

RAILHOPE NEWSLETTER INTERNATIONAL 2025

Vision
We live hope...

Mission
... by connecting Christians in railroads and public transport systems worldwide; praying for each other and our companies, encouraging an authentic life with Jesus Christ.

Passion
We promote and combine faith and life in the professional world. Through our thoughts, speech and actions we seek to grow in and to be inspired by a relationship with Jesus Christ. With passion, we serve our colleagues and seek their common welfare and well-being and we honour the biblical God.

RailHope International

Red light and green light are important colours for signalling an occupied or free track for a train. In the same manner we are requested to take care of God's signalling for our daily lives and mission work.

When God gives you a green light, you must go. And when He gives you a red light, you must stop. Paul and his friends went through Phrygia and Galatia, but the Holy Spirit would not let them preach in Asia. After they arrived in Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirits of Jesus would not let them. So, they went on through Mysia until they came to Troas. During the night, Paul had a vision of someone from Macedonia who was standing there and begging him, *«Come over to Macedonia and help us!»* After Paul had seen the vision, we began looking for a way to go to Macedonia...sure that God had



called us to preach the good news there (vv. Acts 16:6 – 10). Only after a series of red lights, God gave Paul a green light. Why?

1 Because the timing wasn't right. Apollos had to go there first and lay the groundwork.

2 Because God needed Paul and Barnabas elsewhere.

3 Because God wanted them to be more seasoned before embarking on such a major mission. Note the words, *«They tried to go...but the Spirit...would not let them.»* (Verse 7) How reassuring! God loves you so much that He will save you from your own misguided plans. Today God may be saying to you, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted (in this situation)' (Psalm 46:10 NKJV). Please pay attention!

Ulrich Berger (CH),
President of RailHope International (RHI)

Participants and delegates at the continental RailHope Africa Festival 2024 in Cape Town. In the background Table Mountain.





The international RailHOPE group of visitors in front of the empty train ready to depart at the departure and train station Salkor to the mine areas about 900 km away.

WORLDWIDE NETWORK

Africa

South Africa

In March 2024 RailHOPE South Africa invited to Cape Town for the continental RailHOPE Africa Festival. With international support, a pastoral care service for employees of African railways was to be developed. The model were the full-time «chaplains» who provide pastoral care in and after acute situations in the secular environment of the British railways. A team of them accepted the invitation and passed on many years of encouraging experience in workshops at the Cape of Good Hope.

The name «Chaplain» is originally a military term for the pastoral care of troops by a clergyman.



«Professional and personal challenges can also give rise to spiritual and existential questions. Chaplain ministry can help here.»

Stephen Rowe, GB,
Chaplain Euston Station

The nickname was later transferred to other service sectors, such as schools, prisons, hospitals and, in our case, railway staff. In Switzerland, the name «RailPastor» (Shepherd)

was chosen because it is also practically identical to «Pasteur» and «Pastore» in French-speaking and Italian-speaking part of Switzerland. In their pastoral role, RailPastors ultimately care for and accompany people in their needs and concerns.

Serving passionately

It is not a title or designation that is decisive, but how and with what motivation people are served. Stephen Rowe (English Chaplain in Euston Station London) has also emphasized this again and again in Cape Town and explains further: «It's about the well-being of the people who work in the complex railway systems. Certain occupational groups, such as drivers who work in shifts, are often exposed to stressful events, but also to personal challenges. It is about community-promoting elements such as exchange ideas and 'getting something off your chest', and about conveying encouraging words in difficult times. We are present to serve people without profit, impartially and passionately, just as Jesus served people.»

Absorbing negative consequences

Stressful events like accidents, threats of violence, and rail suicides often have significant consequences. Strong emotional and/or physical reactions can occur immediately or later that affect their lives. In the case of experiences of loss, prolonged illness or inability to work, separations, etc., existential and stressful questions can also arise such as: Why me? Why does God allow this? What comes after death? Why doesn't God hear my prayers? etc. These are questions that also show the human being as a holistic, indivisible unity with body, soul and spirit. Early on, the Bible emphasised this unity of man, later also Alfred Adler (physician and founder of

«If your passion and goal is greater than your fears and excuses, you will find a way.»

Charity Schutte, SA,
Train Driver & Certification
Expert at Transnet



individual psychology, 1870 – 1937). Biblically based pastoral care ultimately always focuses on the holistic person. Mental and physical problems often have their origin in alienation from the Creator and must also be analysed spiritually. Wrong goals combined with exaggerated ambition, comparative thinking, unforgiveness have a toxic effect on those affected in the

long term. Conclusion: Without a creator, the creature is quickly exhausted.

