

REPORT OF THE LEPROSY MISSION NORTHERN IRELAND FOR THE YEAR 2008



January 2008 saw Mark Noble take over the Chair of The Leprosy Mission Northern Ireland from Dr Gwyneth Hinds who had served from 2005. We thank Gwyneth for her dedicated work for the Mission and wish Mark well in his new role. A retired businessman, Mark is Clerk of Session in his own church. He went with Tom to Hombolo in 2007 on the Work and Witness Team.

TLMNI support for Hombolo, Tanzania

Quoting from the project paperwork: 'The Diocese of Central Tanganyika seeks to offer God's love to all, to preach the Gospel, and to reach out to its people, the vast majority of whom struggle with poverty, poor education and poor healthcare. The Diocese's primary work is through its 200 parishes, but it has developed over the last 80 years a strong range of over 30 businesses and services.' One of these is Hombolo Hospital.

The project aims to outreach into the six villages which form the hinterland of the hospital, to brief the villages on the proposed Programme, and then to recruit and train a small group of volunteers in each village, so that, once trained, they can go back to their villages and provide basic healthcare advice, particularly for Leprosy and Leprosy-related diseases.

The Programme in 2008 reached 2800+ villagers, including 400 students, and this number is set to rise in 2009. The vehicle supplied by us in 2008 will be central to the success of the programme as most of the villages are very remote.



OUR VISION: A WORLD WITHOUT LEPROSY



Daphne Kerry

After 15 years as 'the face of TLMNI' we were sorry to say farewell to Daphne at the end of February on her retirement. Always cheery and helpful, many supporters became her friends over the years, and they and we will miss her very much.

Youth Team to India

A first for TLMNI was when a team of young people went to Faizabad in India to help to build housing for families of those suffering from leprosy.

The Fisher Foundation generously made an award to defray many of the expenses associated with this trip. [This Foundation was set up in memory of Emma Fisher (a former member of Council) and her father and brother who were all killed in a helicopter accident in 2001.]

The visit went extremely well and was a memorable experience for all concerned. Our very warmest thanks are due to Sam and to Mark Smith – Sam's son – who co-led the team and put a very considerable amount of time and experience at our disposal. Sam and members of the team led the well-attended World Leprosy Day service in Lisburn Cathedral on 25 January 2009.

Dr Esther Davis

Esther is an avid supporter of TLM who until very recently attended many of our Annual Meetings and WLD Services. She was for many years superintendent of Ekpene Obom Hospital in Akwa Ibom State, SE Nigeria, and made her final visit to the hospital just two years ago. Esther is celebrating her 90th birthday today and I have sent her greetings from her friends in TLMNI.

Child Protection

In line with Council's desire to ensure that TLMNI operates under the current legislation, all five of our staff have been checked by AccessNI.

Electives and student visits

Two 4th year medical electives visited India last summer – one of whom, Claire Forde, is to speak at the AGM. We are delighted that in addition to a further two 4th year students who have been accepted for this year, up to 7 3rd year medical students have been accepted to spend a short period visiting leprosy hospitals either in India or Nepal

NLT Conference, Dublin

Elimination of Stigma in Leprosy was the theme of this conference organised by Nepal Leprosy Trust last autumn. A number of projects aimed specifically at the reduction of stigma in Nepal are being undertaken, and research on the topic is also current. The opposite of stigma is integration, and so any measures which seek to integrate the patient and his/her family back into their community is to be welcomed.

Increasing legacy giving in Northern Ireland

The initiative of NICVA to bring charities together to seek to improve the number of people leaving a charitable bequest in their will is progressing well. A recent meeting of the steering group, of which I am a member, with representatives of the legal profession resulted in their agreement to obtain the backing of the Law Society NI to a leaflet being circulated to all solicitors in Northern Ireland. This leaflet will encourage all solicitors to suggest to all clients making a will with them that they consider leaving a charitable bequest. A general meeting of interested charities is to be called to ratify Terms of Reference for the setting up of an organisation in Northern Ireland in the mould of the GB 'Remember a charity' group.

