

Abigail NEWS

Autumn 2009



‘Why do they keep having babies if they can’t afford to feed them?’

This was the question I recently overheard a young teenage girl throw out rhetorically to her friends. I told her it was because they didn’t know how not to! This answer was far too simplistic, however, - even though in many cases it is true! The answers are far too complex to try to explain to a group of 14 year-old girls who are not particularly interested, or to fully cover in a Newsletter like this. In our years of working in the poverty stricken areas of Kenya we have met many sad women who have been caught up in a trap of babies, babies and more babies! They are not in their situations from choice. Some were sent out by their families while still children to beg in the streets. A forlorn child does, after all, usually soften a heart into responding more readily than a begging adult. What it does, however, is make these vulnerable children sitting targets for unscrupulous men to take advantage of - money for sex! Soon, selling their bodies in order to eat becomes an unwanted way of life. Pregnancy is almost an inevitable result in these cases. The family then disowns the youngster, not wanting yet another mouth to feed. Alone with her baby, the girl has no way of providing for them both other than by again selling herself - and so yet another pregnancy follows.

When giving ‘Relationship Talks’ to teenage girls and encouraging them to respect themselves and wait until marriage, I have been asked - very innocently - ‘But what else can we do with our boyfriends?’ What DO you suggest to teenagers who live in the slums or rural areas where there is no form of entertainment, no cafes or clubs for them to go to and no electricity either in their homes or in the streets to shed light on, and so restrain, their evening ‘activities’? These girls, like the young beggars, now face the downward spiral if they become pregnant when their families, not having money to feed yet another baby, throw them out.

Through our limited experience of working with these needy people we know that education alone, though vitally important, is not enough. We need to offer these women practical help. An alternative way of life.

This is what we have been able to do for one such group. As teenagers these women had found themselves in the above described situations. Their subsequent way of earning a living was to brew liquor - illegal in Kenya, but something they could do in their homes and which brought in enough money to feed and clothe the family. It could not, however, be hidden from the authorities and they were often raided by the police - many of whom are corrupt. Unable to pay the fine, the only way to avoid being prosecuted was to sell their bodies to the police who were more than willing to accept this alternative form of payment! A year ago, these women came to us in tears - broken, and desperate to escape this way of life which had become such a burden for them but from which they could not untangle themselves. We were able to give them counselling at the time and recently we were delighted to help them establish their own grain selling business. Their lives have been transformed!

There are still, however, many, many women caught in this trap, all with several variations of the same background story.

Once, as children or teenagers, they found themselves begging in the streets. The people who responded to them then only brought them more grief.

Now, as women, they are begging us for help.

PLEASE HELP US TO RESPOND TO THESE WOMEN!
With your help we can offer them an alternative lifestyle.

Once A Happy Family

They were a happy family. Grandma Monica looked after daughter Jane and grandson Maurice well in spite of their relative poverty. Jane, a beautiful teenager had everything to look forward to. She is an intelligent girl and had just started College studying computing. Within two weeks their lives were shattered, however, when Monica suddenly became ill and died. Jane was left with her orphaned nephew Maurice to care for and all

her dreams came to an end. At first she was very bitter when her siblings refused to help and she had to leave College. Maurice is HIV+ve and needs a lot of care and (to Jane) expensive, nourishing food. Most of his medical expenses are covered through Programmes that are available but Jane still had the daunting responsibility of finding a way of making money for daily living. She began going round the village offering to do people's hair

and giving them skin treatments. She had no initial capital to buy the equipment and necessary products to build up a successful business, however, so her income was very meagre and life was hard. She was also away from home too much when Maurice needed her. Recently Abigail Ministires was able to provide Jane with the capital she needed and she is now establishing her business in her own home where she will always be available for Maurice.

Training Centre, New Hope

This quote is from an email we received recently:

'I must thank you for this facility. It is what they needed. Like the old Chinese saying goes, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach the man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime". Thank you Abigail Ministries for feeding the New Hope Community for a lifetime.'

We are delighted the ladies at the TC are progressing well with card-making and tailoring. Card sales are up and the ladies can now create new designs by themselves. This is really encouraging. The tailoring ladies have orders from local schools to make uniforms for the children when the new school year starts in January. As well as the teacher, we have now employed a tailor who can develop and expand the skills of these ladies. Both sets of ladies started working three days per week in the TC but because of the demand for their work, we are now employing them five days per week. Much of the success of the TC is also due to the hard work and dedication of the staff of New Hope itself who have recognised the potential the TC has for benefitting the whole community. We are very grateful to all of them for their commitment to this Project.



Craft Centre, Daylove

Although the ladies at the Craft Centre continue to do their best, unfortunately they do not have the support and commitment from the Daylove Staff to help them progress like the ladies at the Training Centre. We hope and pray for more encouragement for those ladies and that the Daylove Committee will catch the vision and understand the potential of this Project in the same way the staff at New Hope have.



Love Your Neighbour As Yourself! Christmas Appeal...

Instead of a Christmas Wish List this year we are appealing to you to 'MATCH IT!' In the Bible we read;

The greatest commandment is, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength'. The second is this, 'Love your neighbour as yourself'.

