

## Link Letter No.20 September 2015

### Hey kids how are you?

*“Long ago people in England sent their children by train with labels around their necks, so they could be taken care of by complete strangers in the countryside where it was safe. They will not have forgotten how to treat strangers.”*

Have you heard these words before? They were said by Aunt Lucy in Paddington Bear. She was talking about the time when there was a war in England, although people didn't go to live in different countries; many people left their homes in the big cities and went to the countryside and often the children went on their own in order to be safe. I hope that Aunt Lucy's words are right, that we have not forgotten how to treat strangers, because there



Paddington Bear



### Ruth Radley CMS mission partner South Sudan

Ruth is a CMS mission partner seconded to the children's department of Across and serving in Yei, South Sudan. Across is an interdenominational Christian NGO that has worked in (South) Sudan for over 40 years. Ruth's ministry is based on working with churches and communities to help understand and meet children's holistic needs. The years of war in Sudan make this work so vital to a future generation of Sudanese.

will soon be a lot more coming into England.

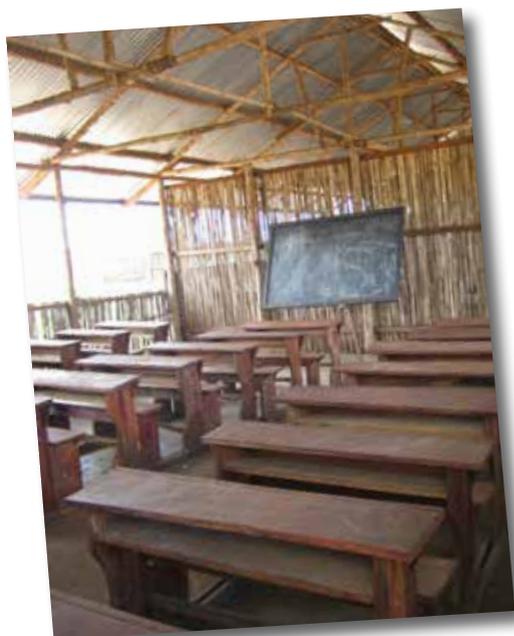
All around the world, there are wars and difficult situations that mean people are often afraid they will die. They can't live a normal life. Every culture does things differently, but for each person, their culture is normal to them – it is how they have grown up – and when we learn more about other people's cultures, we are also blessed.

But there are too many countries at war, or being ruled by people who do not allow people to choose their own faith, and some countries may even kill them for choosing a different faith to theirs. That is what the Bible calls persecution, harming or killing someone because of their faith. Sadly it happens to many Christians all across the world and also happens to others with different faiths and beliefs too.

What do people do when their lives are in danger? What would you do? Mostly we would run to somewhere that was safer. We understand that our lives are precious. That is what lots of people around the world do, including people from my adopted country South Sudan. We had a very long war where lots of people went to Uganda, DR Congo and Ethiopia to live, as it was safer there. Many people had since come back as we had peace, but sadly when the war broke out again in 2013, many people once again started going to different countries to live. When people run away like this, very often they have to leave everything they own behind.



A Yida refugee camp in South Sudan where many people have come from North Sudan fleeing the war in their area



A classroom in Yida; in refugee camps you are not able to make permanent buildings and so this one is made from bamboo and iron sheets

There has just been a peace agreement signed in my country, which we pray really will bring peace, but there are also many other countries suffering from war. Something very sad happened recently, which you may have heard of. A three year old little boy was found on a beach in Turkey. Sadly he had died in the sea when his family were in a boat which had capsized as they were trying to find a safe country to live in because their country, Syria, is at war. Since this sad thing happened, more people seem to be speaking out about how we need to help people in need like this. There are some people who are scared that people will come and only take things from us and not give anything back to the community they are living in. I get sad when I hear people talking about “*them and us*”. One friend once

told me that Jesus never talked about “them and us”. He always talked about all of us together, and made it clear that everyone, no matter where they are from, what language they speak, what their culture is, or whether they are old or young, or a girl or a boy, everyone is as important as each other.

England is not a perfect place, and we also have our problems – we have people who can’t afford to eat and who rely on foodbanks or who do not have a place to sleep. But I also know that we are so blessed to live in a peaceful country, and many people still have so much food that some is thrown away. Also, if we are sick, we can go to get treatment without worrying if we can afford it and every child can go to school, whether their parents have enough money or not. Lots of people in the world do not have these things.

When He was a baby, Jesus was a refugee! You can read about it in Matthew 2:13-14. If His parents had not taken Him to Egypt, He would have been killed as a baby. He had to go to be safe. Even further back, in the Old Testament, the Hebrews also lived in Egypt. But there they were slaves, and not treated well at all. There is a verse in the Bible which reminds the Hebrews that once they lived in a foreign land: *“When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-*



Supplies coming in and stored for refugees

*born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”* Leviticus 19:33-35.

The book of Leviticus is one of the “law” books, the rules as to how people were to live, and here they are told that foreigners are to live as anyone born from that country. But in a verse before this one, God shows even more as to how to treat foreigners,



A church in Yida



Ensuring that a water supply is in a village

Leviticus 19:10: “Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.” I think that this means we are not to keep everything that is ours to ourselves, even if we worked hard for it, but to share with others who are in need. In these verses, the Bible doesn’t say what made people move to live in a different country, but it’s clear to me that God expects that foreigners will come, and when they do, they are to be welcomed and

loved, not treated badly or unjustly.

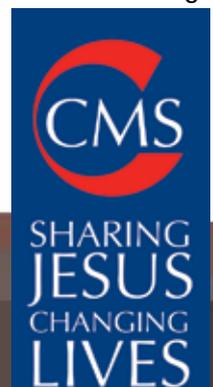
If I had had to leave my home, my friends and possibly even my family because something bad was happening there, I would hope that there would be people somewhere who would welcome me and make me feel loved and valued. How about you? If you find that in your town, there are some refugees coming to live, how can you welcome them and encourage them?

Blessings and thanks again for all your support,

Love

*Ruth*

[www.cms-uk.org](http://www.cms-uk.org)



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