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Changing Times – Unchanging Vision

Rural Ministries began as the result of an imaginative vision given nearly 50 years ago to Herbert Goddard, an entrepreneurial pastor and businessman.



Herbert G. Goddard

Fifty years might seem a short period in world history but for rural Britain the past 50 years have seen profound changes. In many ways the present situation is even more challenging than it was 50 years ago. Here is a transcript from a recently discovered tape recording made in 1974 which gives us an insight into Pastor Goddard's vision that continues to guide Rural Ministries' work today.

A familiar cry

"In 1936 while visiting the Keswick area of the Lake District, the Lord revealed to me that there are vast areas of the British Isles in which churches are closing and where the gospel is not being preached. Throughout England there is an increasing spiritual darkness. Village after village is without the gospel. God gave us the task to do something about it.

We face a situation where Christians are no longer interested in villages. It is difficult to get dedicated evangelical young couples to go and live in villages. We believe that every child in every village has the right to hear of the saving grace of God. It is the responsibility of the whole church to make sure the gospel reaches the villages of Britain. We need to re-educate the church that there are more than 12 million people in rural areas, who are as spiritually lost as those in any other part of the world.

"We face a situation where Christians are no longer interested in villages."
Pastor Goddard

Extend your boundaries

What is needed is a great fellowship in which churches are linked through prayer and further contact. We cannot afford to merely look at our own garden patch. If you have limited God to your own little patch, then God is only as big as the patch. Each place should regard itself as the centre of hub with spokes reaching out as far as twenty-five miles. The principle is to work from the centre out to other areas.

Meet the new Chief Executive

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Of great importance

Nothing is more needed in our country than the gospel. Accessibility to this gospel should not be determined by numbers of Christians present in any one place.

Where two or three are gathered, Christ is present. On a stormy dark night would a Lifeboat only be launched when a cruise ship runs aground? Would two or three in a sinking ship be regarded as a waste of time? Definitely not!

Changing times

There will be periods when certain facets of the ministry change, but I will bind no man's hand in the general operation of the work.

Unchanging vision

I no longer stand at sweet 17. Although I am now 71, I do not depart from this vision to see the gospel reach people in the villages of Britain. We have a great and gigantic task."

Rural Ministries are thankful to God for the vision and faithful service of Herbert Goddard and many others who have served in developing the work.

"Today, in the UK, if it appears that nothing much is happening in a place then we look elsewhere for our ministry."
Roger Carswell, Evangelist

Join Us in 2012!



Many will be focussing on the Olympics in 2012 but Rural Ministries will be focussing on celebrating 50 years of mission to rural Britain.

As part of the celebrations we will be inviting friends, old and new, who have been or are connected with Rural Ministries, to join us for a commemorative lunch on 23rd June 2012. A time to give thanks for Pastor Goddard's vision and to thank God for His provision to Rural Ministries over 50 years.

We are also hoping to publish a pictorial guide to events over the last 50 years. Do you have any suitable photos we can include? Please send them to the Rural Ministries office with a note of what they depict, and where and when they were taken. We will return the photos to you in due course.

New Chief Executive appointed

The Council of Rural Ministries are delighted to announce that from 15th August 2011 Rev. Simon Mattholie will be the new Chief Executive.



Simon and Kirstie Mattholie

Simon is currently Senior Minister at Saffron Walden Baptist Church in Essex. Married to Kirstie with two teenage children, Simon has been leading the Mission Strategy and Training task group of the Eastern Baptist Association. He helped establish a youth congregation in the Winchester area with the support of a larger suburban church. His interests include Formula One motor racing, cycling and macaroni cheese!

Simon commented "Since my time at Spurgeon's College I have always had an interest in rural mission especially as so many of my contemporaries were drawn to urban church planting. Many rural communities are going through huge transitions with an influx of new housing, with the closing of local shops/pubs, and as farmers diversify in order to survive in our challenging economic climate. Christians need to be at the centre of our rural communities, as we seek to play our part in the Big Society. Through its relative size, the rural church can be 'lighter on its feet' giving it the ability to respond with the

hope of Christ, building on the legacy of generations of praying Christians, and contextualising the gospel in this changing time." Simon previously had a rewarding career in finance and marketing within the banking sector in the City: "I am excited by the wonderful opportunity of serving as Chief Executive, working alongside Rob Webb, as Rural Ministries seek to equip, resource and release communities of missional Christians up and down the country."

