

the promise

News about St. Peter's Parish Covenant With the Poor

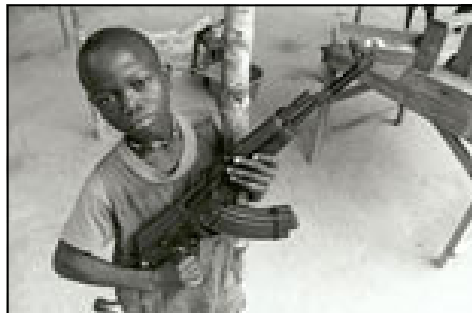
REBUILDING SIERRA LEONE THROUGH EDUCATION

Since emerging in 2002 from a decade of civil war, Sierra Leone is slowly rebuilding itself. Its best hope for a peaceful future lies in the education of its children

It was to promote that education, and so to further the work of a remarkable woman (see next page), that the Lottie Betts-Priddy Education Trust was set up in 2000. Our Covenant With the Poor's Advent appeal will be funding essential work by the Trust to improve facilities at schools in the country's capital - Freetown.

The schools that survived the war are in a very bad state of repair, and the task ahead of reconstructing education in the country is huge. But the project we are supporting has very clear aims, and although they may seem mundane or unglamorous, they will make a real difference.

The money we send - and we hope initially to raise £6,000 - will be used to repair the roofs and the toilets at the Cathedral Schools - the Infant School serving 400 pupils, and the Boys Primary and the Girls Primary Schools, each serving 700 pupils. Repairing the roofs will keep the water out of the classrooms, and repairing the toilets will help make the schools safe and healthy places for child to learn.



From child soldiers



..... to school children



Looking forward to Christmas shopping? Finding it hard to select the perfect gift? Spoilt for choice? Uneasy about the commercialisation of Christmas?

There is a way to give a gift this Christmas that will really mean something, that will really make a difference - choose one of the Covenant With the Poor's **Gifts for Life**.

You can select one of a range of gifts that will buy materials needed by the two projects we are supporting in our Advent and Lent appeals - the **Lottie Betts-Priddy Education Trust**, providing better school facilities for children in civil war-torn Sierra Leone, and **Sumbawange Development Action**, building a medical clinic in the village of Kalalasi in Tanzania (see over).

Use the leaflet included in this newsletter (or pick one up at the back of church). You can choose the value of the gift you want to give, and you will receive an attractive card describing the gift, for you to send this Christmas.



The Lottie Betts-Priddy Education Trust

Over the ten years that Sierra Leone was at war, thousands of children were murdered, raped, maimed, made homeless, mentally and physically abused, deprived of nurturing, love, care and basic human rights. The result is that Sierra Leone is faced with a whole generation of children and young people who have lost out socially, educationally, morally and emotionally.

Lottie Betts-Priddy was a gifted educator, in both Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom. She was passionately committed to the education, training and wellbeing of children and young people ensuring equal opportunities for all. Throughout the wars she was a tireless campaigner for peace.



After her untimely death in September 1999, it was felt that Lottie's vision, that education could overcome the brutalities and inhumanity of war, should be realised. Eighty percent of the country's educational infrastructure had been partially or totally destroyed during the war, and only one in four primary schools has access to text books.

Lottie's vision, to support and contribute to the education of the children of Sierra Leone led to the establishment of The Lottie Betts-Priddy Education Trust in September 2000. The main aims of the Trust are to:

- Support and educate deprived children, particularly girls, who are confronting the legacy of conflict and poverty;
- Work with educational care organisations and projects to facilitate the development of a comprehensive educational network;
- Provide training and/or facilitate the higher educational needs of local young people;
- To provide a series of educational activities for Sierra Leonean children and young people, in order to cultivate a positive cultural identity and a sense of belonging.

Research carried out by the Trustees in early 2002 uncovered a number of concerns that the Trust wish to address. These relate to hygiene, health and safety issues such as over-crowded classrooms and lack of toilet facilities, the provision of appropriate recreational and sporting facilities to support physical education, health and sports activities, the overwhelming need for IT equipment, reading and writing materials and the construction of classrooms and teaching areas etc.



The Cathedral School toilets ...



... in urgent need of replacement



... by these.

BUILDING THE KALALASI CLINIC

Kalalasi is a poor and remote village in the Sumbawanga region of Tanzania. With a population of 2,500, the main activities are peasant farming, cattle herding, pottery and basketry. There is a village school and a small dispensary. The dispensary, however, is quite inadequate for the needs of the village, let alone the wider area it also serves. Through our Lent appeal, we hope to raise the £7,800 needed by Sumbawanga Development Action (SUDEA) to assist the villagers build a medical clinic and health centre.

SUDEA was formed when Mbeka Chifunda, who grew up in the Kalalasi, wanted to help his village - directly, not just with money. So, with a group of friends from the Winchester area, he helped the villagers build a new kiln for the potters there, so they could fire more pots, using less wood. Deforestation and the attendant water shortages are a big problem, wood being the one source of fuel used in cooking and firing pots. The traditional methods are very wasteful - food is cooked on a camp fire and pots fired under a bonfire.

With the Intermediate Technology Development Group's (now called Practical Action) 'Better Bonfire Kiln' they can now fire pots and Upesi cooking stoves using less wood. This kiln is not only more efficient so helping the environment; it also permits the firing of a wider range of pots, raising women's productivity and empowering them



Hand-made bricks drying in the sun in Kalalasi

economically.

It was the success of the kiln project that led to the formation of Sumbawanga Development Action to extend such practical, collaborative activities in the region. SUDEA's next major project is to assist the people of Kalalasi to build the new health centre. The cost of building the clinic can be kept low by the fact that most of the work will be done by the



...a collaborative village project

villages themselves, including making by hand the 456,000 bricks needed for the clinics walls.

Once the clinic has been built, the medical staff will be provided and funded by the Tanzanian government, who are keen to support such projects. The staff will cater not just for the health needs of the villagers themselves, but also all those in the surrounding area, amounting to some 5,000 people.

The founders of Sumbawanga Development Action are in the process of applying for charity status.



Firing the bricks

MEDAILLE COMMUNITY PROJECT - UPDATE

Sister Ann Teresa of the Medaille Community Project writes, 'I would like to begin by thanking each one of you for your incredible generosity in donating your money to our project. I have heard from the Parish that our target of £13,900 has been met and that a cheque will be in the post this week. This is an amazing achievement in just 6 months. So, thank you very much.

'We were given the keys of our Safe House on 30th September, and have arranged for the structural changes needed to be carried out as soon as possible. We have been promised that this part of the work will be completed by the end of January. We will then decorate and furnish the house and have it ready to receive the first group of women by Easter 2006.

We are aware that in order to make a serious attempt at addressing this 'Human Rights Crisis of the 21st Century' we need a network of Safe Houses across the UK. It was for this reason that we hosted a conference for different religious congregations in October. We are hoping, that by working together, we may be able to establish such a network.

We need to put pressure on our Government to ratify the Palermo Protocol and adopt the guidelines of the 2005 Council of Europe. This would mean that the Government would accept responsibility for helping the thousands of women and children whose lives are traumatised by sex-

trafficking in our country.

The Italian Government has been doing this since 1998 and paying the revenue of Safe Houses established by religious congregations in Italy. Our hope is that the UK Government will do likewise.

That is why we are working closely with the Conference of Bishops. Together we hope we meet with Government Ministers in the near future.'

