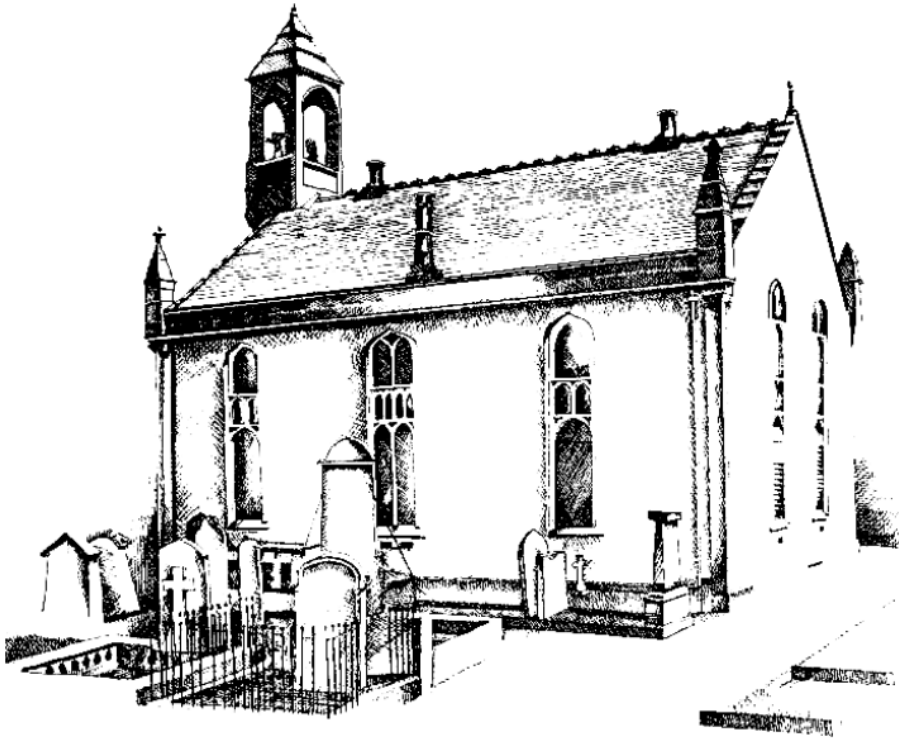


Troqueer Parish Church



Newsletter

September 2008

Minister's Letter



As I write this I am preparing for my visit to Joel Sengoga and his church in Rwanda and it follows on from a meeting of the Kirk Session where the whole matter of supporting Joel and his people was discussed. As a minister I cannot be other than encouraged by the attitude of those who have been elected as elders. From way before I ever came to Troqueer this congregation has demonstrated a spirit of generosity and have blessed others by their giving. I believe this is also a reason the Lord has blessed us in many ways. It's when we start to think too much of self that we lose out on the Lord's giving. It's when we are not walking closely with the Lord that we think more of ourselves than others. Giving then doesn't come naturally to us because we lose faith in the belief that God will always provide when we give to help others.

At the moment our partnership with the church in Rwanda is still in the development stage and while we have been blessed by knowing what we have done to help them and how much they appreciate it, the full extent of our partnership is yet to be. I know when the Lord laid this on my heart the promise was of a two-way blessing between us and the people there. I am also sure the Lord knew we were a congregation to be entrusted with the care and partnership of brothers and sisters who are in need of our help and encouragement – just as we are of theirs. I am glad to say that on the whole our people have shared the vision and can look forward to the blessings which lie ahead. Joel Sengoga and his people are aware of this and he regularly expresses his gratitude to us. Don't forget that we might be experiencing blessings from God through the prayers of those people who might not be able to give financially but who can bless us spiritually and through fellowship with them.

I think we are living in times when the Lord is opening up the bigger picture of where His church is worldwide. No longer can we just think of me in my small corner and ignore what is happening in other parts of the world. No longer is it a case of sending a missionary to do the work of the church but God working with the whole body of his people. I believe God is doing a new thing and in new ways and what we are doing with regards to the church in Rwanda is part of that bigger plan.

I know I will have much to share when I return from my trip and I look forward to sharing with you all and bringing back the blessings which I know the Lord has in store.

