

VISION SUNDAY

Church Resource Pack



"Without vision, people perish"

Proverbs 29:18

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"Without vision, people perish."

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The suggested approach is to dedicate a Sunday to the two-pronged theme of "Vision".

- Without spiritual vision, we perish as people and as a church, because without vision there is no hope.
- Without physical vision, millions of people around the globe, who are blind, face living shorter lives in poverty.

Blindness is a very big issue in the world at large. Did you know every 5 seconds someone in the world goes blind? Or that a child goes blind every minute? And half of these blind people die within two years. A vast amount of blindness in the world is preventable. And vision can be readily restored to a large number of those who are blind.

Alternatively, you may prefer to use this resource as part of a broader Mission Sunday for disability or poverty issues – and use the 'off the shelf' sermon 'Global Poverty' by John Sherlock. Or you can request CBM's latest presentation for churches – the DVD 'Mission, Medics and Miracles' – visit www.cbmuk.org.uk/resources.

CBM is an international Christian organisation whose primary purpose is to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities and those at risk of disability. Our aim is to provide medical care, education, rehabilitation and livelihood opportunities to people with disabilities in disadvantaged societies.

We can only achieve this vision through your continuing prayers and financial support. We hope that through this resource you will catch a 'glimpse' of our vision and make it become a reality.

Thank you for your support of CBM.

About CBM

CBM supports around 1000 projects in around 100 countries. CBM is a world leader in helping those locked in poverty by disability, regardless of race, gender, age or religion in the poorest parts of the world.

CBM has over 100 years experience of working with people with disabilities, and preventing and treating diseases that lead to disability. We reach over 20 million people worldwide each year.

CBM began in the UK in 1996 and is part of CBM International, founded in 1908 by German pastor Ernst Jakob Christoffel. CBM works with around 700 partner organisations, governments and churches to implement programmes.

This page is for your notes

Sermon Points

There are over 35 million blind people around the world with millions more visually impaired. Nearly 90 per cent of these live in the developing world where there is little or no social welfare. Hence blindness, and indeed any physical disability, often guarantees a life of poverty and early death.

What would Jesus do faced with such a situation?

The Blind Man (Mark 10:46-52)

Bartimaeus was blind from birth. At this time in Palestine this meant being cast outside the city walls and excluded from all social interactions. With little water he seldom bathed and must have stunk. Perhaps a man of high intelligence, he was trapped in darkness without any conversation or relationship, the butt of cruel jokes and teasing from children. One day he heard a commotion coming his way from the city walls and was told that the new prophet and healer, Jesus, was in the crowd. Realising that this was his once in a lifetime opportunity he shouted for help to the prophet Jesus. He was sharply rebuked by those near him – indeed told to shut up.

Jesus' response

Jesus was surrounded by a crowd. In those days this meant a lot of noise and dust, with people jostling for attention, children calling out and barking dogs. In the midst of this tumult Jesus heard one voice cry out in despair. Here we read one of the most moving verses in the Bible. Jesus, the Son of God and eternal Messiah, stopped in his tracks and addressed the poor, blind beggar. Jesus healed the man and carried on his ministry. Why?

FACT

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world. Almost half the blind population (17 million people have cataract) could be cured through a simple 15 minute operation – costing just £20 for adults!

Compassion

We are often told in the Bible that Jesus had compassion on the sick, the poor, children and widows. Compassion and love are fundamental to Christian teaching. In Matthew 10 Jesus pointed out that healing the sick was integral to his mission to the world.

A sign of Commission

It is pointed out in the Bible (Matt 9:6 and Matt 11:2-5) that Jesus performed miracles as a sign of his divine appointment. In the same passage in Matthew it is clear that performing miracles is a sign of Christian vocation. In the annals of mission history medical expertise has been one of the most effective tools in evangelism and outreach.

A spiritual lesson

It was commonly believed in Palestine at this time that physical impairment was a spiritual curse (John 9:2). This is also a common belief in many cultures throughout the developing world.

Paul Caswell, CBM's Country Coordinator in Nigeria, says:

"We work with families who have intellectually impaired children where there is a problem of response. Despite that we encourage people to earn a living for the family and not to become defeated. Counselling is needed to teach that disability has nothing to do with a curse or punishment."

Poverty leads
to disability and
disability leads
to poverty.



