

Don't miss reading...

<i>Focus Conflict: 3.5 Million People Displaced in Pakistan</i>	1
Eradicating Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia	2
Make a Lasting Difference...	2
2009 Christmas Bowl	3
<i>Focus Advocacy Initiative: Stand Up</i>	3
New Act for Peace Website Coming Soon!	3
Rev. Tibi's Australian Tour	4
Welcome New Act for Peace Partners	4
Hike4hunger for Zimbabwe	4



Focus Conflict: 3.5 Million People Displaced in Pakistan

By: *Edwyn Shiell, Marketing & Communication Coordinator*

Act for Peace's project partners are continuing to respond to the humanitarian crisis in Pakistan where up to 3.5 million people have been uprooted by the conflict between the government and Taliban militants. So far, we have been able to support life saving work including the provision of food packages, continued medical service through mobile health units in camps, distribution of essential non-food items such as shelter, clothing and beds and counseling for traumatised and emotionally disturbed families.

The World Health Organisation recently reported that within a few weeks, its medicinal supplies will be depleted. With the onset of the monsoon, health issues including malaria and cholera will increase. Without proper medical attention and sufficient supplies, many internally displaced people could suffer severe health problems or even face death.

A survivor, Nazia Bibi, is now receiving assistance from Act for Peace's project partners in a camp. Her husband was killed in front of her by shelling. She was forced to flee, leaving her husband's body and two eldest children behind to save the lives of her two youngest children. She said, "All we

Without proper medical attention and sufficient supplies, many internally displaced people could suffer severe health problems or even face death.

want is peace, restoration of stability in our land and all the terrorists, especially the Taliban, to be removed so once more we can lead our lives with dignity in our homeland."

Two and a half months of the Pakistan military's offensive with the Taliban militants has left a trail of heavy

infrastructure damage, human losses and a severe economic crisis in the war affected region. Act for Peace's project partners are implementing a comprehensive initiative focusing on education, food security, health and protection for the displaced people. We need your help to reach as many people as possible.

A gift of:

- \$22** can provide a fold out bed
- \$60** can provide 15 mosquito nets
- \$188** can provide 3 months of nutritious food for a displaced family during this crisis
- \$236** can provide weatherproof, temporary shelter for families arriving in internal displacement camps

You can make a difference! Please give to this emergency online at www.actforpeace.org.au or free call Edwyn or Jordan on **1800 025 101**.

Eradicating Female Genital Mutilation in Ethiopia

By: Jordan Shank, Marketing & Communication Director

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is a cultural ritual that has been practised on young girls in Africa for thousands of years. FGM includes all procedures that involve the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons.¹ This harmful traditional practice is a violation of women and girls' human rights and represents a deep-rooted inequality between sexes in some cultures.

The eradication of FGM will help in achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 3, 4 and 5: Promoting Gender Equality, Reducing Child Mortality and Improving Maternal Health. After a girl is cut, she will often face severe childbirth complications, resulting in tearing, excessive bleeding, reproductive damage or even the death of both mother and infant.

Shockingly, in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, FGM is still performed regularly to this day. It is one of the



key harmful traditional practices that Act for Peace's Ethiopian project partner, the Development and Inter-church Aid Commission (DICAC), is working to abolish.

Emebet Woldeyes, DICAC Gender & Development Division Head, says, "The majority of the community

surveyed believe that if a girl is not cut, she will not be sexually attractive to be acceptable for marriage or be able to bear children. FGM can cause permanent physical and psychological damage. Through developing Women's Associations, educating the community and training the clergy to speak out against FGM to their congregations, DICAC is making great strides to protect young girls from this traumatising mutilation."

Habash Tefarah, Chairperson of a Women's Association in Amhara, says, "DICAC helped start our Women's Association and taught us about FGM, so that we can share what we have learned with the rest of our community. We need to set an example for the next generation."

Please give to Act for Peace to help ensure that young girls will not have to suffer through the maiming ritual of female genital mutilation and can look towards a more healthy and hopeful future.

¹ World Health Organization

Make a Lasting Difference... Please include the Christmas Bowl in your Will.