Thanks to all of you who have held us in your prayers and been such an encouragement.

Sincerely in Christ.
Billy Kelly

From the Session Clerk

Do not judge others, in order that you may not be judged; for with the standard of judgement with which you judge you will be judged; and with the measure you measure to others it will be measured to you. Why do you look for the speck of dust in your brother's eye, and never notice the plank that is in your own eye? (Matthew 7:1–5)

When Jesus spoke like this, as so often in the Sermon on the Mount, he was using words and ideas which were quite familiar to most of his listeners. Often the Rabbis warned people against judging others: 'He who judges his neighbour favourably will be judged favourably by God.' They laid it down that there were six great works which brought a man credit in this world and profit in the world to come. These were: study, visiting the sick, hospitality, devotion in prayer, the education of children in the Law, and thinking the best of other people. The Jews knew that kindness in judgement is nothing less than a sacred duty.

And yet there is hardly any commandment of Jesus which is more consistently broken and neglected than this one. Is there anyone of us who has not at some time misjudged another? And is there any one of us who has never been misjudged by another?

It is very easy for us to habitually ignore the sins and faults in our own lives so that eventually we virtually forget about them and happily criticise others for far less serious faults. Even worse are those who are well aware of their wickedness, but hide it under a cloak of righteousness. Scotland has its well known examples, such as Deacon Brodie. Holy Wullie was very probably based on a person, or persons, known to Burns. Burns himself was called to face the Kirk Session more than once to answer charges of immoral behaviour, and I suspect he could have told a tale or two about the private lives of some of the pious elders sitting in judgement on him!

No man can judge

There are three great reasons why no man should judge another:

(i) We never know the whole facts or the whole person. Long ago Hillel the famous Rabbi said, 'Do not judge a man until you yourself have come into his circumstances or situation.' No man knows the strength of another man's temptations. The fact is that if we realised what some people have to go through, far from condemning them, we would be amazed that they have succeeded in being as good as they are. We should ask ourselves if we would have been able to behave differently if we were in the same position, or would we have to admit that 'there, but for the grace of God, go I.'

People may seem unlovely simply because we do not know the whole person. Everyone has something good in him or her. Our task is not to judge by the superficial unloveliness, but to look for the underlying beauty. That is what we would have others do to us, and that is what we must do to them.

(ii) It is almost impossible for any person to be strictly impartial in their judgement. Again and again we are swayed by instinctive and unreasoning reactions to people. We are conditioned by our upbringing and education, and by the attitudes of the society we live in.

It is told that sometimes, when the Greeks held a particularly important and difficult trial, they held it in the dark so that judge and jury would not even see the man on trial, and so would be influenced by nothing but the facts of the case.

Only a completely impartial person has a right to judge. It is not in human nature to be completely impartial. Only God can judge.

(iii) No man is good enough to judge any other man. Jesus drew a vivid picture of a man with a plank in his own eye trying to extract a speck of dust from someone else's eye.

Jesus also said to those who were about to kill the woman caught in adultery: ‘Let him who is without fault cast the first stone.’ And as he wrote in the sand the people were convicted, and one by one they crept away.

Only someone without fault has a right to look for faults in others. No man is good enough to criticise his fellow men. We have quite enough to do to rectify our own lives without seeking to criticise the lives of others. We would do well to concentrate on our own faults, and to leave the faults of others to God.

Jesus was speaking against a critical and judgmental spirit. That does not mean that that we must not be prepared to correct or admonish our brothers and sisters when they fall into sin; but it has to be done prayerfully, with love and humility and the desire to help rather than to condemn.

Over and Out...

This is your editor calling...is there anyone out there willing to take on this job? Why don't you take the plunge and speak to the minister? It might just be part of God's plan for you to be used in Troqueer in this way.

This is my last edition, so I would just like to take the opportunity to thank all the contributors, without whom the newsletter wouldn't happen at all. Many of you have faithfully submitted articles time after time – reports about nationwide Christian or local church organisations or more personal pieces – whether funny or serious, these have always been touching and challenging. I do hope that you will continue to support my successor(s) in this way and that other people might feel moved to contribute too.

