

INTERACT



Growing Hope

Adapting and innovating in UK churches

Profile: Latin America

Cleisse Andrade shares about her role and ministry

The Bible for All

Making God's Word accessible



CONTENTS

04

Growing Hope

Adapting and innovating in UK churches

08

News

The latest news from the Lifeworlds global family

10

Profile: Latin America

Cleisse Andrade shares about her role and ministry

13

The Bible for All

Making God's Word accessible

14

Get Involved

Lifeworlds and you



Issue 79 / 3-2021

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Lifeworlds is the operating name of *Scripture Gift Mission (Inc)*, registered charity in England and Wales, 219055

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Interact is free, available three times a year from your nearest member of the Lifeworlds global family of organisations (see page 15).



WELCOME

“Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity.”

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NIV)

Right now, some countries are emerging from lockdown, for others, such as our partners in India and Indonesia, the storm is still raging. As well as grief, uncertainty and rebuilding, there are other factors like climate crisis, justice issues and political turmoil. Through *Interact*, we aim to provide a window on the world that we operate in. To see the needs, to tell stories of our fellow Christ-followers who are trying to equip, inspire and open up ways into the Bible in many different situations.

In this issue, Cleisse Andrade shares just how resilient and versatile Lifewords has been in responding to the moment in Brazil and across Latin America (an epicentre of Covid-19), where the Word still goes out online, in print and (where feasible) in person. Many churches have adapted to online worship and teaching, finding ways to pray and reflect – standing with people and offering a listening ear, a helping hand, a welcoming space. For instance, we loved learning about a garden of hope in Luton, UK – perhaps it will inspire you too. We are also happy to share news of our programmes and projects, and how we are always looking to make our resources accessible to more people – making a change for life

as we offer the Bible’s life words to the Church and the world.

The pandemic has been a stark reminder that no one is immune from difficulties. When tragedies happen, it’s not about someone being better or worse, or good or bad – things happen that are horrible, just as things happen that are very wonderful. One time, Jesus reminded listeners of some local news where 18 people died when a tower collapsed in Siloam, south of Jerusalem (Luke 13:2-5). Jesus pointed out that effectively, terrible accidents happen. Were those 18 souls being punished, and the survivors not so? No, says Jesus – but we must be ready to make the most of each moment, as he goes on to talk about a fig tree, and the importance of bearing fruit. This falling tower reminds us of the fragility of this gift of life – let’s seize the day, to live and share life words.

MAKE A
change
FOR LIFE
Give and live life words.



Growing Hope

Words Jess Bee

In a former derelict waste ground in Luton, UK, life is blooming. A lawn area, vegetable patch, pergola and border plants sit alongside an open space where young people play games. The paved area and raised beds allow access for wheelchair users, and a “prayer tree” offers a space to reflect. This is Stopsley Community Garden, started last year in the midst of the UK’s first lockdown, by members of Stopsley Baptist Church for the local community – a place to find respite, to connect with others, to serve the community; an alternative space to do and be church.

The coronavirus pandemic caused us all to change the way we live. We began to stay at home, alter the way we worked, adapted our social lives. In many countries, lockdown restrictions meant that churches had to close their doors and find other ways to worship and interact as a community.



Volunteers help with planting, and building a pergola.

RETHINKING CHURCH

In the UK, as churches found that they could no longer meet together in person, online services, courses and small groups sprung up, with churches using technology to continue connecting with their congregations. Lockdown restrictions also saw many churches increasing their interaction with the local community: delivering food and medicine to those who were isolating, supporting people who were unable to work due to illness, shielding or job losses; while many helped people navigate the pain, grief and loneliness of the ever-present uncertainty and suffering. A church on the Isle of Wight started a radio station to bring comfort to people who were unable to leave their homes, while the Church of England set up a daily telephone service that offered music, reflections and a church service.

