



**MEDICAL
MISSIONARY
NEWS**

Supporting Christian Mission through Healthcare

2020
Issue 2

FINDING
GOD

IN TROUBLED
TIMES



H *eaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.*
Matthew 24:35

This scripture comes at the end of a chapter in which Jesus explains some of the things that will happen before He returns to the earth. It is worth reading the whole chapter: there will be wars, earthquakes, famines, pandemics and God's people will be persecuted, but we must endure and continue to share the gospel. This is what MMN is seeking to do through all those we support. The coronavirus has changed our world and is still changing it, but Jesus never changes and His message of hope is eternal. I have asked a few of the partners who we support how COVID-19 is affecting them.

VISION FOR CHINA

At Warrior's House, the young people had to stay in the boys' and girls' dormitories, cared for by the dorm supervisors, with a teacher directing their daily activities by the use of video chat link and visiting twice a week.

Hope Haven and Shekinah Shalom Childcare Centre still work as usual, but with stringent hygiene practices and no visitors or new staff. China is beginning to see some loosening of restrictions, but there are some new pockets of disease.

LIFELINE MALAWI

Heather writes: "Lifeline Malawi staff are doing what they can with the limited resources they have available to them. Our staff is sensitising the community to the prevention of infection, educating and inspiring them to take action to protect one another. We have been able to purchase extra masks and protective wear plus some have been donated. We have confidence that God will bring good to us during this crisis."

NEPAL LEPROSY (NLT)

Mike writes: "When lockdown occurred, staff were given the opportunity to return to their homes but medical staff chose to stay. The team have focused on training on infection protocols, disinfection routines for the wards, and taking steps to prevent the spread of the

virus. A stark reality is that there is limited oxygen available and no ventilators. There are currently about 60 leprosy-affected inpatients staying at LLHSC and the team continue to receive leprosy affected outpatients, but general outpatients, apart from suspected COVID-19 cases and emergencies, are not allowed at present. The lock-down has caused much hunger among poor communities who face price increases where food is available, due to the issues with transporting food from India. We have been able to start distributing food since the government recognised this danger."

NEW HOPE (DRC)

When COVID-19 hit, the borders were closed and Pastor Alexander and the staff found themselves without transport and with the cost of food escalating. They were no longer able to get building material to continue building the clinic, but the clinic remained open helping many refugees who were being injured by the Allied Democratic Forces. The refugees have no money to pay for medicine,

but the staff seek to provide masks and teach proper hand washing.

On 24th April there were devastating floods in the region. At least 36 people died, and 42 others were injured. According to the UN, more than 77,000 people have been displaced and are in need for shelter. This has brought many more to the clinic and the needs there are overwhelming. All the churches are closed and Pastor Alexander fears that many will lose their faith in the face of such devastation.

We need to pray and support financially where we can to all our partners who are working in such difficult situations. As we wonder in these unprecedented times, I would like to share words from a song written by a lady in my church. 'You're in control, My life is in Your hands, You won't let go Lord, help me understand: this is Your will, this is Your way.'

Editorial by Christine Sansom, MMN Trustee



CHALLENGES AND TRIALS

WORKING WITH REFUGEES IN THE
MIDDLE EAST

Since 2007 a group of Christian doctors, pharmacists and nurses in Egypt have joined to form Doctors with a Mission (DWAM): an organisation dedicated to raising awareness of medical missions in the Middle East and beyond. By means of an annual conference, training, networking and sponsorship, they have supported short-term medical mission and sent clinicians for longer term placements in the Middle East.

They are evangelical and believe the gospel must be central to all

they do. Egyptians have great advantages in undertaking medical work in the region. Their form of Arabic is widely used and understood, their qualifications are generally recognised, and their visa requirements are usually less stringent between Arab countries. DWAM is a powerful means of envisioning doctors and other healthcare staff to use their gifts for God's kingdom. However, things are not always quite so straightforward.

MMN supported one of these mission projects during 2015-

2017, but it has only recently been possible to complete a report on this work; the way was not easy, but God was faithful.