Special thanks to Christine Wakefield, who has been so faithful in putting out the notices and sending in diary dates, Sunday readings, announcements and other pieces; to Billy Goldie, who is the layout (and centre-spread) guru; and to Steve Johnstone, who magically transforms the material into the finished pages. And, last but not least, thanks to all the distributors, past and present, who have faithfully delivered the newsletter around the parish (and beyond, thanks to Joe Liddell).

Fiona Power

TEARFUND

Tearfund's 40th Anniversary Year

In 1968, Tearfund started with a few people sitting around a table wanting to do something about the suffering in the world. They signalled their vision with the Bible challenge: ‘Let us not love in words or in speech but in deed and in truth (1 John 3:18). The first chairman of Tearfund, Glyn Macaulay recalls: ‘When we started, we had no idea how Tearfund would grow and be a blessing to so many people in the world. We just thought we were doing what God was telling us. Now I'm amazed by what it achieves. But I'm thrilled that what made Tearfund different then – its distinctively Christian commitment and ethos – is still what drives it forward today’.

Forty years later, that 1 John 3 inspiration still runs through Tearfund's DNA. Tearfund is about putting the Biblical challenge of God's compassion into practical action. It's about working with a local church to see lives transformed, people released from material and spiritual poverty.

What does this mean in practice?

Well, it means thousands upon thousands of churches bringing transformation to the local communities – defeating disease – killers such as TB, HIV and malaria;
tackling disasters – working with vulnerable people to prepare for and recover from disasters;
resolving economic justice – including fair trade and corruption;
restoring the environment – helping communities adapt to climate change and improving basic services such as water, education and health.

Give thanks for that early vision in 1968 which has transformed thousands of lives over the last 40 years and please continue to pray that God will multiply these effects in the coming decades.

Living Gifts

Looking for a gift that really will make a difference?

Why not consider a Living Gift voucher and let your loved one or friend decide where it goes?

YOU GIVE, THEY CHOOSE, THE WORLD IMPROVES!

For more information visit www.livinggifts.org.uk or see Joy.

Church Finances – Lessons from Healthcare

In this 60th anniversary year of the NHS it is salutary to recall that all pre-NHS voluntary hospital funding depended on subscriptions and special fundraising. The 1936 appeal for Dumfries Royal Infirmary funds was likened to the Guid Nychburris festival and asked townspeople to –‘Pay until it hurts because that is the only way to get the afterpleasure o’ paying for something worthwhile. Try it and see!’ The tenor of that appeal – launched as ‘Pain and Payin’ reminds me how dependent Troqueer Church funds were on special fundraising activities until the mid-80s. There were many spectacular sums raised by the Women’s Guild, especially at the Christmas Bazaar – eg over £2300 (about 13% of the total income that year) in 1981. However, as church treasurer I am extremely grateful that over most of the past 25 years regular giving has made us much less dependent on special fundraising to cover our own congregation’s needs.

Until the past year our contributions to the national church increased progressively. Awareness of that fact may well have inhibited many people from reviewing their giving. At this year’s General Assembly, however, it was resolved to permit congregations to retain more of their income for local use or support of particular congregation’s projects and responsibilities. In that regard we are, of course, signed up to long-term support of Pastor Joel Sengoga and his Divine Destiny Ministries as well as backing the education of a group of young people.

It is timely for all of us to review our regular giving to Troqueer Church and its broader responsibilities. Present NHS funding comes, of course, from general taxation – at rates of basic income tax and VAT which are, we should remember, considerably greater than a 10% tithe. Doesn’t our spiritual care deserve as much support as our healthcare?

Please feel free to approach me, Joan Milligan or Sandra Bonnar at any time if you would like further information on giving by Free-will offering or ‘standing order’ and consider completing a Gift Aid form if you are a taxpayer,

Jim Lawrence, Treasurer

‘My Daddy is the King of Kings and the King of Kings is my Daddy’ – Healing the Orphan Heart

Well, that was one CLAN seminar that was certainly not for me! Not only was I sure that I did not have an orphan heart but the idea of referring to God as my ‘Daddy’ made my intellect cringe. I felt comfortable calling him ‘Father’ and ‘Lord’ but not ‘Daddy’; somehow that was too lowly, too childish.

