

Dear Friends,

There has been a good deal of discussion recently about Christian Aid Week which takes place next month. Last year it could not take place at all due to the restrictions we were living under at the time. The hope is that it will happen this year though not in the normal format.

Christian Aid is important as a visible sign of our faith, it is a visible sign that the church really does care about the needy wherever they live in the world. Projects in poorer countries run by Christian Aid and other charities are a practical expression of our faith. I know of a number of people who have gone to work in such countries as part of their Christian commitment.

It isn't always very easy to assist those in the greatest need, sometimes it can be quite difficult. In some places there are tremendous difficulties due to violence and an inadequate system of government. Sometimes the authorities expel aid workers from areas of unrest. Sometimes there are problems with transport due to the lack of available vehicles and in some areas the roads are falling to bits and are barely useable. There are so many difficulties that it would be very easy to give up. Sometimes we may give into the feeling that things will never get any better. It isn't always easy to help those who are in need, it requires persistence.

Helping the neediest, the hungriest inevitably involves money, usually large sums of money. The scale of the need is enormous and the sums involved are huge. Last year Christian Aid alone spent over £100 million, but that is only a small fraction of what is needed. There are many other charities that are also raising money and virtually all the governments of developed countries make grants to those countries where the needs are greatest. But there is still so much more that is required. Helping those in need is a costly business. It's very easy to say that something should be done about it, but the money has to come from somewhere.

Christian Aid is the church in action. Their motto used to be "The churches in action with the world's poor". It is often said that the churches spend a lot of time talking, but much less on acting. We can all share this tendency to inaction, this inertia. It can be difficult to summon up enthusiasm, especially about places that seem so far away. But we are all involved because we're all part of one world, we're all part of the one human family.

Christian Aid Week is one of the ways in which we can be involved, one of the ways in which we can do something to help those in the greatest need.

Best wishes,

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