

Topics for Thanksgiving and Prayer

“I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on until the day of Christ Jesus”

Paul, to the Philippians, chapter 1 and verses 3-6.

- Give thanks for the safe travels of Enoch and Phoebe to the UK and back to the Congo, and for Enoch`s recovery from sickness on his return.
- Give thanks for the continued devoted efforts of Timothy and his staff in Kabale, in the face of many difficulties.
- Give thanks for the marvellous response from UK supporters and their friends and families to the recent Batwa giving challenge on the Global Giving international website (see article) and pray for continued giving.
- Timothy is currently looking for a suitable candidate to head the Vocational Training College at AICM. Pray that someone might soon be found for this key post.
- The VTC is always struggling financially. Pray for more UK sponsors to offer student bursaries. Student fees are the mainstay of the VTC finances, and the fact that so many have difficulties with fees is one of the reasons for the financial problems.
- Give thanks for the male and female extension workers who travel out to AICM`s rural communities: that they may be encouraged by having regular and adequate pay.
- Pray that God will bless the forthcoming July visit of five trustees and eight new friends to Uganda; for the planning, for safety and that all involved will catch a vision of what God can do through AICM. Thank you so much for your prayers and support.

Contacts

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Friends of AICM Newsletter

June 2009

In Uganda



AICM - An outworking of the love of Christ in South-West Uganda.

*(Some personal thoughts from Sue Townsend
Trustee of Friends of AICM).*

Pictured on the next page are three of the several AICM notice boards to be found in Kabale and its surrounding area in South-West Uganda. They are a symbol of the outstretched, helping hands of Christ amongst these very needy, lovely people.



For me, they represent desperate need and a challenge. Increasingly, reports from UK visitors to Kabale and visits to UK from Kabale by Enoch, the founder Director, and Timothy, the current Director, keep underlining the desperate funding requirements

of AICM in order to maintain its services at the current level. In spite of this, it is an organisation that cannot stand still in the face of obvious need, and so it is ever seeking to do more.

We hear that the VTC struggles to fund staff adequately and facilities as it caters for ever increasing demands from students. Currently, it is seeking a new director and it needs to expand its buildings. We praise God that Christian commitment and worship are central to its activities. It is a challenge for us to provide for its continued witness.

We praise God that AICM employs faithful extension workers who travel by motorbike, bicycle and even by foot, through rough terrain into rural areas to encourage and support in areas of health, agriculture, handicrafts, dance, drama, income-generating projects such as bee keeping, and of course, bible teaching. But these extension workers have families, often extended families, and are paid meagre salaries, often in arrears. They give much as a service to God, but AICM needs to pay them a better wage, and that is a challenge to us.






There are other activities, including the whole matter of the Batwa (pigmy) re-settlement programme, which includes the AICM Batwa community schools. The funding needs are constant.

I suppose I am putting these thoughts into words in an effort to inspire you, our faithful readers, perhaps to become a little more active; perhaps to offer to help us here in the UK (the trustees would value offers of help); perhaps to broadcast the work of AICM amongst your friends, your church fellowship or school (it would be great to get more supporting churches and schools



Notelets

We have recently produced some notelets, with five different pictures on the front, as shown below. All have the title “Just a Note” above the

picture (not shown), AICM information on the rear, and a faint, attractive watermark inside that can be written over. They are printed on good quality card and a pack of assorted five can be obtained, or at least ordered from any trustee for £3.50. Eventually they will be available on the website, but in case of difficulty, can be ordered now directly from me (“membership” phone number on rear of newsletter, or by email, if you received the newsletter by that means). Postage will vary, but for the UK until told otherwise, will be 30p for one set, 75p for five sets and £1 for ten sets. They can, of course, be bought in any quantity. Those postage costs are only for a guide.

AICM’s New Field Coordinator

Proudly astride the AICM motor bike (purchased by the Friends) is Richard, the new field coordinator at AICM. He is the replacement for Doreen, whom some of you will remember - she left AICM when she gave birth to twins. Richard is an able, energetic, young man, and a university graduate, whose favourite food is yoghurt! He has overall charge of the work in the communities, which is a huge responsibility. It means he oversees the extension workers who travel out into the various rural areas, and regularly visits them himself. His areas of work cover health, agriculture, education, bee keeping; the list could go on. It is an onerous job for a young man. Please pray for him, that his daily walk with God sustains him and protects him. He has recently been ill with malaria, but is returning to strength. He and the extension workers represent the main core of the work of AICM.



Global Giving



The Challenge and BEYOND

At the beginning of April, the Friends of AICM secured a provisional place on the UK site

of the international charitable giving site, globalgiving.co.uk. This site raises the profile of many small charities by giving them a much wider audience. It is secure and well managed. In order to achieve a permanent place on the site, Global Giving required us to raise a minimum of £1000 from 50 unique sponsors during April. Our initial project was to raise funds to aid the primary education of Batwa children in our two schools at Rwamahano and Muribindi. We knew from Timothy that AICM had insufficient funds to provide school lunches and other essential materials like school uniform and materials. Also, they struggle to fund the teachers' salaries and teacher training. That is why we chose the "Pygmy Education" project. We are so thankful to the many who responded to our requests to give in so short a time, and we praise God that we did meet and exceed the challenge by ultimately raising more than

£1500! These funds will make all the difference in the world to a marginalised group who have nothing. So we now have a permanent place, and our work is only just beginning! This project has a way to go to meet its target - another £4000 or so.