This mother of a disabled child in Nigeria runs a shop at her house to provide for her children.

Just as Jesus proved that illness was physiological and restored the blind beggar to his rightful place in society, so today the healing of the blind is a fundamental step in rehabilitating them to their families and societies. Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a major programme for CBM even for those who cannot be healed. It is part of our Christian vocation.

Christian concern for justice

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus preached that those who hunger and thirst after justice would be blessed (Matt. 5:6). It is clearly an injustice that 80 per cent of blindness in the world could either have been prevented or could be cured. We as Christians should be foremost in our action to change this situation.

Our response

As Christians, our compassion should lead us to greater concern for those disadvantaged in our society and overseas. Our concern for justice should encourage us to be informed about what is happening in the world and why evident solutions are not being applied. We should realise that it is only by doing this that we show evidence of our Christian calling to establish the kingdom of God.

But only practical action will make
a difference to us and our world...

Prayers

For people with disabilities

Dear Lord, we pray for those who have physical, intellectual or sensory disabilities around the world that they may feel your presence. May their families support and love them and may they, in turn, find those programmes which can help them in their lives. We pray especially for those who are in war or famine situations that you may be a special help and succour to these weak and disadvantaged people. May they all find the necessary strength to survive and live meaningful lives. Amen

For medical agencies

Dear Lord, we pray for those agencies throughout the world, whether statutory or voluntary such as CBM, which seek to heal and support those who are ill or disabled. May they receive wisdom and strength from you in trying to research and implement new cures or through programmes of support and rehabilitation. May they also have the necessary insight and stamina when confronted with war, famine, hostility or corruption. And may they see in their efforts your hand at work and your love for all humankind. Amen

For the Church

Dear Lord, we pray for the church both at home and overseas. May we see new growth which comes from faithfulness to your commands to preach the gospel and heal the sick. May your church receive wisdom and discernment from the Holy Spirit in trying to decide where to place scarce resources. Help us not to be unduly concerned for our own wellbeing in a world which is crying out for your love, but to put our trust in you. May the light of your world shine through us and through our actions of compassion and help to those who have less than we do, and may the name of Christ our Lord be exalted through our actions. Amen

Prayers for everyone

*O Lord, open my eyes,
To see what is beautiful;
My mind, to know what is true;
My heart, to love what is good;
For Jesus' sake.*

Originally taken from Prayers and Hymns for Junior Schools, Percy Dreamer, Editor. Paperback October 1977. Publisher Oxford University Press ISBN 0192334050.

*Lord, make me an instrument of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.*

From the prayer of St Francis

Readings

Jesus heals Bartimaeus – Mark 10:46-52

'Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (that is, the son of Timaeus), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!". Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!". Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you." Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus. "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.'

Jesus sends out his disciples – Matthew 10:5-10

'Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. As you go, preach this message: "The kingdom of heaven is near". Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received, freely give. Do not take along any gold or silver or copper in your belts; take no bag for the journey, or extra tunic, or sandals or a staff; for the worker is worth his keep.'

The healing of a blind man at Bethsaida – Mark 8:22-26

See 'Handle with care' commentary on this passage that follows!

'They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spat on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't go into the village.'"

Theology of Mark 8: handle with care! A commentary

Initially this presents a difficulty. It's the only miracle that apparently needed two attempts by Jesus to get it right. If Jesus is God He is omnipotent by definition. Therefore the 2-stage healing and 'giving of sight' is deliberate and its placing just before Peter's great confession of Christ in v29, "You are the Christ" is also deliberate. The healing miracle is also a parable of the process of spiritual enlightenment. Immediately before it there is the strange episode of the missing picnic basket in the boat (v16). The disciples, despite having just seen one of the greatest miracles (the feeding of the four thousand vs 1-9) are worried about where their next meal is coming from – they witnessed the miracle but failed to understand who Jesus was (v18 – "Do you have eyes but fail to see?") – they have "the yeast of the Pharisees", i.e. unbelief – hence the question Jesus poses in vs 27 and 28: "Who do people say I am?"

Then Peter, having had his 'spiritual sight' first stage, still doesn't see Jesus and his mission clearly – he doesn't believe that a Messiah should have to die – and Jesus recognises that this is another temptation from Satan – hence v33. "Get behind me Satan."

So even when we are 'saved', 'born again' and our eyes are opened to Jesus we still have a long way to go before our spiritual eyes see clearly:

'Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face'.