Research shows that less than 30% of folk in Northern Ireland have made a will at all.

Death of Ellinor Mortensen

Ellinor, who served for a number of years as a nurse in Bangladesh prior to being appointed National Director for Denmark died last year. She had just reached retirement age when she was diagnosed with cancer.

Her contribution to TLM and her friendship will be much missed in the mission.

Collection Boxes

Having come to the end of the first batch of cardboard collection boxes, we carried out a review of their suitability. The main complaint which we had received was that the boxes were rather flimsier than we would wish. We have found an alternative supplier who is now making a much stronger box for us – hopefully samples will be available for this AGM.

Christmas and Stamp Fair

This annual event was held for three hours on Saturday 8 November. There was unfortunately another major stamp event which coincided with us and kept away a lot of our usual philatelists. However, we raised over £1100 (Stamps £400+ and the shop £700+) and there was a great buzz around the office during the event.

My grateful thanks once again to Roy Smyth and Gordon Kennedy for their work on stamps throughout the year and in particular in connection with the Fair. Also to all who came and who supported with gifts, including stamp collections.

The event just would not have been possible without Joy, who put in a great deal of work and effort into so many different aspects of the event.

We are only too happy to accept all gifts of stamps and stamp collections – for the past two years we have been able to raise over £2000 from the sale of stamps – and we would welcome your help to increase this means of raising money.

New Youth Website

'Leprosy Mission Insight' was launched in October, and has sections on it for organisation leaders, medical electives, news and events, puzzles for kids and the summer team. You can visit it at www.leprosymissioninsight.org. The site has been registered with various search engines in an effort to get other organisations to link to us and so get us ever nearer to page 1!! A regular newsletter and prayer letter is also being sent to various youth groups and organisations which support our work. If you want to receive it please tell Sam or Peter.

Gifts for Life

In concert with The Leprosy Mission in England and Wales and in Scotland, we have been promoting 'Gifts for Life' through our magazine 'In Touch' and through a new joint leaflet. The response has been most encouraging, and I would commend these gifts to you as being a wonderful help to us as a mission and also being a most suitable gift to give the person who already has everything!

I am encouraged also by the sales of tea and coffee both from the office and at meetings staff have been speaking at. Supporters are also able to support TLMNI by purchasing tea and coffee through our website.

Gift Aid

A record amount of £17840 was reclaimed from The Treasury for Gift Aid last year. This represents an immense amount of work by Tom – it is not easy to encourage folk to use gift aid, but as we see the figure rise year on year we have much cause to be thankful. In this period of financial uncertainty it is one very positive way in which we can each increase our donations to the Mission (if we haven't done so already)

Meeting of UK Chairs and National Directors

An historic first meeting of the Chairs and Directors of the three UK TLMs took place in Glasgow last November. It was very apparent that we have much to learn from each other, and much we can do for each other. Notable was a desire for the three Councils to put together a joint application to HM Government for funding of a project.

The three Directors have been meeting regularly over the past year, and the Chairs and Directors hope to get together again around the time of the International Assembly in Canada in June.

Our role in the future fight against leprosy

A major Forum comprising a representative from each supporting and each implementing country of The Leprosy Mission International along with the Brentford Directors met for a week in Pollock Halls, Edinburgh, in June last.