The appeal we are making this year is for you to match any special occasion or treat you might have between now and New Year by giving the equivalent amount of money you spend to Abigail Ministries to send to a needy person in Kenya. It could be the money you have to pay for a ticket for your office Christmas party, a new dress/shirt for the occasion, a theatre ticket, a hairdo, perhaps some new Christmas decorations you buy, or even that box of chocolates you are tempted by! Whatever it is, why not love your needy neighbour in Kenya with the same amount of money.

Please fill in the 'MATCH IT' slip below when you send us the money. If you like, tell us what you are matching. It will be interesting to find out how many ways we can 'love our neighbours' and we may print some in our next Newsletter.

'Manna From Purses' - Abigail Ministries Challenge 2010

As already mentioned in the Newsletter, God does not rain pennies from heaven. He hasn't even sent manna for a very long time as far as we know! What we do get, however, are those very annoying shiny little 5p pieces that get trapped in the linings of our purses and in the seams of our pockets!

The Abigail Ministries Challenge 2010 is to rescue all those 5p pieces, put them in a jar/box throughout the year then send them to us next November so that we can give a needy family a wonderful present next Christmas. If you would like to join in this venture, please sign below and let us know you are part of our

'MANNA FROM PURSES' CHALLENGE 2010



LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR APPEAL

I WOULD LIKE TO LOVE MY NEIGHBOUR BY GIVING £.....

Name _____

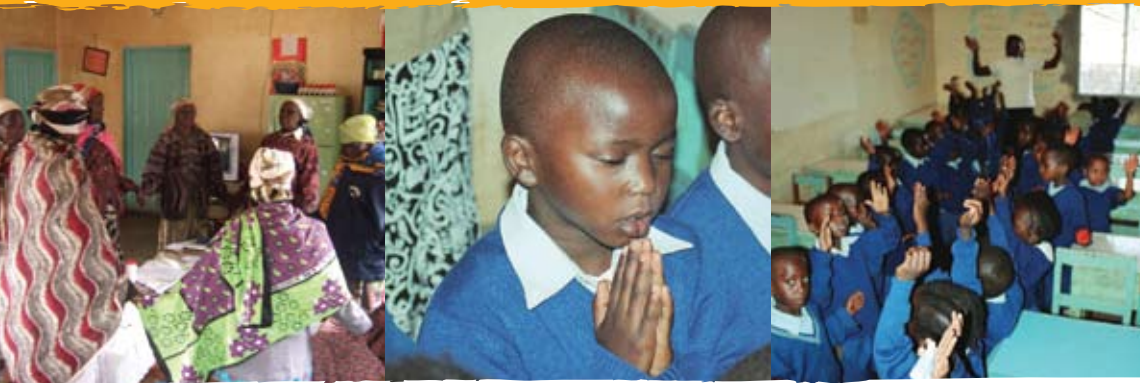
Address _____

This matches the money I spent on (No obligation to fill on this part)

I have taken up the MANNA FROM PURSES challenge and have started collecting 5p coins towards a special Christmas present for a needy person/family in Kenya next year.

Name _____

Address _____



THANK YOU...

...to all of you who have given so generously over the past few months. To those who have asked for gift money for special birthdays and anniversaries to be given to AM. To those who took part in the Adidas Women's Challenge Race and raised a fantastic £1,300. Thank you to our regular donors and sponsors. We thank you all for helping us to transform the lives of many needy families in Kenya.

Prayer Points

This time we are asking you to consider being the ANSWER!

The POOR know how to pray. They have a lot to pray for! Both children and adults plead with God to 'give them their daily bread'. They pray for rains. They pray for peace. They also know how to praise God. We have often been put to shame on hearing these people who have nothing of this world's goods offer up their praise and thanksgiving to God for all His goodness to them. We have many times been humbled by the fervent prayers of gratitude they give God for sending us to them with the little we have to offer compared to their great needs. They pour out their pleadings to God asking Him to enable us to continue to help them. Their prayers are often heart-rending.

How Does God Answer These Prayers? - HE USES US!

Only God can answer their prayer for rain but He does not rain pennies from heaven! God has not created a tree that bears money-fruit! There is no house-seed we can plant in the ground which will produce a floor, walls and a roof. While we believe nothing is impossible for God and He does still perform miracles, He usually answers the prayers of those hungry people through others, like us, who have more of this world's goods. We cannot answer their prayers directly, only God can do that, but we can be used by God to BE THE ANSWER to their prayers and we can respond to God's command to give to the poor, the widow and the orphan and to share what we have. They pray fervently for their own needs but they also pray for us and often apologise they have nothing to give us! Most of us have SOMETHING we can give them.

Without our financial help, the hungry will still go hungry!

PLEASE CONSIDER BEING THE ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS



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Martha Cried With Joy

Martha had been threatened with eviction from her dilapidated railway-side shack and so was delighted when she was allocated one of the new houses in Grannie's Village. The only problem now was that the only furniture she had was a few rocks for chairs and a very old, very thin and very small foam mattress for her and her three grandchildren to sleep on. The four of them were a forlorn sight perched uncomfortably on those rocks and the cold stone floor the mattress was on was unmerciful. It is not surprising, therefore, that Martha cried with joy when she received her settee, arm chairs and coffee table along with new beds, extra thick mattresses and blankets. The whole family were overjoyed.