Rural Ministries Chairman, Stephen Spurgeon, said "2012 marks fifty years of our involvement in planting and growing churches in the countryside. Following a period of significant growth we are looking forward to Simon Mattholie joining us. Additionally, we have all appreciated the contribution Rob and Angela Webb have made in developing the work of Rural Ministries - in recognition of Rob's wider role, which includes visiting and supporting churches, I am pleased to announce he now takes up the position of Operations Director."

What I have learned

As Declan Flanagan, the current Chief Executive, prepares to leave Rural Ministries, Impact asked him to reflect on the past six years at RM.

- Rural churches are not 'failed larger churches'. Many rural churches have much higher levels of participation and contact with local people than apparently 'successful' larger churches. Urban and suburban churches can only dream of 10- 20% of the local population in contact with a church. Being part of a small church may be a strain but remember what can be done with five loaves and two fishes.
- We are in danger of being obsessed with the size of a church and not its health. Big is not necessarily better - merely different.
- There are some great churches in the countryside. The pity is that not many people know about them, but the Lord does. I have seen many examples of sacrificial service, persistent prayer and effective outreach in isolated places.
- Pastors and leaders who do not visit their flock risk becoming isolated from their sheep. The whole shepherding metaphor and the important role of being under-shepherds breaks down. Leading the church to good pasture and keeping it moving in the right direction is essential.
- Improved technology is both a help and hindrance. Internet communications allows a low cost, high speed transfer of information but is very impersonal. It is often more useful to pick up a telephone and have a proper conversation. Emails or text messages should not be used to discuss church issues, personalities or sensitive matters.
- Church planting is essential if Britain is to be re-evangelised. We must move from talking about church planting to doing more about it. Several small churches working together have the potential to commence outreach activities that may result in new churches being established.



Declan and June Flanagan

- A spirit of gloom and doom may attach itself to a church. Nothing is expected and faith is not exercised. But light dispels all darkness.
- We are deceived when we think people are not interested in Jesus Christ. They are largely disinterested in the church because we have failed to 'make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive' (Titus 2:10). Is there anyone more attractive and compelling than Jesus?
- Rural Ministries is well deserving of your support. It has been a privilege to work with a wide variety of churches and some great people. There remains much work to be done.

Declan and June Flanagan will continue mentoring church leaders and work on specific projects with churches.

£3,000 available for new outreach initiative



During 2012 Rural Ministries are celebrating 50 years of encouraging churches in the countryside. Grants will be available to help your local outreach and the competition is open to all rural churches.

Have you always wanted to commence an activity to spread and share the gospel but funds have been a problem? Up to three grants with a maximum of £3000 each are available to support the most enterprising applications. We are looking for imagination and the ability to see the gospel impact your community. The awards will be presented at a lunch being held in June 2012 to celebrate the work and vision of Rural Ministries.

More information and competition rules can be found on the Rural Ministries website: www.ruralministries.org.uk

Closing date for entries is the 1st March 2012 and they are to be sent to Rural Ministries, Wellingborough Innovation Centre, Church Street, Wellingborough NN8 4PD

Does anyone know you are there?

It's hard to run a Christianity Explored course, when you appear to have no church fringe people to invite. What can you do? Dave Bevis a leader at Bishopstoke Evangelical Church in Hampshire has some suggestions.



Church in the community and community in the church' has become more than a slogan. It has transformed the way we do church, and the way we are church.

For many years the commitment of our church to share the gospel has never been in question. Sharing our lives has been less well understood. Paul wrote that, 'because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well' (1 Thessalonians 2:8).

A wakeup call

Although our church has been in the village for over 50 years, I heard someone who lives in the adjoining street comment that she 'didn't even know where we were'. Inevitably she knew even less about the message we had faithfully proclaimed. Her comments were a personal 'wakeup call'. I told others in the church that we should never hear a comment like that again.