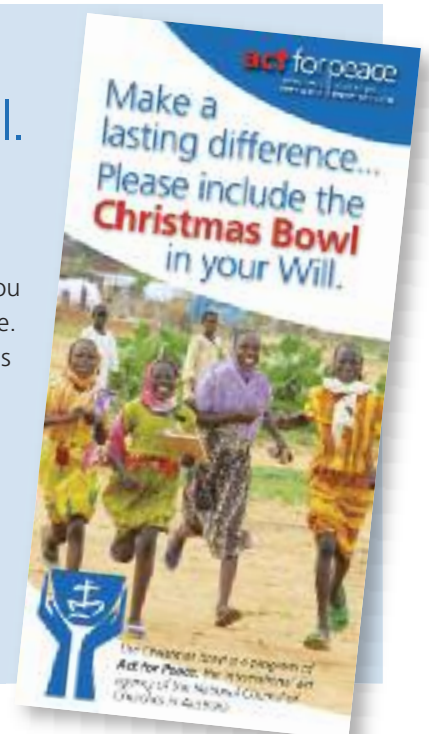
The Christmas Bowl has long been a symbol in Australia of offering, sharing and partnership. For more than 60 years, it has empowered war-torn communities to protect refugees, prevent further conflict and reduce extreme poverty. With the help of the Christmas Bowl, our project partners are currently assisting more than 1 million people



displaced by the most brutal conflicts. Please consider leaving a gift in your Will to the Christmas Bowl to ensure this great work continues for many years into the future.

For the supporters who haven't made a commitment of leaving a gift in your Will, you will find enclosed a brochure outlining how you can make a real and lasting difference. If you plan on including the Christmas Bowl in your Will, please tick the box on the gift form enclosed and return it back to us. If you need further information or assistance, please ring Howard or Jordan on **free call 1800 025 101**.

Thank you for your generous and ongoing support over the years!



The 2009 Christmas Bowl!

The 2009 Christmas Bowl is only a few months away and we hope that you will get involved! This Christmas, we will continue to work for positive change in communities around the world to best serve people living in poverty and conflict.

Across Australia, we will trial in-church receipting to ensure that you receive your tax-deductible gift receipt as soon as possible. Church treasurers will be issued a receipt book accompanying this year's Christmas Bowl kit to issue receipts directly to parishioners when they give through their church.

Act for peace this Christmas and give to the Christmas Bowl! Your vital support will allow our project partners to continue their dedicated, transformational work.

\$1000 Can provide one hand dug water well pump in **Ethiopia** which will benefit the entire community.



\$300 can provide a **Burmese** refugee living in a camp on the Thai-Burma Border with a one year's supply of nutritious food.



\$200 can help rebuild vital health infrastructure in war-torn **Gaza**.



\$140 can improve primary education in the **Solomon Islands**.



\$80 can allow a **Sri Lankan** female refugee to undertake a women's empowerment course.



\$20 Can provide clothing, a blanket, mosquito netting, soap and dishes for a displaced family in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.



These are just some of the ways your gift can make a difference!

Focus Advocacy Initiative:
STAND UP Against Poverty
at Your Church!



This initiative last year saw 116 million people around the world, including 200,000 Australians, STAND UP in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to halve extreme poverty by 2015. Of these 200,000, about 20,000 people participated in churches in Australia.

On **Sunday, 18 October 2009**, we can do much better than this! This year, Act for Peace is urging over 100,000 Australian churchgoers to STAND UP for the MDGs and speak the STAND UP Pledge, calling on our government to take action on their promises to help end poverty, inequality and hunger. There has been impressive progress towards achieving the MDGs; however the deepening financial and food crises are starting to undo much of this good work. For a copy of the Pledge and for more information on how you can act for peace through STAND UP, visit: www.ncca.org.au/actforpeace/advocacy/make_poverty_history

A New Act for Peace Website: Coming in Early September

A new Act for Peace website is currently being developed and will be a further step in communicating the ground breaking work of our project partners in conflict-affected regions around the world. The new website will be a great way to access thorough and up-to-date information about our project partners work, the latest Christmas Bowl resources, information on conflicts and refugee related issues as they occur and will be an educational tool for supporters.

