

AFRIKA

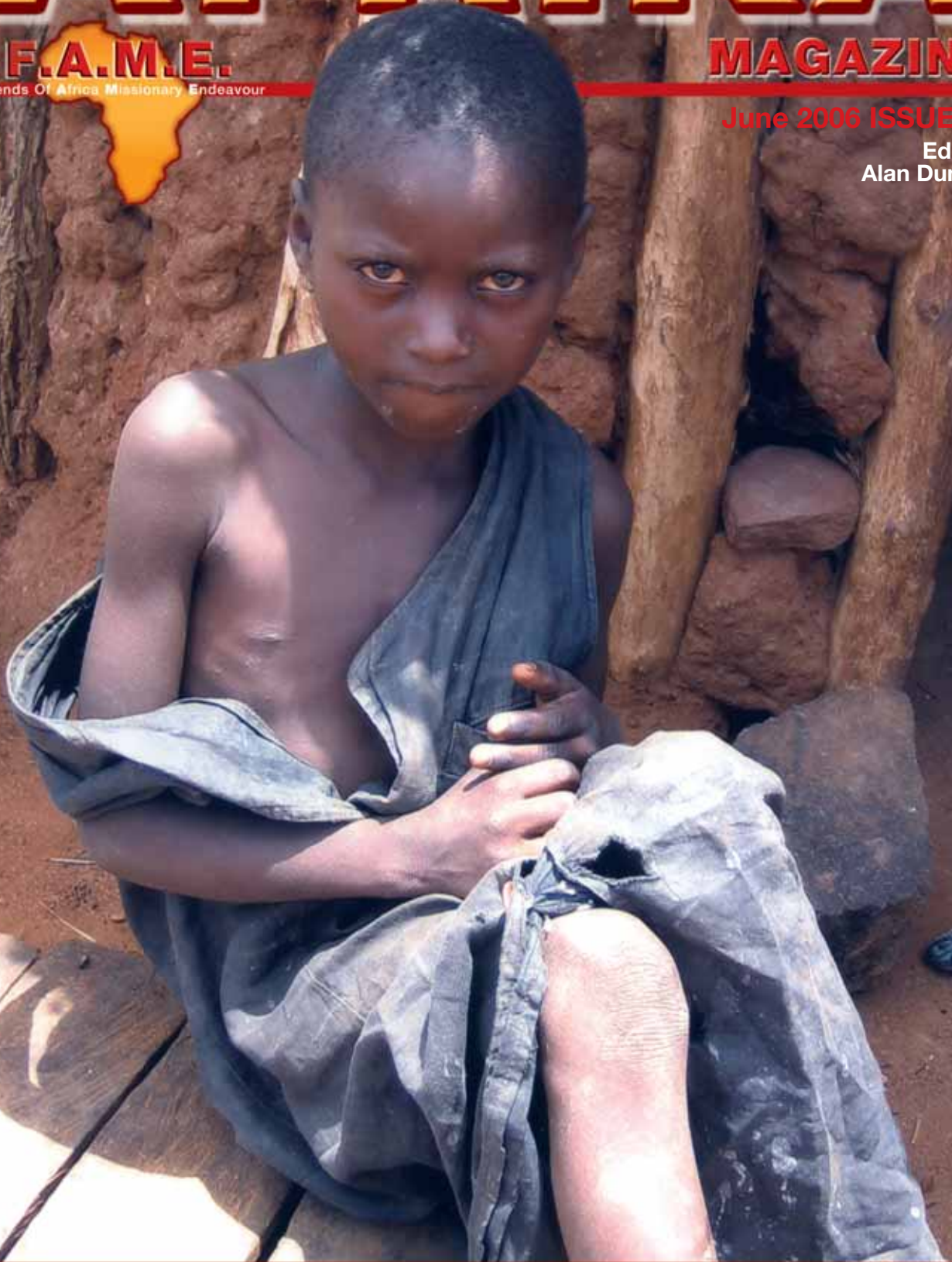
F.A.M.E.