Our responses

We started with a survey of the local population. We sought to discover what was currently happening, or not happening, in our village. This led us to become more involved in the community association and carnival.

In the three years since our wakeup call, we have arranged stalls at May fairs, hosted WI meals, opened the church for use by the local Children's centre, come second in a village quiz, held regular Fun Days for the community, shown family-friendly films and encouraged church people to be on committees of the Women's Institute, Community Association and School Governing Board.

A work in progress

Trust is developing. We are beginning to appreciate that if people are unwilling to come to church, we must first come to them. We genuinely desire not only to share the gospel but our lives as well. Our prayer is that as a missional church we will see more people from our village become part of the Lord's church.



Bishopstoke – Drop in for older folk

By the seaside

We all appreciate when grey and overcast days give way to summer time. There may be thoughts of holidays and trips to the seaside. Here a new partner church leader, Bill Turner, tells us about ministry throughout the year on the Lincolnshire coast.

Church life on the Lincolnshire coast differs with the seasons. Sutton on Sea Evangelical Free Church faces some wonderful opportunities and very real challenges to maintain a constant work with an ever changing congregation. The church is located north of Skegness and south of Mabelthorpe with both coastal tourist towns attracting a large number of summer holiday makers. Caravan parks and retirement bungalows are everywhere.

Our church is made up of many different kinds of Christians. Some have come to retire and we have many different denominational varieties and perspectives. Holding it all together is a challenge as we do not want the fellowship to become a battleship.

We put out advertising signs to point visitors to the church. We seek to give people a warm welcome and want their visit to be helpful and to encourage them. It is always a great joy when visitors tell of the help they have received from our services. Part of our vision is to use the unique opportunities God has given us in this coastal area, to bless others in the body of Christ.

The summer gives us new opportunities as we welcome an annual United Beach Mission team who use our facilities and reach out to the many visitors. Scripture Union also has a team of young people and they help us focus on evangelism. It is one thing to be called an Evangelical Free Church and another to actually be an evangelising church.

The Lord has planted us by the ocean and given us unique opportunities to reach a mixture of all ages over our local and wider area. The spiritual and social challenges are great. The area suffers much from unemployment and from not having constant work outside of the summer season. We are here all the year and we see lives being changed, visitors being blessed and the Lord building His Church.



Bill and Pat Turner



This is my story

It all began with a sermon delivered by a visiting speaker to our church in Rowhedge, Essex. The Bible reading was from Ezekiel 36:26 - *'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh'*. I quickly realised God was talking to me. I had to give my life to God, and I did.

I started meeting with our Pastor discussing what being a Christian means and what it is to have a new heart and spirit within. On one occasion an inner voice prompted me with words saying, 'I want you to spread the word and evangelise'. 'Not me,' I thought, and I did nothing about it.

A few weeks later I sat looking at a glass of water and I asked myself what does it do and what does it mean? The answer was obvious - the water is there for when you are thirsty and in need of refreshment. It occurred to me that the Holy Spirit is given for the same purpose. I realised my life needed refreshing. The symbol of water in baptism is an outward expression of removing the old and receiving something new. *'A new heart and a new spirit'*. The time had come to commit my life fully to Christ and be baptised, to show others, I have the Lord in my life as my personal Saviour.

Jeff Taylor



Mariners' Chapel



Look North

Rural Ministries is seeking to become involved with more churches in the north of England. Here 5 churches share some of their experiences.

The Rossendale Valley

In the late 1980s Helmshore Christian Fellowship in Lancashire came to life. A few of the residents of the village wanted to see an evangelical church in what was an extremely fast growing area. Helmshore village connects with the nearby town of Haslingden.

The church has now met in seven different places (presently meets in the local parish church) and enjoys a relaxed, friendly, modern but moderate style. Those attending come from far and wide. We are a community of believers who share in the Christian faith and activities associated with that, but also share life with others who get involved in the activities in the church.

A toddler group, children's club and a youth club give the church an extended community. Monthly events including fun days, a bonfire, a carol service and days out draw this scattered community together on a regular basis. The hub of the extended community is the thriving toddler group. Parents bring their children to the toddler group and then often bring their children to other activities as well. These connections with the church sometimes last years.