SPIRITUAL NEED

As churches adapted to the unprecedented situation, non-churchgoers showed an increased interest in spirituality. In April 2020, *New Statesman* magazine reported that: "recent data shows that [people] may be engaging more with religion since lockdown. The fact that Bible app downloads shot up in March globally is one indication of this ... Similarly, one of the UK's largest online Christian bookstores, Eden, has seen physical Bible sales rise by 55 per cent in April, while Google searches for 'prayer'

"As churches found that they could no longer meet together in person, online services, courses and small groups sprung up"

“Non-churchgoers showed an increased interest in spirituality”

and ‘Christianity’ have skyrocketed.”¹ The article continues: “The pandemic has triggered a ‘historic spiritual moment’, says Dr Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, who is unsurprised by the growth in Bible-reading. He notes that engagement with online church services is also booming, and that it is a response to feelings of disorientation, fragility and fear caused by the crisis.”² Also speaking about people’s openness to spirituality, Nicky Gumbel from Holy Trinity Brompton said: “I’ve never known a time in my life when people are more open to [God’s Word] than they are now ... There are no other distractions. There’s no football, there’s no sport. There’s no entertainment. People have time to hear the gospel.”³

A REFLECTIVE SPACE

The garden that Stopsley Baptist Church created provided a space for the church to continue to gather and grow while the church building was out of use. “The garden has been a meeting place for people to come and reflect, a space for local workers to take their lunch and get some fresh air, a place to grab a coffee and spend some time at the prayer tree, a place for fun and interaction for the young children within the community to play with their friends,” says Jeremy Young, Project Manager for the garden. “This space has been a place of spiritual outlet as the church building has had to remain closed for many months.” It was also a chance for people to discover the Bible for the first time or to engage with it in a different context. “By the prayer tree is a bench where we have kept *Inspiring Prayer* and *Daily Strength*. We have received many testimonies from local residents who have read the booklets and used them while in the garden for a time of reflection and prayer. Lifewords resources have been so helpful enabling people a time of quiet contemplation.” The garden had its official opening by the mayor of Luton and the local MP at the end of June 2021. Now Jeremy and the team are looking to what’s next: “My greatest

1-3 Miriam Partington and Sebastian Shehadi, New Statesman, 27 April 2020 <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/religion/2020/04/how-coronavirus-leading-religious-revival>

Below: Mayor of Luton, Tahir Malik, and Rachel Hopkins MP for Luton South open the garden.

Right: The finished garden



PHOTO © CHRIS YOUNG



hopes and dreams are to see all of the different walks of life within our local community continue to enjoy the garden,” says Jeremy. “We would like to open a café and community centre, to have local schools and groups use the space ... that this will be a loved and valued space at the heart of the community, for all the community.”

MAKING CONNECTIONS

As the pandemic took hold and countries all over the world implemented lockdowns, Lifeworlds had to rethink the way it resourced the Church. When a large part of churches’ ministry is built on one-to-one relationships, how could we continue to share good news when these very connections were restricted? In order for Lifeworlds to continue to serve and engage with church communities, innovation was the answer: booklets like *An Invitation* and *Finding Hope* were converted into digital resources; Pavement Project moved counselling sessions online; training took place over video conferencing in Indonesia; regional Lifeworlds offices developed new partnerships to help with local needs; Ninefold Path created new online teaching modules and webinars to help people engage with and reflect on the Bible.

So, what’s next? The way we “do” church has been changed – possibly forever – by the pandemic. As many churches start to open their doors for in-person gatherings, the digital communities that have grown will continue. Before the pandemic, digital resources and social media were an important part of life, but through the crisis they were vital to many people’s faith and well-being. So, as we look to the future, how can Lifeworlds serve you better, and continue to resource you and your church to help others engage with the Bible? Let us know what you think by filling in the “Lifeworlds and your church” survey – either by filling in the survey included with your *Interact* mailing or by visiting www.lifeworlds.global.

“In order for Lifeworlds to continue to serve and engage with church communities, innovation was the answer”

PRAY

Praise God for how churches have adapted during the pandemic.

Give thanks for new connections and innovative ways of sharing good news.

Pray for churches as they welcome people back to in-person gatherings and events.