Geoff Warne the International Director, in a keynote speech outlined the vision of partnership which he had for TLM Internationally. It would be an organisation with shared values, (to be like Jesus, to be holistic, to be professional and appropriate in all our work and to be open in all our transactions); a shared purpose, (to minister in the name of Jesus...); having a shared vision, (A world without leprosy); and a shared goal (to eradicate the causes and consequences of leprosy)

The partnership would not be a legal commitment, rather an agreement between Christians. The aim of the partnership is to enable TLM to function well and to glorify God – with all parts of the mission affirmed, respected and participating as equals. The aim of each part of the mission would be to build up the other parts of the same body. The field will be the implementing partner of the mission, each national council a supporting partner, and the International Office the resourcing partner. [Ecclesiastes 4 Verses 9 – 12]

One highlight of the workshop was a session with Professor Cairns Smith OBE who is head of the Department of Public Health at Aberdeen University, Chair of the WHO Technical Advisory Group on Leprosy and also Chair of TLM's Technical Reference Panel. Cairns asked the question 'is the challenge facing the leprosy world today one of leprosy control, leprosy elimination or leprosy eradication?'

It was seen as a great triumph for mankind when small pox was finally got rid of, but the malaria campaign of the 60's and 70's, whose aim was to eradicate malaria, was a complete failure. Everyone wants to take credit for the progress towards elimination which has occurred in the field of leprosy over the past 20 years. Control is when a reduction in incidence or prevalence is achieved; elimination is the reduction of leprosy to a predetermined low level – say 1 case in every 10,000 population; eradication occurs where there are no further cases anywhere, and control measures are unnecessary. Extinction of a disease is where the causes of the disease and even its existence in the laboratory disappear. "Trying to prove something doesn't exist is much harder than trying to prove it does exist."

WHO has now no fixed target for elimination since their aim of elimination of leprosy by 2000 failed. They then spoke of a final push against leprosy until 2005 – it wasn't final. Now their latest strategy for the period 2006-2010 is to 'try to make leprosy work sustainable and to concentrate on case detection, quality care, partnerships and the human rights of sufferers.'

Cairns also told us that the relapse rate was now very low – about one case per 1000 treated. Unfortunately no drug companies want to invest in the development of new drugs in the field since they would not be economically viable – so we need to rely on drugs developed for other conditions but which can help those with leprosy as a spin-off. Novartis, the Japanese drug giant, has promised to continue to provide drugs for leprosy free until the disease is eradicated.

The challenges in leprosy for the future are threefold –

- Africa has fallen behind in progress in the field of leprosy
- With a failure in India for example to detect and treat leprosy, there is a real danger of a re-emergence of leprosy in numbers not seen for many years. Increase in resistance to the drugs we are currently using
- It has to be clearly understood by all supporting countries that the leprosy story is not static – that it is forever changing and sometimes the changes are very rapid.

Mission Agencies Partnership – M.A.P.

TLMNI has joined the Mission Agencies Partnership. This new venture has been set up by many of the main mission agencies in Northern Ireland to co-ordinate and develop joint events, optimise the use of resources, share good practice, share prayer needs and provide a vehicle for fellowship amongst the agencies. The Partnership has established links with Global Connections and has recently secured the services of a part-time worker, employed by Evangelical Alliance who also voluntarily facilitate and administer the Partnership.

MAP is strongly committed to the task and vision of mission through communicating God's saving grace to a needy world and by providing care for the practical and physical needs of people today. This is summed up in their vision statement 'Mission is at the heart of the church, church is at the heart of mission'. 32 agencies have already committed to MAP including AIM, Belfast Bible College, Crosslinks, Interserve, Latinlink, Logos Ministries, MAF, Mission Africa, OM, OMF, Presbyterian Church Overseas Board, SIM, WEC and Wycliffe.

