

Hope *unlimited*



Issue no. 002

Hello and welcome to the second edition of Hope *unlimited*.



As the glorious colours of autumn begin to make their appearance in and around our beautiful village and as the days get cooler and sunrise gets later, thoughts begin to turn to Christmas and the joy and excitement of gifts and family. We really do have so much to look forward to and be thankful for.

In this edition we want to highlight one very special project which will make this Christmas incredibly special for some families who can only dream about the things we take for granted.

So please do take a few moments to learn about **SHOEBOX SUNDAY** on Sunday 16th October at Old Mill Hall, School Lane, Grove, an incredible opportunity for us as a village community to make a huge difference in the lives of very needy families.

Also in this edition...

- Paul Haynes talks about a gift that literally changed his life, and...
- there's a *very special invitation* to our own version of *Any Questions* (see below)



Can you prove there's a God?

If God exists, what does he want?

WHY IS THERE DEATH AND SUFFERING IN THE WORLD?

If I were God I would... So why doesn't he?

IF GOD WANTS ME TO BELIEVE IN HIM WHY DOESN'T HE JUST SHOW UP?!



Your chance to ask the questions that have been on your mind - and **GET ANSWERS**

Starting **Wednesday 12th October 2011 @ Cornerstone Coffee Shop**, Savile Way, Grove

7:30 - 9:30 p.m. each week over the seven week course

There is **no charge** and **all are welcome**

To register or for more information call Paul on 01235 210037

or go to www.gfec.org.uk



Paul Haynes

Why I Believe



I grew up in the 60s and 70s in a 3-bed semi in Didcot with my dad, mum and sister. Our family were not believers – although that didn't save me from being christened or sent to Sunday school most weeks with one of our neighbours. My father dismissed the church as a corrupt and hypocritical institution peddling fairy

stories to the gullible for its own benefit and whose employees were generally on the take or homosexual or both. My mother, influenced largely by the early deaths of her mother (in her 60s) and the good Christian lady who took me to Sunday school (in her early 40s), has never managed to reconcile the suffering she sees in the world with the idea of a loving and powerful God. So, I think it's safe to say, I didn't become a Christian because of family tradition.

"I never questioned why they (physical laws) were as they were or thought that they needed a designer..."

After leaving school I embarked on a career in science. Studying for a degree in physics part time and working at Culham for the Atomic Energy Authority throughout the 80s I learnt much about the beauty of the physical laws that describe and determine how our universe operates. I never questioned why they were as they were or thought that they needed a designer, or why the universe existed at all. It wasn't those questions that led me to God.

By 1989 I was happy in my own home in Grove. I was single but friends, cars, motorbikes and sailing kept me happy. Then I found myself, inexplicably, on a skiing trip surrounded by Christians, some of whom came from Grove. I became friends with them.

I began to read the Bible and meet with these friends to talk about what it said. I began to see the Jesus I now found in the Bible was different from all I remembered from Sunday school. So at Christmas I decided to go to their church to find out more. Then, just after Easter in 1990, God made me aware that while I thought I was in control of my destiny, I wasn't. I fell in love with a woman who didn't love me. So I prayed – as you do. I can still remember a vivid impression of Jesus saying to me "So, now you understand. You're not really in control. I'm not promising to make this work but follow me. Trust me and you will know what love really is." So I did. I decided to believe what the Bible told me about Jesus.

I can still conceive of a world like ours without a God. It would make it easier to dismiss suffering, poverty and injustice. I would be able to justify pursuing my own success, comfort and happiness over that of others. But I would have to deny that very real and on-going experience of Jesus presence in my life. And I would lose the certainty that I am loved by God even though I fall short of what God wants me to be.



My faith was a gift from God that night.

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." Matthew 7:7 (NIV)

Paul is Project Director of REInspired, a charity working with churches and schools in Reading

Grove Community Life



What are you hoping to find wrapped up under the tree on Christmas morning? A games console or iPad or mobile phone or maybe all of them? Would that bring a smile to your face?