WORLD NEWS



NINE BEATS

Mark Scandrette, NINE BEATS friend and collaborator, released his new book *The Ninefold Path of Jesus: Hidden Wisdom of the Beatitudes* in July. Published by IVP, it brings together Mark's experiences gained in developing resources and leading Ninefold Path "learning labs" – both online and in person – as part of the NINE BEATS Collective, plus his own adventures and teaching with the project. The book draws on the material already published in the Ninefold Path resources, and readers will find links and background to many of the original resources' themes.

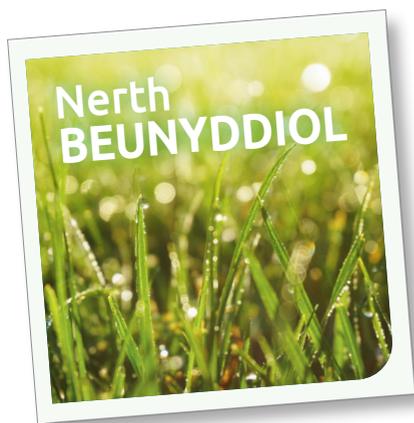
In other NINE BEATS news, the Collective will be represented at the Wild Goose Festival in the USA by some of its USA-based collaborators. Heatherlyn, Eric Leroy Wilson, Ben Grace and others will add a NINE BEATS mix of music, spiritual formation and conversation to the festival's eclectic programme this September.

Over the next few months and into 2022, NINE BEATS is planning Ninefold Path labs both in-person and online; live events, featuring a mix of music, theology, and arts; festivals in the USA, UK and across Europe; as well as developing the initiative further in Australia and other countries.



Connecting online

Gunar Sahari and the Lifewords team in Indonesia have been using Zoom video conferencing to bring together regional pastors. "This technology has enabled support for these pastors that was previously impossible," says Dan Hardie, Lifewords Australia Director. "Zoom has been a revelation for Gunar and the work we are doing in regional areas in Indonesia. Many in our network of pastors are relatively isolated, alone and unsupported. However, the emergence of Zoom and its widespread use has enabled Gunar to find new ways of connecting, caring and supporting these pastors in ways that he could not do previously." Lifewords reach in Indonesia has doubled in just 12 months, and Gunar has set up small support groups which gather weekly for prayer, discussion and support. "Often these pastors would have met one another at a face-to-face training event," says Dan, "but then would have gone back to their village with very little follow-up. However, now they are experiencing deeper community and support, and learning from each other. Now we offer online training sessions for The Visible Story and various Scripture-sharing programmes, and new communities are emerging in areas we could not previously reach."



New translation for *Daily Strength*

A group of Lifewords supporters and their churches have come together with the Lifewords team to develop a new Welsh language version of *Daily Strength*. Work is in progress on the translation and design, and the resource will be available to order by the end of this year. This new translation project is part of Lifewords ongoing initiative to produce resources in 50 languages by 2023, and there is hope that more Welsh titles will be considered for translation in the future.

The 50 languages project continues to grow. Our Poland team have reported a very busy time with lots of translation work taking place. "June was very productive as we produced *An Invitation* and *Finding Hope* in Amharic, Czech, Hausa and Pashto," says Jarek Jankowski, Global Bible Resources Director. "These eight new booklets, sent for printing in May, were delivered and added to our catalogue at the end of June – a significant step in expanding our range of languages to 50 by the end of 2023."



PROFILE: Latin America

Cleisse Andrade is Executive Director of Lifewords Brazil and Pavement Project Co-ordinator in Latin America. *Interact* spoke to her about her role and the ministry in Latin America.

Interview Jess Bee



Cleisse Andrade

“In these 25 years of work, we have supported thousands of churches and organisations”

Interact: Where does Lifewords work in Latin America?

Cleisse: Lifewords opened its office in Brazil in 1996, making it easier to reach Latin American countries. In these 25 years of work, we have supported thousands of churches and organisations. In recent years, Lifewords has been active in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela, either supplying churches and evangelists with our printed publications, or through Pavement Project and Choose Life. Pavement Project has been active in 12 countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. We are currently developing Choose Life in Brazil.

I: What are the main areas of ministry for Lifewords in Latin America?