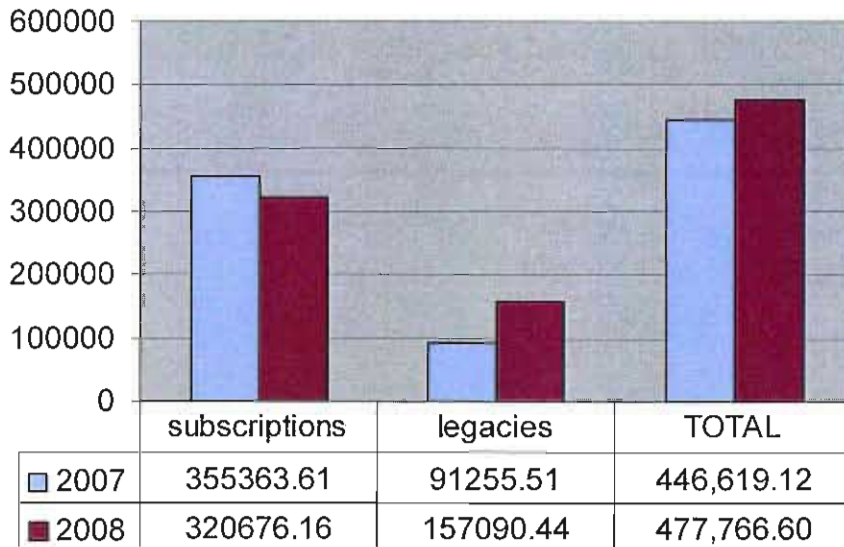
MAP has been recognised as the sole agency to speak to university Christian Unions, New Horizons and Elective Placement (it was through the good offices of MAP that we were allowed to attend the recent electives evening).

Finance

2008 marked a milestone in the finances of TLMNI. Once all the expenses of the Northern Ireland operation had been met, we were able to send a quarter of a million - £250,000 – to The Leprosy Mission International for the year. We can only pause and give thanks to God for His continued blessing of His work for those with Leprosy.

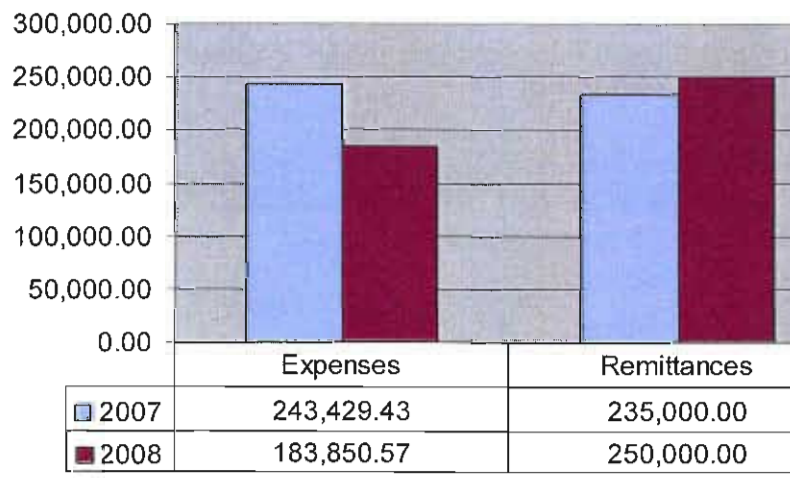
This first graph on this page indicates that whilst general giving showed a small decline on 2007, our legacy income was considerably up. This decline in general giving has continued into 2009 – proof that we are not immune from the financial situation facing the UK.

Income



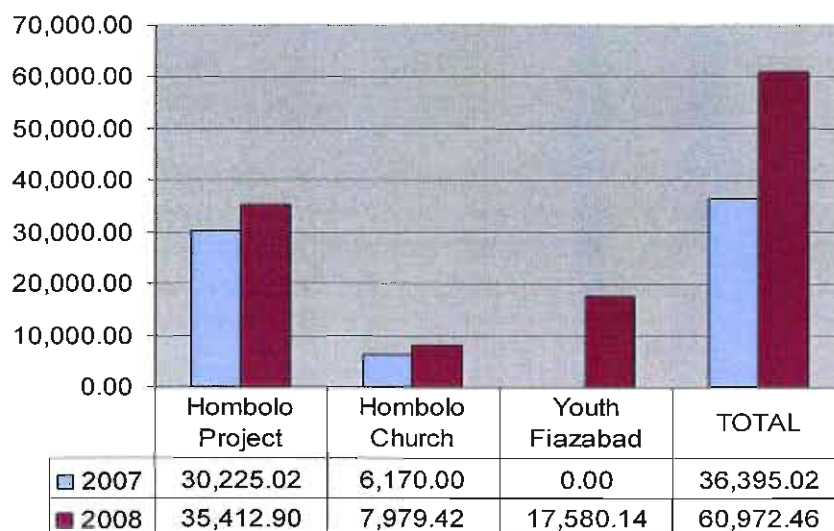
The expenses associated with the running of the office, deputation and the provision of educational materials showed a reduction of £60,000 on the year.

