

GoodNEWS

LINDFIELD URC'S VILLAGE MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2004



PLUS:

- **Cambodia: a traumatised nation.**
- **Nikki Taylor's missionary tales.**
- **Village and church events for January.**





It's about hope

When we are about to enter into a new year there is a sense of looking forward. Whatever the previous year has brought we like to think that somehow this next year will be better. As the last strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' drift away we look forward with hope.

But we need to realise that hope is more than wishes, wants and dreams. The biblical view of hope is not about relying on daily horoscopes, taking a chance on the lottery, dreaming of fame and fortune. It is not about the superficial desires that advertising and media push at us – the perfect body, the ideal relationship or job. True and meaningful hope goes much deeper. It should lead us beyond dreaming and desiring to be a foundation from which our love and faith and action spring – *“the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you”*. (Colossians 1:5)

Hope should stir us in the way to act towards world events, in our relationships and the impact we have on others.

For Christians, as a modern

hymn puts it, “We have a hope that is steadfast and certain”. There is a spiritual dimension to hope. In God there is hope beyond the grave to eternal life – a perishable body is raised a spiritual body. This is certain hope and it sustains us now and in the future.

Christians are more realists than optimists – we do not have a vague hope that everything will be alright in the end or that we ignore the problems we have, but we have a firm hope that despite the real problems of the present God has not abandoned us and will rescue us from our problems in the future.

There is not a lot of hope for the world without God. There is a great deal to look forward to with God. We live in a world where many see death as the worst thing that can happen to a person. But Christian hope goes beyond death to the promised resurrection that Jesus Christ promised to all who believed in him.

I end with words of a famous hymn: “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness; no merit of my own I claim, but wholly trust in Jesus name.

On Christ, the solid rock, I stand –
all other ground is sinking sand,
all other ground is sinking sand.”

Colin Bones, minister

GoodNEWS

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Copydate for the February edition is noon, Monday 12th January 2004. All contributions should be given to the editor by this time via email, or paper copy can be placed in the "GoodNEWS" pigeon hole at the rear of the church. Please ensure that you include contact details in case of query.

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Editorial



The New Year gives us so many new opportunities, the first of which is to spend some time talking to God – 1st January 10-12noon our church is open. Why not pop in to think, pray or just reflect. See page 10 for other diary entries.

From page 4, you can read about a number of different projects that Christians are involved in, within their respective communities. Stuart Dew has kindly prepared this feature to provoke and inspire us all.

Trudy Biersteker shares news of Project Ruth (page 16) – who we will be giving our churches missionary giving to during January, and Nikki Taylor (page 17) lets us know the latest in her missionary life – a boyfriend is on the cards!

Mike Gardiner faithfully provides us with our bible study – where we continue to dig in to John's gospel at page 14.

You will note that the copydates for this year are all on 12th of the month prior to publication. Hopefully this will make life simpler!

If you can write about your experiences as a Christian, a testimony or a review of some sort, it is always appreciated. Failing that, just tell me what is going on in the village. HNY...

David Tingley, editor

Prayer Diary



SUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank God for the opportunities that the New Year may bring.• Ask God to do a new work within each of us in 2004.• Pray for those who's hearts are heavy with sadness or anxiety.
MON	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask God to give us a real sensitivity and love for each other, upholding one another through difficult times.• Pray for a lasting peace in Iraq.
TUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray for all who work in the health service locally – at the hospitals, surgeries, clinics and hospices, etc.• Remember 'Stepping Stones' – Janet Goodenough and helpers.
WED	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pray for the persecuted church around the world:• For women and children abused because of their faith.• Men often not allowed to work or enslaved to hard labour/tortured.• Families divided.
THUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uphold our Government and all political leaders.• Pray for the millions suffering from Aids, and for those who seek to bring them relief and help.
FRI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Our mission focus this month – Project Ruth.• Remember our new youth group and its leaders.• Pray for Graham Campling in his new work for the URC Southern Province.
SAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank God for the church managers, ask God to help and bless them in their care of our church premises.• Pray for all involved in preparing for and leading our worship.