THE CALLING

Dr NF* is a graduate of Assiut University and completed his training in Family Medicine at a Christian Hospital in southern Egypt receiving his diploma from Suez Canal University. He is married to S*, who qualified from the Faculty of Education, Assiut University. Dr NF had felt God's call on his life for many years and, on completing his training, worked in some relatively unreached areas of Egypt, Nubia and an area near Luxor. He also took short-term mission trips to South Sudan, Yemen and Kurdistan. During 2015 he and his wife began to seek the Lord for a longer-term calling. They both felt burdened about the plight of

refugees and recognised that this was a time of great need. They considered work in Lebanon and Kurdistan, but felt led towards Jordan. Following an exploratory visit in 2015 they were accepted by DWAM to be sent to a Baptist church near the capital, Amman, which had an outreach clinic to refugees. They arrived in November 2015, after being married for four years, with their three daughters, aged three, two and one.

MEETING A NEED

Dr NF found there were needy Iraqi and Syrian refugees, many of them Orthodox Christians, who had been uprooted from their homes and found themselves in a strange land without medical insurance. The clinic in the church provided basic medications and a consultation room where Dr NF was able to provide care five days per week seeing five to ten patients per day. Although not many were seen per day, it did mean there was an opportunity to talk with patients and bring the gospel into those conversations. Dr NF was also able to run Bible studies for those he met. The couple supported youth and children's work in the church and S was able to start

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a women's discipleship group for up to 30 young mothers from the Iraqi and Syrian refugee groups. Visa and residency arrangements, however, were very challenging and the couple only managed to obtain a residency permit as a result of their enrolment into a Masters' programme at a local institution.

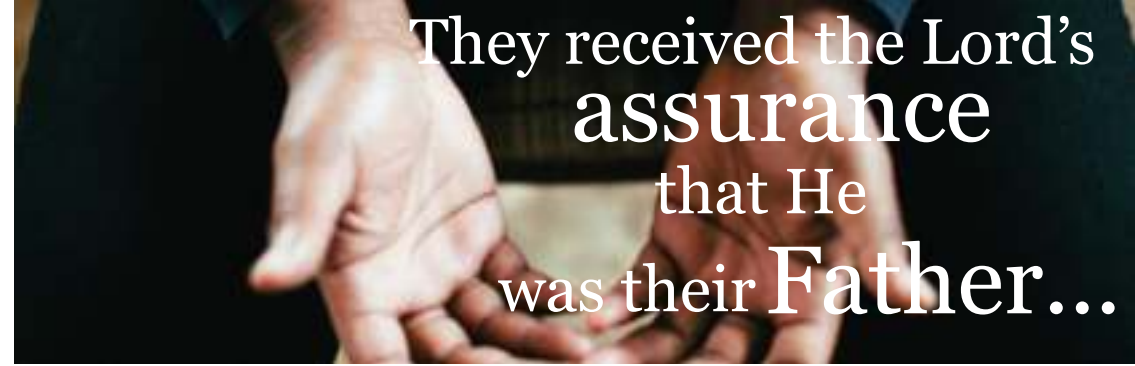
The work was rewarding with a constant stream of opportunities to share the gospel and encourage others to grow in their faith. Encouraged by this work, Dr NF and S wanted to expand their input and started a collaboration with a Korean medical mission serving Syrian refugee communities near Amman as well as a Palestinian refugee camp. Clinics were carried out at different venues on different days of the week and around 120 patients were seen per day by Dr NF and another Korean doctor.

WHEN TRIALS COME Things, however, began to become challenging. The Korean doctor was asked to leave Jordan for security reasons. This left Dr NF with a heavy workload, to lead and direct the clinical work. There were ongoing problems with obtaining official registration of his medical qualifications, meaning his medical

work was technically unsustainable.

Following this, N*, the couple's youngest child who was two years of age, became seriously ill with nephrotic syndrome. Dr NF was in a foreign country with no health insurance and an extremely sick child. The couple did not want to leave the work God had called them to do, but they found themselves under extreme pressure. N required expert paediatric care with regular trips to hospital for intravenous replacement therapy. They received the Lord's assurance that He was their Father and not "the boss of a business", and He would care for them. God was faithful to His word and they continued through 2016 to serve and minister to the refugee communities they had started working with.

By December 2016, it was clear that the situation was not sustainable and reluctantly the couple made the decision to return to Egypt. God blessed them with family and church to support and love them there, and they waited on Him for guidance. They began to work with an organisation which encourages people to go as long-term mission workers to unreached peoples in the Arab world. They continue



They received the Lord's assurance that He was their Father...

in this role at the present time. Dr NF took up a part-time post in the medical centre run by his local church in order to maintain his medical skills and registration. However, their daughter's condition, continued to cause concern and despite intensive treatment did not stabilise. In summer 2019 N deteriorated further and then needed to start renal dialysis. Tragically she developed line sepsis and died on 22nd August 2019. Dr NF, S and the family are still coming to terms with her loss. They thank God for her life and the faith that reassures them this is not the final end of the story.