But what if all you found was some toothpaste or soap perhaps? Or maybe a notebook and a pencil? What about a packet of sweets? Or a woolly hat? Would that bring a smile to your face?

It would to many Eastern Europeans in Romania, Moldova, Albania and Ukraine who endure levels of poverty which have not been seen in this country since the 1920's. So be part of our Shoebox Appeal and help us send *shoe boxes full of smiles* to families in desperate need in Eastern Europe.

The aim of the Shoebox appeal is to provide destitute families with a gift at Christmas. Simple items such as toiletries, small tools, toys and other goodies are packed in an empty shoe box which is gift wrapped and shipped to a number of Eastern European countries for distribution to poor and needy families. These gifts may not seem much to us, but to the families that receive them they are a great encouragement, providing a little bit of "luxury" in their hard lives. It is difficult for us to comprehend the joy these gifts bring, but the smiles on their faces and obvious delight speak volumes to all involved with this work.



For more than 10 years Christians from Wantage and Grove have contributed time, materials and money to support the [Link Romania](#) Christmas Shoebox appeal which in 2010 sent 45,379 shoe boxes. Last year members and friends of Grove Free Evangelical Church packed over 100 shoe boxes for Link Romania (the UK based charity organising this project). Then we thought, "*what if every family in Grove sent a shoe box?*". So our target this year is 1000 shoe boxes, and we are inviting people from our local community to [Old Mill Hall](#), School Lane, Grove, OX12 7LB on Sunday 16th October, to bring small gifts, empty shoeboxes and a concern for the poor this Christmas.

To make this happen we need support from people like you:

- Get involved yourself - put together a shoe box from your family.
- Get friends in your club, school, office or street involved - see if you can pack more shoe boxes than anyone else.
- If you are a local business consider buying or donating from stock some of the items we need.
- Tell others about how they can get involved - share this article on Facebook or Twitter.

For further information on how to become involved, please visit our website at

<http://www.gfec.org.uk/MAG-Force/shoe-box-appeal>

Thank you so very much.

Our next edition of *Hope unlimited* will be our Christmas issue. If there is something you would like us to mention or some subject you would like us to address, please do get in touch.

Email your suggestion to hope@gfec.org.uk or call 210037 and we will certainly consider including it in our Christmas edition.

Thank you.



Remember



**Clocks go back 1 hour on
Sunday 30th October**

Whatever you are facing,
you don't have to face it
alone

Call the
**Grove Prayer
Line**
on
01235 201067



Just leave a confidential
prayer request
(anonymously if you wish)
and a dedicated team will be
praying for you in minutes.
However if you need to
speak to someone, we
would be thrilled to meet
with you.

Or email your prayer request to
prayerline@gfec.org.uk



For families with children under 11
kicks off again on
Friday October 7th.
4:30 - 6:30 p.m.
@ Cornerstone Coffee Shop

Enjoy crafts, table top games, Wii, video
and a meal together

There's no charge, although donations
are always appreciated

Contact Ruth Haynes for details
01235 762868 Funday@gfec.org.uk



Opening hours:
Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm
Sat 10am-4pm

Cornerstone
10 Savile Way
Grove
OX12 0PT



Bibles & Christian Books
Christian CDs & DVDs
Fairtrade Goods
Cards & Gifts

You'll find us near the Co-op in Savile Way

We are open for coffee, tea & cakes all day.
Sandwiches & hot food prepared to order till 2pm.
Free Wi-Fi Internet access

Churches Working Together Serving the Community

Registered Charity No 1046923

**"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever
believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."**

(Gospel of John chapter 3, verse 16 - the Bible)

www.gfec.org.uk



Grove Free Evangelical Church



Meeting at Grove C of E Primary School
North Drive, Grove, Oxfordshire, OX12 7PW

Sunday service times:
10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.



Morning service includes Children's Sunday Club and Youth Groups

Contact us on 01235 210037 (Paul John - Pastor)



www.gfec.org.uk



A WARM WELCOME AWAITS YOU

Registered Charity Number
283079