Expenses & Remittances



Our overall income was greatly helped by folk giving directly to the two major projects we undertook during the year – Hombolo and the Youth Team to India. A total of over £16000 has been raised to re-build the Church at Samaria near to the hospital at Hombolo in Tanzania.

Direct Project Giving



As we look back over the year which is now history, we give thanks to all those who by their prayers, compassion and gifts have used us a channel for God's love to those who suffer from leprosy. We also thank our wonderful team of Church secretaries who tirelessly encourage such support to continue. Without you, there would not be a Leprosy Mission in Northern Ireland.

Above all, we thank our Heavenly Father for allowing us to share in this work. It is such a wonderful privilege to be part of a worldwide organisation which exists solely to reach out, in His name, to those who suffer.

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OUR VISION: A WORLD WITHOUT LEPROSY



<i>NAME OF COUNCIL MEMBER</i>	<i>DENOMINATION</i>	<i>APPOINTED</i>	<i>COMMENTS</i>
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MRS HEATHER ALLDRED	PRESBYTERIAN	2004	HOSPITAL PSYIOTHERAPIST. TLM MISSIONARY IN INDIA, INDONESIA AND ETHIOPIA FOR 17 YRS. BALLYMENA
CANON BRIAN BLACOE	CHURCH OF IREALND	2004	FORMER RECTOR OF KNOCKNAMUCKLEY PARISH. CURRENTLY EMPLOYED BY CROSSLINKS. TANDRAGEE
DR JOANNE HARPER	PRESBYTERIAN	2004	FORMER TLM ELECTIVE TO INDIA. GP LIVING AND WORKING IN BALLYMENA
DR MIRIAM JOHNSTON	METHODIST	2004	HOSPITAL DOCTOR . FORMER TLM ELECTIVE IN INDIA. BELFAST
MRS MARLENE MOORE	CHURCH OF IRELAND	1998	CHAIR, WOMENS' WORLD DAY OF PRAYER. LAY READER.CARRYDUFF
MR MARK NOBLE	PRESBYTERIAN	1997	CHAIR OF COUNCIL. CLERK OF SESSION. REITRED BUSINESSMAN. LISBURN. WORK AND WITNESS 2007
REV ISAAC THOMPSON	PRESBYTERIAN	1990	FORMER CHAIR OF COUNCIL. MINISTER IN COOKSTOWN
DR MARY TODD	PRESBYTERIAN	1998	HON.TREASURER. INFORMATION OFFICER FOR C.E. CHURCH SECRETARY. ANTRIM
MRS JANE TREACY	REFORMED PRESBYETRIAN	2002	HOSPITAL OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST. SHORT-TERM SERVICE IN INDIA WITH TLM. DOAGH.
MR JOHN TUFF	BAPTIST	2000	ENGINEER. TLM MISSIONARY IN TANZANIA FOR 7 YEARS. BALLYMENA. WORK AND WITNESS 2007.
MISS EDITH UPRICHARD	CHURCH OF IRELAND	2000	INTENSIVE CARE NURSE. LURGAN. WORK AND WITNESS 2007
DR MARGARET WALLACE	PRESBYTERIAN	1999	RETIRED HOSPITAL DOCTOR. WORK AND WITNESS 2007. COOKSTOWN
REV DR MAX WATSON	PRESBYTERIAN	1999	FORMER MISSIONARY IN NEPAL. CONSULTANT IN PALLIATIVE MEDICINE. DUNGANNON