

## **APPENDIX 5 – LETTER TO CHURCHES TO RAISE FINANCE**

To whom it may concern

### **APPLICATION FOR FUNDING ON BEHALF OF THE PRINCES ST EASTER PLAY TRUST**

The following documentation about the project is written to answer the questions on the application form. I hope this is sufficient information for you. Please log onto [www.easterplay.org](http://www.easterplay.org) to read more about the project and the means by which we are attempting to inform and bring together people from across the city who might be interested in the idea.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT**

Play: Outline proposal

We intend to produce a play composing 5 scenes from the Easter story. The first will introduce the character and teaching of Christ, the second his influence on the people of his time, the third his arrest and betrayal, the fourth his trial and the fifth his death.

The objectives of the project

- To bring together Christians in Edinburgh from all denominations in the planning and partaking of this production.
- To provide a forum that allows the Christians of Edinburgh to demonstrate publicly their commitment to the gospel of Christ.
- To take the gospel of Christ out into the public arena in the form of a play that is free and easily accessible to any member of the public. The cross from the play will remain in the city centre for 5 days after the play.
- For the church to work with the city of Edinburgh Council and Destination Events, to ensure a public Christian witness in it's future programming of Easter festivities.

#### **Background**

Mystery plays have traditionally been performed for many centuries. In some cities they continue to be performed and are attended and enjoyed by many people. In a city such as Edinburgh with its reputation for celebration of Arts and Culture throughout the year, it was felt that Easter remained a time when there are few events. An outdoor play commemorating the Passion was thought to be a suitable and exciting project that would appeal to a broad cross section of the Christian and wider community.

Discussion between individuals resulted in the coming together of 7 people to form a steering group representing 5 churches in Edinburgh. It is the steering group which is the main decision making body for producing this event. In order to have Trust Charity status a board of Trustees has been formed. The Trust is named the Princes St Easter Play Trust and takes financial and public liability for the project. We have come together solely for the purpose of producing this play and we do not represent any other organisation.

#### **The Board of Trustees**

Chairman of the Trustees is Dr Rachel Wood (G.P). The other 4 members are Councillor Ewan Aitken (Executive member for Education), Mrs Charlotte de Klee (Producer of the Lochie head Nativity and Passion play). Charlottes father is the script writer for the Guilford Life of Christ play which attracts 15000 people annually), Councillor Michael Dixon (Accountant) and Ronald Munro (operations manager for Lloyds and TSB). The board of Trustees come from 5 different churches and represent the Catholic, Episcopalian and Church of Scotland traditions.

### **Support for the project**

We have a signed letter of support from the heads of the three main denominations in Scotland (Catholic, Church of Scotland and Episcopalian). Each of the heads of the churches has met with us personally and given permission for us to approach Christian congregations around the city to recruit actors, stewards, crew members and financial support. Rev Mitchell Bunting is giving his support to the project in his role as co-ordinator of Edinburgh churches together.

The Lord Provost Lesley Hind has sent a letter of support and encouragement indicating the benefit such a project will have on the city festivities.

Support for the creation of the infrastructure of the play comes in the form of free experience, time and talent from numerous professional individuals. Alasdair Mcgregor, retired QC is our legal liaison, Derek Munn is our graphic designer for advertising and programmes and Kamala Maniam is our main Scriptwriter.

### **Locations**

The play will start in West Princes St gardens, the first scene taking place on the grassy area to the West Side of the Ross theatre. The Ross theatre is the second scene site moving through the gardens, to the third scene at the War memorial. The fourth scene will take place on the top path running parallel to Princes St. The audience will move with the play from scene to scene and will follow the actors out of the main body of West Princes St gardens across the footbridge to the final scene underneath the castle on the grassy slopes.

The cross will remain for 5 days during the Easter week as a reminder to the city of the true meaning of Easter. A team of florists has agreed to decorate the cross with flowers to signify new life and hope. (If there is sufficient funds and security it would be wonderful to have the cross illuminated, but this may have to be development that waits for future years.)