This will preserve these children's education for a few years and we shall, in time, be adding other projects.

So, please continue to visit the site and broadcast it to as many as possible. It has a link to our own website, so we hope many will visit that also and learn more about our work. This will tell folk about lots of other ways to give. We are aware that giving for a few can become a burden, and so the more who become aware of the work of AICM, the better it will be, as God's work in Kabale and beyond does depend very much on adequate funding.

on board); perhaps to go out and see for yourself; perhaps, I pray, to commit yourself to regular prayer and giving.

Recently, I have re-read a book by Tim Chester, a former director of Tear Fund, called "Good News for the Poor". I close with a quote from this which I pray will inspire:

"We cannot eradicate poverty within history. Many of our achievements are reversed and undone. But still we have an obligation to care for the poor as we reflect the character of God, live under the reign of God and respond to the grace of God. Proclamation will be central to Christian involvement with the poor, because the greatest need of the poor - along with all people - is to be reconciled with God through the gospel. But the message we proclaim is best understood in the context of loving actions and loving community."

Further information can be obtained from our website www.aicm.org.uk. Contact addresses can be found there, or you can contact colin@ctownsend52.orangehome.co.uk.

The Kireba Bee Keepers

Some of our readers may remember that among the AICM alternative gifts last year were bee hives. You will be pleased to know that they have been placed in the forest by the Kireba Bee Keepers



Association. These are woman, pictured above, from one of the rural communities served by AICM and are seeking to use bee keeping as a means of income generation. These new hives are a great improvement on their old ones, but these woman are still in need of further equipment, more bees, and some training in order to manage the bees correctly and produce honey efficiently. We are currently asking the team in Kabale to report back to us with specific needs for this project as we mean to send more funding in the near future. Are there any bee

keepers out there interested in visiting Kabale to offer help? Do please let us know.



Any honey for tea?



Please!

With every newsletter issue, on average, four emails are returned and two to three envelopes. The emails aren't too much trouble to sort out because we usually have telephone numbers, but normal addresses are difficult, with few links to investigate. Would everyone remember to inform us of any change of address, both normal and email.

Whilst on the subject of emails, it has been some years since we checked on everyone's details and there are probably more of you using email now that we are aware of. We send out the newsletter to approximately half of you by that means now and could save costs by increasing that ratio. Your address can be sent to us simply by emailing henderson_michael@sky.com Thank you all.

Forthcoming Trips to Kabale

July will see the departure of five trustees and eight new supporters as they fly off to Uganda. They intend to explore some of the country's beautiful scenery and wildlife and also to spend about a week visiting some of AICM's projects. We wish them well and look forward to some interesting stories when they return.



Rydal Penrhos School visit to AICM

In the same period, but as a separate venture, Phil and Anne Simpson, who are long-standing friends of AICM, are leading a party of four sixth-form pupils and three other staff from his school to Uganda this summer. They will be spending a few days in Kabale from 16-19 July to see the VTC and other aspects of AICM's work

Rydal Penrhos is an independent boarding school situated at Colwyn Bay on the North Wales coast and has a Methodist Church foundation. This visit is part of their World AIMS (Action in Methodist Schools) programme in partnership with the Methodist Relief and Development.

The group will also be visiting an MRDF funded rural development project near Mbarara and some schools in Mbarara. Phil and his school chaplain Rev Keith Tewkesbury went to Uganda last February on a fact-finding tour and made the links with the schools through the British Council. Then in May 2008 Timothy was able to spend a couple of days at Rydal Penrhos meeting pupils and staff.



Since the autumn, pupils and staff at Rydal Penrhos have been raising money in different ways (including cake and craft sales, a fancy-dress day with a circus theme, selling Christmas cards) and have achieved a total of nearly £2,000 to donate to AICM, RUHEPAI (the MRDF sponsored project) and the schools in Mbarara, in addition to raising the costs of the trip (approximately £1,400 each).

Rydal Penrhos is really hoping that these links with Uganda, including AICM, will grow in strength as a result of this year's visit and that such visits will become a regular two-yearly event.



Craft Items for Sale

As part of the ongoing efforts of AICM in Uganda and The Friends of AICM to establish sustainable income generating activities, a number of craft items made by the Ihunga Women's Groups have been imported to the UK and went on sale to staff at the Charities Aid Foundation recently. A total in excess of £370 was raised which will be used to purchase and ship more goods to the UK as well as providing an injection of £200 to assist the Ihunga Women's Groups. This is an ongoing initiative that can only benefit from greater involvement from supporters of The Friends of AICM. If you are interested and able to organise a sale of craft goods, or have contacts with wholesale or retail outlets that would be interested in stocking these items, contact us at enquiries@aicm.org.uk.