Healing the Orphan Heart was the subject of three seminars by Mark Stibbe at this summer’s CLAN Gathering. I did not attend the first and ended up at the second evening session by default after running back and forth with tired children. Even then I did not manage to catch more than a few minutes before I had to return to the tent and settle an exhausted daughter. When I eventually got back Mark had finished talking and the praise was lifting the roof as a team of people prayed with those who wished to go up for prayer. I had a nagging feeling I should go up but pushed it away and lifted my voice in praise. I could still feel the nag in the pit of my stomach but was determined that this healing and miracle stuff was not targeted at me.

God was having none of this, though – the band started singing *Amazing Grace*, which never fails to tear my heartstrings with awe at the immensity of God’s grace and I knew I had to go up. I spoke with my daughter Hope and she said she wanted to come with me. There was only one person left being prayed for so we knelt and within minutes Mark, Tiffany and another lady were with us. I tried to give a synopsis of everything but God had taken over my mind and mouth and I felt as though I had no control; He knew what needed saying and that was that.

It is very difficult to describe what happened within the limitation of words but as Mark prayed for the healing of my orphan heart I felt as though my guts were being ripped out of me with a primal scream. The experience was so intense that even now I cannot write about it or speak of it without feeling that huge welling up of emotion – as though I am drowning in my Daddy’s love and grace. God took me and in my acceptance of His love, my repentance and forgiveness tore out the wounded detritus that I did not even know I had buried so deeply.

I had thought I was living as a Christian – but it was a half life. I was coming to church on Sundays and worshipping, praising and loving God, but during the week I was an orphan. Now I am living in the glorious liberty God intends for his children. I stand and look in the mirror and say: ‘My Daddy is the King of Kings and the King of Kings is my Daddy.’ I want to infect everyone with this contagious anointing – I want to parade with my royal robe of honour, shouting: ‘I am Abba’s royal child.’ I want the world to know that there is nothing that anyone can do to make our Father, Daddy God love us more or less. We are His sons and daughters; we are loved by the one who flung the stars into space, who created the mind-blowing miracle of this world and us. We are not servants or slaves, we are the children of God; he is our Daddy. Everything has changed for me. My Daddy God has freed me from my past and from the shackles that my mind and intellect all too readily imposed, He has filled me and continues to fill me (I need constant top-ups and reminders!) with a love and joy that is impossible to describe. I am now able to abandon myself in praise and worship of our living God and in my freedom pray that I will be able to set others free.

Anne Marshall

YF – help needed!

We are very fortunate to have such a large number of young people in the Youth Fellowship. Not only do they need the church but the church badly needs its young people. In order to provide relevant and varied activities for them, we do need people who will help with groups or games, make supper or simply be there. No qualifications necessary – only enthusiasm! If you feel you could help in any way, please speak to Vanda or Joy.

CHURCH CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION 2008

It's that time of year again ...oh yes it is!

This year's Christmas production will be based around Graham Kendrick's latest set of Christmas songs entitled 'Dreaming of a Holy Night'. We are hoping that the music will be accompanied by some drama, but at this stage we are looking for people who enjoy singing to come along to our rehearsals, which begin on Saturday 13th September from 5pm–6pm in the church. This hour will be our regular rehearsal time (excluding school holidays). The performances will be on 12th and 13th December.

You do not have to have any previous experience of part- or choral-type singing, or be able to read music, as our group leaders will guide you through everything step by step. All that is necessary is that you can carry a tune and are willing to hang in with everyone else in learning together. It's a great opportunity to work together and enjoy the end product of being able to tell together the 'greatest story ever told'.

If you have any questions or are unsure whether this is for you, why not speak to Sheila Notman

MY FAVOURITE HYMNS

This time around we have Wilf and Marion Campbell in the limelight as they share their thoughts and favourite hymns with us. The couple hail from Burnley, Lancashire and moved north of the border to settle in Dalbeattie some 11 years ago. Recalls Wilf, 'When we first came to Dalbeattie we attended Colvend Church. However, the then minister the Rev. Barry Knight left and the new incumbent wasn't just what we were looking for. We began 'shopping around' so to speak and one night about two and a half years ago we were in Dumfries and popped into Troqueer Church for the evening service. We both really enjoyed it and we've come here ever since'.