### **Timing**

It is intended that the play should take place on Saturday March 26th 2005. This day falls between Good Friday and Easter Sunday and is a day on which churches around the city tend not to hold Easter services. It is important to the Trust that the play does not coincide with other church events.

The proposed starting time at present for the play is 2pm. There will be a maximum of 85 minutes of acting and 60 mins of walking.

### **How the project fits with the aims of the fund**

Of the five categories listed by the fund, the project most closely comes into the “local concern” category. At present Edinburgh City council is seeking to develop the celebrations over the Easter holiday period. Edinburgh is renowned for its festivities at other times of the year but celebrations at Easter are not yet fully established. The council have recruited an Events company, Destination Events, to develop the Easter weekend celebrations. This is a secular profit making organisation.

The Princes St Easter Play Trust, in producing a Christian play over this weekend, seek to ensure that the Gospel message is remembered and celebrated as part of a joint working venture with Edinburgh City Council and Destination Events.

There is a necessity to develop this joint working now and produce a meaningful, professional and well supported Christian event before a timetable of secular profit making celebrations is established.

### **What does the project cost in total?**

Our budget is just under £25 000.

This is a generous budget, allowing for contingency and several unknown costs which are not yet established such as insurance and security.

There are considerable health and safety requirements to adhere to. The biggest expenses are the setting up and use of sound equipment in 5 locations within the gardens (£5000 – 6000), the hire of the Gardens and Ross theatre (costs being negotiated) and the setting up and construction of the cross. The trust has decided to employ a professional Acting director (Suzanne Lofthus) who is working on the project for 14 months, as a steering group member, running acting workshops from November 2004 and then directing the performance. A professional actor will take the part of Jesus. The play is carried so much by this actor and his ability to communicate the message of the gospel that we consider this cost worthwhile.

In a project such as this, there are inevitably going to be set up costs. We do not envisage £25 000 being the cost for putting on “one performance in 2005” but being the cost of establishing an event in 2005 that will continue and grow in years to come, as part of the annual Easter celebrations. In future years we will not have some of the initial set up costs and it may be that in learning from professionals in the first year there may not be the cost of such salaries in future. Other costs that we will not have in future years are legal fees in drawing up a Trust Deed, design and construction of the cross, costumes and some of the props and staging.

### **How do we propose to raise the remainder of the money?**

It is essential that there is both church institutional ownership and individual Christian ownership of this project. We need the Christians in Edinburgh to take part in acting, being marshals, crewing, costume making and advertising the play. To this end we are seeking to present the idea to church congregations in all denominations in Sunday services. We are also going to student Christian groups. To date there are presentations booked in from June to October. In visiting churches we are recruiting people to the posts indicated above, to pray and to donate to the project.

We are suggesting that if 1000 Christians in Edinburgh give £20 then we will have sufficient finances to support the project, with the remaining £5 000 coming from the Church institutions. (There is no direct financial support coming from the Council or from Destination Events)

The title of the funding campaign is “oh for a thousand tongues to sing” ..... to sing the honour of God’s name in Edinburgh.

We are suggesting £20 may be broken down to the equivalent of paying £10 for yourself to come to the play and £10 for someone in the city, who is not a Christian, to come to the play. We suggest that the donar considers supporting the the spread of the gospel praying for that person from the point of donation.

**Would it not be a good idea to raise some finances by charging for tickets?**

No. We are clear as a steering group and trustee board that we want this to be as accessible as possible and not exclusive. In the ethos of the mystery plays we want the passing public to be able to wander down into the gardens to listen and watch the performance. From a practical perspective we are not set up to be able to administer the sale of tickets on a scale such as this.

**The duration of our involvement**

The Trust has been formed in anticipation of having public and financial liability for the project for several years to come. The viability of the project seems to us to depend on several factors

- The grace of God to bless this project with the resources in people time and finances
- Establishing good ecumenical working relationships with each other as Christians.
- The Christian community establishing good working relationships with the Council and Destination Events.
- The support of the public and the Christian community in attending the Event.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours Sincerely,