Exchange of experiences

The RailHOPE Festival Africa 2024 in Cape Town was attended by European, Asian, American and African railway workers. The aim is to encourage our African friends in their cause, supporting and caring for railway employees

in the future has certainly been successful. This helps to create an environment in which God's love can be lived and shared naturally. What is needed are suitable people who will take up this approach and patiently develop it in their cultural context. In any case, the musical contributions were heavenly, the exchange of experiences valuable and the international community cordial.

Freight trains with a length of almost four kilometres

Another highlight of the event was an organised excursion to the Saldanha Bay Depot, around 150 kilometres from Cape Town. Here we had the unique opportunity to watch the longest freight train in Africa with a length of almost four kilometres forming and the attaching

of the locomotives. These massive trains, pulled by six locomotives, transport ore from the mines to the ports by the sea and testify to the efficiency of a modernised railway system in South Africa.

Ulrich Berger, President of RailHOPE International
www.railhope.net

«We are not perfect, but we do our best. This attitude relaxes and makes our work excellent.»

Thomas Schmidhauser, CH,
SBB Cargo train driver



Europe

*End of June beginning July 2024
I started my mission trip by train.
That journey took me through the
following countries: Germany –
Austria – Hungary – Romania – Bul-
garia – Greece (Athens) and back via
North Macedonia – Serbia – Croatia
– Slovenia – Austria via Germany
back to the Netherlands. The aim
was to find railway Christians along
the way.*

Romania

Here is a short report from Romania. On Wednesday I started at Oradea station and met the train driver Nicolae Meszaros, the conductors Ianos Hasaga and Ramona (she didn't want to give her surname) and the wagon master Marim Varga. They also wanted a calendar at the ticket office... As there were only a few trains running, I was only able to get to Arad in the afternoon. There I met the conductors Aurel Ianovici, Daniel Opre, shunter Lughu Versigan and Ioan Oprea. They all received our RailHope calendar and sometimes our RHI-Newsletters if they spoke some English. I have to be a bit careful with distributing calendars, because I have already distributed 20 out of 40 calendars... There were also other railway Christians, but it was sometimes very hectic, and of course they were working.

I was still able to travel to Timisoara (with thunderstorms on the way), but it was already late in the evening when I got there. So, I went to the youth hostel first. The next day I'll be travelling from Timisoara North to Bucharest and won't arrive until after midnight.

Thank you for all the prayers!

Maarten Pijnacker Hordijk
(NL, RHI Network Coordinator Europe)



▼ Maarten Pijnacker Hordijk met many railwaymen on his trip to Eastern Europe and shared RHI-Calendars.



▲ RailHope Asia Festival will take place in Singapore from 9 to 13 October 2025



The RailHope Journey will end in Rautiala/Finland

RailHope Journey 2025

Journey with train, bus and ferry **June, 12 – 20** from Warsaw over the Baltic capitals to Tampere: In the 200th anniversary of the modern railway. Exciting cities and beautiful landscapes are waiting to be discovered on our journey.

Let yourself be inspired by the uniqueness of the countries and cultures and join us on a varied journey through the north of Europe. On the way, we will hand out the RailHope calendar and there will be musical interludes from time to time. Optionally, this journey can be extended with the weekend **June, 20 – 22**.

On this weekend the General Assembly of RailHope International with delegates from different countries and the midsummer festival in Rautiala, the venue of RailHope Finland, will take place. For more information and booking please visit the website: www.railhope.net

Asia

RailHope Asia Festival 2025

We are pleased to furnish details of the RailHope Asia Festival **9 – 13 October 2025** to be held in Singapore. It is our prayer that you will attend this event together with your family. Welcome!

Accommodation

YWCA Fort Canning is a downtown venue, located at 6 Fort Canning Road, Singapore 179494. The 4 Star Christian lodging was founded in 1875 and has a walkable link to Dhoby Ghaut Train Station and Fort Canning Park, which is known for its lush greenery, historical landmarks and cultural events.

Visit ywcafortcanning.org.sg for more details.

Packaged Rate

Each adult pays SGD 750.-, based on twin sharing. Single occupancy, charges are SGD 1.150.-. The price includes four nights, four breakfast & four dinner. (The prevailing GST and taxes have been included).

Sponsored items

RailHope Singapore sponsors the following:

- 2 Bento Box Lunch
- Excursion to Sentosa Island on Saturday.
- Free public transport cards.

Registration

Please register with details: Title/First Name/Last Name (Family Name), Date of Birth/E-mail Address/ Phone Number, Passport Number/Country of Issue

Please register **before 31st July 2025** with all details to:

singapore@railhope.net

Milton Lazarus, RailHope Singapore



Global RailHope Festival 2026

The RailHope International 100-years Jubilee will be held in Interlaken Switzerland.

