

**Visit to India in Feb/March 2020 by Sarah and Carlton Beasley, Annabel Blanch, Denise Burtinshaw, Julia Sciacaluga and Sue Swain-Fossey**

Our blog, which was sent each day, is still available on St Paul's Website, and the team will be giving more detailed feedback very soon. Watch out for details in our weekly email.

During our trip, each evening over supper, we discussed what we had found difficult that day and what our highlights were, and that is what we want to share with you now.



Whilst at the offices of Sahaara on day one, we saw a video of a lady who was trafficked into an arranged marriage at 12, and after escaping that, was trafficked again into the sex trade. Although

still living in the area to help the other women, she has now managed to leave the trade, and when we met her on the second day, we spoke with her for at least half an hour. Her dream is to become a baker and she is learning the requisite skills at the centre. After listening to her I don't think there was a dry eye in the house!



Meeting all the children and knowing some of their backgrounds made us want to make everything better... However, we soon learnt



that children are the same the world over, whatever their circumstances and background: they are enthusiastic to learn and love to play. During all our visits we played



'duck duck goose' several times, sang the Hokey Cokey and other songs and made friendship bands and gave away those made for them by the brownies. Thank you BROWNIES, despite a number of children turning up very late as they had heard that we were giving something away you had made EXACTLY the right number for every child to have one!



Several children were housed in Sahaara hostels, though their mothers had access to them at weekends. That doesn't mean to say that everything is wonderful for them: some of them have severe medical conditions including Aids and others have severe mental health issues. We heard of children being abused and used and many others who are drugged each night so they stay asleep under the bed whilst their mothers are working.



We often see images of the slums online; however what we were not prepared for was the variation of conditions these ladies worked in. Not all slums are the same: the first we visited had narrow streets with two storey buildings on each side; the second was very higgledy piggledy with uneven paths, many with open sewers running down the middle;

and the third one was much more open concreted pathways and it helped that the ladies had been having teaching on hygiene and had just washed all the paths down with disinfectant. In the women's drop in centre the training had just finished and all those there were given a plant and a bag of cleaning things – again there were some who turned up late, as they heard that these things were being given away.



On Wednesday, we visited another project, Oasis, to hear about their work. They look after children of prostitutes to keep them away from their mothers' work environment. Some children's groups consist of younger girls, whilst others have girls and boys ranging from 4 to 17, which is very hard to manage. Carlton was a hit with a group of older boys that we worked with, whilst Sarah and Sue were making friendship bracelets and crafts with the girls. At night, several of the children were looked after, fed and slept at the centre to keep them safe.

The ladies were housed in very run down tenements. That was where we did our prayer walk. The buildings were in bad repair, very run down and just seemed very dark and bleak. The windows were very small with locked bars across the doors to prevent the women from leaving. All the rooms were very basic.



We arrived as the ladies were getting up and washing themselves, doing their hair and getting dressed up and applying their makeup. The sun was out and the children were playing. Sarah and Carlton with the Oasis team member were also able to meet and pray with prostitutes living in one of these rooms.

We did visit one lady in her room 2mx2m with two beds and she was so welcoming. It was explained that she was now too old to 'work' so she acted as a 'madam'. There were several girls outside readying themselves for 'work'. There was a loft area with two beds in the madam's room where the girls took their 'customers'. As with other parents all over the world, the madam was encouraging her son to work hard at school and was worried about his spots. The other team who visited the area later when the ladies were preparing to work found it much more bleak and unwelcoming.



We were very impressed with the enthusiasm and dedication of the team, their reliance on God, and the love and support they showed to all their 'customers'. Some of them travelled over 2 hours each day to work there. One lady summed it up, "We are not allowed to spread the gospel or talk of Jesus, however,

we can show his love and concern by the way we act with these people and we can answer any questions they ask about our faith."

This was highlighted during our prayer walk, as they greeted everyone as though they were best friends, always with a kind word and a smile. When they walked into the rooms they just seemed to light up.