A step at a time

Building a sense of community is a work in progress. Some events flop; others take perseverance and commitment. The toddler group started with one child. If we only viewed Sunday attendance as important it might seem like much is sown but little is reaped.



Often the believing community don't interact as well as they might with the extended community. But little by little our church community is growing. Jim, for example, viewed our website and thought 'this seems like a friendly church'. Brad and Morna appreciated the honesty and openness of the people. Carole started by attending the toddler group but is now one of its main workers. She brings children to the Children's club, attends Ladies group and nearly all the special events and has even been known to turn up on the odd Sunday!

Glenn Scott





On the Cumbrian Coast

The village of Bootle on the Cumbrian coast, with less than 800 residents, does have a train station but also a model railway club meeting in the Evangelical Church. As Pastor I enthusiastically lead our club as an outreach to the children of school age in the village. One family, who had just moved into the area, saw the club on our website and came along. The family started attending on Sunday and are now involved in the church.

Some have asked 'Why a model railway?'. My answer is 'Why not?'. It's something that some children and adults are interested in. It encourages the children to co-operate and work together so that

everyone gets a chance to join in. We also have two computers with train simulators on which the children enjoy crashing the trains!

The layout is on an 8 x 4 board and is a small terminus station leading onto a double track circle main line that leads onto an inner loop that has a reversing loop and goods yard. It takes up to four children to operate. The children also learn about Jesus in a non threatening atmosphere as well as learning basic scenery construction, engine maintenance and electrics. If there's someone in your church with a particular interest or hobby why not share it with others?

James Thomas (Pastor)



Railway set up

In Bronte Country

Perhaps the greatest trial for Mount Zion Baptist, West Yorkshire, is the spiritual barrenness of this popular tourist area close to Hebden Bridge. As well as being in Yorkshire, where only 0.8% of the population regularly attend church, our area is renowned for its alternative lifestyles, the occult and its atheism. We are in an area hostile to the gospel.

Our attempts to reach this scattered and diverse community include a weekly children's club and a monthly older folks' 'drop in' meeting - both include Bible teaching. Many people attend.





Nidderdale, Yorkshire Dales

One of our members started a strategy gaming club. This gives opportunity to get to know local 'Lads and Dads'.

Our main trial, as a 'numerically challenged fellowship', is being able to staff activities meetings adequately. The few are responsible for everything. With a small congregation a visitor can be easily put off in spite of the welcome we give.

Tourism, however, provides a great opportunity for us. The church uses a building that is a holiday centre owned by a Christian Trust. We are able to present the gospel to the resident groups. The premises are also used for the Parish Council and children's birthday parties.

Your interest and prayers are really appreciated.

Jason Hulme



How does a church serve a scattered community? Our church building stands in virtual solitude on a hill. A few houses are dotted around and a small village nearby.

We respond by holding different meetings around the Dale.

Sunday mornings start with a prayer meeting at the home of a lady in Summerbridge, whilst a group take a Sunday school called Discovery Zone in the village hall in Kettlesing. Once a month a family service is held there to which the parents are invited. The service is relaxed with coffee and cakes after a clear gospel message. Sunday afternoons we have our main service at the church after which we enjoy tea together.

Other works include meetings in Summerbridge, a senior citizens' lunch every other week at the church, a weekly youth club on a Friday evening, and a monthly visit to a nursing home. We go into one school to take assemblies. For the past few years we have taken a stall at the local agricultural show which is well attended by folk across Yorkshire. Gospels and tracts have been handed out and we've had some interesting

conversations. Delivering leaflets takes time because homes are so far apart.

Our main focus is personal testimony and personal outreach. The folk at the church have spent years building relationships with people around the area. Considering the small congregation, a lot of outreach goes on. It's hard work but you can see the congregation's commitment and perseverance. In a world where success is usually in size and numbers it is easy to become discouraged and despondent, but when you sit in a prayer meeting with real fervent prayer for each other, the community and especially for revival, you feel God's loving hand of encouragement leading you on.