Visit us at www.actforpeace.org.au in early September for an online experience which will help connect Australian churches and individuals with the ecumenical aid work of Act for Peace.

The Reverend Peter Tibi's Australian Tour: A Call to Action for Congregations

By: Stan Oxworth, Promotions Officer
& Edwyn Shiell, Marketing & Communication Coordinator

The Reverend Peter Tibi's visit to Australia was a whirlwind tour. A series of speaking engagements in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne informed thousands of Australians about the plight of Sudan's long suffering people, and informed the Sudanese Diaspora of the fragile situation in their home country. A significant focus of the trip was to raise awareness of the International Criminal Court's decision to issue an arrest warrant for President Omar al-Bashir, the subsequent expulsion of agencies providing aid to 2.7 million

displaced people, the upcoming 2010 Sudan elections and how we as Australians engage with these issues.

During his brief time in Sydney and Melbourne, Peter emphasised the need to bury the differences of race and tribe and to work toward a unified and peaceful Sudan. Congregations connected strongly with Peter's call to action and he gave supporters of the Christmas Bowl a strong sense of the unique and vital peace-building work that is being done because of their gifts.

"We bring people together where there is conflict between tribes and groups. Village by village, tribe by tribe, clan by clan, we facilitate these



peace conferences, offering recommendations with the view of creating a written peace agreement."

ABC Radio's John Cleary said to Peter, "I'm immensely impressed and humbled by the agenda you have before you and the grace with which you speak about it."

Peter's visit emphasised the need to encourage more congregations to support the Christmas Bowl appeal and Act for Peace. As Peter said, "God has given us a mandate to reconcile our people."

Welcome New Act for Peace Partners!

Thank you to the supporters who responded to last Newsletter's invitation to become Act for Peace Partners with a regular giving commitment. Many existing Partners also increased the amount of their gifts.

Thank you all very much. Your responses show how much you care for people living in regions affected by conflict and extreme poverty. Our project partners are greatly encouraged by your support. For example, we emailed the kind feedback from Act for Peace Partners, John and Peter, to Dr. Bernard Sabella, Executive Secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees.

Dr. Sabella responded: "We are indeed overwhelmed by the warmth and generosity of our Australian friends. I am sure that I speak on behalf of our people in Gaza when I send a sincere message of thanks and appreciation to John and Peter for their contributions. With the help of Act for Peace – NCCA, we are able to stand by those who suffer through difficult conditions. So sincere thanks to all the good people down under who make our work possible in the Holy Land and in the Gaza Strip."

If you are not yet an Act for Peace Partner, please consider making a regular monthly gift to ensure this vital work continues. Simply complete the form on the enclosed letter and return, **free call** Howard or Jordan on **1800 025 101** or e-mail: **hgraham@ncca.org.au**
Regular giving is a great way to act for peace!

Hike4hunger for Zimbabwe!

By: Simon Lewis, Campaign Coordinator

The right to food is fundamental. Yet, in 2009 we are again likely to witness many deaths from starvation. Our global community is in the midst of an economic crisis which preoccupies our politicians, our media and our communities. Taking a step back at this time to consider those whose lives are at risk gives those of us living with first world privileges a different and humbling perspective from which to face our own problems.



The *hike4hunger* initiative is a personal journey, hiking from Canberra beginning **9th October** to arrive at Mount Kosciusko on **16th October 2009**, UN World Food Day. The goal is to increase public awareness about our global food crisis and to raise funds to help alleviate poverty in Zimbabwe. A third of the funds raised will go towards Act for Peace project partner, Christian Care Zimbabwe (CCZ). CCZ promotes Conservation Farming to improve farmer yields, liberate farmers currently dependent on food aid and to regenerate the environment in which they live. For more information about participating in this initiative, please visit: **www.hike4hunger.org**

act for peace

Act for Peace – NCCA, Locked Bag 199, Sydney NSW 1230

Free Call: 1800 025 101 **E:** actforpeace@ncca.org.au

Fax: (02) 9262 4514

W: www.actforpeace.org.au

ABN 64 493 941 795