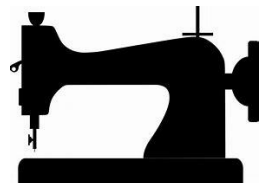


Finally, we visited another project where vulnerable girls were housed in a hostel. There they learned a variety of skills, including hairdressing, baking and tailoring. They were taught to a high standard in order to equip them for

work in the future. The accommodation was good and the care excellent. It was great to end our visits on this inspiring note.



All these projects taught tailoring, and **St Paul's** has agreed to use some of the funds remaining from last year's WCT budget to fund the purchase of 16 sewing machines to be given to the young women as they set out to earn their own money.



- Emmanuel Hospital has been converted to deal with Coronavirus patients. Please pray for protection for those working there and for availability of the necessary medicines, ventilators and protective equipment.
- Pray for the partners and the government as they make decisions dealing with the outbreak.
- There are still riots in Delhi between Hindus and Muslims. Please pray for peace and a solution to the decisions which have ignited these riots.
- We have also read that there are riots in Mumbai about the lack of support for the poor and that there are over 1,000,000 people walking back to their hometowns because of this. Please pray for protection and respite for all those who are undertaking this journey as their only option for survival, as they have no papers, they receive no medical or financial help, and their trade will have dried up.



### **FORGIVENESS, RECONCILIATION AND NEW BEGINNINGS**

In February's newsletter we brought you news of Dieudonné Nahimana, a 'Tearfund Inspired Person', and founder of New Generation in Burundi. Pierre Nkurunziza has served as President, running for three terms, but in January

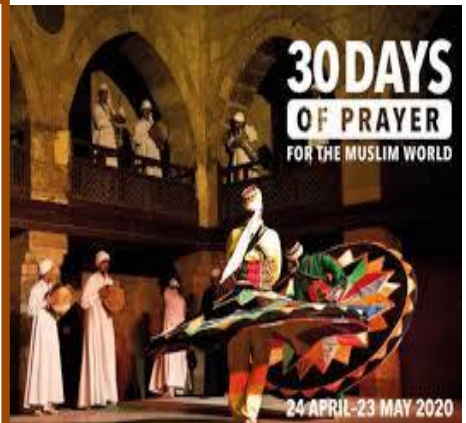
he decided not to stand again. Dieudonné and his friends considered that the time had now come for him to take the next step. New Generation (the organisation created by Dieudonné for street children) has been dedicated to raising up new leaders for the country. Many of the street children he has mentored are now in positions of influence, so, in response to rising pressure from them, and his own personal conviction, Dieudonné has decided to stand as an independent candidate for the presidency in the elections on 20th May. Please pray:



- That Burundi is protected from coronavirus, and their poor health facilities can cope with any infections. The current ruling party has claimed there is no need for any action as “God loves Burundi”, so there are few preventative measures being taken. There are now a few cases in Burundi.
- That Dieudonné’s team may be able to create a clear message of trust to the Burundian people.
- That the elections will be free and fairly fought, and the results will be accepted with none of the unrest (and indeed riots) that have marred previous elections.
- For wisdom for the newly appointed CEO of New Generation, and for the new pastors (including Dieudonné’s wife) of Oasis church – all appointed to allow Dieudonné time for his presidential campaign.
- That, despite his campaign, Dieudonné can spend more quality time with his family, and that they will have sufficient funds to complete their house, enabling them to move out of their current rented home.



Jenny O has sent this to us. Jenny (together with husband Stuart), is one of St Paul’s’ mission partners. They used to live and work in South America. They are now based in the UK and are involved in international strategic prayer ministry for Unreached People Groups who have yet to hear the gospel, and emotional support for those currently in the mission field or recently returned.



**GET INVOLVED** 24<sup>th</sup> April – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2020 during Ramadan: let us join with millions around the globe who will be praying for Muslims.

