

GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE

ISSUE 2, 2021

INTERACT

A Legacy for Life

The long-lasting impact
of Pavement Project

The True Light

Responding to God's Word

More Than Words

Bible resources and
the digital future

LIFEWORDS

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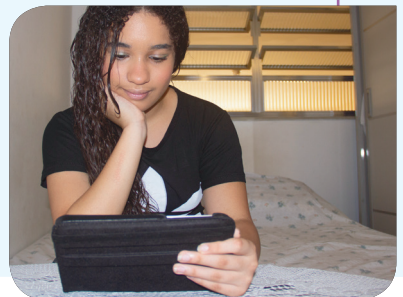
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WELCOME

“Because of his great mercy he gave us new life by raising Jesus Christ from death. This fills us with a living hope.”

1 Peter 1:3 (GNT)

In a moment of deepest despair, Jesus' resurrection brought new hope and ushered in the birth of the Church as a worldwide movement, a revolution born of love. As followers of Jesus now, we are grappling with the ongoing impact and aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. This context continues to present us with new challenges to share God's Living Word through turbulent times. We're so grateful for your support and prayer as we engage together with a newly-emerging era of Bible ministry.

The impact of Covid-19 has been devastating across our lives as individuals, families, churches, and communities, hasn't it? We have sadly lost very many dear, faithful, servants who have served Bible ministry across decades; the natural "passing of the torch" accelerated to an extent that mission has been greatly affected. In response, many Christian organisations have been reimagining their work, Lifewords being no exception. We have been "learning by doing", praying, and working towards ever more effective ways of sharing God's Word with a heartsick world. These are difficult times, and the desire for authentic ministry is very real, wherever we look.

In this issue, we'll be sharing once again how we have been telling "the old, old Story of Jesus and his Love" in this new context, equipping, inspiring and encouraging Christians, empowering churches and ministries, reaching the unreached, serving the Church and reaching the world through our programmes, projects, and resources.

Your prayers, partnership and yes, gifts, are the lifeblood of this work. In many ways, we are telling "the *new*, old, old Story", as the Bible's life words connect in new ways with every generation, every circumstance: ever-changing, yet ever the same. As daily life slowly emerges from a long, sad winter, let's embrace this new era, and thank God for the promise of resurrection joy that welcomes it.

MAKE A
change
FOR LIFE
Give and live life words.

A Legacy for Life

Words Jess Bee

For over 20 years Pavement Project has been counselling young people and their families, helping them find new life in Jesus. But Pavement Project's legacy runs wider and deeper than individual stories of transformation. Through building long-lasting relationships, Pavement Project is seeing how its work is foundational to bringing lasting change and hope to children, families, and communities.



“Jessica opened up to share her story. She talked about her feelings, and the challenges she was facing”

Meet Jessica* and Luciana, friends for 17 years, they have been through a lot together. A relationship built on love, hope, shared experiences, and faithfulness. Luciana is the Pavement Project Coordinator for Brazil and has been a key member of the team in Rio for many years. Jessica, who lives in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, was 9 years old when she met Luciana for the first time.

Jessica and her family lived in a violent community; drugs were sold everywhere; there were constant shootings. Luciana counselled Jessica with the Pavement Project green bag and in their first session, Jessica opened up to share her story. She talked about her feelings, and the challenges she was facing. Jessica told Luciana that she feared death, and said that she felt like a mouse trapped



Luciana and Jessica, above
Jessica and her family, left

in a corner. She chose a card that reads: “Jesus said: ‘Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest’” (Matthew 11:28). This was the start of her journey with Jesus, and the beginning of her relationship with Pavement Project.

Since that initial meeting Jessica has become a mother and completed a degree in law. “The last ten years have been very difficult,” she says. “I had to mature very fast to become a mother. Among all the struggles and difficulties, I always remembered the experience from 17 years ago, when I first heard the story from the green bag. It’s a story that marked my life, it’s a Bible verse that marked me. Many times I thought about giving up, fading, both in my personal and professional life, but there was always that incentive coming from the green bag.”

Through her relationship with Luciana and the steady presence of the Bible-based counselling process, Jessica has grown in her faith and has walked with God through the ups and downs of her life.

