

Sunday 25th October Regent St World Development Service

SLIDE 1 – title slide- Welcome and announcements

Call to worship- SLIDE 2 – God of justice & mercy, we come before you now with an awareness of those whose prayers today are sighs, sobs or even screams for help. **Soften our hearts to care more keenly, Sharpen our minds to think more clearly, & clench our fists to fight more fiercely for those who are oppressed.** amen

PRAISE GROUP – ‘Light of the world’

Intro- Slide 3 This morning we gather to learn about our church’s work amongst the materially poor & those who are refused justice in the world as we hear from our World Development & Relief committee stories of hardship but also stories of inspiration & change. We gather to reflect upon our part in all this is & to act by giving to the WDR 1% Appeal so **all** may have *life in all its fullness*.

Children’s talk COLIN I brought something with me today...Yes its a pair of hill walking boots but I think I would need more equipment than this to climb the world’s highest mountain. Does anyone know how high it is **SLIDE 4 – Everest (8,848 metres / 8.5 kilometres / 5.3 miles)** It is very high, very cold & there isn’t much oxygen/air to breathe. People thought it was too high to climb. No one could do it. But in 1953 2 men, Tenzing Norgay & Edmund Hillary became the first people to climb it. Since then, people have reached the top over 9,000 times. People thought it could be done but they were proved wrong. **SLIDE 5 – school in mountains-** Here is a school in Nepal, high up in the mountains called **Saimarang** Secondary School. Many children in Nepal have trouble going to school because it costs money to buy school books & uniforms. Many families are poor & don’t have the money for this, particularly families where there is only

a mother. Many mums thought it was impossible for their children to get an education.

SLIDE 6 – school montage However, a woman called Bina ([pic](#)) believed that she could change that. She & others started to help these mothers. They helped the women make a little bit more money by showing them how to grow vegetables & breed goats to sell. Our Church helps Bina & her organisation (**Kopila**) through giving money & praying..Now many more children are able to go to school as mothers have more money for uniforms, books & school fees. If a girl or boy can get an education, there’s a better chance that they can do better in life & not live in poverty like their parents. You can see some girls arriving at school at **Saimaring** & all the pupils exercising. All pupils exercise first thing in the morning every day in Nepal.-- JUST like people thought no one would ever climb Everest, people thought that their children could never go to school. But they were wrong. Bina works hard so children & mothers can have a fuller life, a better life. If we keep being generous & giving money to Bina & her team, they will be able to help even more.

PRAYER- for Bina & team (COLIN)

Bible Readings SLIDE 8 John10v 8 – 10 & John 6, v 1 -14

VIDEO- Tim Dunwoody World Development officer

SLIDE 9 – title slide - THANKS

WDR is the way that the Methodist Church in Ireland chooses to come together & tackle global poverty & injustice. The WDR Annual Report contains stories of positive change, from clean water to human rights, from Nepal to Lebanon. Those stories can only be told because of supporters’ giving & prayers. On behalf of all its partners & beneficiary, WDR wishes to thank all those who support their work.

INTRO – Life in fullness & freedom SLIDE 10 – Nandhini at sewing machine Nandhini is a young woman who once lived in bonded labour in India. Bonded labour, is a form of modern slavery, and made her the property of a wealthy owner, working long tiring hours with little reward and no hope of ever buying her freedom. However, through the work of WDR partner, International Justice Mission and a local Indian organisation, 100s of women like Nandhini and their families are being rescued and discovering a new life.

SLIDE 11 – title slide Now if I asked you why we, as Irish Methodists, have World Development & Relief and its 1% Appeal, what you would say?

The answer may seem glaringly obvious. We do it so that people, “less fortunate”, can be set free from curses like hunger, thirst, illness and discrimination. But that is not the whole picture. God is, of course, interested in freeing people from bad things. **BUT** he is perhaps even more interested in freeing people to be and to do new, better things. When a person is freed from something, they may continually be looking back to what was and what they were. WDR is about freeing people so they may look forward and ask, “What can I now become?”. “What can I now do?”...James Finley, the Christian writer, has said, “Our deepest freedom rests not in our freedom to do what we want to do but rather in our freedom to become who God wills us to be.”

When you support WDR, you are freeing people to be more as God intended them to be. Indeed, the WDR vision is: “That everyone will fulfil their God-given potential.” This is an amazing opportunity and privilege for us all.

SLIDE 12 – Nandhini with others

During the COVID pandemic, Nandhini, on the right, had an urge to safeguard the widowed, destitute & those with disabilities in her community. Her husband, also a survivor of bonded labour, told her, “You are a tailor, Nandhini. How about stitching masks for them?”. This she did. She was able to become something new: a provider, protector, role model. She could not have been these things before.