FUTURE HOPES

They would like to return to Jordan to focus on supporting unreached people in the north of the country. Despite the association of the country with the loss of their daughter, they are gaining strength to consider returning to minister there. Their hearts remain committed

to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. MMN played an important role in this story, offering financial support that was vital to enable Dr NF and S to move to Jordan and start this work. The opposition they experienced was not something unexpected, but the ferocity and the depth of the loss were deeply challenging. This is not a story of great success or achievement, in human terms. We will not know the fruit of these endeavours until God declares it. We can only trust and pray over precious seed. What we do see, however, is the depth of servanthood that exists in the lives of our Egyptian brothers and sisters.

This is but one of many stories of faith and trust emerging from the work of DWAM. Let us pray for encouragement and wisdom, as Dr NF, S and others seek to step out in faith and serve.

**names changed*



A SECOND CHANCE

SHINING STAR PROJECT, ZIMBABWE

Bulawayo, Zimbabwe's second largest city, could be viewed as a city without hope. A change in President has not brought the changes people were dreaming of. Wages have remained stagnant while food and fuel prices have soared. Unemployment continues to be high, and the economic situation is compounded by severe drought and shortages of water. Girls and women have turned to sex work to make ends meet and, in 2017, the Ministry of Health and Child Care estimated that there were approximately 45,000

female sex workers in Zimbabwe, with nearly 7,000 in Bulawayo. Shining Star Project continued their life-changing work with girls and women engaged in sex work, resulting in the development of new skills, girls and women being empowered, and aspirations becoming a reality.

PEER EDUCATION

The Shining Star Project planned to train 40 peer educators, but in fact, they were able to increase this to 50. Initial training was carried out in February by Shining

Star staff and a refresher training was held in November with input from the District AIDs coordinator from the National AIDs council.

The training equipped the girls and women to share sexual health knowledge with 3,005 other girls and women in sex work. This is a great achievement and they have far exceeded their target of 2,800 girls and women reached.

The project director, Emsipa Nare, said: "During the report meetings we have been pleased by the passion that the ladies are showing.

Most of the ladies that were timid are now showing some confidence in the way they talk. We noticed that most of the women were encouraging each other to do better in reaching out to others involved in sex work. The peer educators are the pillar of the project as they are a link between the project and the sex worker community. They create a platform to be able to interact with women in sex work and refer them for uptake to other services."

Through the referrals made by the peer educators:

- 351 girls and women have been

tested for HIV

- 167 women were provided with access to contraception
- 83 women were provided with cervical cancer screening
- 33 women were provided with gender-based violence assistance.



VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

A key aim of the Shining Star Project is to provide the peer educators with a variety of vocational training opportunities to support them in growing their skills and confidence to start a

business, which gives them a viable route out of sex work. The range of vocational training on offer expanded this year to include; learning how to make a popular concentrated juice drink and learning how to make sanitary pads, alongside the established offers of training, consisting of beauty therapy and cooking.



...through exploring the Bible, their eyes were opened to God's love and compassion...

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

To ensure the Shining Star ladies could utilise the vocational skills they had acquired to create a credible business, or to inspire them to create a new business idea, they were provided with business management training. The Director of the Bulawayo Publicity Board, More-Blessings, carried out the training. She is a member of the City Pentecostal Assembly Church, where the Shining Star Project is based, and has a Master's degree in Marketing Management. Of the peer educators, 41 completed the training, which involved; understanding what business is, how it is managed, how to calculate and make a profit, and writing business proposals. Following the training, proposals could be submitted to the Shining Star project, and so far, 15 of these have been funded with more being funded later in 2020.

DISCIPLESHIP

A total of 24 discipleship sessions were run over the year, with around 22 girls and women attending each session. At the start of the programme, many of the ladies regarded themselves as worthless and assumed that God hated

them. Some of the ladies had attended church previously, but felt that because of their lifestyle, they were no longer accepted by God. However, through exploring the Bible, their eyes were opened to God's love and compassion for them. They took part in team-building exercises and Bible teaching was shared, with particular emphasis on how valuable each of the ladies are. As a result of the time away, it was a great joy to see five ladies give their lives to Christ – praise God! The Shining Star project partnered with Bulawayo for Jesus Mission to run a revival dinner, where many of the ladies who had previously attended church rededicated their lives to God.

