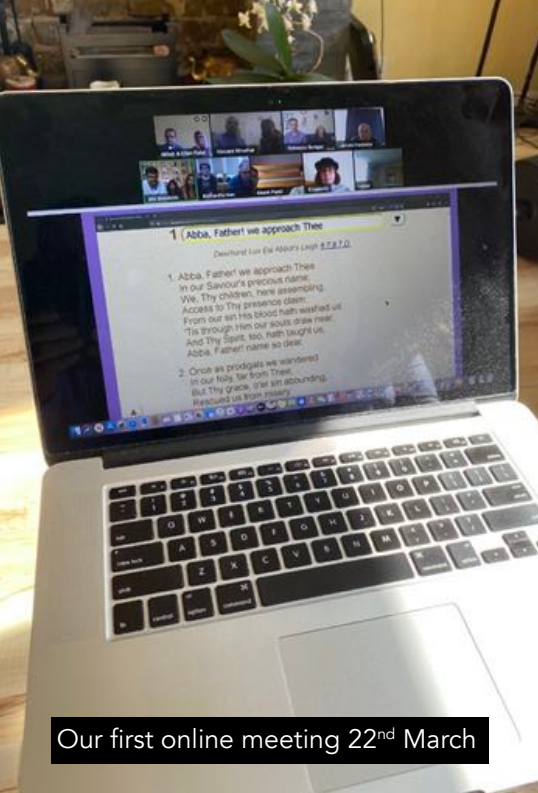


Clifton News

289 April - September 2020

Published since 1948





Our first online meeting 22nd March



Alessa Joyce Girard



Back at the hall after 109 days on 9th July

News

When this magazine first came into production 72 years ago, World War 2 had just ended three years before with all its tumultuous changes to this world. We are now hopefully coming out of the worst global pandemic seen since the 1918 Spanish flu that took the lives of millions. Some of us have lost loved ones during this pandemic. My father Arunbhai Patel died of the Covid-19 virus in March, Kathy Alcide's husband died of cancer in June, our brother Jerry's father died in Ghana in July and Adolphus Dubar who was the youth leader at Clifton Hall many years ago died in May after several years of ill health. However, the God who sustained believers in the past is still our God today. He is still on His throne and all has happened according to His blessed will. We can say like David, "As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust in him." (2 Samuel 22:21).

Like many others we have been conducting all our meetings online using Zoom and thankful to God for this means of keeping in touch, praying and hearing the ministry of His Word. Other believers also joined us from other assemblies and we also thank God for unsaved contacts who have been listening to the gospel at our Family service.

We have begun meeting back at the hall starting with the weekly prayer and ministry meeting and God willing the other meetings will follow during August and September.

During the lockdown there was good news. Dan and Jochebed announced the birth of their daughter Alessa Joyce Girard born on 26th June 2020 weighing 2.9 kg. We give God thanks for answered prayer.

Nitish Patel

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Meetings

Lord's Day

Breaking of Bread 11.00 am
(During outreach at local community events it is at 10 am)

Young people's Bible class 12.00 pm
Family Service 4.00 pm

Monday

Prayer and Bible Teaching 7.45 pm

Wednesday

Seekers 6.30 pm
(Term time only for under 10s)

Friday

Friday Club 7.30 pm
(Term time only for those over 10)

SUNDAY AFTERNOON FAMILY SERVICE

July

(Zoom online)

5	Nitish Patel
12	Nitish Patel
19	Nitish Patel
26	Richard Catchpole

August

(Zoom online)

2	Richard Catchpole
9	Ferranti Wong
16	John Aston
23	Richard Catchpole
30	Alastair Rodger

September

(Hopefully meeting back at Clifton Hall)

6	Alastair Rodger
13	Richard Catchpole
20	Jonathan Doxy
27	Nitish Patel

MONDAY PRAYER AND BIBLE TEACHING

July

(Thursday via Zoom)