1 Corinthians 13:12

In the eyes of the world, seeing is believing
In matters of faith, believing is seeing
(once you believe you see)

Further suggestions for readings

Physical blindness and deafness is used as a metaphor for spiritual ignorance. See texts: Isaiah 42:20, Isaiah 59:9-10, Psalm 119:18, John 9:39.

A vision of beauty and encouragement: Isaiah 35:5-10.

Nelson Mandela, 1994 inaugural speech

'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.

Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.

It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?

Actually who are you not to be?

You are a child of God.

Your playing small doesn't serve the world.

There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.

We are born to make manifest the glory of God within us.

It is not just in some of us, it's in everyone.

And, as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.

As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.'

Nelson Mandela

Past President of South Africa

Youth Group Discussion

Study 1 – Spiritual and physical blindness

'Jesus said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness."' (Matthew 6:22-23)

'Paul said, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.'" (Romans 1:20)

The Psalmist said, *'The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.'* (Psalm 19:1)

Question

Is there any connection at all between physical blindness and spiritual blindness? Does the ability to see creation add anything to our understanding and appreciation of God?

Study 2 – Good works: a sign of spirituality

James said, *'What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?'" (James 2:14-16)*

Question

Is it necessary to get involved in charity in order to grow in faith? Why are we responsible to our brothers and sisters in developing countries especially when these countries are often corrupt and inefficient?

Study 3

Question

Is money given to poor countries a waste of effort?
Or *'It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness'*. (Chinese proverb)

Study 4

The Bible says: *'Love thy neighbour as thyself.'* Matthew 22:39

Questions

1. Are people with disabilities our 'neighbours' within the commandment to love thy neighbour?
2. How can we be better at caring for people with disabilities?

Music suggestions

MP = Mission Praise reference number

Be thou my vision (MP 51)
Give me a sight, O Saviour (MP 166)
Hail the day that sees him rise (MP 202)
I know that I'll see Jesus some day (MP 277)
I lift my eyes (MP 281)
I want to see your face (MP 300)
Open my eyes that I may see (MP 544)
Open our eyes, Lord (MP 545)
Open thou mine eyes (MP 546)
Open your eyes (MP 547)
Our eyes have seen the glory (MP 549)
See amidst the winter snow (MP 588)
Lord, the light of your light is shining
(Shine Jesus Shine) (MP 445)
Amazing Grace (MP 31)
Light of the world/here I am to worship
© 2000 Kingsway's Thankyou Music
Will you come and follow me?
© Iona Community

Pop music

If I don't see you by Van Morrison,
I can see clearly now by The Isley Brothers

WORLD VIEW

- Every five seconds, someone in the world goes blind.
- A child goes blind every minute.
- Almost half of children who go blind will die within two years of losing their sight.
- The World Health Organization estimates that a full 10% of the world's population has a disability – that's 600 million people.
- 80% of people with disabilities live in low-income countries.
- More than 161 million people are visually impaired.
- 250 million people around the world suffer from hearing impairments.
- 30 million people are deaf.

Statistics From CBM



Daniel

Daniel is 7 years old and has cerebral palsy. Cerebral palsy has twisted Daniel's legs and made movement and speech difficult.

When asked by a CBM worker what his greatest wish would be, his answer was simple: 'I wish that I could move and walk like any other child.'

CBM is working with over 16,000 cerebral palsy patients.

Sermon: Global poverty

by John Sherlock, Reader, Holy Trinity, Rudgwick. www.rudgwick.net/church

In this sermon 'Global Poverty' comes under the spotlight. Readings: Isaiah 3:8-15; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

These two Bible readings give us a structure with which we can look at the issue of global poverty. In the first, from Isaiah chapter 3, we hear of God's anger in the face of oppression, corruption and ill-treatment of the poor. In the second reading, from 2 Corinthians chapter 9, we hear Paul's exhortation to sow generously – 'God loves a cheerful giver'.

Let's be clear first of all what we are speaking about, for poverty has many faces. Put at its simplest, more than half of the world's population – over 3 billion people – live on less than two euros a day – that's about £1.20. Of those about half live on less than half that amount – 60p a day. But a financial measure is only relevant in the context of what that money can buy. Poverty is described more qualitatively by the World Bank in these terms:

'Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not being able to go to school, not knowing how to read, not being able to speak properly. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom.'