C: Our major ministry in Latin America has been to partner with churches and organisations who are already working with those that need to hear the good news. There are thousands of



churches and organisations committed to preaching the gospel of Jesus in a practical way. We have evangelists serving in prisons; chaplains working in hospitals; counsellors reaching women and men in prostitution; those who are meeting homeless people, bringing food and the message of God's welcome; many others who are bringing the Word to ship crews of different nationalities in the ports of the Americas. There are missionaries ministering to riverside dwellers, to indigenous people, in violent slums or rural areas. With Pavement Project and Choose Life, we are helping vulnerable children to have their present and future transformed, healing their hearts through Bible stories. In addition to the hundreds of workers who counsel children with the "green bag", assisted by their churches and organisations, we also have 45 trainers who help us to prepare new workers to use our counselling tools.

I: What are the main challenges in Latin America at the moment?

C: Poverty is one of the worst problems in Latin America. This generates suffering, unemployment, malnutrition, family maladjustment, violence, social injustice, and much more. Some countries are also suffering from the attack on democracy with oppressive governments, causing all kinds of inequality.

Brazil has been severely affected by the coronavirus pandemic – it is one of the highest countries for total deaths recorded by Covid-19. I believe that there is no one Brazilian who does not know someone who has died of Covid, or who has been affected by its after-effects, having survived. This has shaken families. With the pandemic, the economic crisis – which was already serious – has got worse, leading many businesses to bankruptcy, unemployment with the highest rate in recent years, family breakdown, and informal workers going hungry.

Above: Happy day wishes from children in Chile

Left: Spending time on the streets in Colombia

Page 10 image: Sharing the Bible in Latin America

“There are thousands of churches and organisations committed to preaching the gospel of Jesus in a practical way”

“What excites me the most about working at Lifeworlds is being able to see the transformation that happens because of our ministry”

PRAY

Give thanks for the years of diverse work in Latin America.

Give thanks for Cleisse and the team, for the Pavement Project workers, and partner organisations.

Pray for the people of Latin America, that God would be present in their lives.

For Lifeworlds, the pandemic stopped all face-to-face activities of counselling, training, programmed workshops, literature postage. But it opened up a new world of possibilities so that we could supply our partners and reach those in need. Pavement Project counselling moved online, we held virtual emotional care workshops for volunteers, turned our publications into animated resources, and we produced excellent content that was distributed to strengthen those working with children-at-risk.

As restrictions are loosening, our partners and volunteers are resuming activities with their outreach groups. They need to be well – emotionally and spiritually – to help those who are suffering, and they need to have financial resources to carry out their work. As Lifeworlds, we need the borders of countries to open for publications to arrive. We need face-to-face activities to resume, so that counselling with the green bag can be carried out with those who do not have access to the internet, and so that Choose Life can be started. Another big challenge is that many organisations that serve children-at-risk do not have the resources to buy a tablet.

I: What do you enjoy about your role at Lifeworlds?

C: It's been a great privilege to work at Lifeworlds, although I feel very small in the face of this big task. But with the team and volunteers that we have spread across the countries where we work, I feel very encouraged and supported. What excites me the most about working at Lifeworlds is being able to see the transformation that happens because of our ministry – in the lives of those who experience God's love, as well as in the lives of those who are thrilled to have a resource so carefully prepared empowering them to accomplish God's call.

I: What are your hopes and dreams for Lifeworlds in Latin America?

C: We have overcome many barriers, going further than we could imagine, with such limited human and financial resources. But we continue to dream of taking Pavement Project to the seven Latin American countries where it is not yet established, and to grow in the other 12 countries, so that children can be heard in their pain, and receive relief through the restorative message of the Bible.



A young girl reads a Choose Life booklet.

The Bible for All

Lifewords has launched new large print versions of *Living with Loss*, and *Why Me?* as part of its pastoral range of resources. These new versions match the look of the smaller size booklets as they explore what the Bible says about loss, grief, and suffering.

This text is 16pt (RNIB large print guidelines)

“Amidst the pain and uncertainty of the pandemic, it became a priority to offer large print versions of our pastoral range to ensure those words of hope and comfort might be available to all during this difficult time,” says Kris Calver, Head of Production. *Living with Loss*, *Why Me?*, and *Daily Strength* are now all available in 16pt large print, the bigger text making them more suitable for those with impaired vision.