Helen Dale





Swarland Village



North of Newcastle

Our church began 14 years ago in the village of Swarland, Northumberland. The market town of Alnwick is 7 miles away. As a small church we are discovering some of the opportunities and challenges of being in a rural church:

Size is an advantage and a disadvantage

Positively, we are able to get to know people as there are not more than 300 homes in the village. There are not a lot of choices in a rural community so anything the church provides for young people is normally well attended. A slightly slower pace of life provides opportunity to talk to parents at the end of a meeting.

Involvement in village events is important

There are not many people to volunteer and therefore we are asked to be on the Village Hall Committee as we're one of the chief users of the facility and to get involved in the Village Show. This provides an opportunity to get to know people and also to give out gospel literature.

School visits and clubs are welcome

Access to our local school is easier as we are the only church in the village. We have no competition when it comes to running the children's club as there are no other organisations providing anything for them in the village. We also have more



Church members

opportunity to work with other evangelical churches from surrounding villages that wouldn't be so easy in a more built up area.

So there are great opportunities in a rural setting because of the small population size but it also presents challenges!

We are short of people

When there are so few people in the Church (we have 7 members at Swarland - the youngest being 48, the oldest 81) it can be difficult to put on all the events you would like to. We have the resources to run a children's club for those aged 5-12 but do not have the manpower (or is it energy?!) to provide anything for them once they become teenagers.

Commuter villages are hard work

Many local people commute to Newcastle to work. It can be difficult getting people along to evangelistic events as they just want to batten down the hatches when they get home. This isn't just something we suffer from - other non-Christian organisations find it difficult getting people to their events.

Affluence can be a barrier

With the wealth people enjoy, the beautiful countryside around them and big houses, people appear to have a contentment with this world that prevents them seeking after God.

Pray that God would help us to trust in him whether we are few in number or many and that he would save sinners in our communities.

Alan Travis

Giving – Ask yourself the questions!

Q: Why is giving important in the life of a Christian?

A: Giving is an outward sign of an inward commitment. The root problem of a lack of giving, is spiritual before financial. Sunday offerings are not to be regarded as a 'discretionary obligation'. Where Jesus is Lord, we give up the right to what we think we own. We need to progress from 'All that I have, am and will ever become is mine, and I'll decide what God gets', to 'All that I have, am and will ever become is a gift from God, to be invested into building the Kingdom.'

Q: How is the current economic situation affecting giving?

A: The expectations are that charitable giving will be 10% lower this year.

Q: How are churches responding?

A: While aware that giving includes our time and talents churches are more prepared to address the issue of money. When Jesus spoke about money it was most frequently in the context of discipleship. That's a good starting point for a sermon series or small group studies. Some churches offer help with money management and debt counselling.

Encouraging faithful giving is helped through personal testimonies and specific, direct challenges. Increasing the number of tax-paying individuals using Gift Aid is always helpful. For those who use internet banking, online giving is becoming more popular and churches are providing this opportunity.