SLIDE 13 – JOHN 10 – Life in all its fullness. In our first reading from John 10, Jesus talks about others who came before him and promised the crowds great things. Jesus labels them as thieves & robbers for only he offers “*life in all its fullness*”, life in abundance. Some Bible scholars focus on this “life in all its fullness” simply as a reference to our spiritual wellbeing. However, others are broader in their interpretation. “Life in all its fullness” does include our spiritual relationship with God but also the physical, emotional, economic & social aspects of our lives. The Life in all its fullness that God intended for us all is a life where we walk closely with Him but also one where we are not hungry, where we have adequate shelter & water, feel safe with our families & receive justice when things go wrong. So, when you support WDR, you are not just freeing people from terrible circumstances, you are freeing them to be & do new things which delight both themselves & God. WDR’s 13 partners are impacting over 400,000 people in this way..Together, we are freeing people that they may know life in all its fullness. **This** is why WDR exists.

SLIDE 14 – Phakamisa PHAKAMISA

One of our wonderful WDR partners, helping people to live life to the full, is Phakamisa in South Africa. Phakamisa operates out of Pinetown Methodist Church. They have 3 main areas of work:

- older women, many of whom have been left to look after orphaned children

- pre-school education (giving children a good educational start in life)
- those affected by and infected with HIV and AIDS.

Despite their daily trials, the Phakamisa community is a fun, vibrant and loving community.

PHAKAMISA VIDEO –Page 8 of the Annual Report

SLIDE 15 - Image of Thokozani Poswa WDR was heartbroken to hear of the passing of Thokozani Poswa, Director of Phakamisa, from COVID-19 during the pandemic. Thokozani was someone who did know life in all its fullness with God. As a single mum, she had raised 3 children well & her compassion drove her relentlessly to also make life better for those in her community. WDR has lost a good friend & kindred spirit.

SLIDE 16 – title slide PLAYING OUR PART- The Methodist Church in Ireland very much believes in the value of each & every individual. We can see this in how we do international development. WDR uses the word “partner” a lot. Generally, when we use it, we are referring to the people in the indigenous organisation with whom we work. For example, at Phakamisa, our partners are people like Zethu, Sdu & Zola. We can also use the word partner to mean the organisation itself, like Phakamisa. However, WDR actually considers everyone who contributes to the positive change in materially poor communities, as partners.

So, indigenous staff & their local volunteers are partners. The beneficiaries themselves are partners as they contribute. Also, any helpful local authorities, the WDR committee, WDR volunteers who give their skills & time & raise funds, & supporters who give & pray. All of us are partners, working together & playing our own particular part for the common good.

Now, some may assume that development work is done by the educated & privileged to those who are materially poor. This is completely wrong. Indeed, this is the worst way to bring about long-lasting change. It is local people who are best at identifying the underlying problems & long-term solutions. That is why WDR works with indigenous organisations & why those organisations consult & work closely with local communities...Local people may not contribute much, in terms of money, but they do contribute local knowledge, skills, time & labour.

SLIDE 17 – Open Schools Worldwide

OPEN SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE – local people playing their part

This local contribution can be seen clearly in how our partner, Open Schools Worldwide, works, again, in South Africa . . .

OPEN SCHOOLS WORLDWIDE VIDEO – 2-3 minutes Page 8 .

We play our part and they play theirs. The Annual Report gives you more glimpses of local people changing their communities.

SLIDE 18 – title slide-- JOHN 6 – the small miracle of generosity

Our second reading told of how Jesus fed the 5,000. It is so familiar that perhaps we have long stopped exploring it for its lessons.

All 4 gospels have some version of this event. The miracle, we generally focus upon is that of Jesus converting a few loaves & fish into a banquet for thousands. However, without the willingness of the few who shared the little they had, the miracle could not have taken place. Perhaps the minor ‘miracle’ was the generosity of those few. Giving up what they had, what they believed to be theirs & sharing it with others so that all had enough.

We can hold on a little too tightly to our wealth & resources. As his disciples, Jesus asks us to release our blessings so that everyone can have enough; so that everyone can live life to the full.

THE CHALLENGE TO GIVE

As I said before, I could tell you many more stories of change. My fear is that I will have fewer stories to tell you next year because WDR income will have dropped due to the corona virus pandemic. The 1% Appeal during churches' annual WDR service is our main source of income. Because of disruptions to normal church, some congregations have not held their services. Some have had them online but members may have found it difficult to give easily &, as time passes, they forget to do so.

