

A Short History of the Development of Relationships - Tanzania / Scotland - and also St John's and St John's School and Legho

Tracy Burgess, the Co-ordinator of the new Legho Renewal Group, writes:

'Over 30 years ago a young African woman studying in Edinburgh and attending church at St. John's, Portobello, began sharing her concerns for her family during one of the worst famines in Africa's history. The village she came from was Legho in Tanzania....

And so...in 1984 St. John's entered into a relationship with a small village in Tanzania called Legho – the village was an outstation of Kilema parish in the diocese of Moshi.

Mgr Rae was only a couple of years into what would be three and a half decades as St John's parish priest. As he memorably said at the launching of this relationship:

'When we voted as a parish to embark on the adventurous journey of friendship with the Legho Village, we were responding promptly to a providential call to the Holy Spirit, the eternal bond of love. Here we have an opportunity to promote understanding between ourselves and the people of the village of Legho on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania. In so doing we can learn from each other's gifts of faith and Christian life in very different circumstances. Let us grasp this opportunity and let this be like a grain of mustard seed, that will grow and mature into a true and loving concern for each of our communities.'

Over the years, the main focus of the contact with the Legho community has been developing relationships rather than giving aid. From the beginning it has been seen as an opportunity for a mutual sharing of experience, ideas, faith and culture.

Establishing and developing a relationship at such a distance inevitably meant that the process has been a gradual one. The first group that visited from St John's spent time in the village staying with different families in a number of the small communities. Part of the purpose was to establish links with the young people. There was a program of joint activity, discussions, social and

sporting events. Football was found to be an international way of communication. Since then many different groups of – of all ages – have visited.

In 2004, Mgr Paul Uria duly reflected: *' The experience was a significant one for the young adults and everyone who went out there. Apart from the obvious learning opportunities of experiencing the realities of underdevelopment first hand the main impact was in appreciating the values that informed the lives of everyone and the strong sense of living community.'*

As our relationship with Legho has grown, so has the diversity of that relationship developed – not least with the twinning of additional primary school and secondary schools developing links with each other.

Also arising from these interlinked experiences has been the development of Twende Pamoja Trust. The trust supports the relationship between groups and communities in Scotland and Tanzania and promote development in education.

Last month Legho became a full parish in its own right.

The question has been asked how do we go forward as a parish to refresh and strengthen our special relationship with Legho parish?

This question is currently being asked by Legho parish, who are just as eager to grow this bond between us.

If you are willing to pray/contemplate/mull over this question, we would be very grateful and please forward any suggestions on to Father Jock /Tracy Burgess/ the box at the back of the church.

Please also give names and contact details if this is something you would consider being part of an initiative - The Legho renewal group.'

Twende Pamoja (Let us walk together)