

Paul B's Summer News



JULY 2011

Once again (seems to be usual in recent years!) my apologies for my newsletter being somewhat late. As usual, too, there's always a reason! I've been waiting for news on the USA 'Visagate' saga: I send out enough emails without constantly deluging your inbox/letterboxes with more.... I'll get to the USA further on!

I do hope and pray that 2011 hasn't been too hard for you: so many jobs going, pension strikes, austerity cuts... it's wonderful that God is our provider, isn't it, and that he meets ALL of our needs. Bill Johnson once said he'd done an 'in depth, theological word study' on 'all' – and, amazingly, it means – all! What an amazing year it's been so far, in every way – from events, disasters, tragedies, blessings, wars, the Middle East, countries going bankrupt... absurd weather, too! I'm so glad that when Paul said to the Romans 'Where evil increases, there grace will increase even more' – he meant it... With all that is happening, it would be so easy to fear, panic, become desperate, but we have a God who calmly says 'don't fear' when everything seems to be going wrong.

During the past months, I've read Matthew 24 so many times: wars, rumours of wars (BUT – 'see to it that you are not alarmed' 'Don't be afraid, I've overcome the world' – Jesus), nation against nation, famines, earthquakes, persecution, many losing their faith, false prophets (by the way, DID the world end on May 21, and I missed it...??!??), increase of wickedness – BUT!!! The gospel of the Kingdom will be preached to the whole world. So isn't this just the most amazing time to be alive? The acceleration of the world towards the end is going to more than match the acceleration of God using ordinary people, those left standing firm, to see the Kingdom come.... I'm so glad to be alive in 2011! I feel that this must be the most exciting generation that we could possibly be alive in – and we are a privileged people to be called, chosen, and anointed for such a time as this....

*So much has happened since the last newsletter: many trips (what's new?!), lots of preaching, praying for (literally) thousands of people. In December, I was in **SWEDEN**, in the cities of Kungsängen, Orebro, & Gothenburg; in January, in **ENGLAND, & MEXICO**; IN February **MEXICO & NORTHERN IRELAND**; IN March, **SCOTLAND**; April **COLOMBIA**; May all over **ENGLAND**; June **ENGLAND & NORTHERN IRELAND**.*

*On the horizon for the coming months are **ROMANIA, AUSTRALIA, COLOMBIA, MEXICO, CHILE, & KENYA**, possibly **ISRAEL, UGANDA** or **INDIA**. All being well, at some point in the next few months (still not definite as yet!) I'll be back in the USA. I'm so, so blessed, and grateful to God, to have this house in Northern Ireland, it really IS home, and for the first time in many years, I really look forward to **COMING** home – especially when I know I've been 'instructed' by so many (including my Rhinos mates) to rest – I realised soon after coming here that I didn't really know how to do that, & it's been a delight to begin to learn (!): it **DOES** help having an abundance of sport on TV – I've watched cricket, football, and tennis ad nauseum! I still love what God has called me to do: I can't (humanly) see a day when that will end, even though in just over 6 years time, I'll be the proud beneficiary of my £10 (\$16) a month pension from the bank I used to work for...!*

That should be life-changing.... ☺



My Rhino mates have made into the national press now.....

I'm so grateful to the Lord that opportunities and invitations still keep coming! Truth is, at heart, I guess I'm still somewhat insecure, and always wonder why people don't invite 'real' preachers, but being thrilled that I keep being asked, often asked **BACK**, which I reckon is a **REAL** privilege! I was speaking recently at the bi-annual camp of a church in Worcester (more of that later!) – their previous camp speaker had been Ken McGreavy, truly one of the most anointed and wise men of God, wonderful Bible teachers, that I've ever known.

Ken never became really 'famous' like some, as a preacher, (whatever that might mean), the thing for me that singled Ken out – who sadly (for us) - went to be with the Jesus he so loved & served not so long ago, was that, many years ago, God gave him a choice. The choice was – 'Ken, **do you want significance, or prominence?**' If you knew Ken, you'll know that his answer was 'significance, hence his lack of 'fame'. But man, was he significant...

I've never verbalised that in my own life in quite that way, but my heart's desire has been, wherever possible, to go to the poor, the marginalised nations, and the 'dangerous' places, where foreign preachers won't go, and my prayer, since recalling Ken's testimony, is that my life will be significant, not because of who I am, but through what God does, and that I'll never be 'famous'....

