

A note from the Editor,
Simon Watkinson



THE BEST PART
of journalism is
meeting and
interviewing people
with incredible life

stories. It is often said that it
doesn't matter how long one
lives, but how well one lives.
Some people may live to
longevity and do very little.
Others may live just a
relatively short number of
years, but by filling their time
with service to God and those
around them, they leave
a lasting legacy.

The features in this issue
portray folk who are devoted
to the service of the Lord and
to bringing blessing to others.
It's both an honour and
privilege to catch a glimpse
of so many wonderful
heavenward lives.

I hope these reports
inspire you!

Simon

TLM's mission statement

To minister in the name of Jesus
Christ to the physical, mental, social
and spiritual needs of individuals and
communities disadvantaged by leprosy;
working with them to uphold human
dignity and eradicate leprosy.



'A golden decade!'

*Simon Watkinson meets the Revd Tony Lloyd on
a grey, windswept morning last February and speaks
to him about his eleven years as executive director
of TLM England and Wales.*

We joke about the appalling weather as I
cross the threshold of the Grade II Listed
Georgian schoolhouse where he and his
wife live as a perk of her employment.
Relinquishing my coat, I am then ushered
into a spacious lounge, its pleasing pale blue décor
befitting a bygone era when Stephenson's steam engine
Rocket began the process of changing the geographical
landscape of Britain forever and revolutionising its
social and economic demography.



Revd Tony Lloyd
at home

'When I was ten years old, I saw some footage of a man in India
walking on all fours,' Tony relates his first horrific encounter with leprosy
in his gentle Mancunian accent. 'His lower legs and forearms were
missing and he was being stoned because of his disease.'

'My first love was mathematics - I had no Christian background,
but in 1956 I was so intrigued after a Baptist minister living next door
witnessed to me that I made a commitment. Then one night at
University I went with two medical student friends to hear Dr John Stott
speaking. Afterwards he asked one of my friends whether he had any
Christian beliefs. When he confessed that he didn't, John Stott said,
"Then you will fail because all you'll do is prolong life." Then referring
to my other friend, a Christian, he said, "He not only prolongs life, but
imparts it."

'At the time I felt that this was either the most arrogant or truthful
statement I had ever heard. However, the following morning I woke up
realising its truth and so raised my level of commitment. After training
for full-time ministry, I spent four years
as a minister in Cheshire and then
moved back to Manchester where
I also lectured in mathematics.'

'I joined TLM in 1987 as an area
organiser for central and southern
England and shortly afterwards was
asked by Revd Jim Findlay, the executive
director, to computerise the Mission.
Then prior to his retirement in 1989,
I was asked whether I would take over
from him. I was amazed because I had

*It is the LORD your
God you must follow,
and him you must
revere. Keep his
commands and obey
him; serve him and
hold fast to him.*

Deuteronomy 13:4



A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.' Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'

Mark 1:40-41

minimal management experience, but after much thought I accepted the offer.

'It has been great to do something, in the name of Christ, about this most obscene disease, and the connection with our remarkable supporters – most of whom have never seen leprosy – is wonderful. Yet it is so hard to impress on people that leprosy still exists. Our biggest problem is persuading people that there is a problem!

'Undoubtedly, the worst aspect of leprosy is the stigma,' he continues. 'In some countries people are ostracised by their own families and told by their priests that their condition is a curse from the gods. One cannot imagine how that must feel, but as a Christian Mission, and not just a charity, we can offer the love of God to leprosy sufferers.

'And TLM's spiritual life is developing through its programme of twinning, which links areas of England and Wales to hospitals and centres in the field. This enables them to pray personally for individual patients.'

Handing me a cherished small black folder containing photographs of, and letters from, Princess Diana, he then explains how she first became involved in TLM's work.

'We had a phone call from the *Sun* asking if we knew that the Princess of Wales was going "to touch a leper". The pictures of her doing this at Sitanala Hospital in Indonesia were immediately flashed all around the world. She did more to publicise the needs of leprosy victims in five minutes than we had done in 120 years,' Tony reminisces. 'She became our patron in January 1990 and travelled widely for the Mission to Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia, again attracting attention to the needs of leprosy patients. She was a woman of immeasurable compassion and had a deep interest in Christianity. We prayed together on three occasions when we thought a visit might be difficult and we sometimes discussed the nature of Christianity at some length.

'She once asked me, "What do you need to believe in as a Christian to have eternal life?" I replied, "To believe in God – Father, Son and

Holy Spirit; and that the Son came down to earth and died and rose again for us; and that the Bible is the inspired Word of God." She then floored me with her question, "Where does that leave the thief on the cross who couldn't believe these things?"

'Shortly afterwards, I wrote to her saying that I couldn't answer her question but guessed that it was some extraordinary work of the Holy Spirit. She didn't reply to my letter which was unusual, so when I next saw her I asked her what she thought of my delayed response to her question. Resting her head on one side, she smiled and said, "It'll do!" and I burst out laughing!

'A member of staff recently remarked that it had been a golden decade. The growth of TLM England and Wales has been phenomenal. The Lord has opened many new doors and our excellent staff have enabled us to expand our work beyond measure and do more for leprosy affected people.

'In the future, I see a continuing growth in our supporter base because within TLM's ethos, the Gospel is everything. Had this not been the case then I wouldn't have worked here. I am retiring in July 2001, but hope to continue to support the work of TLM,' Tony reflects.

'I've been involved with many Christian organisations in my working life, but TLM does the most Christ-like work imaginable,' he stresses, as I am offered another cup of coffee. ■

'We can offer the love of God.'

Revd Tony Lloyd greeting The Princess of Wales at the 30th Anniversary Meeting of the International Anti-Leprosy Associations in London, December 1996

