

newrestalrig

an evangelical church of scotland

Minister:
Rev. David Court

Session Clerk:
Mr. Harry Witherspoon

Address: 1a Willowbrae Rd, Edinburgh

Phone: (0131) 661 4045
Website: www.newrestalrig.com

PARISH NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2006

FROM THE MINISTER

Dear Friends,

This month's pastoral letter comes as an update on the situation of the MacDonald family in Zambia. Recently we have received a couple of e-mails from them informing us of their work amongst orphaned boys living rough on the streets of Lusaka. Here are some extracts from their last communication.

Last time I told you we had decided that something must be done about the increasing number of little boys we have seen abandoned at Manda Hill. Our earlier experience of street kids in this area was that they were older boys, whom nobody wanted or trusted, and who had been on the streets for a number of years. Consequently they were pretty hardened characters usually with a heavy drug addiction, and by definition they were survivors, having made it to their late teens. These were the boys we took in, and about whom I have written over the past 3 years. In total we have probably looked after 30, with a drop out rate of 5 or 6, meaning that 24 are still going straight, either with us or on their own.

But over the past 12 months we have seen a disturbing new development in the street kid population around Manda Hill. For those who do not know, Manda Hill is a western style shopping mall near to the area we live in. It is the biggest shopping place in Zambia, and is

frequented by well-to-do local people and the expatriate community. This makes it a good place to beg, and although the boys are not allowed inside the premises they hang around at the traffic lights outside and ask for food and money from the shoppers.

Of course there are thousands of other street children in Zambia – an estimated 100,000 – and many of them live in Lusaka and beg in other parts of the city. One such area is a local market called Soweto, where an estimated 200 boys used to sleep every night. A crackdown by the authorities has now however left those 200 boys, most of them very young, with no shelter and no begging pitch, so they scattered around town, and about 50 of them settled at Manda Hill, where there were few other boys to stake claim. And so, the problem multiplied before our eyes. The newcomers were very different from our existing group of lads. For a start they were much younger – some as young as 6, and they were therefore not so hardened to street life. Secondly, they were made up of all kinds of boys. The brutal fact is that the average life expectancy of a boy who goes on the street in Zambia is 6 years. Since the survivors make it to adulthood, this means that a lot of little boys, with gentler natures or less robust physiques, do not make it to their 6th year on the street.

With the migration that took place, we were suddenly faced with little boys who were not just little, but were almost certainly NOT survivors. Added to this, the bigger boys who were around Manda Hill were quick to spot

the opportunity to introduce the little guys to glue and solvent abuse, and then sell it to them to feed their habit, and so within a short space of time we found a whole new generation of little lost souls, stoned out of their heads, high on glue, dirty, smelly, cold and hungry, begging for enough money to survive through to the following day. For many of them "the sands of time are sinking" very fast, with little hope of "the dawn of heaven" breaking, and it was, and is, very distressing to watch. And on a weekly basis, Christine and I would say we must do something about the problem, we cannot just walk past again.

But we did not know what to do. The fact is that we do not have enough space on our premises to take many more children, and certainly not another 50. Yet if we leave them, many of them might die, and so the soul searching and hard questions rose again and again, with no apparent solution.

4 weeks ago we agreed to invite them all for Sunday lunch. We expected about 20, but in the event 45 turned up, and the number has remained at that level for the 4 weeks we have been operating. That first Sunday was a life-altering experience for us all. There is so much I could tell you about, so many little glimpses of the horrors of life on the street, so many flashes of love winning over all the odds, so many illustrations of what God has done for us on a cosmic scale.

But let me just give you a couple of incidents which show some of it. Like Clifford, a mentally retarded teenager, abandoned on the street, high on glue, with patches of pink skin all over his body, and hair turning prematurely grey. Unable to express himself clearly, he just put his head on my shoulder and grinned at me when I hugged him. Or Sam, 14 years old, pretending to box with me, then dropping his stance, running to me and holding me around the neck for dear life. He had to be prised off by a couple of helpers, but

all he wanted was a cuddle. Or little Albert, 8 years old, shivering with cold, and hungry, yet leaving his place in the food queue to get a hug from one of the helpers. Or Gift, 15, with dead hopelessness in his eyes, who told me how he had been to school until 2003 when his parents were killed in a road accident and he went from comfortable home to street in a matter of days.