Friends Of Africa Missionary Endeavour

MAGAZINE

June 2006 ISSUE 18

Editor:
Alan Dunlop



■ *Famine in Kenya* ■ *Woman of Africa*
■ *Special Wedding Ceremony* ■ *Orphans Outing*

FAMINE

FAMINE IN KENYA



The handicapped suffer most of all in times of famine

FAMINE

The word itself is feared. The letters printed upon the page have an appearance all of their own, distinctive ominous. To those of us who love the Lord the word calls to mind visions of Bible times. We recall how the patriarchs in their turn suffered the want of bread.

None of us can know of course the whys and wherefores of these things. The God who created us

also created the planet upon which we live. He Himself has given each their portion. It is true that some portions are more fruitful than others, (depending of course on how we value true wealth) but the fact remains that in His providence God has set our boundaries. He has given the Continents. He has made the seas, ordered the climates, and, perhaps most significantly of all He has **“made of one Blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth”** Act 17:26

Responsibility

Making excuses or proportioning blame for Kenya's present famine crises cannot negate our obligation as christians. Nor will statistics suffice to stir our hearts and evoke response. Statistics are cold things. There is nothing personal in them to evoke sympathy. Perhaps a few real life incidents will bring the blight and curse of famine home to our hearts. Perhaps then we can evaluate it in terms of human suffering.

Old woman collapses

On Sunday morning 5th March 2006 Irene and myself were just about to leave for church service when my mobile rang. It was the local Pastor telling me of an old woman who had collapsed in the village and was in a serious condition. We made our way to the patient and ascertained that she was not dehydrated and found that her pulse was strong and regular.



Orphans such as this little girl are being brought to us in the early stages of malnutrition

FAMINE IN KENYA

I ordered some tea and food and said we would call coming from Service.

Our basic aid did the trick and on our return she was much better. She had only been hungry and exhausted. **Only hungry and exhausted**, as if that were not enough. In the year of our Lord 2006, and when the capital of Kenya boasts skyscrapers, tens of thousands are still hungry and exhausted, and far too many have died already.

First Orphans

The first orphans in our new centre have been rescued from famine conditions. Five children were discovered by my manager and we went to see what we could do.

The children were living alone, with only a relative nearby. No parents, no food, only that supplied the previous week by my manager. A girl child of 9 years had been preparing the grains for porridge using two stones to grind with. She was dressed in a torn dress that exposed her back to the hot sun. The water she was using was muddy and came from a filthy plastic container.

One by one the mud and wattle houses that comprised the family holding were collapsing with decay. We asked the children in the presence of the relative if they would like to come with us. The relative was relieved that her burden was lifted while the children happily put together their few remaining rags and got into our truck.

That the centre was not yet quite ready was of small significance. The children needed help and we provided it. The finer points can wait till later. At the time of going to press we have brought in 100 children rescued from similar circumstances.

Hungry Grandmothers

Old women, well advanced in years are to be seen daily leaving our compound with full kiondo's (baskets). Faces gaunt and weatherlined, backs bent crooked with a lifetime of hard toil, carrying a little food to their grandchildren, orphans, for whom, now in the eventide of life, they are become



An orphan girl (9 years old) prepares food for her siblings. We have brought the whole family to our new centre.

sole custodians and providers. The plague of Aids has swept many into eternity and this has brought the sins of the fathers to be visited heavily upon the children. The fact of famine is with us, it is at our door already, it surrounds us like an evil murrain. Famine, disease, death, the cycle is inexorable and so final, so tragically final.

Food for work

As often as we can we give food for work. This entails men and women clearing bush, grass cutting, school ground cleaning etc. Just whatever work may be helpful to us while at the same time providing them with an opportunity to do

something for themselves while maintaining the dignity they deserve. Very many, men and women, come for these details. The work is from 9 o'clock am, till 1.00 pm and for this I give a total of five kilos of grains, four of maize and one of beans. It is demonstrably not sufficient, but it provides some small sustenance where otherwise they would have nothing and they are very grateful for it.

Pray for us, it is a hard time. We have our limits of assistance, and when those limits are reached someone must be turned away. It is a trying experience, an emotional challenge. Pray for us.