2	Colin Lacy
(Thursday back at the hall)	
9	Roy Aitkin
16	Roy Aitkin
23	Roy Aitkin

(Back to usual time on Mondays at the hall)

27	Nitish Patel (Sin offering)
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August

3	Nitish Patel (Trespass offering)
10	Nitish Patel (Studies in 2 Kings)
17	Richard Catchpole (Series on Daniel)
24	Richard Catchpole (Series on Daniel)
31	Bank holiday (no meeting)

September

7	Colin Roberts
14	Colin Roberts
21	Colin Roberts
28	Richard Catchpole

Question Box

A question asked some time ago at the Friday Club was “Could God give me powers like He gave to Moses?”

Moses was called by God to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and into the promised land. He was reluctant to go, “But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, ‘The Lord did not appear to you.’” Exodus 4:1. God told him that he would be able to perform signs.

All these signs were to show God had sent him, to bring judgement on the Egyptians and then take them into the promised land. As you carry on through Exodus, you see how God, through Moses brings ten plagues upon Egypt, before Pharaoh lets them leave. Continuing the journey toward the promised land, we see how God, through Moses, parts the Red Sea, gives water from a rock to drink and gives them victory over their enemies.

All Moses’ power came from God and the miracles were to be performed as instructed by God. Indeed we see in Numbers 20 that Moses is punished after rather than speaking to a rock bring out water, as God had commanded him, in anger he hit it. Moses punishment was that he would not be allowed to bring the people into the promised land.

So, the power that Moses had was not to be used as he pleased but as God instructed. Not to amaze people or to attract attention to himself. If we want such power, what do we want to use it for? If it’s because we just want to be able to perform miracles for the sake of it or because we want to people to be impressed with us, then that’s not the right motivation to seek a gift or power from God. Any gift we seek from God should be for us to use in God’s service rather than for our own benefit.

However, going back to our question, could we expect God to give us such powers if we were to ask for them?

Firstly, it's worth noting that looking through the bible, there are only three main periods where miracles occur, the times of: (1) Moses and Joshua; (2) Elijah and Elisha and (3) Jesus and the Apostles

Each of these periods was only relatively brief (around 100 years each) and occurred when God had an extraordinary messenger on the earth, Moses gave the law, Elijah was a mighty prophet and Jesus was His own Son. The miracles they performed demonstrated that God had sent them.

Joshua, Elisha and the Apostles were also able to perform miracles to confirm their message and to show that God was continuing with them. Even then miracles were not the focus of their work, the key part was what the message they brought. The miracles accompanied the proclaiming of God's message.

When it comes to us, we're no longer receiving new messages from God – His word is complete. We don't need miracles to confirm our message, we can rest on the word of God (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

However, God does still give gifts "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ." 1 Peter 4:10-11.

Every Christian has a gift from God, and we are to use those gifts for His service not for our own benefit. For instance, if we are especially gifted to help others, we're to do so for their blessing and God's glory – not to get other people to be impressed with us. If we're gifted to teach, we're to do so to bless others and glorify God, not to make money or build a following.

God doesn't give us the ability to perform miracles like He gave Moses, but He still gives gifts and abilities for us to use in His service.

Alastair Rodger

Bible Teaching

JOHN 9

(Part 1)

From Bible notes by the late Tom Ledger



(We would like to express our thanks to Pamela Ledger for permission to put Tom's edited notes into print).

Chapter 8: LORD IN MIDST OF MEN SPIRITUALLY BLIND

Their outlook, minds, thinking, reasoning distorted hearts filled with prejudice, hatred, pride, and self will.

Chapter 9: (A) THE LORD LEADING ONE OF HIS SHEEP OUT IN SOVEREIGN GRACE. (B) TEACHING by the way He did it.

He could have just given the word.

1 And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

Jesus passed by

In John 8:59 "passed by" is literally "out" (see). In John 9:1 "passed by" literally "passing along", on His way "from God to God" on His way to glory. The accomplishment of a purpose. Doing His Father's work. The time of opportunity. He is gathering His own out of the world.

