

## Ruth Andersen

21<sup>st</sup> January, 1937 - 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2024



***Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.***  
***(Hebrews 13:20-21)***

Ruth Andersen (née Hookins) was born in Bath, England, the second daughter of a cabinet maker, William (Bill) Hookins, and a home maker, Gladys Clifford. She grew up in Bath during the war and in post-war Britain.

Despite having no relatives in the Church or mission field, Ruth developed an interest in missionary work from an early age. This interest was greatly influenced by Sunday school at Widcombe Baptist Church, where she learnt about the mission work in India supported by the church. Ruth's desire to become a mission nurse began with seeing the photographs and hearing the stories told by missionaries visiting her Church - learning about the struggles faced by people in far off places inspired in her a real passion for going out and helping people where there was a need.

Ruth did 6 years of training, including nurses training, midwifery, and Bible school and missions training, as well as gaining some experience in hospitals in the UK, before she was able to go out to Kenya as an AIM mission nurse. But it was good training and stood her in good stead for the challenges ahead of her in Kenya. Towards the end of her training Ruth began to feel strongly that she wanted to go to the Turkana area in Kenya. She had seen pictures of terribly emaciated people there following a period of famine and learnt that there were no hospitals or medical work in the region. At the time the Northern Frontier District (NFD) was considered a no-go zone, due to conflict. When the NFD opened up, some missionary doctors started a hospital in this region and this is where Ruth eventually went on to work.

When Ruth left for Kenya on a ship, in 1964 aged 27, she had never been beyond the shores of Britain before. She left everything she knew behind and moved to a country where she didn't know anyone, not knowing whether she would ever return or whether she would see her family again. When she arrived in Kenya, she began what she thought would be several months of induction and language training in Kijabe. However, due to a nurse becoming ill in Lokori, after only two months in Kijabe she travelled straight out to spend a month assisting with the nursing work at the remote mission station at Lokori in Turkana - she ended up staying there for two years.

Ruth met her husband, Herbert Andersen (Dilly), who was also an AIM missionary, in Lokori when he came to fix the water system at the mission station. Ruth and Dilly got married in Nairobi in 1966 and had two daughters, Carolyn and Heather, who were both born in Kenya and grew up helping out with their mission work throughout Northern Kenya.

Ruth's life and career were a testament to her faith, to God's amazing faithfulness in making so much possible, and to her great heart for serving others. After their marriage, Ruth and Dilly went on to work in Kalokol, Gatab, Logologo, and then Kalacha, where they served for 27 years. They often lived and worked out of tents in remote locations, including working along the Ethiopian border building clinics and putting in airstrips for doctors' visits.

The life of a mission nurse was full of challenges. From running remote clinics and lifesaving vaccination programs for diseases such as polio and measles, to delivering babies in remote manyattas, to treating warriors injured in a fight with a lion or a young girl who was attacked by a crocodile. Ruth both worked alongside and served people from many backgrounds and tribes - all so different from her own. She worked amongst Turkana, Samburu, Rendille, Gabbra and Boran people. Ruth worked in dispensaries, visiting homes and manyattas, running remote clinics and supporting Dilly's work developing and building churches, clinics, schools, roads, water systems, and airstrips. She raised her two daughters in remote villages full of dust, heat and unexpected challenges.

After Ruth and Dilly retired from the mission in 2004, they remained in Kenya, living in Laikipia and Meru Counties at Ol Kateti and then at Pembeni, near Carolyn's family.

Towards the end of her life Ruth endured several years of poor health, including almost entirely losing her eyesight, but she did so with incredible grace and resilience. She never failed to stay positive and remained a faithful woman of prayer, continuing to serve people in daily prayer when she became immobile and was no longer able to serve people practically. Ruth died, aged 87, at her home Pembeni with Dilly, and Ngina and Bancy (two ladies who helped to take care of her), by her side. When she died she was ready to go home and it is a great comfort to Dilly and her family to know that she is no longer suffering and that we will meet her again in a better place.

We give thanks for Ruth, for the grace and mercy she received from God, for all that was good in her life, and for the memories we treasure today. At Ruth's request we held a small gathering of immediate family for her cremation - we have faith that by the grace of Jesus Christ we will join with her in celebration with so many of her friends and family in the next life. We ask that in place of gathering for a memorial (which was not something Ruth wanted), all who knew Ruth remember her in prayer and in acts of kindness towards others, in keeping with Ruth's life of service to the Lord and to others in need, no matter what their tribe or background.

We give thanks to the Lord for a life well lived and a race well finished in service of the Lord.

*"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith" 2 Timothy, 4:7*

Sending prayers and love to all of Ruth's many friends and family.



