



**Achievements**

The project has enabled the children of the village to gain a foundation for education. 199 children now attend preschool, 307 children attend primary school and 13 girls have advanced to study in Gudalur high schools, a first for the community. The community has also formed 12 youth clubs to provide social support for the children and four of these groups received sports equipment. There are now 24 women’s self-help groups to create income opportunities and women’s leadership training was held for 50 women.

**The Future**

Over the next three years the holistic community development program will expand to new villages. The nutritional program, vocational training, pre- and post-natal care and general health programs will be expanded within the existing 12 villages. The number of regular visits to the villages by trained health staff will also be increased and additional coaching for primary school children will be provided.

**STUDY 3**

**Whose Death Worries Us and Why?  
Luke 13:1-9**

**READ the passage.**

*Jot down what you think it is about.*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



**Thinking About How You Read  
The Passage**

Whose death is important?  
Who do we grieve and notice when they die? Who does society seek to save, and who do they let die?

*What deaths cause you the most anguish and pain? Why is this?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*The media is full of stories of people dying. We respond to some more than others; they seem more tragic or unjust. Why do you think people are particularly concerned about these deaths? What issues do these deaths raise for them?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Whose death would you most want to speak with Jesus about?  
Whose death seems to you to most focus or express the unfairness of the world?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



**Thinking About Luke 13:1-9  
With Our Partners**

***To our partners: 'If you were speaking to Jesus, whose deaths would you talk about?'***

Our partners said that they would ask about thieves, murderers, and non-believers who are killed. They would ask about martyrs who are killed because of their faith (why did God allow such believers to be killed?). They would ask about those killed abruptly in cold blood without them knowing (what would happen to their souls?); those killed unjustly by the law, when they are not guilty of a crime; and those killed before any public hearing (could they be granted forgiveness when they asked God for pardon?)

They would ask about the death of those killed 'in the name of God' (both Christian martyrs and people Christians have killed in crusades), and those who are victims of the Lord's Resistance rebel movement in northern Uganda. They would ask about those who die due to war,

starvation, natural calamities like tsunamis and earthquakes, terrorism, ethnic violence, terrorist attacks, or accidents. They would talk about the death of babies, children and young people, especially those who are healthy.

*What types of deaths have our partners questioned that we are inclined to forget or ignore?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Who are the people that we are inclined to forget or ignore?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

***To the partners: 'What would you ask Jesus about those deaths and what they mean?'***

Our partners replied: Is there such a thing as 'killing in the name of God?'

What would happen to those who killed and/or were killed in the name of God/Christianity, or those who died because they refused to convert to Christianity? I would ask why all those people had to die painfully, and yet the conflict is not yet over. Why this situation, whose mistakes, is there a way out? Why do I live; because I am better than others? Over and over I would ask this. Why do they not have a chance to have a long life?

One partner said: Even though I am a pastor, I feel no comfort when the pastor preaches at the funeral of those people (and the preaching is directed to the parents and family) by saying: 'Even though we love him/her, we believe that The Lord has a beautiful plan for him/her and the Lord loves them more to take them from the family.' Why are these people, who are in no way responsible for the terrorist's ideology or for natural disaster or famine, dying such tragic deaths; and evil people who do such atrocities flourish and escape the wrath of an early death? Why, Lord?

*Which of the partners' questions particularly resonate for you?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



**Going Deeper Into The Passage**

Whose deaths haunt us, and why? Are we concerned about the death of those killed in war, those who die in natural disasters, or those who die senselessly in tragic accidents? Does the death of a child most disturb us, or do we allow our culture to convince us that the truly tragic deaths are those of movie stars and the rich and famous? Are disasters more tragic because they involve us or Americans or Europeans than they are when they involve people from other parts of the world?

The people who were talking to Jesus were disturbed by the death of people who had been killed while at worship, viciously slaughtered by Pilate's command. What sense could they make of such a thing, such brutality and tragedy? Whose fault was this? Part (but only part) of the Old Testament tradition, drew a simple connection between suffering and personal guilt, but Jesus rejects such an understanding. Do they think that because the people suffered so terribly they must have been worse sinners than other people? They were not, Jesus indicated.