More than words

The history of involvement by the Christian Church in social action is both noble and inventive. Many of the great social reformers of the 19th Century were inspired by a faith commitment – and the encouraging news is that this tradition remains very much alive today. In his working life, Stuart Dew continually hears both of local church-based initiatives which seek to enrich people's lives, as well as secular projects in which Christians are inspired by their faith to be involved. Stuart writes:

"I have chosen a small selection for 'GoodNEWS'. Some are schemes which I know of personally, others are taken from a book part-written by Steve Chalke. Through the organisation 'Faithworks' he is an advocate of Christian social action. He writes: "The task of the church is simply to reflect God and in so doing demonstrate a faith that works. I believe that it is through our actions that our faith speaks and we reflect God faithfully. Rather than primarily talking about God we, the church, should be demonstrating God". There are contact details so that you can find out more if you feel called to become involved – or to explore the possibility of starting something similar!"



A Baptist Church in Buckinghamshire links trained volunteers with people in the local community who are in need of help and friendship. Referrals come from health visitors, doctors and Social Services, or through direct contact with the church's community and family worker. The church says "The secular bodies dealing with situations of personal crisis are overburdened. There is a real need for Christians to take up the challenge and demonstrate that we care". Contact Corinne.jeffery@goldhill.org



A Catholic Church in County Durham which has links with the chaplaincy team in Low Newton women's prison was told that women were often being accosted by pimps and drug dealers immediately upon release; good intentions to change bad habits were immediately lost. The church organised a rota of car drivers and escorts, who would offer transport to the bus or railway station, to at least see women safely on to the first leg of the journey home. Contact details from Stuart Dew.



The Cornerstone Community Church in Swansea runs The Gap for disaffected young people who are struggling academically, are from troubled backgrounds, have been in trouble with the police or are victims of the many other problems that beset local youngsters. Each year, The Gap takes on fifteen of the most disruptive pupils from a local girls' school and takes them through training programmes from the Open College Network. Organisers of The Gap say "We've seen some young people become Christians, and others hopefully will in the future. But quite besides that, if their experience of Cornerstone has helped to break down their suspicion of the Church, then that is a very positive influence in their lives". www.cornerstoneproject.co.uk



The premises of Boulevard United Reformed Church in Nottingham are used for a day centre called The Bridge. The centre offers inexpensive meals, leisure activities, a credit union, benefits advice, computer facilities, volunteering opportunities and a community shop selling affordable clothing and toys. Tel. 0115 942 1680.



The Mornington Community Project works for the 'holistic well-being' of the Lower Ormeau Road area of Belfast. The toll taken in the area by years of sectarian division is high. The project runs an advice centre, a coffee shop, several youth clubs, a women's group, a mother and toddler group, a homework club, a senior citizen's group and employment training. But more important, it is a place where former enemies can be reconciled and work together for the good of the community. The project is Christian-based; the request of the organisers is: "If you are on speaking terms with God, please pray for Lower Ormeau". www.mornington-belfast.com



Continued on next page >



Worshippers at a church in Surrey were concerned that people released from a local prison were easily identifiable because their belongings were often in a plastic bag marked 'HM Prison Service'. The church undertook to provide the prison with an alternative supply of bags that could be offered to prisoners.

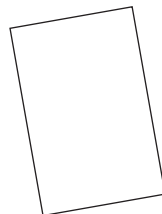


Volunteers at several prisons provide children's story books and assist parents who are in prison to read a story for their children on to cassette. The story is sent home to the child together with a personal message from mum or dad. This helps families stay in touch during a prison sentence. It also helps prisoners improve their literacy; half of all prisoners have reading skills worse, or no better, than those expected of a child of eleven, which can be a significant obstacle in obtaining employment. This is not a specifically Christian project, but provides a great opportunity to demonstrate Christian compassion. Contact Parents in Prison, PO Box 55, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 5GE.