Date: 2026, August 13 – 19

Arrival: Thu 13 August (before dinner)

Jubilee: Fr to Sun 14 – 16, August

Excursions: Mo & Tue 17 – 18, August (optional)

Departure: Wed 19 August (after breakfast)

Donations for this event are very welcome with the note «Fund for Support».



Co-Working?

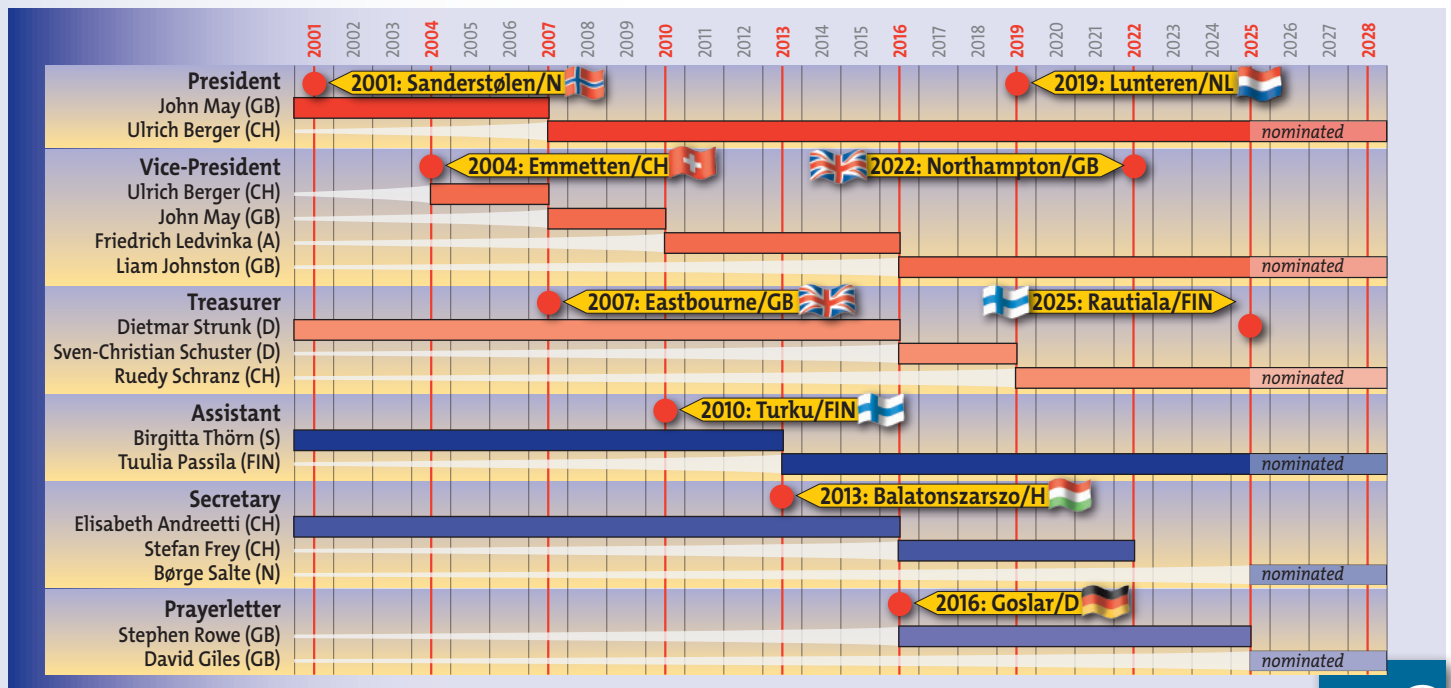
In addition to working railway workers, people with no direct connection to the railway, such as pastors and occasionally bishops, are also involved in RailHope International's networking work. If these brothers and sisters share RailHope's «vision, passion and mission», this can be very helpful in networking Christians in railways and sharing the gospel. In order to have a lasting impact at the grassroots level, we need above all Christians in railways and public transport who know the RailHope vision, live it and are present in

the workplace. In some RailHope associations, the proportion of retired brothers and sisters is far higher than that of working people. This applies to the USA, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands. Here, it has not yet been possible to bring about a generational change. This also applies to the board of RailHope International (RHI). With this graphic, we would like to inform and motivate people to work on the RHI board so that it remains dynamic as possible. The goal is that after the 2025-2028 term of office, the RHI President and the RHI Treasurer can be replaced by an active railway worker. **How about you?**

We are praying according to the motto: **«God give us light and courage for the next step, but not a headlight for the whole way.»**

It was important for me to share these thoughts with you and I greet you all warmly with an encouragement from the Apostle Paul from 1 Corinthians 15:56: **«My dear brothers and sisters, remain strong in the faith. Do not let anything discourage you. Always devote yourselves completely to the work of the Lord. Because you belong to the Lord, you know that your work is not worthless.»**

Yours, Ulrich Berger (RHI President)



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RailHope international (RHI)