EASTER OUTING FOR KISUMU ORPHANS

EASTER OUTING FOR KISUMU ORPHANS

The Steensons visit this year was marked by a very special occasion when all our children from western Kenya made the 600 kilometre journey to spend some time with us. We were able to hire a school bus and this made it possible for the children to enjoy what was for them the treat of a lifetime.

Accommodation was readily available in our new centre and water was already harvested in the last rains. Even though the rains failed we were able to harvest, a full tank (almost half a million litres). Such is the success of our water catchment system.

The children had the joy of experiencing the wide open spaces after the relatively small confines of their own centre, and the days were spent playing games and making new friends among the locals.

Mervyn and Valerie spoke to the children daily and it was a very happy milestone for us when all the work was brought together for these few days.



The flannelgraph proved to be a big attraction.

The children continue to progress and we are very pleased with how things are going. If you sponsor one of these children your labour of love is not in vain.

Also our Easter Evangelism Programme was a big success with Mervyn & Valerie visiting schools in our area and beyond. We are indebted to them for this labour of love they do amongst the children.



In Kenya TB is still a killer

The school facilities may be primitive but the gospel is received with rapt attention.



WOMAN OF AFRICA

She has a hard life; still she rises
writes Carole Mandi

As a young girl growing up, I believed there was something wrong with me because I couldn't balance a pot of water on my head whenever I went upcountry during the school holidays. The village girls would laugh at me and say things like, "I bet you can't cook *ugali* either." How right they were. With hindsight, I suppose they had to find ways to poke fun at me because I was the only one among them who could speak English. And anyone who spoke English held the enviable place of distinction in the rural areas.

All the villagers had admiration for one of their own who had learnt the ways and language of the white man. All, that is, except the old women. They had lived long enough to earn the wisdom that came with their grey hair and refused to be fooled by the trappings of modernity. As the years passed and I grew older, they shook their heads at my brightly painted lips, relaxed hair and Western way of dressing, and often dropped proverbs like "*Mwenda tezi na omo, marejeo ni ngomani.*" Loosely



translated, this means East or West, home is always best. It took me a while to figure it out but when I did, I discovered something about the soul of the African woman and, by extension, myself, I discovered her enduring spirit.

So much so that I now have a

picture of an African woman on the windowsill in my office. For me, it is a picture that brings meaning and dignity to what has been our collective troubled experience. It is a black and white portrait of a rural African woman in her mid-thirties who is, I assume, trudging to or from the market. She is carrying a load of firewood on her back while her child is strapped to her front with a leso. Her back is bent from the heavy load, her forehead creased from a difficult life and her eyes downcast in such deep thought that it is possible she didn't notice the photographer snapping away. I wonder, could she be thinking of what to cook that evening or whether or not she will fetch a fair price for her goods at the market?

In contrast, her child, who looks about two years old, looks with wonderment into the camera lens, oblivious of the fact that he is adding to his mother's physical discomfort. Long after her has learnt to walk and begun to dream of the big cities of the world, he may still not realise

WOMAN OF AFRICA

just how difficult it was for her to trudge that dusty road home daily. There is nothing uncommon about my picture of the African woman for one just has to drive 10 minutes from the city centre to see a woman carrying everything from firewood and water to a bulging *kiondo* on her back, sometimes on her head. In most instances, she carries her child or he walks beside her if he can. This is a picture that tells the story of the woman of Africa.

Any foreigner will tell you that the women of Africa work doubly hard. In many communities, they actually take part in back-breaking activities like building homes, collecting firewood and water, tilling the *shamba* and rearing the children. And when they are employed outside their homes, in most instances they are paid less than their male counterparts for their labour. In addition, a significant portion of the work they undertake for the community is undervalued and more often than not, uncompensated. The women of Africa are usually the first to rise and the last to sleep. They rarely leave their children behind, carrying them to the market, the *shamba*, almost everywhere. In most of Africa, it is the women who carry the community on their backs through their small income generating projects.