SWEDEN

So good to back in this wonderful country, with so many lovely friends... Stojan & Soila in Kungsängen, Vello & Ingalill in Orebro, Ulf & ElseMarie in Gothenburg (and their large fantastic family!). But boy, was it COLD!!!! My phone told me at times it was -25C (what else are phones for?), but there were some fantastic meetings, wonderful socialising with those dear friends, and some lovely testimonies to God's grace... in GOTHENBURG, I SO wanted to stay at Ulf & ElseMarie's home: BUT... they have I think 111 steps up to their house. If you've read my news before, you'll know that I seriously damaged my knee last June, and stairs have been interesting since then. Throw in thick, packed ice, and fresh snow, on each step, and those particular stairs became even more interesting! Well, I went up and down a good number of times (and you couldn't hold the handrail for more than a couple of seconds as your hand 'burned' to it with the ice!), without any discomfort... so it gave me faith to know that if God could heal my knee for 4 days, there will be permanent healing ahead! Great, great meeting with the wonderful church, 'The House', there, too.



In OREBRO, some lovely meetings, where God graciously turned up (!), I met the man in the picture to the left (no, not me!) – a Ghanaian, from +25C preaching in Sweden -25C! I'd rehearsed my only recallable Ghanaian words, but as we met, we both realised we knew each other. He is the Revd. James Godlly (great name, huh?!)... turns out, I'd spoken on his Youth with a Mission school in Tema, Ghana, in 1991: he'd been asking God for the opportunity to meet me again since that time! I'd spoken on 'Goals, Dreams, & Visions' – and he graciously told me that some of that teaching formed the Missions

Statement for the churches and Overseas mission that he has established in West Africa & further afield. I found it incredibly humbling, to be honest: but made me so thankful to God that, even though almost 20 years had elapsed, something that God had given me to share was still producing fruit.... All being well, I plan to go out to be with James in Ghana next year.... hopefully with Vello & Ingalill, from this Swedish city!

Oh... and by the way, since the photograph above was taken with James.... I've lost 3½ stone in weight! (For the Americans... that's nearly 50 pounds, and for everyone else, about 22 kilos! Another 50-60 pounds, 4 stone, 25 kilos, will do nicely.....

In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer.

Albert Camus

MEXICO always has been, and I reckon always will be, one of my favourite places: these past few years, though, have seen a massive increase in (mostly) drug-related violence, political unrest, and a huge increase in poverty. There are some wonderful Christians



there, though, and it's my privilege to be involved with Mundo de Fe (World of Faith) churches there, in Mexico City, and Puebla. My dear friends the Osorio family in Mexico City, have a lovely church in Azcapotzalco, where I love speaking and praying for people. Last September, Benny Osorio, now very much an apostolic young man, took me to Puebla, where I met German (pronounced Herman) & Isabelle Muñoz: spoke to their leaders, and in February, had the delight of preaching in their church. God wonderfully healed Isabelle last trip: I also got to pray with Paula, pictured below with her husband, John. Paula, a teacher, was struggling for work, John was out of work, and she was desperate. Then, God told her to give me everything she had with her, which she did: an apple (no, not computer/ipad/phone!). It was so hard to take it, it was perhaps her only food of the day. You can imagine, I think, how wonderful it was to see her – and John, this time – in church, looking well, laughing, the stress seemingly to have gone... What happened in the meantime? Well, God proved that He is God....



Almost immediately, Paula started to get students, to the point where she couldn't take any more: John had a call offering him work (he's an accountant) with DeLoitte's, just one of the top 4 such firms in the world.... I cried and laughed with them, but I really believe it was as a result of Paula's sacrifice, giving God the 'opening' he needed to prove that you cannot 'out-give' him, and that to give what we don't have in order to get what we can't lose is so real...

Please pray for Mexico – so much violence, flooding, social issues: Colombia, too. Mostly, the disasters in countries like these don't make our news, but in Colombia, for instance, 3 million have lost their homes in the extensive and abnormal flooding in the past year. Mexico is not dissimilar.

‘VISAGATE’ rolls on (my brother-in-law, Derek, coined it that!). It is now 26 months since I was last in the USA... many months of documentation preparation, immense wisdom on the part of my wonderful immigration lawyer, Gunnar Armstrong, huge (for me) sums of money having to be raised and spent even just to be able to put my foot back on American soil.... last year, the petition for my permanent residence status was sent in: many months of waiting, files sent to the wrong place by the immigration service, and then, in March, approval from that service – not to go back, but the approval for me to apply for the necessary visa TO go back! Talk about convoluted.... well, that involved yet more cost, and, for those of you know London, you’ll know what this means – a medical at the US appointed visa doctor’s surgery – which just happens to be close to Mayfair and Park Lane... Monopoly all over again: the medical cost the other arm and leg that this whole saga hadn’t yet removed!

The very fact that I have reached ‘medical’ status, AND now have a date for my visa interview, at the US Embassy in London, is a big step towards being able to go to the USA again. My interview date is 19th August. From what I understand, I have to go to the USA first time within 6 months of the visa being granted – assuming (!!) that it is. Truth is, every time in these past 2 years and 2 months (so far) that I get sight of the finishing line, it seems to move... so even though this is a big development, I’m not in the least bit expectant just yet! I’ve also had to plan for the months ahead not knowing when this might drop out of the blue, so a good bit of the next few months is sort of spoken for!