ONGOING SUPPORT

Jessica recently lost her mother to cancer. Through the challenges, worry, heartbreak and grief, Pavement Project was a support to her and her family. In the last days of her life, Jessica’s mother was in hospital. “I became very worried about talking about Jesus to her,” says Jessica. “As much as I worshipped, as much as I spoke words of comfort, it seemed like I needed to say something more. Then I felt in my heart I should call Luciana. That’s when we had this meeting that was very remarkable for me.

“Through her relationship with Luciana and the steady presence of the Bible-based counselling process, Jessica has grown in her faith”

Children play at the Child Restoration Outreach

Carol, right



“She has witnessed the impact Pavement Project can have on a whole family”

“I remember my mother, she had little strength to talk, even to raise her hand. When Luciana spoke of Jesus, my mom mentioned that she wanted to live a new life.” Jessica’s mother chose a card from the green bag, it was the same one that Jessica had chosen as a young girl all those years ago: “Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Jessica’s mother raised her hands to take the hands of her daughter and Luciana, and together they prayed for her new life, which Jesus had just given her. She died a few days later.

REACHING FAMILIES

All over the world, dedicated Pavement Project workers like Luciana are building relationships with young people, bringing transformation and new life that impacts families and communities. Carol, a Pavement Project worker in Mbale, Uganda, counsels children at the Child Restoration Outreach (CRO) that works with children on the streets. She has witnessed the impact Pavement Project can have on a whole family – and how transformation in one person can lead to restoration of others. She first met Lydia* whose mother died when she was 8 years old, and who was then abandoned by her father when he remarried. Lydia, left on her own, spent time on the streets of Mbale and ultimately ended up at CRO.

When Carol took her through the counselling process, she was 12 years old. Lydia expressed hate for her father to the extent that she did not want to see him. She had dropped out of school and her older sister – who was now head of the family – was working in prostitution. After going through counselling, Lydia went back to school and performed really well. Then she brought her sister to Carol, who took her through the green bag too – Lydia’s sister is now undergoing a computer training course. Though they still live on their own, the sisters now have a relationship with their father, who visits and supports them.

RESTORING LIVES

Just like with Jessica, a life-long relationship starts with that first counselling session. Here is a moment where the child is welcomed, listened to, understood, and offered the good news of Jesus, impacting them forever. Oliver is from Cape Verde. Her parents separated shortly after her birth, leaving her mother to take care of her five daughters alone. “Despite always being with my sisters, I felt an immense emptiness and, even as a child, I did not want to live,” says Oliver.

“I lived in a community that was on a hill, full of alleys. Every day I saw a woman walking

down the streets carrying a green bag with a red flower. One day I decided to go to her and ask, ‘What is in this bag?’ That woman, Carmen, told me beautiful stories and stopped to listen to me in a way that no one had done before. I opened my heart to tell my sad stories and to receive peace. When we finished our conversation, I was very different, I felt better about myself and others, I met Jesus. Carmen told me that I could return [to her] whenever I felt bad or needed to talk. Each time I talked about different pain and heard more about God. It was in these meetings that I understood God’s love for me, it was a healing process, getting rid of all feelings of abandonment and inferiority. From the first day, I started to trust God and his promises.

“After a long time on this walk, now an adult, I was once again in the project near my home, where, as a child, I went for so many days to talk about my pain. Carmen had left a few years ago, but another Brazilian missionary came to help and tell stories to the children. She began to tell a story using some pictures and I started to cry right away. I had seen those pictures before! It was with



Carmen

“Here is a moment where the child is welcomed, listened to, understood”

“The importance of Pavement Project in my life is immeasurable”

them that I met Jesus. I became a teacher for the children in the project, and I could see them being impacted as I had been. As a child, I thought that nobody cared about me, but I was wrong. One day, listening to stories that came out like magic from inside a green bag, I made a choice that gave me a future that I thought was impossible. I chose God, I chose to be happy!”

Oliver was 11 years old when she first met Carmen. Now 30 years old, she was ordained as a missionary by her church earlier this year after finishing her studies at Bible college.

“Pavement Project introduced me to Jesus, not only as my Saviour, but as a friend – a faithful friend to whom I can tell my pains and joys, who is always with me and never leaves me alone.”

LIFELONG FRIENDSHIP

“The importance of Pavement Project in my life is immeasurable,” says Jessica. “It was part of my childhood, of my adolescence, and continues to be so today, in my adulthood. It has filled an emptiness that existed in me. It is so effective that today I still have a friendship with Luciana. I have her as a second mother.”