He saw

The look of Jesus

(A) IN ANGER

“And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other.” (Mark 3.5)

(B) PURPOSE

“And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone.” (John 1.42)

(C) SORROW

“And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.” (Luke 22.61)

(D) UNDERSTANDING

“When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled.” (John 11.33)

(E) NOW IT IS A LOOK OF COMPASSION

“He saw” its His love, sovereignty. His grace: unasked, unexpected. “He first loved us”

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

Did His look draw their attention to the man?

Master, who did sin

Master i.e. Teacher !

(A) They did not say “did this man sin?” But who? i.e. someone must have sinned.

THE GREAT QUESTION

(B) What is the relationship between sin and suffering? !

The mother of this man must have asked this question at his birth. Oh why? What have we done to deserve this? Why do infants suffer? Some come into the world with imperfect maimed bodies. Blind, deaf and dumb. How account for a God of infinite love and grace allowing an infant to suffer?

“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort.” (2 Cor. 1.3)

We are asked to trust Him! Sin has caused God to suffer. It cost Him His Son.

THE FALL

Rom. 5.12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Adam, Eve - Abel

Rom. 8.22 “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.”

THE EXAGGERATION OF A TRUTH

Suffering is the result of sin: a general law under the government of God. To say that special suffering is always the result of some particular sin is wrong but it may be e.g. the impotent man at the pool, “Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.” (John 5:14)

“For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.” (1 Cor. 11.30-31)

BEFORE BIRTH

This man ?

Gen. 25.22, “And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the LORD.” Lit. Jostled each other within her (N.I.V.)

His parents ?

Ex. 20.5, “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.”

“Visiting” i.e. permitted to affect them

“Yet say ye, Why? doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, and hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezek. 18.19-20)

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Neither hath this man sinned

Not a judgment from God. Not His wrath etc.

(A) Not in the absolute sense but comparative sense in relation to this blindness.

nor his parents:

If not a judgment for sin, then why?

Full stop? Not comma ! The time had not come to explain the mystery of suffering.

but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

Not full stop but comma “made manifest in him,”

Not a judgment from God not His wrath etc...

Not in an absolute sense but a comparative sense in relation to his blindness. “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” (John 11.4)

Works of God are God’s doings, activity, movements, God’s glory. God’s goodness, which God alone could perform.

To be continued ...

Good News



BRITISH MAN RESCUED FROM BALI WELL

In June this year, a British man named Jacob Roberts aged 29 from Aylesbury was on holiday in Bali, Indonesia when he had the misfortune of being chased by a dog while out walking.

As he ran from the dog he did not see the large disused well in front of him that had no barrier and he fell down into it, breaking his leg as he struck the bottom.

To make matters worse, he was in Pecatu village a remote part of the island and the Covid-19 pandemic meant that most were in lockdown and his cries for help were not heard for a long time.

The well had a little water so he could drink and survive a few days but he could not climb out because of his broken leg and the well

was 13ft (4 m) deep. He daily cries for help rang out of the well for six days until they were eventually heard by a local farmer who was out looking for grass for his cow. The farmer called for help and the local villagers tried to pull him out with a rope but could not because of his injuries. Finally, Jacob Roberts was lifted out by the rescue services agency Basarnas Bali whose men went into the pit and took him out in a stretcher. He was taken to the BIMC Nusa Dua hospital where he made a recovery. He looked thin and injured according to the South Kuta police chief Yusak Agustinus Sooi.