Trust is a church and community based project that grew out of concern for women involved in prostitution in Lambeth. Trust workers go on to the streets with hot drinks and chocolate, and an invitation for the women to attend a drop-in, at which they can have a shower, cook meals, and wash their clothes. They can also access help with accommodation, drug and alcohol misuse, health and legal concerns. Trust says "We want to communicate through our actions that the women we work with are not forgotten, but are unique and valuable people who are made in the image of God".
Contact: trustdi@ukonline.co.uk

Stuart Dew is a member of Lindfield URC, and works for the Churches' Criminal Justice Forum.



- "One Hundred Proven Ways to Transform Your Community" by Steve Chalke with Anthony Watkis, Kingsway Publications 2003.

The sacrifice of giving

I walk past him every time I take the shortcut to the Health Food shop, during my lunch hour.

He is silent, and standing across the pavement. Moments later, he moves a step up the road and pauses again. He is a tall man, mid-20's I would guess and sporting a baseball cap and a personal stereo of some sort. His face is expressionless as he stands with his arms folded.

You will also see, in this London suburb side street, a severely disabled older man. He too is walking the road, but with no pauses – it is a constant struggle. This gentleman wears a high neck brace and walks by the support of two 'tripod' sticks. Every movement he makes looks like it pains every muscle in his entire body, his slow and staggered progress faintly reminiscent of a Duracell bunny running out of steam.

As the old man walks, the young one watches, standing beside him – just being there.

It is the luxury of the passer-by not to know any of the *real* story here. The young man may be his son, grandson, or perhaps he is doing community service, or simply a friend wanting to help out. However, the relationship matters

little to the situation. What I see as I walk past them from day to day, week to week, is the level of commitment from that individual to make someone else's life better.

I am humbled that this regular, simple and selfless act happens continually. This guy is the older gentleman's security: he knows there is always someone there, his presence enables him to still get out and taste fresh air – maybe it is just once a day.

This man is just one example of community action. All around us are people giving up their time, resources, energy and money for the sake of others. Some will deny themselves financially more rewarding job offers, others may make sacrifices in their personal lives to devote their time to a particular project. As someone who does a job that does not really enrich the lives of the hard-done-by (although all designers like to think they do!), I do find this a personal challenge.

"I want to serve the purpose of God in my generation" the worship song goes, and I pray that that is true for me. If I am serious, I had better keep my eyes peeled for any hints God might be dropping!

David Tingley

Making a [fashion] statement

Christian charity, Tearfund, have been encouraging young people to think more about who makes items they buy on the high street.

The ethical campaign was launched last summer, with a questionnaire on lifestyle distributed through TF magazines and at summer festivals like 'Summer Madness' and 'Soul Survivor'.

Of the 4,000 or so replies they received (from age 14 - young adults) 50% said they are most influenced by price when they are clothes shopping and 10% are most influenced by brand label. However, 62.3% said they would be more likely to buy ethical clothes if they knew where to find them, with 48% admitting they have never thought about whether the clothes makers have good working conditions or not.

Lift the Label campaign aims to inform people of good suppliers of fairtraded goods (including food), resource them for action in demanding justice for the poor overseas and give out personal bible study material to connect faith with lifestyle choices.

More details can be found at: www.tearfund.org/youth/lifftthelabel



Christian kids in bomb threat

Bombs and leaflets threatening Christian students will be killed unless they convert to Islam have been found in schools in Baghdad and Mosul, Iraq. At St Thomas' School in Mosul, a cluster of low explosive hand grenades was discovered. The school has around 500 pupils of whom approximately 450 are Christian and 50 are Muslim.

Source: Christian Herald – the UK's only inter-church weekly. Subscribe on 01903 602100

Employment law to 'protect' Christians

Faithworks (a movement to empower Christians in community roles) has welcomed controversial new employment legislation, aimed at ending religious discrimination. Several Christian organisations had expressed concern over the European Employment Directive, saying the new legislation would force Christian groups to hire those whose religion or moral values might undermine the Christian faith.

Source: Christian Herald – the UK's only inter-church weekly. Subscribe on 01903 602100

Congratulations to Betty and Roy Billins on the arrival of another grandson.