“I believe that the message you wanted to pass onto me,” says Jessica, talking to Luciana, “is that regardless of the problems, beyond the problems, there is God, who is always here to meet any need. Every time I thought about quitting, I didn’t give up because I knew I had someone for me.”

* Names have been changed

PRAY

Give thanks for all the lives that have been impacted by Pavement Project.

Praise God for workers like Luciana and Carmen, for their commitment and faithfulness.

Pray for young people being counselled now, that they would continue in their relationship with God.



Top image: Carmen, third from right, and Oliver as a child, far right.

Bottom image: Oliver



WORLD NEWS

1 million Gospels

In 2014, Lifeworlds printed the first replica copy *WW1 Active Service Saint John's Gospel* which was first produced in 1914 by Scripture Gift Mission. Earlier this year, Lifeworlds printed another 60,000 booklets, taking the total amount printed since 2014 to 1 million.

The original replica copies were created to mark the 100th anniversary of the First World War in 2014, but they continue to be used in schools, churches, and at remembrance events, and demand is high. The Gospel is a versatile and useful resource for many contexts. "I first received a replica Gospel at an ANZAC commemoration," says one Lifeworlds supporter in Australia. "I was very touched to read about how these Gospels were distributed to all servicemen during WW1." This supporter has gone on to share the Gospels with family, in a mental health clinic, and with young children as part of their ANZAC day learning.

Thank you for your support for the WW1 Gospels. If you would like to give financially to support their ongoing printing and distribution, please visit www.lifeworlds.global/give or call the UK office on 020 7730 2155.



Changing world views in Brazil

In 2017 we piloted our Choose Life programme in Brazil. Now, nearly four years on, the team in Brazil are working with partners to bring the curriculum-based resource to more young people. During the pilot programme the team saw children who were living in communities affected by crime, drugs and violence discover an alternative world view through the values of the Bible. Speaking at the time Cleinir

dos Santos, from Lifeworlds Brazil, said: "For these children, guns and violence are an everyday reality but Choose Life is offering them a new path, one which they are walking with enthusiasm. Instead of death they are focussing on life and hope."

After the successful trial in Brazil, it has taken over three years of translating and producing the resource for a Latin American context, together with putting together the communication and infrastructure for training and roll-out of the programme. "We are making a dream come true by offering Choose Life to our partners in Brazil," says Cleisse Andrade from Lifeworlds Latin America.

The True Light

Last Christmas we launched our new resource *The True Light* – a booklet and online conversation that invited us to reflect on the Christmas story in the midst of a global pandemic.



“It asked us to spend a moment to consider and contemplate the state of our minds and hearts”

The True Light encouraged us to reflect on our fears and hopes for what we would encounter during the festive season, whether it was grieving for the loss of a loved one, dealing with the isolation of living alone, being overwhelmed with juggling work and home schooling, or learning to live and exist with those around us. The resource uses contemporary collages of shift workers, grieving mothers, lost young people, those fighting injustice, and those fleeing oppression to frame words from the Bible and explore the Christmas story in the context of an unsettling, uncertain and difficult year. “As the global pandemic raged, the usual festive trappings were overshadowed by sadness and uncertainty – even with the hope of a vaccine,” says Steve Bassett, Lifewords Creative Director. “So, we created a resource that responds to our shared struggle and pain, a resource that speaks of the True Light coming to meet us in the hopes, dreams and disappointments of our daily lives.”

HEARTFELT RESPONSE

The True Light asked us to engage with the question: how does the True Light find you this Christmas? It asked us to spend a moment to consider and contemplate the state of our minds and hearts. We received an influx of heartfelt, honest answers. Here are just a few examples from readers on how the True Light found them.

HOW DOES THE TRUE LIGHT FIND YOU?

The True Light finds me well and praising the Lord for all his goodness to us all in the gift of this beautiful True Light – Jesus Christ. He indeed is the light in the dark days of uncertainty of this pandemic.

Gerry

More and more frustrated that I cannot hear what God is saying to me. God used to send me messages through individuals in my church congregation, but we only meet rarely and not in a way for personal conversations to take place. Not being able to discern what God is saying has made me very angry.

Jane

Very grateful for everything, and daily learning that the promise "I will never leave you or forsake you" is true, one day at a time, one hour at a time. To have God's presence and peace, in whatever situation we are in, will be an ever present help that I, and I am sure many others, need to understand deeply in our present circumstances. Thank you Lord, keep us clinging to your sure and certain promises, in our minds and hearts, to enable us to face the future without fear.