Even a visitor from Mars will tell you that the African woman's lot is a difficult one, as she is also the one who bears the brunt of most of the ills afflicting the continent. She has been described as the face of HIV/Aids, poverty and civil war. It is her haggard, hungry face we continue to see on the news bulletins of the world as she breastfeeds her child even though

she has not had a meal in days. It is the same weeping face as she passes her hand over her dead child's face to close his eyes after he has breathed his last due to malaria, diarrhoea and the other diseases that steal our children before the age of five.

Unfortunately, many of us, the daughters who drive on the tarmacked highways and ride up steel elevators to our offices filled with polished wood and leather furniture and the latest technological gizmos, sometimes forget that we wouldn't have got where we are today without her resilience and hard work.

People ask me if I'm a feminist when I take this tone. I can tell you what I am: an African woman in form and spirit. And if we speak of women's liberation, it is because the baton has been passed on to us. We must do our part and take the debate from the *shamba* and homestead to boardroom and Parliament. We must articulate her groanings into persuasive speech that says to the world that if the woman of Africa is shackled in chains of inferiority, Africa is still not free.

It is because of her struggles that we are able to successfully carry our own loads in the corporate world. She keeps the faith that we, the daughters of today, will take the struggle for justice and equality further than she could ever dream of. She is proof that what didn't kill her through generations of slavery, colonialism and dehumanising cultural practices only made her stronger.

In the words of African – American poet and writer, Maya Angelou's poem: "*Still I rise*"

**You may write me down in history
with your bitter, twisted lies,
you may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I'll rise.
Out of the huts of history's
shame - I rise
Up from a past that's rooted in
pain - I rise
I'm black ocean, leaping and
wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in
the tide,
Leaving behind nights of terror
and fear - I rise
Into a daybreak that's
wondrously clear - I rise
Bringing the gifts that my
ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of
the slave,
I rise I rise I rise**

But back to that picture on my window ledge. Far from being a pitiable picture, she reminds me of what is possible. And like another African woman in Mozambique who gave birth in a tree several years ago, she tells me that in the most difficult of circumstances, in places ravaged by death, disease, war and calamity, it is still she who gives birth to the hope for the continent.

Editors note: Carole Mandi is an editor of a woman's magazine. This article appeared in the Daily Nation, Kenya's National newspaper on 8th March 2006. I have reprinted it in its entirety as a tribute to the African women.

SPECIAL WEDDING CEREMONY

SOLIDARITY JOIN US FOR SPECIAL WEDDING CEREMONY



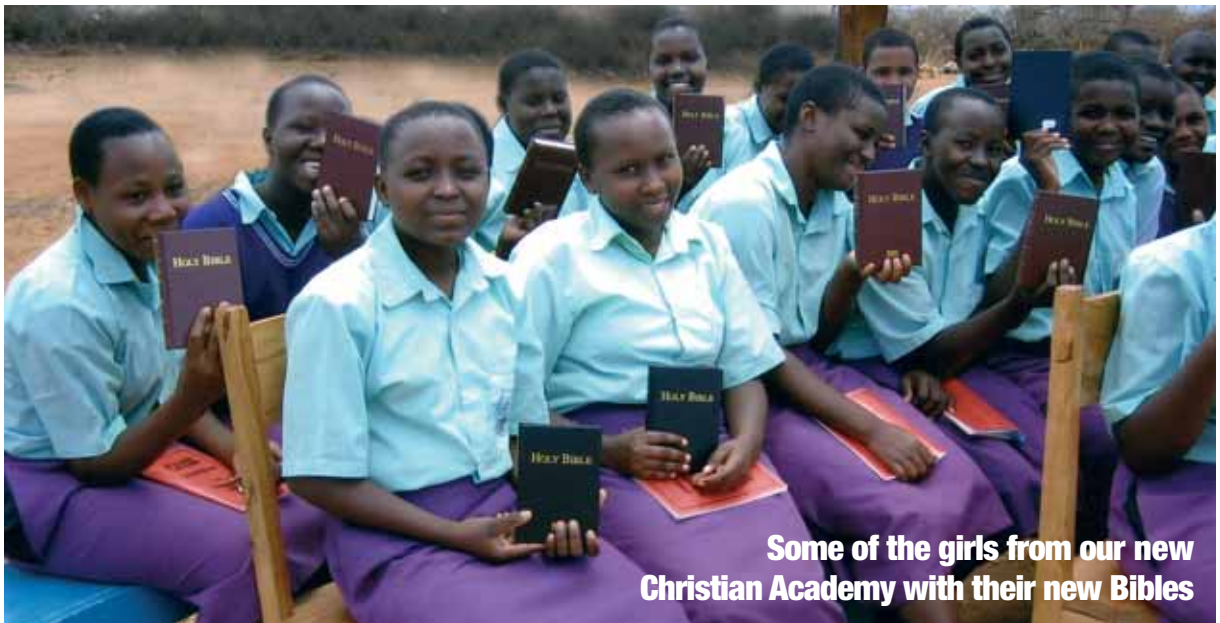
Mary and Jackson on their wedding day.