"We give thanks for answered prayer in the birth of our grandson, son of Nigel & Sheryl and brother for Jessica; Matthias Alexander. Born on 3rd December, weighing 9lb 6oz."
Betty & Roy Billins

New Address:

Mies Brock has moved to:-
9 Harvest Close, Lindfield
RH16 2LW
Tel no. 01444 482640
Please amend your Who's Who

Congratulations to Norman Burtenshaw who celebrated his 90th birthday on 12th December.

The Fellowship

We start our new year on Wednesday 28th January, when arrangements have been made to visit McBean's Orchid Nursery, Chailey. This should prove to be a very interesting afternoon. Will those members travelling by coach please be ready at the earlier time of 1.50pm.

Swinging success

Church member, Christine Giltrow, recently paid tribute to all who helped to make 'The Perdido Players Swing Night' a great success.

The event, which took place at Lindfield's King Edward Hall during November, raised £760.75 for St Catherine's Hospice.

"It was a super evening" she commented. The event was organised by Christine and the Haywards Heath Fundraising Group for St Catherine's. The night featured the talents of a number from our church family – including Leesa LeMay's tap group: The Ragtime Follies.

"Many thanks to Peter Swann and the Perdido Players, Leesa LeMay and her tap dancers and all who supported this event."

Crowded church

On Wednesday 3rd December, Lindfield URC was packed with hundreds of villagers enjoying some Christmas community spirit.

The main sanctuary had a fairtrade stall, an illusionist show, bell-ringers and sausage rolls on-demand.

Deeper inside the building, there was chill-out space provided for teenagers and for younger ones; face-painting, hair-braiding and, of course, Santa's grotto.

Outside, carollers were singing, and Mary and Joseph did shift work while many looked into the stage-lit manse garage.

Well done to all involved.

1st
Thursday 10.0am – noon
Church open for prayer

8th
Thursday 8.0pm Church Meeting

4th
Sunday 9.30am Communion
Colin Bones
11.0am Colin Bones
6.30pm Colin Bones

11th
Sunday 9.30am Colin Bones
11.0am Colin Bones
6.30pm Communion
Ron Goodenough

12th
Monday 5.0pm Copydate for
February
GoodNEWS

Can you give us a tip-off!?

In order to make this listing as useful as possible, we need to get as much information about events happening in and around the village.

Anyone can contribute; if you hear of something going on in February or March – write it down and give it to the editor – before the 12th!

14th
Wednesday 12.30pm Lunch
Fellowship

15th
Thursday tbc House Groups
week
*‘Love Actually’
film showing at
King Edward Hall

16th
Friday 12.30pm Lunch
Fellowship

18th
Sunday 9.30am Tim Griffiths
11.0am Graham
Campling
6.30pm Colin Bones

22nd
Thursday 8.0pm Monthly Prayer
Meeting

25th
Sunday 9.30am Derek Heath
11.0am Communion
Derek Heath
6.30pm Barry Piper

27th
Tuesday 7.45pm Ladies ‘In Touch’

28th
Wednesday 2.45pm The Fellowship
7.45pm Elders’ Meeting

* denotes event not taking place at Lindfield URC

New year, new copydates!

In an effort to help contributors know when the GoodNEWS magazine copydates are, we have decided to simplify the system.

Thus far, the copydate has always moved according to the publication date. However for 2004 copydate will **always be the 12th day of the month at 5.0pm**. Publication date will **always be the last Sunday** of the month.

We hope this makes things clearer, and helps ensure your copy gets in to the right edition on time. Let me know how it goes, and keep ‘em coming!

David Tingley, editor

	Copydate	Publication
Feb 04	Mon 12th Jan	25th Jan
Mar 04	Thur 12th Feb	29th Feb
Apr 04	Fri 12th Mar	28th Mar
May 04	Mon 12th Apr	25th Apr
Jun 04	Wed 12th May	30th May
Jul/Aug 04	Sat 12th Jun	27th Jun
Sept 04	Thur 12th Aug	29th Aug
Oct 04	Sun 12th Sept	26th Sept
Nov 04	Tue 12th Oct	31st Oct
Dec 04	Fri 12th Nov	28th Nov

Don't forget you now have until 5pm on the copydate, and that postal contributions can also be made to the church address.