Perhaps one of the starkest facts – highlighted throughout 2005 with the 'Make Poverty History' campaign – is that an avoidable child death – that is to say a child dying of hunger or lack of clean water – occurs every eight seconds.

Of course these are scandalous statistics in absolute terms, but what makes them all the more unbearable is the gap between rich and poor. The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of the world's countries) is less than the wealth of the world's three richest people combined. The gap widens year on year.

How do the words of scripture – the words from God – help us to see, reflect and act, in the face of this stark reality? Well, the opening verses of the Bible, and very starting point of Biblical theology, is this: that God made a good world.

He was pleased with what he had made – it was good, and it was provided with abundant resources, including food and water. And even today, all the major famine relief agencies agree that there is enough food on this planet to go round – more than enough. So the problem is not availability. Is it then a problem of distribution?

Well, it's not that either. Go to Tesco and see how far your food has travelled. In the USA now the average lettuce travels more than 2000 miles between the field where it's grown and the salad where it's dressed. We are experts at shipping food around the world. So it's not a distribution problem any more than it's a problem of availability. The problem is allocation – and of course behind that is a complex web of political ideologies, trade practices, market economics whose combined outcome as things stand, and unless things change, is that the rich are getting richer and the gap is widening and we are creeping further from the goal of 'making poverty history'.

So God made a good world, with abundant resources. Don't blame the Creator for global poverty. And the second basic theological premise from the opening verses of the Bible is this: God made humankind in his image. And that has two consequences: first, that means that every being has enormous potential, and anything that stunts that potential is an offence against God. Enforced poverty is not God's will for humankind. It is offensive to God. And the second consequence of us being made in the image of God is that we will inevitably sense the mind of God from time to time – indeed the whole purpose of spending time with the Bible is to let God's thoughts into our minds – to glimpse his great design, his redemptive plan for humankind and all creation. And there's little doubt from that Isaiah reading that God treats very seriously the issue of oppression, corruption and general overlordship of the poor by the rich, and therefore so must we:

'Woe to the wicked! Disaster is upon them! They will be paid back for what their hands have done.' Verse 12: *'Youths oppress my people, women rule over them. O my people, your guides lead you astray; they turn you from the path.'* Verse 13: *'The LORD takes his place in court; he rises to judge the people.'* Verse 14: *'The LORD enters into judgment against the elders and leaders of his people: "It is you who have ruined my vineyard; the plunder from the poor is in your houses."'* Verse 15: *"What do you mean by crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor?" declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.'*

God is angered by the way the poor are treated. Indeed this theme comes through again and again in the Old Testament. There are the rich and there are the poor – that is taken as a given. What is critically important is how the poor are treated.

'Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, therefore I command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land".'
(Deuteronomy 15:11)

And this theme carries on unbroken into the New Testament. In Luke 11 we read of Jesus castigating the Pharisees for their love of ritual but lack of care for the poor: *'But woe to you, Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect justice and the love of God.'* (Luke 11:42).

Looking at the book of James, who has harsh words to those who have exploited their workers:

'Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you... The wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.'
(James 5:1-4)

So if we are to outline a Biblical perspective of poverty it might be this:

God made the world good and abundant in resources; he made humankind in his image; enforced poverty is therefore an offence against God; if we are living up to our calling of being made in God's image, sharing God's concerns, our attitudes and actions towards the poor are a clear measure of our response to that calling. We shall not be judged on how we treat the rich, but on how we treat the poor.

How to respond

So how, in practice, may we respond? There are many obvious responses expressed in terms of generous giving, and there are those better qualified than I am to speak of generosity, both in terms of money and of direct action. So our practical responses may be by direct giving, by direct action, or by speaking out articulately – prophetically – against injustice. But there is yet one further response God might be calling us to as we reflect on our second reading – 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Paul talks about ‘deciding in the heart.’

Verse 7: 'Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' Verse 8: 'And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.'

And the attitude of the heart to giving, in my personal experience, is deeply tied into one's attitude to ownership. If you've ever spent any time trying to get to grips with property law, you'll know that there is no such thing as land ownership. The best any of us can ever attain is certain rights to do certain things on a piece of land: to build on it, to farm it, to walk on it, to extract minerals from it, to shoot pigeons on it and so on. But the land itself, in this country at least, always ultimately belongs to a higher authority. If we're lucky enough to hold the freehold of a piece of property, it is essentially ours to do more or less what we like with for a period, and in trust. But we don't truly own it – we can't pick it up and take it with us.

