



Hope for the world

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Keeping Hope Alive

Before I found my faith again in 2002, I thought of hope as wishful thinking that good things might happen – a fingers-crossed sort of feeling. Now as a Christian, hope is now for me a feeling of great confidence that it is safe – indeed, safest – to put my trust in God, in good times and in bad.

On my travels round the world for Christian Aid, I have met people in dire poverty, a poverty often exacerbated by conflict or natural disaster – earthquake, flood or typhoon. Even in really desperate situations, I've usually seen a glimmer of hope. And I see our role as Christians as one about keeping alive and then growing that glimmer of hope – by being the certainty that life can be better.

I visited the Philippines earlier this year, on a visit to see the recovery work we've been doing in response to the massive typhoon which struck there at the end of 2013. Thousands of people died, thousands of homes were destroyed, millions of people were affected.

Now there are signs of hope. Sturdier homes are in place, children are back in school, and people are beginning to earn a living again – no longer just relying on handouts. In Tacloban, I was welcomed by hundreds of genuinely grateful people. But there is a huge amount of trauma beneath their smiles.

I heard about the body of water that swept in off the sea with the typhoon – a body of water six metres high that swept them up and inland, killing and destroying so much in its wake.

One woman told me that with nothing initially to hold on to, it was a case of swimming along in this body of water, with her four children saying, 'Mamma, Mamma, how long do we have to keep swimming?' And she said, 'Just a little bit longer, just a little bit longer'. And she said to me, 'I didn't know how I would keep going. I don't know how I kept going'. But she kept going.

And she asked me what we were doing about climate change, because she knows that climate change will make extreme weather events like Haiyan increasingly common. It gave me even more energy for our climate campaign in this crucial year.

To be the hope this community needs is to do more than give money, do more than organise short term practical support, it is to commit ourselves to change, to a world in which we support each other – in our communities, our nation and our world – to live differently, more sustainably, most justly. Please pray today for God's wisdom to discern your own part in bringing that change about.



A lawyer by training, Loretta Minghella OBE is former Chief Executive of the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. She has been Chief Executive of Christian Aid since April 2010.

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