And why Troqueer? we asked. Said Marion, 'It was the fellowship and we were made so welcome. Now we try and get to morning worship and back again in the evening'.

The Lord's my Shepherd to the tune of *Crimond* was Marion's first choice and she openly admits that she's been blessed by this psalm many times over. And that third verse in particular really pulls at her heartstrings:

*Yea, though I walk through death's dark vale,
yet will I fear no ill;*

*for thou art with me, and thy rod
and staff me comfort still.*

What a friend we have in Jesus is one of Wilf's all-time favourites and he says he loves those wonderful words by Joseph Scriven. Although Jesus will always be his 'best friend' he claims to have made so many other wonderful friends since joining us here at Troqueer.

He picks out Tom and Sandra Bonnar; Sheena Gibson, her daughter Fiona and grand-daughter Anna, to name but a few. There was also Margaret Howdel, Helen Teenan, Margaret Moore, Alf and Dianne Marshall, John and June Edwards, Geoff and Sue Robinson and, of course, Billy and Joy Kelly plus many many more.

'I suppose we were Christians when we left Burnley' added Wilf. 'But it wasn't until we arrived in Scotland that we fully realised it. Just looking out our window we see beauty all around and bless God for his wonderful work in creating heaven and earth. Neither of us have ever regretted the move north!'

Marion nodded in agreement and stressed, 'Even travelling back and forward to the church the scenery is so spectacular. We see the hills and the cattle in the fields and life is so peaceful'.

Jesus lover of my soul and *Morning has broken* are two other hymns close to their hearts and Wilf

recalls, 'We never tire of driving around the countryside. We both cherish the tranquility and know that God is always with us'.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine and *Amazing Grace* are two more the couple love dearly. The words of the latter by John Newton and the story of his early life and his eventual conversion to Christianity is one they always enjoy.

And to end with Marion opted for *Shine Jesus shine*, one of Graham Kendrick's many great hymns. 'I like both the words and that triumphant tune' she concluded.

Wilf and Marion have been blessed with three children--a son and two daughters. Also three lovely grandchildren who they worship and adore.

The happy couple have been together for 47 years--only three years short of their Golden Wedding--and it was a pleasure to meet with them and discuss their faith.

WJG

ALIVE RADIO

Many people reading this might be forgiven for wondering what's happening with the Alive Radio project! The last broadcast was during the summer of 2006, so this is an update on events since then. From 2004 to 2006 we broadcast using a 'Restricted Service Licence' from OFCOM, which allowed us 28 days of programming per year. We then applied for a 'Community Radio Licence', which was granted in May 2007, to present 24/7 radio for 5 years. Since then volunteers from a range of local churches have been planning (and praying!).

There's a lot more involved than many of us had anticipated, and it's taken longer than expected to get to this stage. Dumfries Baptist Church has kindly offered us free use of rooms in their building on Newall Terrace for a studio and limited office accommodation. The Council have made a transmission facility available free of charge and we are talking to various organisations who may be willing to partner with us to make use of our community radio facilities for training and interacting with the people of Dumfries and surrounding area.

Alive is a not-for-profit charity which is founded on Christian values and God's love. It won't be a station which 'pushes Christianity down people's throats', but a natural expression of lively, relevant faith, presented with enthusiasm and fun. In addition to broadcasting on FM, we will be on the internet, through live online streaming, enabling people to receive our programmes worldwide.

Our greatest need now is the finance to construct studios and kit them out. Our total budget for set-up and launch is in the region of £25,000, of which facilities and equipment comprise around £20,000. If you are interested in supporting Alive through a one-off or regular donation, or through Gift Aid, information and forms are available online at www.aliveradio.net or speak to Sheila Notman. Look out for news of regular meetings on the intimation sheet.