Sunday services explained...

The **9.30am service** is an opportunity for all age groups to join in a relaxed informal time. There is a crèche, and after about 20 minutes children and young people up to age 14 go out to their own groups on most Sundays.

Coffee is normally served between the morning services and after the evening one.

The **11.00am service** is usually more set and formal.

At **6.30pm** it is sometimes a celebration, sometimes a quieter ministry time and sometimes an open communion service or something quite different!

Personal prayer is available after every service. Prayer requests and brief statements of praise for answered prayer can be put in the red book on the concourse table. We can also offer personal prayer ministry at home or in hospital.

We **do not take up an offering** during the services, but all those wishing to give are invited to place a gift in one of the bowls at the doors before or after the service. Thank you.

Cassette **recordings of services** can be borrowed free from the church.

Intrigued by faith?

A New Year and our next Alpha Course is due to start soon. An Introductory Supper, comprising a two-course meal, will be served at this church (Lindfield United Reformed) on Wednesday 14th January 2004. The evening is designed for anyone interested enough just to come along to find out more about the Christian faith and will give people the opportunity to decide on whether they would like to attend the course.



The format of the Introductory Supper will be as follows;

7.30pm	Arrival
7.45pm	Meal
8.45pm	"Christianity - Untrue, Boring, Irrelevant?"
9.30pm	Close

The Alpha Course itself will then run for a further 10 weeks. We are making arrangements for morning and evening courses and will revolve around a series of talks given by church members and the occasional video presentation given by the Revd. Nicky Gumbel, the curate of Holy Trinity Church, Brompton. After each presentation there will be time for everyone to discuss any issues or questions that arise from the talk, giving opportunity to get to know each other and learn together.

The venue for each of the weekly sessions will be the lounge at the church and the intention will be to start each morning session with coffee and the evening session with a light meal.

Coming to the supper in no way commits you to attend the course!
Equally, if

Tear off and return slip to:- Rob Biersteker, 16 Priory Way, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3LT

We/I can/cannot come to the Introductory Supper at Lindfield URC on Wednesday 14th January 2004.

Although we/I are unable to attend the Introductory Supper, we/I would like to know more about the arrangements for the Alpha Course.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ TEL. NO. _____



Just before the December meeting of the Sussex East District Council closed, we were reminded that all churches had been asked by the Revd Dr David Cornick, General Secretary of the URC, to discuss the national vision statement at church meetings in January – what do YOU think the shape of the 21st Century URC should be?

At the District meeting many of the items were interesting (some even exciting?) glimpses into the visions that some local churches had for their next few years – maybe not the whole of the Century! – and I guess the two key themes were MISSION and WORKING ECUMENICALLY. How good are we at spreading the word in the local community? Can we do it more effectively by working more closely with neighbouring churches of all denominations? Have we the same fire in our bellies for Christian work as when we first turned to Jesus?

I'd better do what I was asked and write a few bullet points, but the above were the thoughts running through my mind throughout the meeting and I think they give the general flavour of the meeting.

- Outline of the Mission workshops 'Preparing for Outreach' to be held in 2004, including one at Lindfield on 24th April.
- An exciting development at Hastings URC in the form of a coffee shop, aimed particularly at young people.
- A prayer calendar for 2004. A resource pack 'Your Kingdom Come' for local churches has been produced to help unite them in prayer for their communities – 'Lighting the flame of hope for Sussex'.
- Challenging ecumenical developments in many communities throughout the District. Although numbers of buildings, ministers and church members are important issues, churches are asking whether hunting in packs provides more effective mission.
- A lively discussion on whether we should recommend a national day of repentance next year – if so, what is an appropriate day in the church calendar? Watch this space...
- There is a need for more lay preachers around the District (nationally too) and another 'Introduction to Leading Worship' course will be offered at Burgess Hill next year. Vocations Sunday (9th February 2004) is an appropriate occasion for churches to highlight this and other callings.

Graham Campling

What/who is the Holy Spirit?

