminent dermatologist at Father Muller's Hospital in Mangalore, who was able to help him with a prescription of sulphatrone tablets. After a year of treatment, Dr. Coelho issued him with a certificate stating that he was cured of the disease and that he could continue with his studies at school. But for KV Shetty life would never be the same again.

Leprosy, the disease that can rob one of all sense of pain can, at the same time, inflict a pain so acute and etch so deep within that it can only be managed with an extraordinary degree of fortitude. Perhaps that is why the Wellesley Bailey award is unique because it is as much a recognition of that quality as it is of one's contribution to the fight against leprosy.

KV Shetty was determined to succeed in life. He persevered, through isolation at school and being denied admission to college, the segregation at teachers' college, and finally being forced to give up his new teaching position in the face of objections from parents in the community. His attempts at finding any other means of livelihood only met with further rejection. Dejected with thoughts of suicide crowding his mind KV Shetty turned to Baba Amte for guidance. Baba Amte came from a wealthy Brahmin family but had turned his back on trappings of affluence to dedicate his life for the welfare of those afflicted by leprosy. His suggestion that KV Shetty could be a successful leprosy worker set a new direction and purpose in Shetty's life. 'This made me start the Bright India leprosy rehabilitation centre in which I am working till this day,' says Mr Shetty.

That point on KV Shetty's journey took a favorable turn but he would continue to fight public prejudice and indifference. His personal life began to change as well. 'Because of the stigma of leprosy no girl would come forward to marry me,' he says. Then, at the age of 50, a young woman from his village agreed to marry him. Now, he says, they are happily married and have one son who is a college student. Mr. Shetty has endured much and he has prevailed. Through his work, he has accomplished much for the cause of leprosy. A worthy winner of the 2009 Wellesley Bailey Award whom we are privileged to honor.

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## Lights

by Marie-Hannah & Silvano Perotti

**T**he first half of the soccer game between two French first division teams had been excellent. The over 40,000 supporters, and a few million of us following it on TV were impressed with its quality and looked forward to the second half.

Just after the players left the ground, the powerful flood lights went off and the stadium was plunged in total darkness. We were watching the screen and wondering what would happen next.

A few flickering lights started to appear, then more and more followed. Within a minute, the whole stadium was aglow, lit up by over 40,000 little flames. The organizers had given each person a lighter as they entered and they had been informed that at half time the main lights would be switched off for a while. This was to be the signal for everyone to "light up".

As I admired the spectacle and the impact of the combined lighters on the area, I was struck by the power of team work.

How often have I - we - felt that the resources were too small or insignificant to have a meaningful impact on the problem or need - and so did nothing?

If it is true that darkness is the absence of light, even one little flame can partially dispel it, what is the potential of thousands of lights shining together in harmony?

As followers of Christ, we should never feel that our efforts are insignificant or that we are defeated before we begin.



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*As well as seeking prayer support, Prayer Update is a means for The Leprosy Mission to keep over 1000 individual prayer warriors and new friends informed. Please feel free to pass along Prayer Update, allowing others to get to know the work of the Mission.*