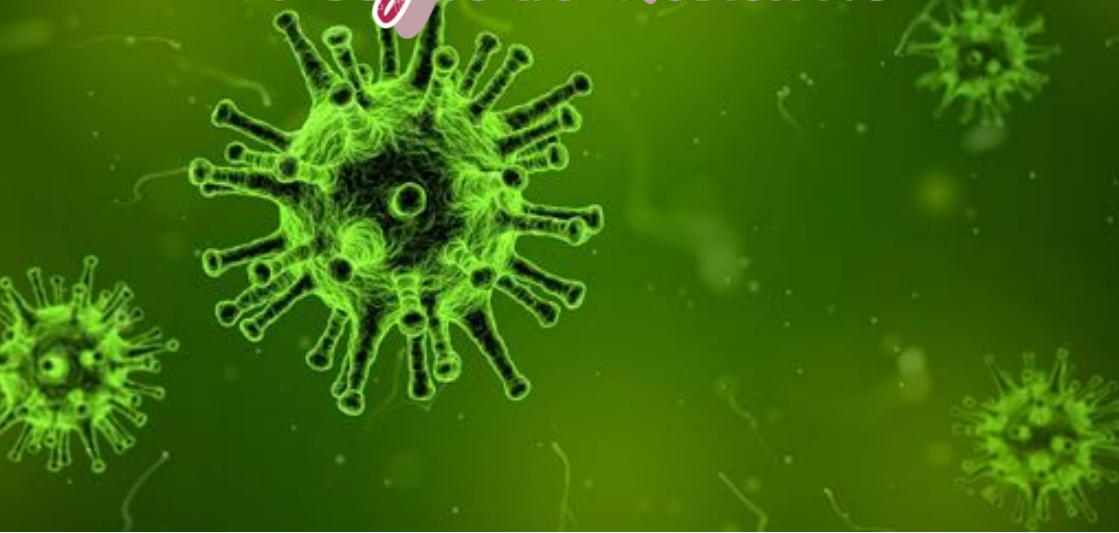
Sin is a deep pit from which the human race has fallen into because of Adam's sin. There is no escape and the Bible says that we were "without Christ ... having no hope and without God in this world." (Ephesians 2:12)

Salvation must come from outside of ourselves. It is not found in man or any religion. It is God who has come to the rescue and who alone can save. "Salvation of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9).

It is through the love of God in the giving of His Son be the Saviour of the world, that salvation is possible. The Lord Jesus on the cross in three hours of darkness went into the deep pit of God's judgment for our sins. He cried out, "Let not the waterflood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." (Psalm 69:15). He died in agonies for our sins suffering the just punishment our sins deserve. God answered His prayer by raising Him from the dead to be our living Saviour. We can be rescued from sin and judgment in hell by calling upon him for salvation. We do not need to keep calling. He will hear and answer at once and then like King David, you will be able to say,

"I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." (Psalm 40:1-2)

Design in Creation



VIRUSES

Geoffrey R. Guile, BSc, MSc, PhD.
Coltishall, Norfolk.

We are glad to have an article written by our brother who regularly came to preach at Clifton Hall when he lived in Uxbridge. He is a scientist who has degrees in biochemistry and computing science.

In recent months, much of human activity has been brought to a standstill by the COVID-19 pandemic. This illness is caused by a tiny virus called SARS-CoV-2, a single particle of which can potentially kill a human being, yet it is only 0.0002mm in size.

There are many different types of virus, but all multiply by infecting a cell, taking over its cellular machinery and turning it into a “virus factory” which makes thousands of copies of the original virus. These are then released and can go on to infect other cells.

Many people think of viruses as being sinister and dangerous, almost evil. It is true that they cause some human diseases and people even die as a result; however, most people are totally unaware that we are



continually surrounded by viruses, and not only are the vast majority of them harmless, they are actually beneficial, and essential for life to exist on the earth.

VIRUSES ARE ALMOST EVERYWHERE

Viruses are the most abundant “life-form” on earth, and are all around us, though we cannot see them. They are found in soil, in water and are even in the air we breathe. There are about 100,000 virus particles in every cubic metre of air and we each inhale millions of virus particles every day.