We are planning an evening for anyone interested in supporting Alive or finding out more in DGOne on Friday 7th November. The programme for the evening will include Syd Little, best known as one half of top comedy duo 'Little & Large'. After experiencing tragedy in his life, Syd was invited by the organisation 'Christians in Entertainment' to a comedian's Bible Study in Bobby Ball's dressing room backstage in Blackpool. For Syd, it was a revelation that changed his life: 'I have always been a church-goer and believed in God,' says Syd, 'but somehow that didn't have much to do with the realities of life and the difficulties I was facing. It was there that I finally asked God into my life.' It will be an evening of comedy and song – watch this space for further details!

‘Friends Reunited’ – Why do we have small groups?

It’s that time of year. The schools have gone back, most people are back from their hols (except us...we’re just about to go away), it’s getting dark earlier (Will we notice? It’s been such a gloomy we summer...) and various groups are clamouring for our attention again. Why should I listen?

A small group, whether it meets in somebody’s home or in the Church Centre, is a place of **mutual support**: Laura Irving speaks of her appreciation of the ‘help and support of others in the church in a more intimate setting’ and Millie Glen says: ‘I have been through a lot lately and having my Christian friends around and the Lord at my side – it’s made me stronger and made me realise that being a Christian isn’t easy. But the reward you get with the Lord and the housegroup is worth it all!’

A small group is a **safe place to learn**. Mary Bell describes the housegroup she goes to as a ‘safe place’ where people are able to share together and pray for each other, and Margaret Howdle expands on that by saying, ‘I enjoy the relaxed feeling in our housegroup and feel comfortable asking questions I may not voice anywhere else; so I can discuss the Bible and hear others’ views and interpretations...’.

A small group is a place where some people take their **first steps in praying**. Several people have mentioned how valuable and uplifting it is to be with a small number of people who are beginning to pray for each other and for the problems of the world in an informal setting. Millie again: ‘It’s like walking with Jesus: the more you attend the group, the more you feel what Jesus went through for us. And you feel that you are there with him.’ That fits in with Jesus’ promise in Matthew 18:20: ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.’

We have a handful of groups which are about to restart after the summer break, which will meet on one evening a week; we’d like to have more, and possibly a daytime group as well. If you are interested in seeing what goes on, or if you think you could help to lead/host a group, I’d be delighted to hear from you – or you could talk to the minister, or ask to be pointed towards one of the group leaders mentioned on the weekly intimation sheets. Thanks!

Raymond Witty

Christian Aid

Coffee Morning – Saturday 13th September

Saturday 13th September will be the Christian Aid Coffee Morning in the Minerva Hall, Dumfries Academy, between 10am and 12 noon. This is an important date in the Christian Aid calendar. This year, as well as the local children’s art competition winners, there will be a special display of children’s pictures from El Salvador. These moving pictures, which were shown in a recent morning service, show the devastation caused by Hurricane Stan in 2005. The painting of the pictures was part of the healing process helped by Christian Aid’s partner organisation, Aprodehni.

Last year the coffee morning raised over £1600 for Christian Aid’s work with poor communities around the world. This is not possible without your help. Donations are requested for the stalls: China and Glass; Books and Toys; Cake, Candy and Produce; Plants; and Gifts (eg unwanted presents). This year we have been asked to help with the catering especially. For this, small cakes

or tray-bakes, unbuttered scones and panscones are requested as well as folks to wait on tables. Donations can be taken to the Minerva Hall on the Friday evening or, if perishable, dropped off on Saturday morning. Help is also needed with home baking for the catering and on the day. Please contact Alison Wright if you can help. She also has tickets for sale!

Fairtrade progress

The Dumfries Fairtrade Group has organised an important meeting towards Dumfries becoming a Fairtrade town on Tuesday 7th October at 7.30pm at Cumberland St. Day Centre. Bruce Crowther, Fairtrade towns coordinator for the Fairtrade Foundation will be the speaker. Bruce is from Garstang, north of Preston, the world's first Fairtrade town, and is well placed to explain how Fairtrade towns benefit both towns in the UK and farmers in the developing world. All are welcome. More information from Alison Wright

Christian Aid Week total

The final total for Christian Aid week locally was £18,137, only £139 down on last year. We contributed £1187. Thanks to all who helped.