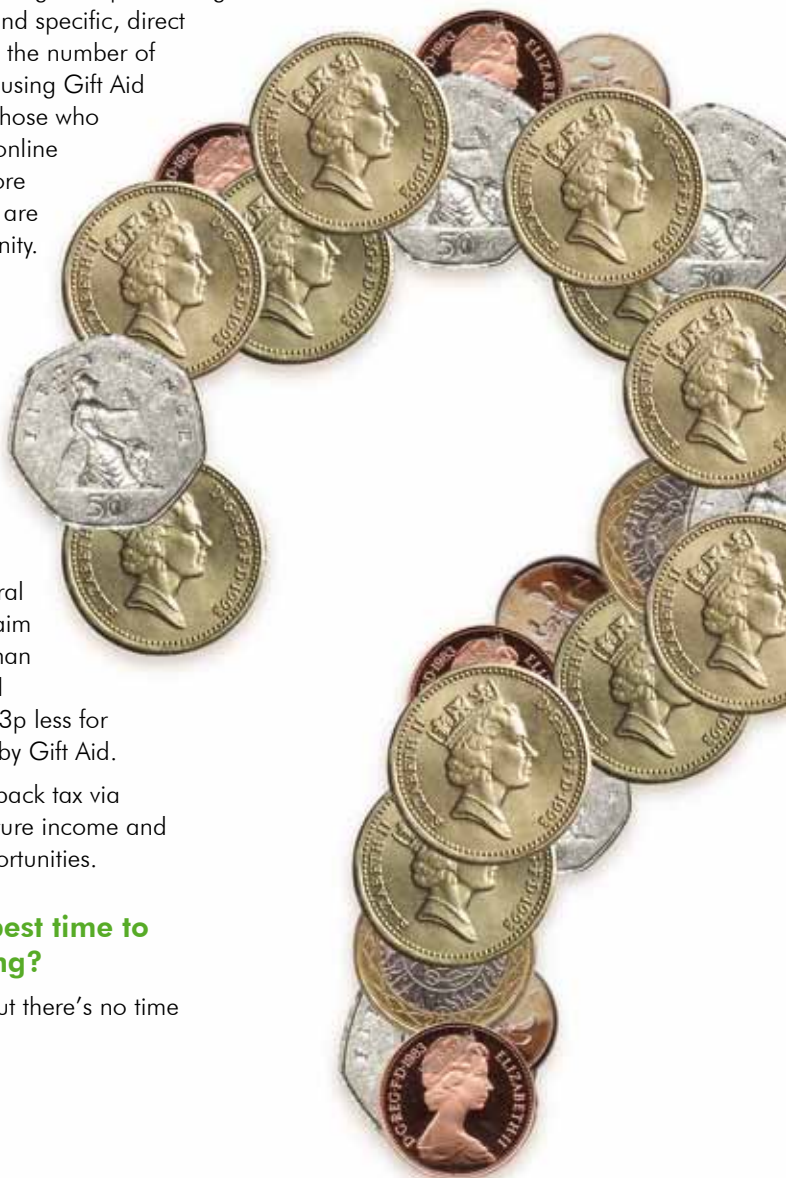
Q: I hear there are changes in Gift Aid. What are they?

A: Changes to Treasury rules mean that from 6 April 2011 churches and charities (including Rural Ministries) can only claim back 25% tax rather than 28%. So churches and charities are claiming 3p less for every pound donated by Gift Aid.

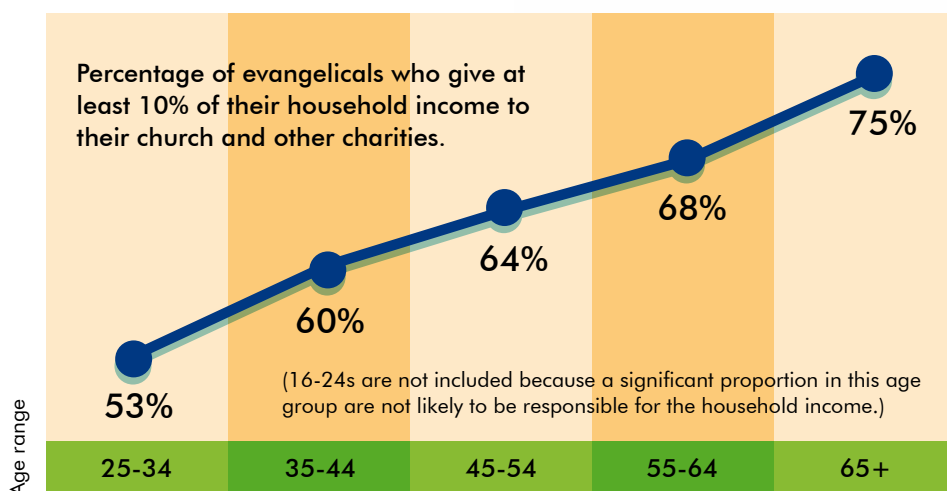
This drop in claiming back tax via Gift Aid will impact future income and therefore ministry opportunities.

Q: When is the best time to review your giving?

A: At least annually, but there's no time like the present!



Is this graph a cause for concern?



From the Evangelical Alliance report, '21st Century Evangelicals' (2011).



"I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in relation to the kingdom of Christ."
David Livingstone

What Makes A Good Holiday Club?



Ian and Elaine Coules are well known to those who attend the Rural Ministries Conference, where they have provided excellent children's programmes. We asked them for some pointers for churches running holiday clubs.



Are they worthwhile?