¹⁵If you love me, you will obey what I command. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”

²²Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. ²⁴He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

²⁵“All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

²⁷Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

The atmosphere in chapters 13–17 is dominated by Jesus’ imminent death. John portrays Jesus facing this prospect with a quiet confidence, despite the suffering that lies ahead.

The disciples, however, are anxious, dreading the loss of one who had been their teacher, companion, friend and guide. In this passage, Jesus tells his friends of two gifts he will leave with them:

Firstly, v16, “a Counsellor”. The original Greek word is *parakletos*, which has no exact equivalent in English – attempts to convey the meaning have included “Friend”, “Comforter”, “Advocate”, “Helper”, “Encourager.” Who or what is this multi-functional presence? Well, Jesus identifies him in v26 as the Holy Spirit. Yes, a “him”, not an “it”, because the Holy Spirit is nothing less than the presence of Jesus with the Christian believer!

Look at v16: “another Counsellor”. Who was the first one? And in v18, Jesus promises: “I will come to you”, just after saying that the Counsellor would come to them. The more we look at these verses, the more we see that the Holy Spirit would continue the ministry of Jesus to his followers: their constant companion (v17), their guide into truth (v17 and 16v13), their teacher (v26).

Jesus’ talk to his friends clarifies for us some misunderstandings. First, the Holy Spirit is given to all true believers; note the clear sequence in v15–17a: We love Jesus... therefore we obey his commands... therefore Jesus gives us his Holy Spirit (see also Acts 5v32). Spirit-filled Christians are not just those who have had special experiences. Secondly, in v26 and 16v13–15 Jesus tells us that the promptings of the Spirit are the voice of Jesus, so the Holy Spirit will never guide us in a way that conflicts with Jesus’ teaching. Thirdly, every time the word “you” appears here it is plural, referring to the Christian community. We should be cautious of individual guidance claimed to be from the Holy Spirit which conflicts with wise Christian counsel.

Jesus’ second “bequest” is found in v27: “My peace I leave with you”. The thought here is of the Jewish “Shalom”, signifying a deep and holistic peace: peace with God, peace with our fellow men and women, and a personal peace, giving us the grace to face life’s joys and troubles with the inner serenity that Jesus shows in these chapters.

These verses bring us challenge as well as comfort. Lord, help me to love you better and obey you more consistently.

Mike Gardiner

Project Ruth

PROJECT RUTH and Providence Baptist Church are located in Ferentari in south-west Bucharest.

Ferentari is a poor area with a large Gypsy population and many social problems stemming from poverty and illiteracy. As in many other countries in Europe, the Gypsies are a disadvantaged minority group in Romania. In order to help poor families and to reach out to the Gypsy community, in 1992 the church established a day centre offering activities, food and some basic schooling for 2 afternoons a week. In the beginning the day centre was attended by about 20 children and run by volunteers.

After a year of activity at this level the church decided to pay a few people to run the project and expand its activities. The results were dramatic. Between 1993 and 1994 attendance leaped from 20 to 50 children and the day centre began to open its doors every weekday afternoon.

Many of the children were 3 or 4 years past the age at which they should have started school and effectively already excluded from the education system. Faced with this situation the

church approached the Ministry of Education with a request to establish an officially recognised school which would cater for children who for various reasons were missing out on an education and particularly Gypsies.

At first the request was greeted with some scepticism since primary education is compulsory in Romania and it was therefore believed that illiteracy did not exist. The Ministry of Education was prepared to listen, however, when a parents' petition was presented which drew attention to the plight of a number of illiterate children who were above the age at which a regular school would accept them. Permission was given for the establishment of a school and in September 1994 the Ruth School was born.

To start with classes took place in the church basement and in a room across the road from the church, which had formerly been the Headquarters of the local branch of the Communist Party! As time passed it became apparent that the existing premises were simply not big enough to support a fully functioning school

and plans were drawn up for a purpose-built facility to house Project Ruth. In May 1998 the Ruth Centre was officially opened, providing space for classrooms, a dining hall and kitchen, a school library, staffroom and office and the number of children attending the Ruth School passed 100 for the first time.