World food crisis

Food riots in Haiti and Egypt, dire warnings about rocketing food prices – the world is in the midst of a food crisis. Why is this happening? In fact, much of the problem is of the West's making – the food crisis facing many poor countries does not come as a surprise. Christian Aid has long warned that the doctrinaire imposition of market liberalisation on developing countries has left the poorest farmers without financial or marketing support, and this has seriously threatened staple food yields.

The poorest people in developing countries have been increasingly forced to rely on imports, which are extremely vulnerable to fluctuating global economic conditions. Much of recent debate over the food crisis has been polarised into a choice between saving the planet by growing biofuels and feeding the world's people by growing food. But it is not that simple. The poor are the first to suffer from climate change, and equally from soaring food prices. Both problems need to be tackled urgently, but more intelligently.

Abiy Hailu, Christian Aid's Ethiopia country manager, points out that even before the food crisis there were 8 million people in Ethiopia unable to afford adequate nutrition on a regular basis. Crop failure, climate change, soaring food costs means that the vulnerable can no longer cope. With millions of people across Africa facing extreme hunger, this is a crisis the world cannot ignore. And though Africa is bearing the brunt of this crisis, Christian Aid has warned that the food crisis is a global problem.

For Christian Aid's full report on the food crisis, see:

Christian Aid has launched an emergency appeal in support of the millions of people across Africa facing food shortages and malnutrition. Millions of people are in urgent need of food according to the UN.

Which countries need urgent aid?

Ethiopia: The failure of seasonal rains earlier in the year has left millions without food. This, combined with a poor July harvest, has left around 11 million people facing extreme hunger.

Somalia: In a country that has suffered years of conflict, 2.6 million people – 35% of the population – need humanitarian assistance.

Kenya: Food insecurity is widespread and 1.2 million people are in need of food assistance and the whole population is affected by rising food prices.

Burkina Faso: The world's second poorest and least developed country, according UNDP, cannot cope with the sudden rise in global food prices. Already, 39% of the population are experiencing chronic malnutrition and 19% are experiencing acute malnutrition.

Democratic Republic of Congo: In one of the poorest countries in the world, the whole population faces food insecurity. Rising food costs have caused the prices of staples, such as maize and rice, to double since December last year.

Malawi: With almost two-thirds of the population living on less than \$2 a day, large numbers of people are likely to need food aid.

What is Christian Aid doing?

Christian Aid partners are on the ground providing help to those most in need. In Ethiopia, Christian Aid partners SOS Sahel and Centre for Development Initiatives, are distributing seeds to ensure subsequent harvests are not affected by current food shortages. And across Africa, our ongoing support to partners working with communities to improve their agricultural productivity will be increasingly important as the changing climate brings new challenges for domestic production. However, the huge scale of the crisis will require funds, which is why we have launched our appeal.

Do all the good you can
By all the means you can
In all the ways you can
At all the times you can
To all the people you can
As long as ever you can

John Wesley

Letter from Andrew Ineeza (Divine Child Development Initiative Administrator).

Greetings to all sponsors of the children in our project. As a child I was sponsored by someone from Norway through a church in Uganda. I have always acknowledged the role my sponsor played, someone I have never met nor corresponded with. I know that this sponsor played a significant part in my education. When I was in Primary 1 my father was killed in a plotted bomb blast. My mother was uneducated and left with six children; our relatives wouldn't help. Our father's friend tried to help but we suffered despite this, until the sponsorship began. You can imagine how this helped me so very much.

We are so pleased that you are committed to helping our nation; this service will not go unrewarded. Our Father will not forget your support in sending a child to school. This act is impacting the lives of the children today and will change them forever. You are laying foundations for their future and the children will not forget this.

Yours in Christ,

Andrew Ineeza

Masks

I looked across at you,
Agony silently screamed its protest from your face.
It lasted only for a moment; your cover had slipped,
revealing your torment.

I asked you how you were.
'Fine, just a little tired,' you said.
I do not think your conscious mind
can accept or register your deep suffering.