Richard

My husband and I have been very fortunate in good health. We have been food shopping and getting about with God's wonderful help each day. I wake up each morning and thank the Lord for another day. I feel for the people who have suffered, and not recovered, and their families. The Lord touches and reaches out to each and everyone, and through this Covid I pray that many will seek the Lord.

Susan

Experiencing a pandemic I am more appreciative of my health and home and I value friendships more. I have more time to pray but have a greater sadness for those deeply affected by the pandemic and for those who do not know the Saviour. I am very grateful for my certainty that God is in control.

Rosemary

Pondering how to let people know they don't need to carry their burdens alone. Wondering at the depth of grief this year – lives lost, careers broken, dreams shattered, and yet through all this, knowing the depth of God's love, and the knowledge that every tear will be wiped from our eyes. Hoping I don't turn inwards to hide from the difficulties of other people or hide from the darkness in my own heart either.

Elizabeth

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

In addition to taking our current resources online, we are excited by the idea of creating new, authentic, digital-first Bible encounters. "People are prioritising their digital content and appreciating the power of social media as a tool of engaging with people, alongside physical resources," explains Murima Thodi, Lifewords Digital Lead – a new role especially created to share the Bible's life words online. "Sharing our content online works in a similar way as dropping a booklet round to a friend, it's natural! If we don't adapt to this new era, we risk missing a wonderful opportunity to share the Bible in new ways."

This is a new challenge that the pandemic has accelerated. And it's important because it's how a generation shares its hopes and fears.

"A wonderful opportunity to share the Bible in new ways."

In response, we want to create more authentic "digital-first" Bible encounters and with your help, we can invite young social media users and digital content creators to gather around the Bible to release the potential of its life words in digital spaces.

You can pray and donate today to help us open up the powerful, untapped potential of digital media to share the Story. Mindful that church is more than bricks and mortar, and the Bible is more than words, the road ahead will surely open up many as-yet-unimagined creative, healing, and redemptive ways into the Bible. Find out more at www.lifewords.global.

PRAY

Praise God for the way Lifewords has been able to reach people with digital resources during the pandemic.

Pray for us as we plan and develop more digital resources.

Pray that we would be innovators who are guided by God.



GET INVOLVED

LIFEWORDS AND YOU



Connecting Communities

For over a year the world has been enduring various restrictions and “lockdowns” due to the coronavirus pandemic. This has left countless people alone and without human connections. Throughout this time of isolation, Lifeworlds supporters have been thinking of new and creative ways to stay connected with their communities.

Helen Forbes from Holy Trinity, Claygate, Surrey, UK, wrote to us requesting booklets to share with some of the older people in their church and community during the UK lockdown earlier this year. She explains more: “During January we sent these [booklets] to our 160 Connections guests – seniors who come to our weekly coffee mornings and also to our team of 50 volunteers who help. We also delivered booklets to 11 residents at a local care home specialising in neurological care and rehabilitation. It was such a joy to know we were sending God’s encouraging, comforting and powerful words into all those homes. We prayed that the Bible verses would really speak of God’s love to this older, vulnerable community who are struggling with the loneliness of lockdown.” Helen received some encouraging feedback from the delivery of *Daily Strength* booklets: “Thank you so much for your lovely message and the wonderful *Daily Strength* booklet, which I am keeping next to me so that I can look at it all the time! Thank you so much for reaching out with just small positive things that bring us hope and so much comfort,” said one recipient. “Thanks so much for the booklet. I didn’t know I needed it until I started reading it! It’s lovely and I feel more peaceful and less alone,” said another.

Help us reach 50 languages by 2023

A large part of Lifewords work is built on a core range of Bible literature in multiple languages – equipping hundreds of thousands of Christians all over the world as we share good news. Today, a range of our literature is produced in over 20 languages. You can help us with the translation into more priority world languages as we refresh our existing library and extend the languages available over the next few years – building up to at least two core titles in 50 languages by 2023. Jarek Jankowski, Bible Resources Director explains: “Lifewords is all about creating ways into the Bible, so we want to carry on presenting Scripture in ways that resonate with people’s sense of identity and belonging. Language is key.”

This is just the start of the journey, but your support now will help us achieve the first batch of translations. Please will you be part of the new era for Lifewords in prayer, giving and support? Find out more about how you can get involved at www.lifewords.global/get-involved.



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