

CHAP-AID Newsletter No 6
March 2011

Dear Members,

In the last few weeks I have been turning my thoughts to our next Newsletter. We are about to finalise accounts for the year 2010; we are well into 2011, with plans for raising funds for the many charities we now support via Chap-Aid; and our Annual General Meeting will shortly be upon us. It is time to update you all.

But suddenly, all this necessary planning and activity that any Charity must do has been sidelined by the terrible and extra-ordinary news coming from Japan. Like me, you will have been horrified and mesmerised by the scenes of devastation and destruction recorded live by amateur digital photographers as the earthquake and the following tsunami of unbelievable proportions swept thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, away in a few minutes of blind natural fury.

I write as that country continues to hold its breath as scientists and engineers fight to contain the deadly radioactive core of several of its nuclear plants. If that is not successful, what horrors yet await the nation?

As international bodies once again are called upon to wage war against the effects of a gigantic tragedy, appeals are being made for help, financial, material and personnel. How should we respond?

We (Chap-Aid Council) have discussed this and are responding from our emergency funds by sending a donation to Shelterbox sufficient for one emergency Box. (750€).

This seems a tiny amount against what will be the final cost of the disaster, which will be measured in billions of dollars. But as we, and others around the globe, provide many small amounts a great deal will be achieved. If you as an individual, or if your local congregation or sector, wishes to supplement this donation, funds should be collected and sent in the normal way to our Treasurer, Brian Hogarth. Any cheques should be made out to Chap-Aid and NOT to the Chaplaincy of Aquitaine as the Chaplaincy is not allowed, by French law, to give funds to charities. For further details of giving please contact your local Chap-Aid representative or visit our website www.chap-aid.com.

Our emergency fund will need to be replenished in due course, but the immediate need is to provide emergency shelter, rations, etc., to the displaced and homeless tens of thousands of Japanese people. We, here in the West, are under our own financial difficulties at the moment, so I come to you with a measure of hesitation. But the vastness of the need in Japan, in the minds of your Council, emboldens us to do something even while we tighten our belts

through our own economic storm. May God give us all that generosity of spirit which genuinely reflects the gospel of love we have to proclaim. Thank you for your understanding.

But, to other matters:

Firstly, as we look back on 2010, we see a level of giving across the Chaplaincy that causes us great encouragement. Over 20,000 euros has been raised for Emmaüs and the other local sector charities that we have been supporting. May I thank you all on behalf of the Council for such a level of response.

Secondly, as we go further into 2011, we hope to continue to support our Emmaüs centres across the Chaplaincy, as we did in 2010. The needs of the homeless in France continue to grow, alas. This is a real way of showing both our commitment to those in need in our locality and our commitment to the country in which we have settled. Most sectors are continuing to support other charities as well. An encouraging dimension is that in a number of sectors now there is a growing personal involvement in those charities as people visit and work with local centres - Emmaüs, Resto-de-Coeur, Foyer Fraternel, etc. Well done to those who are getting involved in those practical ways.

Thirdly, we are making plans for the AGM and in particular for the composition of the new Council for 2011. This year is likely to see a considerable continuity of Council members, but that will certainly change in 2012. It looks as though the names of the current local reps are all being reconfirmed in place following local AGMs.

The positions of Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will be voted on at the AGM. At the moment the three existing post holders have indicated their willingness to serve for another year. They are myself [Roger Cheale], Revd Gillian Strachan, and Brian Hogarth, respectively. Any other names, with proposers and seconders should be sent to me at cheale@wanadoo.fr as soon as possible and at least one week before the AGM on Saturday 9th April. You will receive details of the AGM by separate circulation from Amy, our Chaplaincy Administrator.

Looking further ahead to 2012, three members of the Council will have completed their maximum 4-year term of office. They are Lindsay Mégraud, Bordeaux rep., Philip Pearce, Chancelade-and-Sorges rep., and myself as Vice President and Chairman of Council. We will therefore be looking for replacements during 2011. In particular we need to replace Lindsay who has done sterling work as our bilingual secretary in communicating with our French charities and also French bureaucracies. Please give thought and prayer to who might take on these roles. You, perhaps??

I finish with some challenging 'statistics' produced by Steve Pierce of 'Stewardship' (www.stewardship.org.uk)

- *If we have anything other than a dirt floor in our home, we are in the top 50% of wealthy people in the world*
- *If we have a roof, doors and windows in our home, we are in the top 20%*
- *If we have refrigeration, we are in the top 5%*
- *If we have a car, microwave and a door on our toilet we are in the top 1%*

We are in so many ways a deeply privileged people living in France, in Western Europe, in 2011. May we continue to use those privileges responsibly and generously.

Thank you again for your consistent support of Chap-Aid and the charitable work of the Chaplaincy throughout 2010.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the AGM in April.

Yours on behalf of all of us on Chap-Aid Council.

Roger Cheale

Chairman of Council