STUDENT OUTREACH

The adolescent peer educators spearheaded a project to deliver



sexual-health education in colleges and universities. Unfortunately, the peer educators reported that sex work is rife in some of these institutions due to the pressures of paying fees. They also found that some students are being recruited into the trade by other sex workers. The Shining Star Project worked in partnership with a number of organisations in their work with colleges and universities to conduct a wellness day at White City Stadium in Bulawayo. Shining Star also delivered sexual health sessions at six other universities and colleges.

A topic that was raised regularly was the rise of Vuzu parties, which are wild gatherings organised by young people, but sponsored by adults, which involved sexual activity and drug-taking. One of the project team, Thembi, spoke

to the students about the risks of these parties. The response of the students was overwhelmingly positive, with many asking to have more sessions, saying that they don't receive this information from their families and instead learn about sex from their peers. While the project aimed to reach 2,000 students, around 460 students received the information due to an issue in securing timetable slots. When the programme is run again this year, the institutions will be contacted earlier in advance, to hopefully secure more slots with the students.

Please pray for the incredible work being done through the Shining Star project, and for the numerous lives God is changing through the information they are passing on to these women in need.



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AGAINST ALL ODDS

ACCOMPLISH CHILDREN'S TRUST

We are experiencing vast changes as the UK tackles the Coronavirus and for many it is a difficult, challenging and worrying time. Isolation is a new experience for us, but we are grateful for the technology available to help us keep in touch with loved ones.

Can you imagine being constantly socially isolated? Disability is misunderstood in many rural parts of Africa and is often believed

to be a curse. This often leads to these children being treated as useless and worthless, and in extreme cases, even being locked indoors with no stimulation.

SIMPLE BEGINNINGS

Accomplish Children's Trust (ACT) is a small charity with a huge aim: to reach Africa's children with disabilities. Founded in 2008, with God at its centre and prayer as its foundation, ACT has grown beyond everyone's wildest dreams. God is an amazing God, so we should



Jeremiah
...attained division
one level, placing him
amongst the top students
in Uganda.

not be surprised, but we always are. In this short time, ACT has reached hundreds of children and their families, usually in remote rural regions where no other help is available. ACT now has projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi and Uganda. Its founder, Rebecca Cornish, was awarded an MBE in the 2020 New Years' Honours list in recognition of this work.

Thank God for people like Rev and Mrs Maali Wilson who view these children differently. They view them as special in God's eyes. Their own son, Kihembo, has cerebral palsy, so they understand the challenges of bringing up a child with disabilities in a hostile environment, with no support. In 2005, they formed the Rwenzori Association of Parents of Children with Disabilities (RAPCD), with a small handful of like-minded parents and guardians to provide mutual support.

In 2010, supported by ACT, the RAPCD primary school for deaf or blind children was opened in Kasese, western Uganda. It began with 15 pupils, one of whom was Jeremiah, who is blind, and the school consisted of one primitive building.

From this humble beginning the school grew and it now has a complex of buildings for nearly 200 pupils, most of whom are deaf or blind. Some of the students have a severe physical disability which prevents them from accessing education in a village school. There is now a water supply and sporadic electricity. This school is also a beacon for children with disabilities and their families in the whole Rwenzori region. Teams who work as part of the school outreach regularly go to visit 350 families in remote villages bringing support, advice and practical help, which includes gifts of soap. Income generation projects are organised from the school base and various health clinics are held at the school. ACT is the main source of funding for this unique and far reaching project.

J E R E M I A H

St Agnes School, an integrated secondary school, is being built nearby, again mostly supported by ACT. It opened in 2017 and is far from being complete; however, pupils are still reaching very high standards. Ten years after Jeremiah was a pioneer primary school pupil, he took his Standard 4 exams, which are like GCSE's,



...local churches and congregations are **in awe** when a blind child reads from a **Braille Bible** or a deaf child **sings** in sign.