One cubic millimetre of seawater contains about 10,000 virus particles which are continually being taken up into the atmosphere through the action of wind and waves. They are then carried to all parts of the planet by atmospheric currents, and every day billions of marine virus particles and millions of bacteria fall on every square metre of the world’s surface.

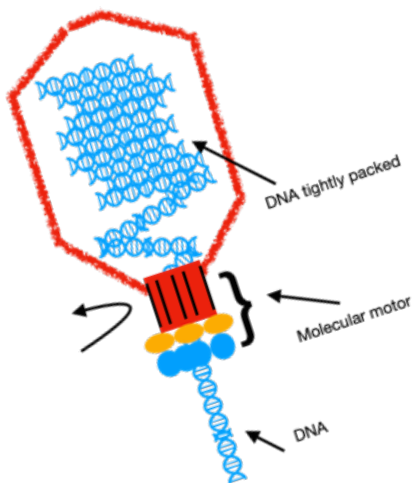
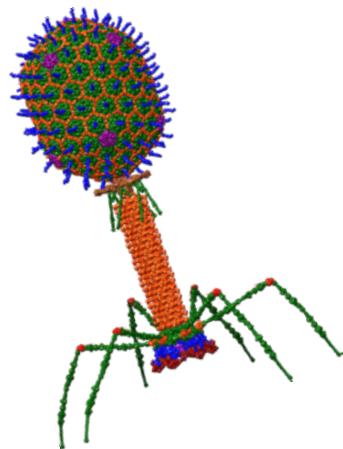
MOST VIRUSES ARE BENEFICIAL

Most viruses have a very useful — even essential — role in the world; indeed life as we know it could not exist without viruses. For example, marine viruses infect and destroy about 20% of ocean

bacteria every day. Without this continual “cull”, it is quite likely that the oceans would rapidly fill up with bacteria and all other sea life would die. Another benefit of this process is that some of the dead material sinks to the bottom of the ocean, thereby removing carbon from the atmosphere.

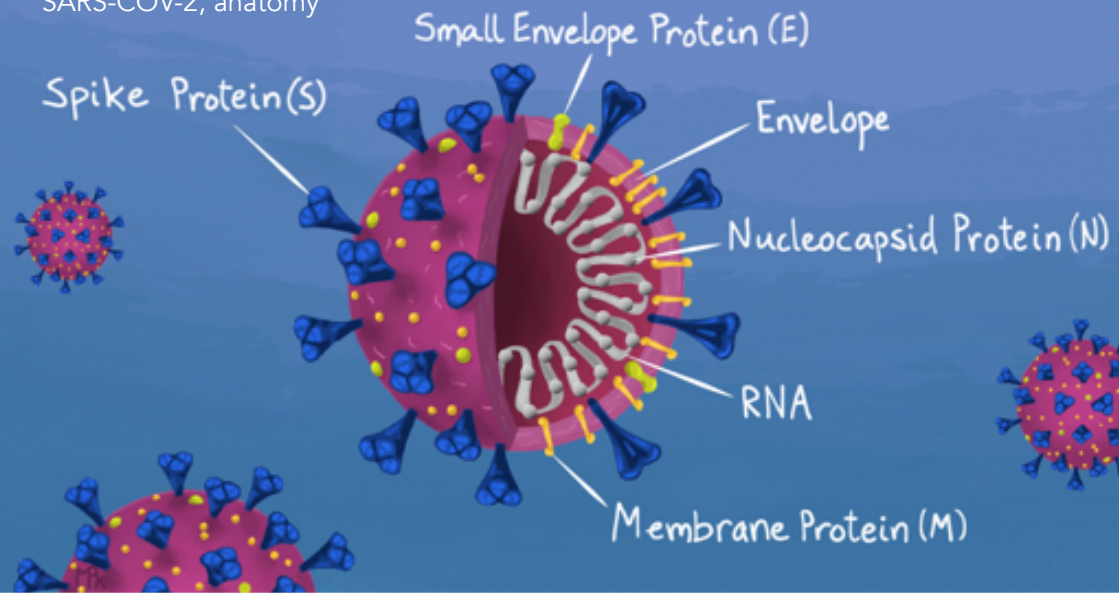
VIRUSES SHOW COMPLEX DESIGN

Viruses show complex design that enables them to function very efficiently. Bacteriophage viruses that infect bacteria look like a lunar landing module with a “head” that contains DNA (the code for making the virus), a “tail” and “legs”. This structure enables the virus to inject its DNA into the bacterium, where it then takes control and replicates itself.