In a world where hardship and hunger rule with a cruel and relentless hand, a time of joy and happiness is to be savoured to the full.

Such was Saturday 9th April when Mary Gathoni, formerly from Solidarity Child Rescue Centre married a young Bible School Graduate in Kithimulla Baptist Church. Mary came to work with FAME Curran Clinic in 1998. As our readers know we have sponsored Solidarity for food since 1996.

The Directors of Solidarity, as well as all the children who knew Mary, travelled to join us on the happy occasion. Solidarity is expanding also and it was very nice to have them remember Mary.

The reception was held in our New Centre Dining Hall and considering the famine situation I left it open for all to come. The congregation of around 200 followed us from the church. It was a happy conclusion as far as our care of Mary has been concerned. It is always a cause of satisfaction when we see the young well settled in a happy marital arrangement. The young man is a local and well respected. We wish them every Blessing in their new life together.



Some of the girls from our new Christian Academy with their new Bibles

CONTACTS

EVENTS

F.A.M.E. BOARD MEMBERS CONTACT LIST

CHAIRMAN

Alan Dunlop (Field Address)
PO Box 609, Mwingi 90 400, Kenya,
East Africa
Mobile: 00254 733 969646
Email: Alan.Dunlop@fame.uk.net

(F.A.M.E. Headquarters address)

9 Limetrees, Lisburn Road,
Ballynahinch, BT24 8NB
T/F Fame: 028 9756 0004
T: 028 9756 0769
Email: info@fame.uk.net

ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN

Deputation meetings
David Garrett
5 Burandell Manor, Derriagh Road
Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT28 3AX
T: 028 9267 1956
Email: David.Garrett@fame.uk.net

TREASURER

Alan Cunningham
9 Thornhill Avenue, Lisburn,
Co. Antrim, BT28 3EE
T: 028 9260 5878, F: 028 9262 8120
Email: Alan.Cunningham@fame.uk.net

SECRETARY

Ken Sayers
The Glebe, 51 Ballyreagh Road,
Newtownards, Co. Down, BT23 8RP
T: 028 9181 3654
Email: Ken.Sayers@fame.uk.net

CORRESPONDENCE ADMINISTRATOR

Trevor Cunningham
Bracken Lodge, Brackenagh West Road
Ballykeel, Ballymartin,
Co. Down, BT34 4PW
T: 028 4176 5730
Email: Trevor.Cunningham@fame.uk.net

CHILD SPONSORSHIP

Alexander Boyd
12 Clanwilliam Close, Riverside Road,
Ballynahinch, BT24 8FB
T: 028 9756 4818
Email: Sandy.Boyd@fame.uk.net

GIFT AID

Francis Lecky
8 Ballymagin Road, Magheralin,
Craigavon, BT67 0RU
T: 028 9261 1574
Email: Francis.Lecky@fame.uk.net

F.A.M.E. Annual Dinner

Saturday 21st October 2006

in The Paisley Jubilee Complex
Ardenlee Avenue, Belfast

Time: 6.30 for 7pm

Special Singer: Amy Roberts



Sportscrest Bangor provided the nice pullovers. A little food, a wash and these hungry and fatherless children were transformed. Your support makes this possible.

If we cannot help the child we can help the parent care for it.

WEBSITE

Why not visit us here and be brought up to date with our locations and information:

www.fame.uk.net