CONFIRMATION OF 32 PUPILS

and was awarded division one level, placing him amongst the top students in Uganda. So much for blind children being useless! Pupils like Jeremiah learn Braille, but Braille textbooks and equipment are expensive, especially for the different subjects taught at secondary level. Teaching blind pupils at both schools was severely hampered, so Rev Maali and his devoted team of dedicated teachers appealed for help. In 2019 MMN answered this urgent need with a generous grant so both schools now have textbooks in Braille and the equipment to produce Braille transcripts. Before building these schools there was virtually no education available for blind pupils in this large region of Uganda, but now they are able to learn and communicate with confidence. Some of their teachers are blind and provide fantastic role models. Jeremiah's dream is to become a teacher and, with the help of MMN, this dream now has a real chance of becoming a reality.

BIBLE TEACHING

The RAPCD schools are focused on teaching from the Bible. ACT has provided a Braille Bible and audio Bibles for the schools. Small groups of deaf or blind pupils

visit local churches and the congregations are in awe when a blind child reads from a Braille Bible or a deaf child sings in sign. It was with great rejoicing that 32 pupils were confirmed in October 2019. These visits, along with other community engagement like the school's football team of deaf players and the integrated nature of the secondary school, are helping to slowly change attitudes towards these children with disabilities throughout the Rwensori region.

Thank you to the supporters of MMN for bringing about life changing education for many blind children now and for several years to come.



A TIME OF NEED

THE PROVISION OF PPE TO SHANGHAI, CHINA

In February 2020, IHP received a shipment from MMN which contained PPE for medical staff in Shanghai, China. This shipment was sent at a vital stage in the country's response to COVID-19 with over 70,000 cases and over 2,000 deaths reported at that time, with the disease beginning its spread across the world.

On 31 December 2019, Chinese officials notified the World Health Organisation that there were several cases of an unusual illness in Wuhan, a port

city on the Yangtze River. This was later named COVID-19, a deadly new coronavirus that would soon infect millions of people and unite the world in a global struggle. This equipment was received by IHP's partner Project Hope in Shanghai and was distributed to Shanghai Children's Medical Centre (SCMC). SCMC is a tertiary children's hospital with 1,000 beds and a fever clinic. The equipment was to support frontline health workers playing a crucial role in containing the spread of COVID-19. As cases started to increase in Shanghai,

and the need for intensive care rapidly increased, SCMC set up a quarantine ward to care for patients who had contracted the disease and prevent its spread. The donated PPE was used among the doctors and nurses working in this quarantine unit, to keep them safe as they offered medical care to children in quarantine. The 9,000 masks and 1,875 protective coveralls would support medical staff at SCMC for the next 90 days.

PROTECTING KEY HEALTH WORKERS

Due to the widespread shortage of PPE, which is required to be removed and safely disposed of whenever staff leave a quarantine ward, medical staff needed to work for very long periods of time, with no breaks, in order to preserve the limited supply of protective equipment.

Ms. Chen Lianli, Head Nurse of the quarantine unit, said "We work on 8-hour shifts. Due to the shortage of PPE, most of our nurses, refuse drinking water or (food) during their shift, in order to save a set of coveralls. Thank you IHP and Project HOPE for donating the PPE including mask and coveralls. Now... my colleagues (can) have some water and a meal during their shift."

MMN's support has enabled almost 11,000 pieces of protective equipment to be sent to this part of China, which has provided essential protection to medical staff in a real time of need. We are very grateful for this support and it has brought hope to those battling on the frontlines of this crisis. This hope is vital at a time when they are required to go above and beyond and experience great suffering to keep their communities safe.





KATOKA

LIFE IN A MISSION HOSPITAL
MARY RATTER

It is a pleasure to be able to write to you again to acknowledge with many thanks the recent MMN gift for medicines. This regular quarterly gift is such a help and enables us to keep the work functioning and be a blessing to many in this corner of DR Congo. The local medical authorities are keen to do inspections and to insist that we send copies of all our reports on activities, such as; vaccinations, number of patients seen and number of deliveries. However, the only drugs that they help us with are for HIV and TB

patients, and the rapid malaria test kits, so all our other supplies are obtained in Lubumbashi.

OBSTACLES

Just before the rains started, Sandy Meikle was able to do a trip to Lubumbashi to stock up, knowing that for several months travel would be inadvisable and, at times, impossible. She also went to Sakeji school in Zambia and collected the parcels, which Sakeji very kindly keep for us until we are able to go across the border. However, despite this diligence we were doing a Pharmacy check

and it looks as though many of our supplies are now rather low, but there seems to be no relenting in the severity of the daily rains we are experiencing this year. We can buy a few things at the border town of Dilolo but the prices there are roughly four times higher than in Lubumbashi, so we will need to be ready to do a trip as soon as the rains stop and the roads dry up sufficiently.

