

Nahum 1:7 The Lord is good, A refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in him.

On the wall in my home is a photograph of a "Refuge" where I stayed for two nights, in June 2018 with David my oldest son who had kindly taken me there on a walking break while I was waiting minor surgery. The refuge is perched on a cliff edge in the Italian Dolomites, close to the border with Austria. The range is renowned for its rugged beauty and rapid treacherous changes of weather. The refuge is a welcome sight for many venturing on the often-snow-clad heights. A safe house, warm and cosy with good food where you can safely sit out the storm

None of us are strangers to trouble as it manifests in the storms of life and the verse above, something of a favourite of mine since I first memorised it as a young teenager, will recently have brought comfort to many especially as we have wrestled together with the impact of Covid 19 and other troubles.

Jesus is master of the squalls and storms which regularly strike us as we journey through life. Whatever the source of your present storm I would encourage you to turn to him, lean on him, call out to him as the disciples did in the boat out on the lake. He is the one who can bring calm into your life. "Quiet! Be still." The wind died down and it was completely calm, Mark 4:39.

Kindfund also has experienced storms lately, challenging our faith and sending us scurrying to our "Refuge" Jesus himself. He has not disappointed. Far from it he has held us in his everlasting arms, brought peace where there was worry and quiet assurance where there was fear. His invitation is still, "Come, taste and see"

Editor



Sorrow on arrival

Standing in the hot 35 C, mid-day sun a short distance from the main Great North Highway in Northern Kenya, I stared at the little white coffin that held the remains of baby Francis. It was Saturday. Was it last Sunday 6th Feb 2022 when Gillian and I had arrived at Ngaremara from cold wintry Fermanagh?

What had gone wrong? Ken and Esther (Manager) had only brought baby Francis and his young mother, another Esther just 17 yrs, to us in October. Esther weaned the baby and returned to her education. The staff had carefully looked after him and since he had fallen ill, they had been taking him to the local clinic and to the hospital 20 kms away. Staff and children at our homes had been praying for him. In Kindfund the prayer team who cover all requests from Kenya also prayed. I recalled the words of David 2 Samuel 12:22. 'Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me.'

As my eyes grew moist, they moved around the group of mourners gathered to put Francis to rest. Here is our Kenyan family given birth by Ken and me when we travelled to Kenya in February 2004. I recall the words in my heart at the time when considering the request for help from a pastor, while holiday working with another charity in Kenya. 'If you say no to this request, you are saying no to me.'

Ken had just retired from the bank and would be 60 later that year. I was almost 57. We were both fit and well, our three sons had left the nest and we had a heart to serve the Lord giving him the last, but hopefully best years of our lives. Now 18 yrs later supported by a Board of trustees and over 200 people at home and further afield, and joined five years ago by Gillian from Ballinamallard, Kindfund manages four projects involving over 200 children and almost 60 staff in remote Northern Kenya. These are the poorest pastoralist tribal people in Kenya. Today we continue to seek God's direction as he brings daily challenges and we ask, 'What will you have us to do?'

Standing to one side at the gathering is Ambrose, he visited NI as a young teenager in 2014, now Groundsman at Ngaremara. Beside him a few of our teenage boys who attend secondary school, they had just hand dug the little grave. There also is heavily pregnant Martha, and Esther, now managing the home but who came to us as teenage primary school leavers 12 years ago. How well, supported by Gillian, they had organised the funeral arrangements. Standing over a little is yet another Esther, a young mother herself who stays at night with our babies, Doreen one of our housemothers who stayed in the hospital nursing Francis 24 hrs a day during his last week: Damaris, another Housemother but previously one of our first children standing beside Rosemum, another of our first children but now a qualified Early Years teacher. Other teachers and staff are standing surrounded by our pre-primary and primary 1 and 2 children. They stand quietly.

Leading the service is William, a local pastor we have known from those early years

supported by John the Anglican rector from Isiolo, our local town 12 miles away. He had hosted all our Ngaremara children and some staff to sleep on the floor of his church 2 years ago when we had to temporarily abandon our home for 2 nights due to disturbances in the area. He is accompanied by Janet, a retired Housemother from his parish who remains a good friend.