Torch Trust is a Christian charity working to support people with sight loss – they partner with Lifewords to reproduce some of the Bible resources in braille and super-large print. Tim Jeffery from Torch Trust says: “How wonderful to hear that you are producing more key resources in large print – thank you for taking that step, it gladdens our hearts to see organisations thinking of those for whom the standard versions are not accessible.”

MAKING THE BIBLE ACCESSIBLE

These new booklets are part of a growing range specifically designed to make the Bible more accessible to all. In 2018, Lifewords partnered with Biblica and disability charities Livability, Torch Trust, and Count Everyone In on the Christmas resource OUTSIDE/IN. Using larger text in line with the RNIB’s clear print standards, Bible verses from Biblica’s NIV (New International Reader’s Version) – aimed at a reading age of 7+ – and a downloadable animation with BSL signing, OUTSIDE/IN was designed to make it easier for everyone to engage with the story. At Wave (We’re All Valued Equally) Church in London, UK, people with or without learning disabilities come together to worship. “OUTSIDE/IN is brilliant,” says Bernice Hardie, who founded the church. “I love the booklet. When I first came across it, I was like, ‘Wow, somebody has finally thought about it from a different perspective.’”

To find out more and order large print Bible resources visit www.lifewords.global.



PRAY

Give thanks for all those working to make the Bible accessible to all.

Pray for us as we seek to develop resources that reach as many people as possible.

Pray for those engaging with the Bible, that they would experience hope, joy, and peace.

GET INVOLVED

LIFEWORDS AND YOU



Come and see what's new!

We are delighted to be hosting a stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition in Surrey, UK, in October this year. We are even more excited to be meeting you face-to-face with an elbow bump or a socially-distanced high five. We cannot wait to share with you all the exciting things that have been happening at Lifewords over the last 18 months.

The digital world has become a familiar place where we have been able to bring our print-based resources to life, with animations and YouTube videos. We have a world of revamped, new, and existing resources to share with you – all Scripture-based and covering a range of topics. We also have a resource for small group leaders who are looking for an impactful group resource. We have something for everyone!

Come and join us – say hello, meet the team, grab a coffee, and hang out. We cannot wait to see you there!



CRE National 2021: 12-14 Oct 2021 at Sandown Park, Surrey.

Visit www.creonline.co.uk/tickets and quote the discount code "LIFEWORDS" to get your free ticket (numbers are limited).

Changing lives through Pavement Project



Pavement Project workers are key to the success of the counselling process. Through partner organisations and the relationship they build with children-at-risk, opportunities for counselling are created. Fabiola Nogales, a newly trained worker in Chile, talks about the impact Pavement Project has on her faith, and the power it has to change lives – not only of the children, but her own too:

“By God’s mercy I have been working with children for over 25 years, and the Lord has allowed me to serve in different cultures, cities and countries,” says Fabiola. “I am a psychologist by profession, and I can safely say that learning how to use the green bag was one of the most powerful and enriching experiences for my own life. The Lord has allowed each Bible story to take on new meaning in my life, and it has been a time of healing and growth in areas that I believed were outgrown. My emotional health has been deeply touched by the hand of the Lord.

“Pavement Project has meant finding an excellent convergence between psychological tools and the Word of God. For years, I tried to prepare similar material, applying biblical stories to particular traumas, but nothing like what came to me through the green bag. I am so grateful to God that in learning to use this tool, I have had renewed hope of what we can do, even in the midst of the pandemic.”

CONTACT US

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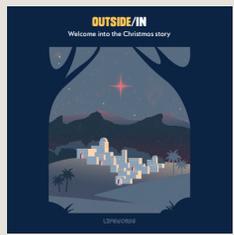


THE
TRUE
LIGHT

“...a beautifully designed telling of the Nativity ‘where hope meets real lives’ – it’s hugely enriching.”
Corin Pilling – Sanctuary, UK

“I think the tone of *The True Light* was just right.”
Anne Loudon – The Mission, Aberdeen, UK

Also available



In print and online – helping you share the story this Christmas.
To find out more visit lifeworlds.global/christmas

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