MATERNITY WARD

The medical work continues to be challenging, but also rewarding in many ways. The maternity work has had its fair share of difficult



cases in the past few months and we give all of the praise to God for so many answered prayers. It was so lovely when, in the maternity ward, I suddenly heard the cry of a newborn and at the same time the patients' mother-in-law burst into song, singing in Chokwe: 'Thank you, oh our Father for giving us your son'. She went dancing around the ward singing various other hymns and praising God for His goodness. I thought that was a scenario probably not likely to be seen or heard in the UK, but it was so lovely and she

had us all singing along with her. A beautiful baby was born some distance from Katoka, but the parents were concerned so they brought her to us. She was a hydrocephalic child and we arranged for her to go to Lusaka for treatment. The father of the child was sick at the time, so the mother set off with her rather elderly father to do the long journey to Lusaka. The child received treatment and immediately responded favourably to the insertion of the stent. On the return journey they had to make use of a motorbike down a steep and rocky road, and the



stent was displaced, meaning the child needed hospital admission.

Mutshatsha hospital were unable to help and suggested they proceed to Kasaji, but Dr Kayombo was absent at the time and, although good treatment was given, they were not able to save the child. They made it back to Katoka, but two weeks later the child died. I cannot even imagine what the poor mother thought as she travelled back with a child who was more sick than she had been before embarking on the journey, but I felt like crying when the couple turned up a few weeks later and brought me a gift to thank me for helping them. We can only pray in these times: that having the freedom to pray with them, share with them and perhaps help financially, we can do something to show God's love to these needy people.

CAUSE FOR HOPE

Another thing which is concerning is the increased number of cases of malnutrition that we are seeing, despite the fact that this is the time when people are harvesting their crops. One of the causes is that trade in protein items, such as fish and frozen chicken from Angola, has been curtailed due to the

rains affecting the road conditions. During the time that Sandy was doing the hospital bed rounds, two of the children died from hunger, so it is very sad.

On Monday afternoons we are studying the book of Ephesians at the ladies' Bible school and the subject of how we can demonstrate love to those around us. I shared with them about the desperate state of some of our patients and asked them for their ideas on what kind of solution we could come up with. There were 25 of us at the class and they decided that they would organise a special food offering. It was so exciting to see their enthusiasm and, the next day, gifts started to come in, including: flour, maize, peanuts, salt, charcoal for cooking, soap, money to buy oil and even a tray of bread rolls for the children. We took these to the patients and explained the reason for the giving and shared with the most needy of the very sick patients. It was a blessed time for us all.

Please pray for the work at Katoka and that lives will continue to be changed through the saving power of God.



MARGARET PEARCE

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

Margaret joined MMN in April 2020, having spent many years working in Administration and Finance in the corporate world. She comes to us from her recent position as Office Manager in a small company. She will be involved in setting up the new premises in Swindon and will be working alongside Grev to assist with the Finance and Administration of MMN.



Margaret is married with two sons, one of whom is married and she now has two lovely grandsons. She is very involved with her local church where she works with all ages, particularly children's and youth work. When not working, she likes to spend time with the family and enjoys baking. If you ever find yourself at the new premises, she is sure to welcome you with a drink and some home baking!

MMN Team

HANNAH PEARCE

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Hannah joined MMN in March 2020, having previously worked for *Echoes International (Echoes of Service)* for five years. She worked in a number of different roles within the organisation but mainly focused on the magazine and coordinated the gap year programme, *FirstServe*. Hannah will be responsible for MMN's communication outlets, including the magazine, website and social media pages.



Hannah lives in Bath and is married, with two young children, Joshua and Harvey. She has a particular passion for writing and music, and plays piano at the church she attends in Bath. After studying English Literature at university, Hannah loves getting stuck into a good book whenever she has a quiet moment, although they are rare when looking after two boys!



REBUILDING HOPE

A REPORT FROM
AURORA CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
ROMANIA

We have just returned from a visit to Romania and have returned full of positivity as all of the projects are going so well, and there is also a vision for future work. However, we received news that the state has instructed all school and state kindergartens to close because of the Coronavirus. On the 16th March a state of emergency was declared. We seek ways to support and maintain relationships with people during this time while respecting the regulations. Two of our volunteers, Leta and Lela, have been willing to distribute the money for medications to those with chronic health conditions. We know this has affected many financially as they have either not been able to work so receive only 75% of their salary or have reduced hours. Our

hope is that that we will be able to in some way reopen the canteen soon, but we wait to see what the government says next.