In the centre are Esther, the mother, and her mother the grandmother of Francis comforted by those around them. As the service draws to a close the teenagers carefully fill in the grave and everyone present including the children each go forward and carefully place a stone on top of the soil building a small mound. We all stand quietly with our remembrances of Francis. I walk slowly back to the home 500 yards away thanking God for building his family, the church, at its best comforting and consoling us in our trouble.

Pamela

Kindfund

Be kind to one another Eph 4:32

In Kenya

Gillian and Pamela travelled to Kenya on 3rd February arriving at Ngaremara on Sunday 6th. What a busy and emotionally exhausting first 10 days at Ngaremara with the shock of the passing of baby Francis. They have now moved to Wamba where we have 60 children in the home, 6 Primary classes and we have had many, "squalls," involving staff, to cope with in the last 6 months.

At Wamba, Gillian has been in at the deep end dealing with a multitude of issues from discussions with World Vision about possible practical support to discussions on our children's education with the Vice Principal of our supervising Primary School. After speaking at the Sunday morning service, she managed to fit in a four-hour hike in the company of many of the children that afternoon before returning to Ngaremara on Monday for important administration and payroll issues coming to month end.

Pamela as the 'senior partner' was unusually hit by a tummy bug, so contented herself with a more sedentary roll within the grounds of the home and has remained at Wamba. Taking time to come alongside both staff and children she has been blessed as she has listened and encouraged.

Please pray that both these ladies will shine for Jesus as they lead by example. Ken who has been at home co-ordinating our response to the banking crises has now booked to travel to Kenya DV in mid-March. A management conference has been organised later in the month on the theme of 'renewing the vision'

In addition to dealing with the unexpected squalls of life the Team will be working to a specific plan to encourage the management and review all aspects of the work to ensure the projects are meeting our standards and expectations.

Please pray for them – for health and energy in temperatures above 30°C, for wisdom in their decisions, and for a close personal walk with Jesus that will overflow in all their dealings with children, staff, Government, and community. Pray also for favour with Government in a few areas where we would like to see progress.

Storm at home

Just another day, Thursday 9th December 2021. I was in Enniskillen early to visit the bank for the second time that week making lodgements and this time to also enquire why Kindfund's ebanking was not working.

Entering, I spoke to a customer service staff. She listened and as she was about to go to look up the account the manager interrupted and said, "I know why it is not working. The bank has closed the account." The account was closed on 3rd December."

Standing there speechless, the enormity of what had just been said slowly registering in my brain. "Sorry, closed the charity account, without warning, without a reason. What is going on here? This will be an absolute disaster for the charity and for the around 200 children and 60 staff it supports in Northern Kenya, the Horn of Africa." Do you understand the charity has around 200 supporters giving monthly to the account? Are you telling me that the bank is not accepting those donations and is returning them to the sending bank?

"Yes!" replied the Manager. "That is what is happening, and we cannot now access the account. It has been taken off our system. Management was taken over by a unit at HQ and they have informed us it is closed. They have said the charity has not answered requests for information." I thanked God that just 2 weeks earlier I had transferred 3 months supply of



funds to our Kenyan bank. We had a breathing space to sort this out.

What a start to the day and what a storm these last 3 months have been. Thank you to those faithful friends who reminded me that God is in control, and he is faithful.

On 15th after much lobbying and clarification that no questions from the bank remained unanswered a mistake was acknowledged, and a new account was opened a/c no. 39354359; our balances transferred. We pulled together a small team of trustees and wrote to all monthly donors on 17th December. The rest is a long story for some other time.

We thank God for bringing out the very best in many. Thank you to those supporters who immediately responded by resetting their standing orders to the new account, to all who have since responded, and to those who still have it in their hearts to do so. Thank you to those who realised our dilemma and made special donations to help see us through. We now at 21st February 22 have 2/3rds of the standing orders renewed representing around 80% of the previous level of funding.

We ask you to continue to pray that God will remind and prompt those who have not yet renewed to do so. We are convinced that God will keep his promise and work all things for good.

Your support

New Bank Account 39354359

Same Sort Code 90-48-86

If you have been supporting us with a Standing Order, if you have not already done so, you will need to set it up again to this new account number. The original account has been closed and items presented are being returned to the sender's bank. Thank you for your support.



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*Jeremiah 9:24 I am the lord who exercises kindness
Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another*