As Christian children's workers we have been running holiday clubs and children's evangelistic programmes for 15 years. Each holiday club provides amazing opportunities to give children a positive experience of the Gospel but requires careful organisation, thought and commitment.

Making a start

Selecting the right programme is essential. Many have been developed and are available for purchase. You are likely to need to adapt the programme to suit your budget, venue, available equipment and aims.

We want children to learn a truth about God, a piece of Scripture and a truth about their relationship with God, and have great fun doing this.

When children first arrive they experience a 'wow' factor through a room looking

fun with scenery and props. We include crafts, songs, dramas, memory verse challenges, quizzes, stories, puppets, object lessons and teaching about prayer.

The Team

We recommend creating a small management team. They pick the programme, plan the budget, co-ordinate the club and delegate tasks. Help is required with crafts, publicity, music, registration, child safety, venue, refreshments, equipment, main teaching programme and general administration.

Safety First

We recommend that a good percentage of the team have a completed Criminal Records Bureau check and that others help under the supervision of these leaders. Being safe is essential - if you get these things right then the programme will go well.

SAFE

Safe Practice includes:

- Always try to work in one room where all leaders can be seen by others.
- Children should be escorted to the toilet, leaders should then remain in view of others and should never enter the toilet area.
- Leaders should never be left alone with one child away from the view of others.
- Someone should always remain at the entrance to monitor those entering and exiting, and keeping a register of both children and adults in the venue.
- Conducting a risk assessment of the venue. Look out for blocked fire exits, loose cables, unsafely stacked chairs or tables, dangerous chemicals, loose carpeting/matting, wall heaters and kitchen areas being secured off from the children. Always view the room from a child's level.
- We do not recommend hot drinks being served during the programme.

On your best behaviour

Rules and boundaries need to be established from the start. We encourage RESPECT:

- Respect the leaders
- Respect each other
- Respect the building

A programme which is well organized and full of activities normally has no problems in this area. It is often boredom that causes good behaviour to break down.

So down to the fun!

Songs – If possible use musicians or make use of the many good CD's around. Each week we select 6 songs that are simple, easy to pick up and contain good truths from the Bible.

Fun sheets – We aim to have two activity sheets available for children of different ages and abilities.

Crafts – Some children will not come every day so one per day is advisable. The crafts should have different textures, colours, 3D and different functions rather than flat colouring sheets.

We could say more about storytelling, illusions, puppets and effective ways of teaching memory verses. We are available to help, advise, train and support you. If you have web access see: www.kids-inc.co.uk or email Elaine@kids-inc.co.uk

SONGS
FUN SHEETS
CRAFTS



Working together

With churches finding it difficult to resource their own dedicated church worker, more and more will need to consider the option of sharing. Here someone who has worked with more than one church describes some of the strengths and weakness of churches sharing a pastor, evangelist or youth worker.



Strengths

Working together means:

- Churches may be able to have a gifted worker, and pay a realistic salary.
- A greater opportunity to share prayer, practical support and working together for outreach events.
- More people are engaged in gospel work with costs being shared between churches.

Weaknesses:

Among the difficulties are:

- How best to allocate time. A worker could be expected to be involved '8' days a week, giving 60% of their time to each church!
- A tendency to give preference to what might be regarded as the better or more effective church which may have more encouragement, existing opportunities and support.
- Double the amount of evening meetings to attend throughout the week. This is not healthy, especially for the family of the worker.
- The constant need for effective communication between the churches employing the worker. Praying for each other and discussing the needs of their shared worker, to ensure time is used effectively, cannot be neglected.

What makes it work?

Faith is essential. Jesus gives workers to His church, and therefore faith is needed for the resources and blessing on this worker. In addition a Kingdom mindset is required. If a church only thinks about their own needs the work will be even more difficult. Where a church can rejoice that God is at work elsewhere, the partnership can flourish.

It is helpful to realistically define job requirements with both churches. Knowing the expected role especially in terms of the leadership structure is vital. Awareness of these matters needs to be shared with all in the church. They

should also appreciate that a worker is not a one-person solution to a church's problems. Support and encouragement from both churches should not be merely assumed but actively practised.