CANTEEN PROJECT

Numbers in the canteen have risen, following the previous decline of children due to being provided with meals at school. Some of these projects have come to an end, so the children are eating back at the canteen. We have seen a slight increase in the number of Romanian families eating with us, and it has given us contact with many new families in the village.

We were able to send out a second-hand cooker from Rora to the canteen to replace one of their old ones and a gift was given to install a new hot water boiler to service the canteen and sinks in

the downstairs toilets. As in previous years, a gift was specifically given to make up food bags for approximately 40 older people, widows and widowers, to support them over the winter months. The bags consist of: flour, polenta, oil, tomato paste, pasta, rice, jam and stock cubes, among other items.

BUILDING WORK

We went with Irene to visit a couple, Eugenia and Gheorge, who we have been able to build a house for with some funds received from MMN, and we were so pleased to see what has been achieved. The house was clean, Gheorge had a fire going to keep Eugenia warm



EUGENIA & GHEORGE

and she was tucked up in bed. Gheorge visits the canteen every day that it is open to get food for them both. Eugenia would hugely benefit from incontinence pants as at the moment she only has sheets that go on top of the mattress.

The big news from the end of last year was the fire at Ionut and Roxana's house, caused by a barbecue in their neighbours' garden that had not been extinguished properly. Their house was completely destroyed, and the old people's home lost its roof. We are very grateful for the huge response to send funds to enable them to rebuild their home. Due to the unseasonable weather, and not much snow, they have been able to get on with the building work. With the funds received, all the building materials were purchased and Ionut provided all the labour. Ionut and Roxana are so appreciative to everyone who gave so generously. Two building projects in the neighbouring village of Tauhan continue to go well, however, many complications have arisen with the building project for Meralina, which we are waiting to hear news about.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

We also visited a little girl called



ROXANA'S NEW HOUSE



ADRIANA



IRENE & SOFIA

Adriana, who was born at 27 weeks and left in the same position in her cot for six months, which left her with a deformed head shape, along with other complications from being born so prematurely. With support from MMN, Aurora Christian Association (ACA) were able to buy a helmet to help straighten her head and help with physiotherapy. When we visited, she was in a baby walker but had some strength in her legs from the physio she has received. Fortunately, her parents are committed to their daughter and are trying to give her the best help possible, although a lot of it is beyond their means. With support, we will continue to help this family as much as we can.

There is starting to be more recognition of children with special needs. Previously, they would be hidden away and ignored, but people are now receiving education. A young girl, Sofia, would just scream, but recently has been diagnosed with Autism and now attends a special kindergarten, three days a week. Since being at the kindergarten Sofia's behaviour has improved greatly, and her mother is also learning tools and skills to help her cope at home.

COVID-19 RESPONSE



At a recent meeting, MMN trustees set aside some designated funds to support the needs of our partners as they respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have taken responsibility for providing food, clothing and basic medical supplies in their local communities as a way of sharing God's love in a very practical way. If you would like to join us in supporting our partners during this time of uncertainty, please send your donations to us online or by post specifically marking them for COVID-19.

The final container has been loaded and shipped from Wickford, and is now on its way to Zambia. We thank God for the way He has used this operation to help spread the gospel and build His kingdom. We had hoped to be in our new premises in Swindon by now, but the lockdown restrictions have slowed the whole process down so please pray that it will soon be finalised.

The changes keep coming and we want to thank Alex Grimson for his many years of hard work in dealing with the stamps, coins and postcards that you have sent him. Alex now feels it is the right time to pass this work on to others. Therefore, please can you stop sending anything

to Alex with immediate effect. His work has raised thousands of pounds to support medical mission around the world and we want to continue this work. If you know of anyone who can help in this area please let us know. Any stamps and postcards can be sent to our office in Swindon once we are able to confirm the address.

Another change is that we have refreshed our website so that we can share more about what God is doing through the ministry of our partners. Please have a look: MMN.UK.COM. It is good to remind ourselves, as we did at the beginning, that God is the same, yesterday, today and forever, and He never changes.

Grev Parmenter, MMN Director

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