The DNA molecule in one type of virus (T4 virus) is about 1000 times longer than the diameter of the “head” that contains it. To get it inside when it is being assembled, the virus has its own tiny molecular motor that winds the DNA into the virus. For its size this motor produces twice the power of a car engine and can even vary its speed as it packs the long DNA molecule into the virus “head”.

Such a motor is a major problem for the evolutionist because without the motor the virus cannot be assembled, but how was the DNA packed inside the virus before the motor evolved? This is an example of “irreducible complexity” — the virus could not exist without all its components complete and functioning properly — which shows that it could not have evolved but was designed by an almighty Creator. However, the evolutionist insists that it came about by natural selection acting on random processes over millions of years. To believe that needs far more faith than believing in a Creator!



WHY ARE SOME VIRUSES HARMFUL?

Many people are understandably anxious to avoid COVID-19 and take great care to avoid infection. But while it is possible to avoid it, there is a far more serious condition that affects us not just for time but for eternity. That condition is called sin. The Bible states, “by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” (Rom 5.12) Because of the sin of Adam, the human race is subject to death. But Adam’s act of disobedience affected the entire creation, and harmful viruses are the result of that, just as harmful bacteria are.

There are other consequences of sin as well, “it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” (Heb. 9.27) But the wonder is that out of love for sinners, the Creator Himself, who brought all things into being, became a man in order that He might give His life so that sinners could be saved, “Christ died for our sins...and rose again the third day.” (1 Cor 15.3-4) But we each need to personally accept this salvation, not by becoming “religious” but by exercising “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20.21) Have you done this? Can you say from your heart, “the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me”?

REPORT OF VISIT TO INDIA

by Nitish & Ellen Patel

Just before the Covid-19 pandemic started around the world, we were able to visit India for two weeks 26th January to 9th February 2020. We visited the assembly in the Banduph slum in Mumbai. It has been two years since we last were able to be there and it encouraging to see even more folks now saved and in fellowship. The small hall was so full that we had to step over folks to get to the front. We were told by the evangelist who labours there that despite the persecution from militant groups that operate there, many of the Hindu neighbours are now sending their children to the Sunday school and some have been saved. The assembly continues to grow for which we praise the Lord.

In Anand, Gujarat, things are much the same as that state has remained hardened to the gospel for centuries. We can only keep praying that the Lord will work there as He has done in other parts of India. The believers are happy in the Lord and active in the gospel though there is a lack of Bible teachers. Outreach continues in a nearby village amongst the Hindu children but recently there has been some opposition to the meetings which take place in the home of a couple in fellowship. The evangelist there visits various villages to reach out with the gospel but all has to be done very carefully due to the increased hostility.

The assembly at Borivali West, Mumbai where Ellen's family attends continues its many activities, one of which is an annual Bible teaching camp for youngsters. It is very popular and consists of a lot of Bible teaching sessions with just a short time for games. Mainly children of believers attend and it has proved to be a great blessing.

As the covid virus situation worsens in India, prayer is valued especially for the very poor in the slums who suffer the most as they live hand to mouth with what little money they earn. The lockdown has made life very difficult.

However, the Word of God cannot be bound and the believers there are reaching many hundreds online with the gospel using Zoom.

Marine Drive, Mumbai



Baunduph assembly



Cheeky monkey!



Bible study in home, Anand



Lunch time, Anand

The Mount of Olives