Summing up

Sharing a worker is a great way of blessing small churches and using gifted people in more than one place. While there are issues to be aware of, the Lord can do great things through godly workers. What could He do in your church?



Rural Ministries News

Leadership Development Programme

At Rural Ministries we think that helping those in their first five years of pastoral ministry is really worthwhile. Nine pastors and church leaders met with Dave Edwins and Declan Flanagan for 3 days at the first part of our Leadership Development Programme. Topics included what it means to minister in turbulent times, ministry for the long haul, developing leadership values and understanding the rural context. A very honest session on pressure points in ministry revealed balancing ministry and family life as a major tension. The second part of the course will take place in 2012.

Dave Edwins who leads On Track Ministries commented, 'What a great three days! These leaders are committed to making a difference in their context and it was a privilege to work with them. Now the hard work begins to follow up the learning and keeping in touch.'



New Council Member

Paul Susans has recently joined the Council of Rural Ministries. Married to Sue and with three grown up children, Paul is a Director of a firm of Certified Accountants in Alton, Hampshire. A busy life for Paul includes being an Elder of the Butts Evangelical Church in Alton, chairing a charity working with children in the Middle East, serving as a School Governor and being on the Executive Board of East Hampshire Citizens Advice Bureau. In his spare time Paul follows motor sports and is interested in classic cars.



Paul Susans

First Regional Day - Lincolnshire

Leaders from 8 churches met together in March at Fenlands Church, Tydd Gote, Lincolnshire and enjoyed a great meal, worship, prayer and the opportunity to share news. The feedback was positive and we plan to do it again next year!

Conference 2011

If you are a leader or a member of a rural church why not consider joining us for a weekend of fellowship, sharing and teaching? Our 2011 conference is 28th-30th October. The venue is Kings Park, Northampton and we can offer subsidised places to those wishing to attend. Contact Rural Ministries at the Wellingborough office or download a booking form from our website www.ruralministries.org.uk.



Party On The Green

During May 2011 the Chapel Fellowship, a partner church of Rural Ministries, combined with a number of other churches in the Ivinghoe and Pitstone area of Bedfordshire to organise a 'Party on the Green' and sponsor this first outreach event.

Dave Clifford (Pastor) reported, 'With a combination of games, food, music and the gospel message it was great to see nine folks make a profession of faith while several others made new commitments and there were countless healings.' One of the organisers commented, 'New relationships were forged and old ones strengthened. What a joy to see the Body of Christ together in unity and what a witness to the village! We gave away 1,400 burgers and hot dogs and over the weekend, we must have seen well over 1,000 people visit the party.'



Churches combining and witnessing together

11th June 2011 saw the formal launch of Grace Church, Isle of Wight, a new island church formed from the 'missional merging' of Beulah Evangelical Church, Seaview, with Elmfield Congregational Church, Ryde.

In Norwich, the Rock Church, Blofield, has joined up with the Fountain of Life Church, Ashill, Thetford, as they look to move forward together.



Apprentices no longer

Having served as an apprentice for two years at Milton under Wychwood Baptist Church Mark Harewood has been appointed Assistant Pastor at Bessacarr Evangelical Church, Doncaster. Another former Rural Ministries Apprentice, Stephen Howard, has been appointed as Assistant Pastor at Newtown Evangelical Church in Powys.

Rural Ministries Roadshow



A further Roadshow took place at Milton-under-Wychwood in the Cotswolds with several churches represented. Could your church host an evening to invite others to share news, information and face the challenge of establishing healthy churches in the countryside?

"A very positive meeting"
Helen Wright, Charlbury Baptist

"We were stimulated and challenged"
Valerie Leach, Bourton on the Water Baptist

Prayer makes a difference

In many churches summer school holidays means one thing – Holiday Clubs. Please remember all our partner churches as they plan and run these events. More details are in the current issue of Praise and Prayer News. Contact the Rural Ministries Office to obtain your copy.

If IMPACT has inspired you to want to know more about Rural Ministries then please contact us via our web site or telephone the Rural Ministries office and talk to the Chief Executive **Simon Mattholie** or **Rob Webb** our Operations Director

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Stephen Howard & Mark Harewood