And there's a passage in Chronicles when David is receiving offerings for the temple, and he says: *'Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory the majesty and the splendour. Everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you and of your own do we give you.'*

I've found it so helpful to reflect on the notion that everything I have is not actually mine, but God's. That he entrusts me with a portion of it, and he asks me to compare this portion with what I need. And he says to me, look after your needs, there's enough, and the remainder I entrust to you to look after, or dispose of in my name.

The trouble is there is an avalanche of persuasive messaging coming my way, day in, day out, that is trying to convince me that I need more, that my needs are at least equal to, if not greater than, the portion of my resources.

Coupled with alluring lifestyle images that promise me that if only I spent a bit more on razor blades and personal hygiene I could have an array of beautiful girls queuing up to feel the smoothness of my chin – you know what I'm talking about!

A cheerful and generous giver

And there's little chance of me being a cheerful and generous giver if the needs are so inflated that nothing is left over. And so the particular grace that I pray God will make abound in me, to use Paul's words, is that I moderate those needs under the barrage of marketing messages wanting me to do just the opposite. All that I have is God's. The question is not how much shall I grudgingly give away, but how much am I really entitled to retain?

I want to end on a message of hope. For there's another scripture where we encounter the Magnificat – the song of Mary when she knew she was to give birth – which contains that revolutionary announcement of the arrival of God's Kingdom on earth: 'He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he hath sent empty away'. Luke 1:52-53. In the early church, the sharing of wealth was a characteristic of the new Christian community (Acts 4:32-35) – it was a sign of the presence, in the here and now, of the Kingdom of God. Treating the poor with compassion and justice was a natural outcome that flowed from the inauguration of the Kingdom of God on earth.

And so it is today. If the Kingdom of God grows, and biblically based communities grow within it, then justice will surely grow too, as sure as daylight follows the dawn. And I do believe that the Kingdom of God has been inaugurated here on earth, though sometimes you wonder, but it has. And despite all its failings and frequent stumblings and occasional crass errors, the church of God has not a bad record in witnessing to and pressing for the justice of God in society. So our mission – the mission of any church surely – is to grow the Kingdom in the place where we're put; in the spheres in which we have influence. If we're being true to that calling – justice will be an inevitable outcome, and poverty will one day be history. It's a long road ahead.

John Sherlock



Marinah from Madagascar

Six year old Marinah Solinirina lives in Ambohomangakely village, Madagascar. She is about to visit an ear clinic with her mother and two sisters, to have her ears examined and her hearing tested. The clinics were set up as part of a broader survey of the prevalence of hearing impairment. Teams of health workers, with support from WHO and CBM, have set these up in remote areas.

The main purpose of the clinics is to diagnose and manage hearing problems early. Half of all hearing loss can be prevented if caught early enough.

Testing is quick and inexpensive. When problems are identified early, they are usually more straightforward to treat. At the clinic, health workers carry out a hearing test and an ear examination on Marinah. They find a potentially serious middle ear infection in one ear.

Testing consists of checking hearing levels using headphones which play tones at different pitches and volumes as well as visual examination of the ear drum and middle ear. The health workers prescribe a course of antibiotics and instruct Marinah's mother in personal hygiene for her ears. Through inexpensive, simple and early intervention, serious damage to Marinah's hearing was also prevented.

More than 1 million men, women and children in Madagascar are affected by moderate to profound hearing loss. In children, most hearing loss is caused by ear infections, many of which go untreated and often lead to serious hearing problems.

In Marinah's village, the village chief encouraged local people to come for hearing tests at the mobile clinic. The goal of WHO (World Health Organisation) and partners such as CBM is to set up training for primary ear and hearing care for health workers in clinics in remote areas so that many more people in Madagascar will be spared a lifetime of hearing loss and deafness.

An idea for a children's talk about blindness

Talk to children

- Ask a small child to come forward and, whilst they are holding up their hand, count up to five on their fingers. Make the statement 'whilst we were doing that, someone has gone blind.'
- Then ask the whole congregation to join the child in doing it again.
- Then say 'There's another one!'
- Thank the child and say 'Someone goes blind every five seconds!'

Bible

Jesus healed blind people.