Jesus doesn't say it, but to blame these people who died is to shift the blame from where it belongs. That is what tyrants do: 'It is not my fault that I had them killed. It is what they deserved because they were so bad.' In reality, these Galileans died because Pilate was a murderer, and it was politically and socially important that Jesus did not allow the blame to shift.

*What preventable deaths today are blamed on either the victims or others who are not responsible?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

---

*Lent Event provides support for those who may otherwise face death. What is one local project you could support to stop unnecessary deaths in your area or city?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

---



Lent Event – Bible Study Three

There is a warning in the passage. There will come a time of judgment and we will all need to repent. While we should not see in tragedies and deaths a sign of punishment for people's great sinfulness, we should allow them to remind us that life is limited. We can all be placed in circumstances where we suffer at the hands of tyrants, even to the point of death. So we need to get our life in order.

Jesus then tells the story of an unproductive fig tree that has a year to produce fruit. In this, there is both an image of patience and care, and a promise that the refusal or inability to bear fruit will not be tolerated forever.

Jesus is less concerned for individuals (a more modern concern) than he is with the nation. Jesus is calling the whole people to repentance, to recover their vocation as God's people and to stop interpreting that vocation in terms of privilege and worldly greatness. They must use God's patience as a chance for internal reform, not as an excuse for 'business as usual'.



### Our World

Jesus will not allow us to dismiss some deaths as of no meaning, and neither will he blame these deaths on some larger degree of sinfulness. Why people die is often a painful mystery.

In our world, the challenge for us is not to dismiss some deaths; not to tolerate some deaths when they could be stopped. We cannot mourn the death of some people at the hands of terrorists, and at the same time ignore those who die from AIDS, lack of food and water, or other tragedies which we can address, just because these people are not part of our community.

*Lent Event seeks to save lives. What is one other thing you can do to ensure that (i) all deaths are taken seriously, and (ii) that you might save a life?*

.....

.....

.....

.....

---

Lent Event – Bible Study Three

Where in your life (both as an individual and as a church) is there a need to reconsider your vocation or call so that it is much more a matter of service rather than privilege? Suggest one action you can take to begin that change.

.....

.....

.....

.....

---

**Project**

The projects we support through Lent Event are sometimes a matter of life or death for people. They are a way we can support people's physical and social survival. How does this project challenge your priorities, and your sense of whose life is important?

**Relief and Development Project 3**  
*Rural Water Supply and Sanitation*

**Location** – Milne Bay and Central Province, Papua New Guinea

**Partner Church** – United Church in Papua New Guinea

**The Situation**

Most of the population of Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea live a traditional lifestyle. Many are living below the poverty line with few opportunities for employment or enterprise. Poor health hinders people's livelihood with water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and skin disease rife. This is because only 32% of the population have access to 'improved' water supplies. Water collecting remains largely the responsibility of women and children who walk long distances to collect from wells, springs and rivers. Furthermore, the lack of education within communities regarding sanitation and hygiene contributes to illness and mortality.

**The Project**

The project works to improve family and overall community health and productivity by providing access to a safe water supply. By reducing the time taken to access clean water women are able to contribute to the sustainable development of their community. Access to clean water is provided to villages through pipelines to taps, seesaw pumps, hand pumps, electric pumps

and petrol pumps and reticulated water supplies to taps in the villages. Workshops and training are also provided to the community to raise awareness of hygiene, sanitation and health. The objective of this project is to assist in reducing the level of poverty in selected villages through the provision of safe, sustainable water supplies.

**Achievements**

Eight rural villages were provided access to safe drinking water catering to a population of approximately 5,500 people. Many more people from surrounding areas have benefited indirectly as they use the schools and health centres which have also been provided with a safe water supply. The success of the Milne Bay program, which has been so aptly managed by our local team since 2002, has enabled Uniting World to establish a second team in Central Province.

**The Future**

All future water projects will now include a sanitation component. This means that every village

receiving a water supply will also receive a number of toilets, designed to meet the best possible levels of sanitation. In the coming year, UnitingWorld will assist another five villages in Milne Bay and three in Central Province by supplying safe drinking water and sanitation facilities as well as education and training programs. This will transform the lives of some 5,000 people.