**Prayer and Fasting: Let's be serious about sharing Jesus with our neighbours.** God's heart for our world is that none should perish but all should have the opportunity to choose to believe and follow Jesus (2 Peter 3:9). We know that unless people hear the Good News, they will not be able to follow Jesus (Romans 10:11-15). We want to share a few stories to build up our faith and encourage us because God is answering prayers for thousands of Muslims to turn and follow Jesus.

**Dreams and Visions:** we often pray for Jesus to reveal Himself through dreams and visions. Many testimonies start at this point. Jesus is appearing to people who live in a Muslim context, from children through to older people. In many cultures, it is common to discuss dreams, and parents will ask their children about their dreams. When Jesus appears to them, the question that follows is often "Who is this man?" "Who is the one who looked at me with such love and peace in his eyes?" For believers who are sharing about Jesus in these places in the world, a dream can be the first stepping stone for someone to want to read scriptures and find out more about Jesus and his teaching.

**Persecution and Suffering:** Just as in the book of Acts, when there is hardship and crisis, or restrictions, the church can be growing. There are many "hot spots" around the world where people are secretly following Jesus from Muslim backgrounds. They have Bible studies whilst driving around in the car, they cannot sing songs for fear of being heard, they know that even close family members could report them to the authorities. However, today there are over 80 million new believers who are following Jesus in harsh contexts through church planting movements. These numbers are unprecedented and we have never lived in such times before. New followers at their baptism declare that they are willing to die for Christ. Prisons can become places of training for new church leaders. Those who hold the firing pistol are convicted through a two minute testimony to follow Jesus. Our prayers are being answered.

### **How can I share Jesus with my Muslim friends and work colleagues?**

The best witness is an authentic one, let's be ourselves and offer genuine friendship. Sharing about answered prayer in our lives and the difference that Jesus makes is very well received by Muslims, as faith in God is so important. In conversation, when appropriate, let us be bold to offer to pray for a personal or family need, you are unlikely to be rejected. If someone is interested in exploring more about Jesus' teaching, encourage them to bring another friend or family member so that they can explore together. Here is a good place to start a Bible study <https://www.dbsguide.org/> and for yourself or home group, <https://www.kitab.org.uk/> The Friendship First course is a great place to begin.

To order the prayer guide for 2020 <https://30daysprayer.org.uk/order/>

- ✓ Thank God for his supernatural revelation through dreams and visions to thousands of Muslims around the world, including the UK.
- ✓ Pray for followers of Jesus to offer to pray for Muslim friends and as about their faith.
- ✓ Pray for strength and grace for those who follow Jesus in very harsh situations, with death being a possibility for believing in Jesus.
- ✓ Ask Jesus for opportunities to offer friendship and prayer with your Muslim neighbour or work colleague.
- ✓ Pray for whole households to follow Jesus, as well as individuals.



**STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS**

**News from mission partners Penny and Juan Carlos Marcés in Lima.**

Peru is in severe lock down and has so far avoided a major outbreak of Coronavirus. However, as in so many countries, the virus is causing severe problems for the many families who are now without income. We learned from Penny of 20-25 families in particular need, who do not qualify for a government handout. They have no way to buy food and are down to their last supplies.



The children of these families are served by Penny and Juan Carlos' Sunday school, and Penny would like to be able to offer them food parcels of 2 weeks supply of basics. £20 would provide a bag of the basic groceries and a young woman in their church has set up a grocery stall so could supply the items.

**£500 is being sent as a matter of urgency to Penny and Juan Carlos to provide these food parcels.** This funding is from the WCT budget for 2019 (remaining due to the change of circumstances of

another of our mission partners). Penny will keep us in touch with the situation, and in the meantime we will all pray for these families, early in their journey to discover the love of Jesus.

For information about any of the above, please contact ***St Paul's World Church Team: Karen Wheatley, Annabel Blanch, Charlotte Chaplin, Sally Hulbert, Jonathan Papworth, Elizabeth Shaw and Sue Swain-Fossey***  
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