In the last few years several other small projects involving day centres or literacy projects have been established in partnership with state schools in different parts of Romania. 2001 witnessed two significant developments at the Ruth School. A Hygiene and Wellness Centre offering washing and laundry facilities was opened in January. The Centre is staffed by a qualified nurse who can monitor the health of the children and provide medical assistance.

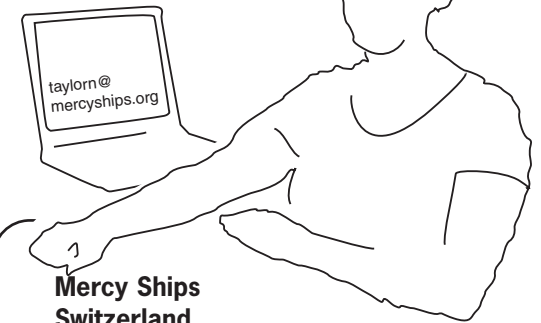
Currently, the school goes up to Grade 7 and Project Ruth is involved in an exciting school building project. For further information on this please see the missions board.

Website: www.projectruth.ro

Trudy Biersteker,
Mission Group

My world

Missionary tales by Nikki Taylor



Mercy Ships Switzerland

So Grandad made it! Incredible. I have mentioned before my Grandad was a minister in the URC. He visited me in Switzerland for his 95th birthday. On Friday morning when I went into his room and opened the shutters he was so excited to see the snow which fell overnight. He said he had been praying for it. Unfortunately that meant we couldn't see as much of the mountains as we hoped because it was still snowing. By Saturday it was a bit clearer and we took a trip across the lake to Evian and back.

On Sunday after church, we had tea at Nicolas' (boyfriend) parents' house. (Yes, I have indeed met someone and we are both enjoying getting to know each other again). Nicolas and I did Discipleship Training School in Gambia together and he still works for Mercy Ships in the CH creative pool creating amazing images and DJ-ing at clubs and youth events. Once a month there is a 'deep worship evening' where we worship God in different ways, using images and sound – very cool!

So every one had a great time and Switzerland is still my Grandad's favourite place to visit after all these years.

Cambodia: a traumatised

In 1975 Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge seized power and forced most of the population into rural communes, while rounding up and murdering intellectuals, religious leaders and thousands of others, for all sorts of reasons. This three-year reign of terror – now known as the Killing Fields – also saw thousands of professional and educated Cambodians fleeing to other countries, where they live today.

During the following years, after the Communist Vietnamese took power, hundreds of thousands of others ended up in refugee camps along the border.

National elections were held in 1993 and were overseen by the United Nations. The refugees were then allowed back but those behind the atrocities were never brought to justice. For ten years now the perpetrators, survivors and former refugees have been living and working side by side. You can't imagine what this is like. Sometimes you hear of someone walking down the street, seeing a person and, with stark horror, realising "he was the one who tortured me", or "he was the one who killed my father".

Because of this, it is a very sad country, a traumatised nation, and no one knows what to do about it.

Most people are Buddhist, ruled by a strong concept of karma and are very fatalistic, so there's an apathy, an attitude of "it was meant to happen" and "there's nothing we can do". Also under Pol Pot, family relationships were denied and, because any expression of emotion could get you killed, people's feelings today are suppressed. Every now and then something boils over into an explosion of violence, with random acts of killings and revenge shootings.

The situation could be very depressing and humanly speaking it could take the life and death of a whole generation

before Cambodia can begin to be healed. We need to pray that there will be a movement of God's love and grace to bring reconciliation and forgiveness, and that people will look to the future with confidence and peace.

My experience was that, apart from children, the only people we saw expressing any real joy were Christians. During the Killing Fields the Church was reduced from around 10,000 to a few hundred but there are now 130,000 Christians, and many have found coming to Christ a hugely healing and liberating experience. God really is changing lives and his Word is so vital to this young and dramatically growing Church in enabling people to see how they can move forward.

Gay Pye, Northern Development Manager, Bible Society reports...



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That's why the work of the Bible Society in Cambodia is so important. Working with churches and many other Christian organisations, they're doing all they can to reveal the power and hope contained in the Bible's message. But they face a huge task. There are barriers, such as high illiteracy (65%) and a non-book culture.