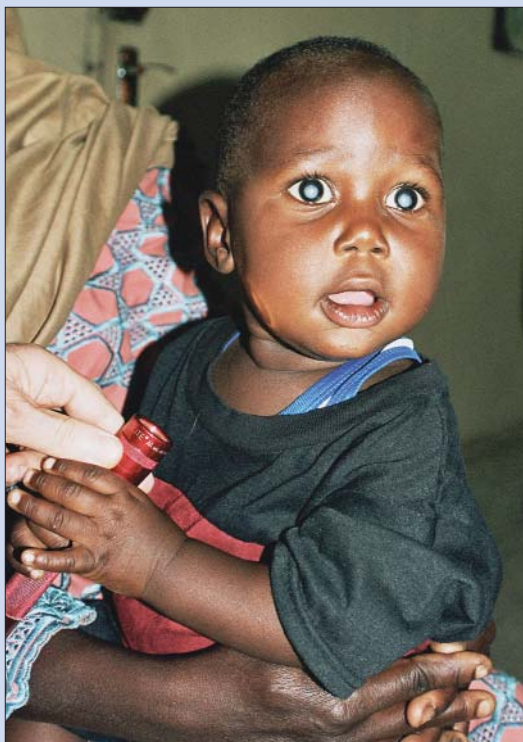
Mark 8:22-26. The healing of a blind man at Bethsaida

- At Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him.
- Jesus healed him and his sight was restored.

Message

- Every single minute a child goes blind.
- Worldwide 17 million people are totally blind because of cataract. It only takes a simple 15-minute operation costing £20 for CBM and their partners to restore the miracle of sight to an adult or young person. And £90 to give a child a life-transforming cataract operation.*
- We can heal blindness and we can prevent it. Just 50p will buy Vitamin A tablets that will protect a child from blindness for a year.

* To give sight to a child is more expensive because of the general anaesthetic, different surgical technique and sophisticated equipment that is needed to treat their delicate eyes.



Abraham

Abraham had bilateral cataracts and was completely blind due to an illness which left him severely weakened and weakened his eye lens.

Through the intervention of CBM's medical specialists and the support of someone just like you, Abraham's sight and his future were restored for £160.

- In 2005 CBM's local partners performed 604,990 cataract operations.
- £90 can pay for a child's cataract operation, under general anaesthesia.

Choices icebreaker

As this involves physical contact with children please ensure you have the necessary clearance!

You will need:

- A washing line and clothes pegs
- A number of chocolate bars or fruit of different varieties

Ask for two or three children to volunteer and get them (except one who is not blindfolded, and can see) to choose a sweet out of a jar whilst blindfolded, or choose a chocolate bar from a row of them hanging on a washing line. (The washing line is better because it is very visual, and can be seen from the back of the church).

Let the child not blindfolded go first (saying 'Because life is unfair, and in the developing world people with disabilities always come last, we are going to let the sighted person go first') and ask the child to choose the sweet/chocolate bar the same as the one you have shown them. (Hold up a sweet/bar for the congregation to see). The 'sighted' child will do it easily.

Then ask the blindfolded children to do the same – and, of course, they can't see your sample, so they can't get it right (make sure surreptitiously that they don't get it right).

Let them keep their chocolates as a prize, and thank them for taking part. Make the point that blind people lose their choices, and a sightsaving operation will restore choice to their lives.



Sylvania Duri Macupa

Deaf girl in Bolivia

Sylvania has been studying in The Centre for the Deaf called 'Arca Maranatha' since 1999. She began at the beginners' level and now is in the third year of the primary school. Aged 12, she is one of the best pupils at the centre. She was deaf at birth and comes from a poor family who live in the marginalised suburbs of Riberalta.

Sylvania likes Mathematics, Spanish language, life sciences and handicrafts. She is the oldest daughter of Humberto and Zulema who are

exemplary parents in their communication with their daughter who is deaf; she has a brother Humberto who is not deaf. Sylvania's mother works in the kitchens of this Centre for the Deaf, preparing breakfast for the students.

CBM UK supports Sylvania's school including funding for her teachers, ear consultations and general administration of this project.

Real lives

'I am not afraid.'

Blind three year old has vision restored

Three year old Elysee Kinata Mbango loves to sing with her two sisters as they pound away at the mortar – to grind manioc roots, their staple food. Like her sister Berthe, she suffers from cataract leaving her almost blind. She lives in Nganga, 52 kilometres from Vanga in the bush, around 300km east of the capital Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.