This potential huge drop in income comes at a time when our partners need us more than ever. In the places where our partners work, people have not had the safety nets & resources that our government & society have been able to offer: furloughing, exhaustive public health information, access to food & to hygiene products. Partners have lost access to other funding due to the pandemic. They have had to spend financial reserves because their communities have had new needs because of COVID 19. Some individual supporters have already recognised the extra need this year. They have done amazing fundraising efforts. Others have given significant, extra donations. We thank them sincerely. We each need to consider giving more, as we are able. That's why, this year, our offering envelope has a great big PLUS SIGN.....We're asking you to give more than usual.

Here are the ways in which we can easily do this:

1) Standing Order - This is the best way for us & our partners. It enables us to give more as we can spread our giving across the year. For example, just £20 a month is enough to pay for care packages for families that have been rescued from slavery, people like Nandhini.

2) Increase your usual giving - If you tend to give a one-off donation each year, a cheque or cash in the 1% Appeal envelope, then WDR asks you to consider doubling it if you are able. Some of us have been hard hit by the pandemic but some have actually saved money – no holiday, less eating out. One WDR supporter contacted them to say that they are able to give more this year because of all the money saved on coffees out. We each know our own circumstances.

3) Tax reclaim/Gift Aid- Whatever we are giving, whether a tax payer in the UK or Republic of Ireland, we can claim back extra money from the government at no extra cost to ourselves. It is simple. Fill in the form on the back of your 1% envelope or in the report.

And how do we practically do these things:

- 1) Use the Report – forms at the back
- 2) Use the envelope – remember to give a little bit more
- 3) Go to website where there is a donate button
- 4) Just do a direct bank transfer to WDR – bank details are in the report and on the website
- 5) If in doubt how to give, just contact the WDR office

Let us not be inspired by these stories of God's mission and then forget to respond generously.

SLIDE 18 – title slide **CONCLUSION** God can use whatever we give that so that people can access more water, produce larger harvests, get a better education, receive medical treatment, understand their rights, access land, increase their income, find a meaningful place in society despite a disability, be free from slavery & see justice done. All this requires a little time & the small miracle of generosity on our part. We all have the equivalent of loaves & fishes. & this year we are being asked for a little more.

I pray that we, as the Irish Methodist people, will rise to this challenge. That we will stand in solidarity with our partners. That we will meet our obligations to our partners & even go a little further. Our faith is vertical, in that we have a relationship with God BUT it should also be horizontal in that we have kinship with others about us.....I pray that we will give more than usual because times are even harder and we are compassionate, just as Christ was. And in so doing, people will have the opportunity to be as God intended them to be, having life in all its fullness.

SLIDE 20 – title slide - Prayers of Intercession

Prayer for WDR Father, we thank you for the first 50 years of WDR partner relationships. Help us learn from one another, to give generously & serve wholeheartedly. We praise you for your love & faithfulness in times of adversity & in times of plenty. Inspire us to play our part to help your kingdom grow in education, healthcare, water, housing, farming, skills training, business & advocacy. May you fulfil every good act prompted by faith, for your honour & glory. We pray too for those who have requested our prayers through our prayer chain. **We pray for 10 year old Leo... Timothy Harte...Daniel Kidson...& Adam Bruce... For Paul McDowell, Jean Woods, Jean & Jerry , Bernie McKee, Ronnie Deering & Maggie Bowles. We also pray for Sarah, Lucy, Anna, Mark, Trevor, George, Susanne, Liz, John, 8 month old Arianna , pastor Raymond & his wife Connie, Linda with cancer & Nicky with a heart complaint. & we also remember all their families.** We sum up our prayers saying together the Lord's prayer.

HYMN- MP835 Great is the darkness

Great is the darkness that covers the earth
Oppression, injustice and pain
Nations are slipping In hopeless despair

Though many have come in Your name
Watching while sanity dies touched by the madness and lies

*Chorus- Come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus
Pour out Your spirit we pray
Come Lord Jesus, come Lord Jesus
Pour out Your spirit on us today*

May now Your church rise with power and love
This glorious gospel proclaim
In every nation salvation will come
To those who believe in Your name
Help us bring light to this world
That we might speed Your return & Chorus

Great celebrations on that final day
When out of the heavens You come
Darkness will vanish all sorrow will end
And rulers will bow at Your throne
Our great commission complete
Then face to face we shall meet & Chorus

Blessing May God bless us with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts. May God bless us with *anger* at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, & peace. May God bless us with *tears* to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy. And may God bless us with enough *foolishness* to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor. (*A Franciscan Blessing*)

