



HOPE National Impact – Local Action

in our villages, towns & cities



**Catherine
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Mission is on the agenda of the Church. As soon as his appointment was announced, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said that sharing the 'good news of Christ in word and deed' was a priority.¹ And, speaking on World Mission Day earlier this year Pope Francis said, 'The strength of our faith, at a personal and community level, can be measured by the ability to communicate it to others, to spread and live it.'²

Anglicans, Catholics and the spectrum of other UK denominations are making plans to reach out together in words and action as part of HOPE 2014. The goal is villages, towns and cities transformed by the love of God and a lasting legacy of churches at the heart of communities being good news.

Roy Crowne, HOPE's Director says: 'We are praying that 2014 would be a catalytic year where churches will work together around the Christian calendar to bring good news to a lost and broken world. The fruit of this could be thousands of changed lives and a great harvest for the kingdom of God. HOPE 2014 has the potential to be a catalyst, not just for one year. My dream is that it seeds a movement of word and deed evangelism which would transform lives, families and communities for years to come.'

HOPE developed at the invitation of UK church leaders who had seen the impact of Hope08 in more than 1500 areas. HOPE focuses on what churches have in common. There's no prescription for mission. HOPE and its partners provide ideas and resources; it is up to each church how they translate ideas into action in their local community.

For example, churches in the London Borough of Croydon have divided their district into areas so the churches in each area can focus on one aspect of mission in 2014 linked to Easter, Pentecost, summer festivals, the Football World Cup, Harvest, the World War One commemorations, Advent and Christmas. By opting to focus on different mission opportunities, each church plays to its strengths, no church will be overwhelmed, but from a public perspective their efforts are all part of the same mission as they are joined by the distinctive HOPE logo.

Roy Crowne says, 'Jesus prayed that we – the church – would be one so the world would discover God's love for themselves (John 17.20–23). Using HOPE's logo on all the churches' mission activities in 2014, makes a connection that speaks volumes to the world. We may be diverse in worship styles, traditions, colours and cultures, but we are able to unite for the sake of the gospel.'

Rhythm of mission

HOPE's rhythm of mission is based around the Church calendar:

- Easter week (13–20 April): What better opportunity to tell the story of Jesus than at Easter time? Passion plays, Maundy Thursday shoe-shine stalls and Easter-egg give-aways feature in church plans to spread the Easter message of hope.
- Pentecost (30 May – 8 June): Churches in villages, towns and cities will be inviting their communities to join 'the Biggest Birthday Party Ever' as London's successful Pentecost Festival goes nationwide.

- **Big Lunch (1 June):** More than 8 million people shared Sunday lunch together celebrating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012. The Big Lunch team had asked HOPE to help them get churches involved. HOPE co-published a Diamond Jubilee New Testament and 750,000 copies were given away. The Big Lunch continues in 2014 and is a great excuse for church members to get to know neighbours and to show that the Church knows how to party!
- **Summer fun days:** Lark in the Park, run by Sidcup and Ramsgate churches, and Totton's annual Family Fun Day, run by churches in the New Forest, are just two examples of events held up and down the country which strengthen community relationships. Many churches also use the summer to get out into the neighbourhood with social action projects that make a significant difference to community life as playgrounds are re-painted, waste ground cleared and gardens tidied up.
- **Harvest:** HOPE is helping churches to celebrate harvest as a time to be thankful for God's provision of food as well as a season to give thanks for work. Harvest festivals and suppers are an ideal time for community celebrations around food.
- **Alpha and Christianity Explored:** Autumn courses let local people ask questions about faith in Christ.
- **World War One centenary commemorations –** HOPE is preparing resources on the theme of 'Greater Love' to help churches to take a lead in each community's Remembrance events, including commemorations for the start of war on 4 August, Remembrance Sunday, Armistice Day and at Christmas when 'Silent Night' Carol Services in sports stadiums will focus on the 1914 truce in the trenches.
- **Christmas:** the celebration of Jesus's birth is a prime opportunity to point people in villages, towns and cities to God's special gift of hope.

Mission countdown

HOPE 2014 was launched on 18 October 2013 when 40,000 people gathered at London's Excel Centre for a night of prayer hosted by the Redeemed Christian Church of God. Then, on 24 October 2013, 100 key leaders of denominations and ministries were at Lambeth Palace as guests of the Archbishop of Canterbury to pray for the year of mission.

The countdown continues through the country as more than a million people will receive a copy of HOPE's Mission Prayer Focus – a daily prayer calendar, printed by UCB and distributed by HOPE's mission partners including Bible Society.

Young people are taking a lead in HOPE 2014. HOPE Revolution – the youth arm of HOPE – is training more than 100 youth leaders from 25 areas, to deliver a Mission Academy for young people in their area. Find out more at www.hope-revolution.com

Resources for every church

HOPE is working with more than 30 denominations and Christian ministries to provide churches with resources

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for mission. Hundreds of tried-and-tested mission ideas have been brought together in HOPE's resource book *HOPE – The Heartbeat of Mission*; so far 22,000 copies have been distributed to church leaders. Several denominations and Anglican dioceses have bought copies for every church leader. HOPE's partners are also producing resources for churches to use.

- Bible Society is producing a special HOPE edition of *Who? – Jesus' life story from the Synoptic Gospels* presented as one easy-to-read narrative.
- SGM Lifewords is producing 250,000 copies of a HOPE-branded New Testament, which churches can give away at Remembrance events in their communities. During the First World War, SGM Lifewords distributed over 43 million pieces of literature (New Testaments & Gospels mainly) to training corps, troops, and civilians. The HOPE-branded New Testament is a replica of the World War One version.
- Sports chaplains around the country are working with HOPE to hold Christmas carol events for fans' churches and their communities to celebrate Christmas in the country's sports stadiums. In 2014 these will feature 'Silent Night' to link with the 1914 trenches truce.
- United Christian Broadcasters have produced 'bags of hope', a free resource available for churches to order and distribute over the Halloween and Christmas periods. For further details go to www.ucb.co.uk/bagofhope
- HOPE, Crossing London and Pentecost Festivals are working with churches in the capital to prepare for mission in London in 2014.

Funding pledged

Churches and Anglican dioceses are showing their commitment to HOPE by pledging funds for HOPE-style mission in 2014. For example, the bishop of Wakefield is giving every church in his diocese £100 to help kick start a community initiative to mark his tenth anniversary as diocesan bishop and to celebrate the HOPE 2014 year of mission. In Truro the Bishop is holding a Dragon's Den-style competition which challenges groups in the diocese to come up with imaginative, collaborative evangelistic projects that get the gospel out to the people of Cornwall, projects that really demonstrate the Church serving its community.

Notes

1. www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/9666722/Archbishop-of-Canterbury-first-address-by-Justin-Welby.html
2. www.catholicherald.co.uk/news/2013/08/06/full-text-pope-francis-world-mission-day-message/