Her father left the family after Elysee's birth due to her blindness and that of her sister Berthe, now aged 6. He could not stand the 'shame' of being punished with two children who were blind. He has since started a second family with 'healthy' children. Berthe has assumed a significant part of the family responsibility for her little sister and spends a lot of time caring for her while her mother and grandmother are working in the field.

Despite being just three years old, Elysee uses her hearing to recognise a large number of people in the village, even though she can talk relatively well for her age, she doesn't say a word. She prefers to sing.

FACT FILE Democratic Republic of Congo

- In existence since 1960 – gained independence from Belgium
- Surface area: 12th largest in the world – 80 times the surface area of its former colonial master Belgium
- Population: about 58.3 million people – approximately half under 15 years old.
- Average life expectancy: 49
- Infant mortality: 9.5%
- Tribal context: over 200 different ethnic groups
- Official language: French

When asked what she would like to do when she can see, she replies: 'I'd like to wash myself.'

Elysee's mother Marie-Jeanne, aged 23, first became a mother in very early teens and suffers from the shame of being left by her husband. She wants Elysee to be able to see so that it will be easier for her to care for the whole family. She has to spend significantly more time caring for Elysee than for the other six children. She is certain that, without the operation, her daughter has no future. When asked whether she was worried about her daughter's cataract operation, she replied: 'I am not afraid because I trust in God.'

Thanks to CBM and our partner, Elysee and her sister Berthe were flown to Hopital St Joseph in Kinshasa where they had successful surgery for cataract. Back in the village, Elysee beams all over her face when she recognises the voice and smell of her mother, Marie-Jeanne. In time, her brain will be able to process the sight of her mother. The place she likes best of all is on her grandmother's knee.

Adapted from original report by Thomas Einberger

A boy called 'Sunday'

A story of empowerment!

Sunday was affected by Polio at the age of eleven and was left without the use of his legs. He had learned to get around by crawling on all fours from then on. He had enjoyed ease of mobility as a child, but then had to learn to survive as a street vendor, selling goods by the roadside. The things he sold were brought across the borders or up country and brought back to Kigali to sell at a 'marked up' price. This way of making a living is illegal and after a few years Sunday was found by a Catholic priest who helped him out by buying him a hand powered tricycle.

When Sunday was looking for a new means of getting around, a CBM co-worker named Erwin Telemans asked him whether he would like further assistance in the form of permanent employment. Sunday accepted a job as an apprentice craftsman learning to build the tricycles and wheelchairs that had brought him to the clinic in the first place.



Sunday – named after the day on which he was born – has been working in the clinic since 2003. The clinic is in the Gikondo sector of Kigali, Rwanda, and has been sponsored by CBM since 2002. On site there is a rehabilitation unit, physiotherapy ward and a workshop where wheelchairs and prosthetic limbs are tailor-made for specific patients. Today, Sunday works as an assistant carpenter within the workshop, building wheelchair and tricycle seats and crutches.

Sunday has been married now for just over a year and is a very proud man who has come a long way. He also enjoys 'wheelchair rugby'.

Keith McAllister

Power on three wheels

Isaac's story

In Nigeria, 36 year-old Isaac was totally dependent on family but since CBM has started to assist he has been given a tri-ped which he is able to move around on, allowing him to leave the house and go to church for the first time in his life.

Isaac has Cerebral Palsy and therefore could not leave his family's house and move around his village Bwari, about 40km from Abuja. He can only crawl on his knees. Gideon, a CBM fieldworker, took a physiotherapist to see Isaac and he said that it was too late for physiotherapy. Then Gideon identified two problems he wanted to change.

He wanted Isaac to be able to move about more independently and to have access to economic opportunities. CBM's 'Services for people with Disabilities' therefore gave Isaac a tricycle. He can now drive through the village on his own. First, he had difficulties operating the tricycle as his hands were weak, but as time passed he grew stronger and can handle the tricycle very well on his own. Furthermore, Isaac received a loan from CBM-supported 'Services for people with Disabilities'.



This loan enabled him to open a little shop where he sells plastics. His business runs well and he could repay the loan to the project. He would now like to expand his business and sell rubber shoes.

'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.'

Isaiah 35:5-6



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