We smile and laugh, compete in conversation.
We walk erect, eyes straight, heads up,
efficient, composed, in control.
No one hears the battles, the fighting of wars within, without.
No one hears the silent clashing of swords.

I have a friend,
I shall not name her, but often in conversation,
her tears well up and overflow,
allowing me to walk with her in dark places,
permitting me to love her.

O Lord, I am so glad that before You I need no pretence.
In the presence of Your compassionate love
my waxen face melts.
Into Your attentive ear I can pour myself.

Each day, I learn to lower my mask a little more.
If I face others as I really am,
they may face me as they are,
and, in revealing, permit Your healing.

Janet Bell

Funny Face!

Charlie was playing with his friends in his front garden when some other children who were passing by started to call him names – because Charlie had a facial disfigurement. One of the boys came right into the garden, pointed at him and in ridiculing voice shouted, ‘Hey you, Funny Face!’ Charlie ran away into his house and went straight to the mirror in his room, looked for a moment or two – then ran back into the garden and declared to everyone – ‘Yes, I *have* got a funny face,’ and went on playing with his friends.

‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’ (Hebrews 13:6)

‘I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.’ (Philippians 4:12,13)

Bill Murphy

FRENDZ

FRENDZ is a Pregnancy Crisis Centre set up with the involvement of a number of churches in Dumfries and Galloway. The Centre’s purpose is to provide a place for women and/or their partners to have confidential help and advice in a caring environment with a Christian ethos; before, during or after pregnancy, miscarriage or abortion. It is hoped that the Centre will open in Dumfries towards the end of this year. The next round of training commences on Saturday September 20th, 10am–4pm at Troqueer Church Centre. If anyone is interested in the work of the group please contact Maggie Gurney

Scottish Bible Society Annual Collection

Thanks to all those within the congregation who assisted with the annual collection for the Scottish Bible Society, or who donated towards the work. A total of £2771.90 was forwarded to the Bible Society for their work, an increase of 8.5% on last year.

This is a great encouragement to all those involved in translation, production and distribution of bibles, in producing other audiovisual forms of communicating God's Word, and in the development of school work with Bible World.

This year the Scottish Bible Society has continued to bring encouragement in countries struck by natural disasters, and is particularly involved in the volatile Middle East, impoverished parts of Latin America and in Bible-hungry China.

Bill McKenzie

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday 13th September	Christian Aid Coffee Morning, Minerva Hall, 10am–12noon
Wednesday 17th September	Board Meeting, Centre, 7pm
Sunday 21st September	Presbytery Sunday
Sunday 28th September	Harvest Thanksgiving Family Service, Church, 11am Harvest Offering for Partner Church in Rwanda
Tuesday 30th September	Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm
Saturday 4th October	Prayer Breakfast, Centre, 7.30–9am
Tuesday 7th October	Guild Meeting, ‘Chocolate making’, Centre, 7.30pm
Wednesday 8th October	Kirk Session Meeting, Centre, 7pm
Sunday 26th October	Communion, Church, 11am
Tuesday 28th October	Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm
Saturday 1st November	Prayer Breakfast, Centre, 7.30–9am
Tuesday 4th November	Guild Meeting, St. Mary’s Church Hall, 7pm
Sunday 2nd November	Boys’ Brigade Enrolment Service, Church, 11am
Saturday 8th November	‘Children in Need’ Soup Lunch, Centre, 12noon
Sunday 9th November	Remembrance Service, Church, 10.45am Retiring Offering for Earl Haig and RAF Benevolent Funds
Wednesday 12th November	Kirk Session Meeting, Centre, 7pm
Sunday 16th November	Guild Dedication Service, Church, 11am
Wednesday 19th November	Board Meeting, Centre, 7pm
Tuesday 25th November	Healing Service, Centre, 7.30pm
Tuesday 2nd December	Guild Christmas Dinner, Aberdour Hotel, 5.30 for 6pm
Saturday 6th December	Prayer Breakfast, Centre, 7.30–9am
Wednesday 10th December	Fellowship Session, Centre, 7pm
12th/13th December	‘Dreaming of a Holy Night’ Christmas Production