This has all been happening while we considered a much longer-term idea of trying to obtain a small farm on the outskirts of Lusaka and turning it into a small village type location for keeping many more children. We had been concerned that taking more kids would mean losing that one on one contact which is vital to them, but the last few weeks have showed us that many of the older lads are now fit and able to be responsible older brother figures to

UPCOMING SUNDAY SERVICES

6th August

11.00 AM
Andrew Randal

6.30 PM
Alex Aitken

20th August

11.00 AM
David Court

6.30 PM
Bob Fyall

13th August

11.00 AM
Andrew Randall

6.30 PM
Andrew Randall

27th August

11.00 AM (Communion)
David Court

6.30 PM
Bob Fyall

MIDWEEK PRAYER MEETINGS

August 2nd - Harry Witherspoon

August 9th - John Norrie

August 16th - Gavin and Des Campbell

August 23rd - Eungyu Choi

August 30th - Presentation on the work of
London City Mission

CHANGES TO THE CHURCH FAMILY

DEATHS

Mr. R.Manson 24 Bryce Avenue on 16.03.06
Mrs. J Fairholm 44 Lady Nairne Cres. on 29.03.06
Mrs. A.Blyth 11/3 NorthField Road on 30.04.06
Mrs. M.Nisbet 46 Kenmyre Ave on 02.05.06
Mrs. J.Hunter 2 Piershill Terr. on 08.05.06

DISJUNCTION

Mrs. R.M.Whitelaw 24 Durham Rd. on 01.04.06

BIRTHS

Ghiselle Plchot 64 Gibraltar Gardens on 26.07.06

BAPTISM

Kenneth Euan Martin 170 Craigleith Rd. on 05.03.06
Joshua Andrew Francey on 09.07.06

MARRIAGE

Miss Sarah Kelly 12/4 Moray Park Terr to Mr. Stephen Phillips 5 Denham Green Place on 31.3.06

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Miss J.Simpson from 27 Lochend Dr to 18d Links Steet, Musselburgh
Mrs. P. Laporte from 48 Abercorn Road to 3 new belfield, Willowbrae Road

the younger boys and could in fact be trusted with a lot of the work in caring and nurturing them. A smallholding would be ideal for building housing, a small school, a workshop for trades education and an agriculture project, run by Phil which would serve the dual purpose of providing food and teaching good farming methods to the children. It all seemed like an impossible dream so we discussed it manytimes only to shelve it again. Yet now here we are faced with a crisis. We need more space if we are to do any more. We are willing to go forward, and the personnel seem to be available to make such a project work. And then....

Donald tells us that they have now, through a variety of providences and no little faith, acquired a suitable property. He concludes: So there we have it. Everything is moving at breathtaking speed. The road seems to be

going quickly in one direction, and we are happy to follow it. It could all yet go wrong, but somehow I don't think it will, and we are enjoying the anticipation of seeing how our God will supply all our needs.

Please remember the MacDonald family - Don, Christine, Sarah, Rachel, Nicholas and Mulenga, and all the boys in your prayers. We hope to provide an opportunity for members of the church to financially support their work in the near future.

In His Service,
David L Court

ANNOUNCING...

Rutherford House Evening Classes

'Seeing the Big Picture'

Mondays 7.30-9.00pm, September 4th to October 9th

The aim of this series of 6 studies is to help people to see something of the overall shape of the Bible and how its different kinds of writing make their contribution to the whole.

Thank You

Barbara Ritchie and family would like to thank everyone who donated so generously at her 80th birthday. The sum of £700 was raised for Edinburgh City Mission and Cancer Research..

Congratulations...

to Doro and Mirek Plchots on the safe arrival of their new baby daughter, Ghiselle. Ghiselle was born on 26th July 2006 at 04:00AM, 4,08kg (9 pounds).

September Newsletter

Submissions for the September Newsletter should be sent to David Urminsky by August 26th. Submissions can be e-mailed to editor@newrestalrig.com or you can phone 0131-467-3319.

Kirk Session

meet at 7.30pm Tuesday 22nd August

Recycling

For a long while the church has had a brown bin for recycling garden waste. To help further recycling in the church we now have a plastic box for recycling church paper. This can be found in the office, in the Church Centre.

Run the Race

Anyone feeling fit? 'Run the Race' maybe for you. This a professionally organised run for Tear Fund. to be held on the 9th September in Strathclyde Park in the morning. Once you have recovered there is a 'Praise in the Park' in the afternoon (all welcome) with well known people leading the worship. Full details for this event can be found on the web site www.runningtherace.co.uk and www.praiseinthepark.info. Last year £100,000 was raised for Tear Fund. For information regarding Tear Fund contact Patricia Sharp, 661 1738.

Awakening UK 2006

Awakening UK 2006, Praise Celebration for all the family, to be held at Carberry Tower Estate, Saturday September 2nd, 1pm-8pm. For more information please call 0131 665 4483.