



Church of Scotland  
Castlemilk East Parish Church

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Very Rev John D Miller D.D.

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29<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Melanie Matthews  
TB Alert

Dear Melanie,

MURAMBINDA HOSPITAL, ZIMBABWE, has provided health-care for 250,000 people in Zimbabwe's Buhera State for more than thirty years. Founded by an Order of Roman Catholic nuns, the Little Company of Mary, it at first provided only nursing care and midwifery. But quickly a wider range of health services was made available as doctors arrived, and for many years a series of young doctors from the UK have spent periods of two years working at the hospital. The health problems caused by long-term poverty and malnutrition are currently compounded by Zimbabwe's economic plight and the scourge of HIV/AIDS.

The hospital's Chief Medical Officer, South African Dr. Monica Glenshaw, surprised me by highlighting the issue of TB. She said, 'We can cure TB. And although 50% of the TB patients we see are HIV positive you can make a real difference to their lives. Uncombated, TB will accelerate the devastation of the AIDS epidemic. But you can treat it. There's no substitute for just going on, patiently, doggedly, doing it properly.'

When I visited Murambinda I attended prayers in the early morning. Each day begins with Prayer, Bible Reading and Hymns. After that the staff go to the wards and theatre, and others go out visiting in the surrounding area. Throughout the hospital I sensed the significance of faith as patients and staff together faced the problems of each day. The hospital has what is called the Dananai Project. 'Dananai' is a *Shona* word meaning 'unlimited love'. It comprises a team of locally-based carers, caring for dying HIV/AIDS sufferers in their own homes. I saw that the carers' prayers were valued as much as the soap, cooking oil and medicines they brought.

Murambinda Hospital is characterised by selfless care, strengthened by the pattern of shared daily prayers and the personal Christian faith of the staff. Wherever I go in Scotland I commend the work of Murambinda Hospital, and no hospital of my acquaintance is more worthy to be supported by the churches.

Yours sincerely,

*John Miller*

**Very Rev. Dr. John Miller**  
**Past Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland**