

TO PROVIDE:

- * A base for a fully functional Independent New Testament Church, according to the Acts of the Apostles.
- * A home church base for missionaries who have the genuine call of God to other lands.
- * Opportunities for those called into the work at Rora to:
 - 1) Gain practical experience in a work environment.
 - 2) Trust God for their needs.
 - 3) Learn to serve the Lord together as a team.
- * A platform for Christian conferences and bible teaching ministry.
- * A base for churches, missions and other Christian groups to run their own seminars.
- * Holidays with fellowship for those in need of refreshment in a Christian atmosphere.



The History of the Work at Rora

Rora Christian Fellowship

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... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem and in Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. Acts 1 v 8

Rora Christian Fellowship is based at Rora House, and comprises an Independent New Testament Church, and a small Christian Conference Centre.

We think that at the time the original house was built at Rora, only a small cottage stood on the site, in the grounds of Rora Farm, which still stands next door. The deeds go back to 1885 when an eight roomed house was constructed, and it became known as Rora House. In 1920 the house became the property of a well known local family, who completely remodelled and added to it. The roof was raised and the servant's flat was built, and the position of the front door, entrance hall, and stairs was altered. At that time, the present library was built, with bedrooms over, on the west side of the house, and a sun lounge with a bedroom over, on the east side. In the early 1960's the house was again sold to a local business man. Unfortunately he became ill soon after the purchase and later died. Again Rora was back on the market. It did not sell very quickly, and looking back, we believe God was reserving it for us, and for His work. We finally purchased Rora in May 1968.

Between the years 1962 and 1968, the Lord was working in our hearts, creating a deep desire for the reality of His presence, and a spiritual hunger for His Word. We also passed through some very difficult times in our farming years, and finally the Lord spoke very clearly to us to move house, and to utterly trust Him for the future. Rora House was one of the properties we looked at, and immediately we entered the house, we knew that this was the Lord's place for us. It was completely beyond human reasoning, far too large, and anyway, we didn't have nearly enough money, but we did have the word of the Lord. So we went ahead in faith, step by step, and four months after first looking at Rora we moved in, on July 19th 1968. This was the beginning of what is now known as The Rora Christian Fellowship.

The meeting hall at Rora is registered as a public place of worship. We bought it for a token price of £5 in 1967, a year before we moved to Rora. It was our first venture of faith. It used to be the Red Cross hut at Teignmouth, and when the new road was to be put through, it had to be moved. We looked at it, decided it was right for our needs (at the time we thought it was to be erected at the farm for youth work), and paid for it. The following day, we received our first gift in the post. It was a £5 note, sent to us by someone who had just stayed with us at the farm, and had been blessed by the Lord there. We didn't actually move it until we had moved to Rora. It was a sectional building and we moved it, and re-erected it ourselves. That was another major miracle, because at that time the only helpers available were teenagers. This wooden building has been a place of blessing for many during the years, and although only a temporary building, has been the church building of the Rora Christian Fellowship now for 37 years. We have now completed another building project. This involves an extension on the dining room, it comprises rooms to accommodate vegetable preparation and baking rooms and a self catering kitchen. Work has now begun on the new church building, which extends on into the garden, beyond the dining room of Rora House. This will house a large and a small meeting room, book room and toilet facilities. Upstairs will be devoted to a games facility for the youth.

Our purpose and vision as a whole church is to live out the life of the Lord Jesus in our daily circumstances wherever we may be, or in whatever we are doing. We want to bring the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to the world, and demonstrate it's relevance for today in everyday life. We none of us need much discernment to see the way in which the world is going, and we are certain that Jesus Christ remains the only sure unshakable rock in a shaking world.

Every meeting is open to all. These meetings take a less formal form than most traditional churches, but nevertheless are orderly and full of participation from the membership. We believe that the Holy Spirit should be allowed to lead the church in every way, through its individual members, as in the early New Testament church.

The church, or fellowship at Rora has quite a number of missionaries, serving the Lord abroad in Mongolia, China, Bolivia, Cambodia and Romania.

The work entails the use of the house for the Lord through conferences weekend and sometimes mid-week, Christian groups, who use the facilities, but run their own programme. The conferences are run by the fellowship at Rora, with the exception of the New Life Summer Conference, which is jointly run by a group of fellowships, who are linked together by a common bond of shared ministry. Rora is also used by individuals needing a place of rest, recovery or spiritual refreshment for short periods. We do not operate as a guest house or hotel, but as an enlarged family, with each person contributing to the running of the whole. There are no set charges for accommodation, but obviously cost is involved, so an estimated cost of stay is recommended on request, based on the annual costs of running the place, therefore enabling the work to continue.

The long term vision involves finishing the new church building and conference facilities and developing the campsite. We are very aware that all these things can only be accomplished by God's grace, and through the prayers and support of His people. Our trust is in Him alone, and may He have all the glory. Thank you for your support, we hope you have been encouraged in the Lord to hear what God can do with just anyone who will trust Him with all that they have and are. May He have all the glory.

When we purchased Rora, we bought it in our own names as a private residence, but within a few years we saw the need to form a registered charitable trust. This was done in 1972, and a board of trustees was appointed. The church however, which in Biblical terms is not the building, but the body of believers, is led by an eldership, approved of, recognized, and appointed by the members of the church.

In 1968 Rora consisted of 26 rooms and 6½ acres of land, which was a field, a small area of woodland, and the garden. A few years later the Lord enabled us to buy another 16 acres, making the whole as we have it now, 22½ acres. The church at that time was very small, and our meetings were held in the original dining room of the house (at that time we used the larger of the two rooms as a dining room). As time went on, and more and more visitors came to Rora for rest and spiritual refreshment, it became obvious that the house was not large enough. By this time the conferences had begun, and the church was also growing. At first we tried to get planning permission for chalets in the woods as accommodation for visitors. This was immediately refused, and we were driven to the Lord for His will in the matter. After a time of prayer and fasting as a whole church, the Lord spoke to us in a very definite word from Isaiah 54 v 2-3. We knew immediately what we should do, this was to extend the building on the west side and on the east side of the existing house. Soon after this, plans were drawn up accordingly, and passed by the relevant planning authorities. Work commenced in 1974 with the 1st stage of the building project, which was a laundry room, a boiler room and a boot room at the back on the west side. We learnt many very hard lessons through the whole building project, but as we pressed on in faith, the Lord honored us in spite of our mistakes.

One vital lesson we learnt, was to only move ahead with the next stage when we knew we had the word of the Lord. This was only obtained as we were united as a church, and in one accord. We made our first big mistake when we began to build the 2nd stage (dining room and kitchen with bedrooms over) without this word from the Lord. We completed the footings, and found that no more money was coming in. We stopped building, put things right as best we could, told the Lord we were sorry, and waited. It was a full 3 years before we were able to start again. It was a very humbling experience as it looked as if the whole project was a mistake. But praise the Lord we were slowly learning God's ways, and He hadn't forsaken us.

In the autumn of 1977 the Lord clearly spoke to us again. He told us to use what we had, and as we had no money, that was just our own manpower and abilities. So one Saturday morning we had a work party and began removing all the accumulated earth and rubbish out of the footings, in faith that this was the time to start again. The following day we received a gift of a lorry load of blocks, and enough money for cement and sand. So stage two was under way. The whole of the rest of the building project was done like this, little by little, here a little, there a little. Sometimes there was enough money for a lorry load of blocks, and a trailer load of cement, sometimes only enough for a trailer load of blocks and a few bags of cement. All the time we used what we had, and as we used it, God gave us more. Most of the work was done by members of the church, the majority of whom had never done anything like it before. The Lord taught us step by step, and there was an amazing sense of unity and fellowship. We saw many miracles during the building project in the realm of finance, and always at exactly the right time. One specific incident was when we were £10 short on a lorry load of cement (£10 was a lot of money in 1978!) and no-one knew about this except Malcolm - we were paying cash on delivery at the time. Just as the lorry was coming up the drive, someone put a £10 note in Malcolm's hand. We saw this as the Lord's love towards us. We believe that in all these seemingly little things God reveals His love and care for us. Nothing is too small for Him to be interested and involved in.

The 3rd stage, on the west side of the house, all bedrooms, was completed in Spring 1986.

The work at first was very small, comprising our own family and a few young people who lived with us and had secular jobs. In the beginning we all lived as one big family, but as time went on, and the number of visitors increased, we recognized the need for each family unit to have their own apartments. We began to eat together only during working hours, as in most other residential establishments. This principle works the same today, and we respect one another's privacy, even though we live in one house. We understood quite early on in the work, that the Lord is very concerned about maintaining individual family units.

The church and the work at Rora, have always been seen as one. The Work is in fact the 'work' of the church. The majority of the members of the church live in their own homes in the local area, and only a small number live and work full time at Rora. From the beginning we have had the vision to operate as much as is possible in these days, as in the New Testament Church. The actual work at Rora, is shared by the whole church, with members who do not live in the house, coming in weekly and helping as necessary with the conferences and weekend groups, as they are able.



The church at Rora is an officially registered, independent, autonomous church, and fulfils all the normal functions of a Spirit filled church. Meetings are held regularly on Sundays and Wednesdays, and there is a basic soup and bread lunch served after each Sunday morning meeting, so that everyone can enjoy fellowship together.