So the Bible Society is being innovative in its approach. For example, the church songbook is very important to Christians. Barnabas Mam, President of the Bible Society in Cambodia, wrote 500 of these songs in a Thai refugee camp – they're all Scripture songs put to Cambodia tunes so Christians love to sing them.

And, along with producing a Bible storybook – with lots of pictures relevant to Khmer culture – the Bible Society is developing a wonderful literacy programme using books and audio cassettes. There's also a daily radio broadcast, when the Bible is read aloud for 15 minutes, so Cambodians can hear the Word for themselves.

Showing love and living a way of love is crucially important. That's why my daughter and her husband (with the Church Mission Society and Servants)

and my grandchildren are living in a tiny wooden house by the river with the poor people of Phnom Penh, the nation's capital. You have to live Christ's message in order for people to believe the message.

This is crucial to a people who can't read, and the Bible Society, recognising that, is continuing to do all it can working with Christians to demonstrate God's love, and reveal his message of hope to a people who desperately need it.

Gay Pye



Flower Rota

		Arranging	Distributing
Jan	4	Gladys Porter	Iris Bingham
	11	Carol Marsh	Fiona Tingley
	18	Audrey McKee	Heather Swann
	25	Mary Comber	Sue Tester
Feb	1	Zoe McQuillin	Dorothy Forster
	8	Angela Newnham	Betty Peter
	15	Jessie Green	Jacqueline Wood
	22	Barbara Shepherd	Iris Bingham
	29	Audrey Saunders	Fiona Tingley

Church activities

SUNDAY WORSHIP:

- 9.30am Service for all the family, including crèche and Junior Church
(Most weeks, children leave after 20 minutes for their own activities)
Holy Communion (1st Sunday)
- 11.0am Morning Worship
Holy Communion (4th Sunday)
- 6.30pm Evening Service
Holy Communion (2nd Sunday)
- Healing services as announced*

PRAYER MEETINGS:

- Mon 9.15am An Hour of Prayer
- Wed 9.45am Short Service of Intercession
- Thur 8.00pm Church Prayer Evening
(4th Thursday)
- Fri 7.30am Prayer Meeting in the Lounge

REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

- Sun 6.30pm Sunday Evening Youth Group
- Mon 6.30pm Boys' Brigade – Junior
Section (8–11 years)
- Tue 10.00am Stepping Stones
(Parents and toddlers)
- 6.15pm Girls' Brigade – Juniors,
Seniors & Brigaders
- 7.45pm In Touch (4th Tuesday)
- Wed 2.45pm The Fellowship (4th Wed.)
- Thur 10.00am Pop-In (for coffee and a chat)
- 8.00pm Church Meeting (2nd Thur.)
- Fri 5.30pm Boys' Brigade – Anchor Boys
(5–7 years)
- 7.30pm Boys' Brigade – Company
Section (11+ years)

House Groups normally meet 1st and 3rd Thursday

**The church is open Monday to Saturday
from 10.00am to 1.00pm**

Phonebook



Church (payphone):

01444 484620

Minister's office number:

01444 487607

Boys' Brigade:

Geoffrey Cocksedge
01444 474007

Cradle Roll:

Sue Tester 01444 482810

Flowers:

Betty Billins 01444 484494

Girls' Brigade:

Margaret Luscombe
01444 412156

Hall Letting Secretary:

Audrey McKee 01444 415031

In Touch:

Sue Waller 01444 455047

Lunch Fellowship:

Wednesday:
Iris Green 01444 484117

Friday: Gwen and
Derrick Hillman 01444 456963

Magazine: Editor:

David Tingley 01444 451024

The Fellowship:

Jessie Green 01444 452708

Roy Billins 01444 484494

Stepping Stones:

Janet Goodenough
01825 740351

Transport:

Tina Elphick 01444 484440

Youth and Children's Work

Co-ordinator:

Rob Biersteker 01444 440835

Junior Church Co-ordinator:

Clare Nibloe 01444 484683