I’d value your prayers for 19th August, and for the whole financial implications that this saga has cost, and, doubtless, will continue to cost. You’d be shocked if you knew how much that is!

There have been ‘knock on’ implications, too: I was interrogated in Canada on my to and from Colombia in April, the return ‘conversation’ with a particularly hostile man, who clearly had not got his facts straight, and told me I was being questioned because ‘it’s obvious you have a criminal record in the United States’. I’m taking advice on how to complain officially about this ‘gentleman’, especially as Canada is a Commonwealth country, and as a Brit I shouldn’t have any problem visiting there: in fact, I was due to be in Canada for just 30 minutes between connecting flights when he, er, introduced himself to me....!!

When I CAN return to or transit interesting looking at

through the USA, it’s going to be the diary!

News from visits around the UK!

So many opportunities this year! Two ‘regular’ churches kicked off the year – Brownhill Road Baptist, Catford, and Green Street Green Baptist, Orpington. Both lovely meetings. My cousin and her son & daughter in law came to Catford: the first time I’ve seen Raye for 36 years, meaning that John, her son was 7 then... Another ‘becoming regular’ church, Old Town Community Church, Eastbourne has been on the agenda twice this year: and Worthing Tabernacle was lovely to go back to. It was an immense blessing to pray for people for about 90 minutes after that service! A men’s breakfast (always appreciated!) at Towerview Free Methodist, in Bangor, was a blessing too. Twelve days in Scotland – fantastic time – some wonderful healings, still hearing about some ongoing, in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Troon: through a meeting at Glasgow City Mission, I was connected with the amazing Causeway Coast Vineyard Church, in Coleraine. What a delight it is to be building a relationship with them, such a ‘happening’ church out of which has come the ‘Healing on the Streets’ ministry. A fantastic evening with their Ballymena campus in April, and 3 amazing services in Coleraine, early in June, were just astonishing. Dozens and dozens healed there! Visits to Bridport Christian Fellowship, City Church Plymouth, a home fellowship in Kingsbridge, Devon: back to Eastbourne, to Old Town Community Church, and St Michael’s & All Angels (I lived for many years about a mile from this church, and never preached there until I lived a long way away!!) – lovely meetings, all of them, with many prayed for. An FGB dinner in Bexhill was lovely too: seems that the National Director of FGB was healed that evening! Melton Mowbray Vineyard was a lovely return visit: so good to see what God’s doing there through Neal & Eluned – and in all these places – something’s changing in the UK which is very exciting! And to have the delight of speaking at the annual Trust day for my mate, Simon Allaby – his trust is ‘6:19’ (based on Ephesians) – that was a great privilege too. A small home meeting in Aghadowey since I’ve been back in Ireland, was a great blessing too. The bi-annual camp of City Church, Worcester, was a wonderful weekend (yes, even in a field, but the weather was great!). Some healings, many blessed, including me, and the joy of catching up with Graham & Anne, and Rick & Liz, who are part of that church, whom I’d not really caught up with since being at Roffey Place in 1984! Also, many good, key connections made with lots of people, for the future!

COLOMBIA



Could a newsletter go by WITHOUT a report from Colombia?? I doubt it! Fantastic 19 days in my favourite place... Alan, my terrific Bangorian friend, was with me: an astonishing trip, yet again. So many miracles, people saved... I feel like a record with a scratch sometimes saying such words! Healings on the street, in Plaza de Caicedo (which 'connects' the business district in Cali to a market area, theoretically 'unsafe' for tourists to go to)... with Hendrik & Willmar, pastors of the lovely 'El Abrigo' church. Prayed for, perhaps, 30 people in 90 minutes – every one of them healed – including the young lady in the picture. Asked what her name was: she indicated she was deaf and dumb, so my Spanish was lip-readable, which was the first blessing! 3 minutes later, on the street, and just before the picture was taken, she told me her name was Monica, speaking & hearing perfectly! That's Hendrik in the background praying with someone else....legs grew, pain went, illnesses disappeared. In a church in the north, amongst many to respond was a lady with a massive brain tumour, & secondary in her right breast, very aggressive, due for imminent (but already advised to be unlikely successful) surgery. Two minutes later, she started to shout, laugh, cry: the pressure and headache in her head had gone, she'd felt the tumour disappear: I told her to examine her breast when she got home, as that one would have gone too... did she wait until she was in her bedroom?? Like heck she didn't!! A huge very loud and laughing right-breast examination later, during which she tried to grab my hand for me to check (!!), and that one had gone too... By the way, I managed to exercise my arm muscles sufficiently before anywhere near the point of impact! And then there was Veronica: crippled by a motorbike accident when Alan & I last saw her, 18-24 months ago: leg totally wrecked, the likelihood of walking a distant vain hope... DANCING at the front of the church where we prayed for her, with nothing more than a small white scar on her knee as a reminder of the miracle! I could spend the whole newsletter telling you more stories: of course I COULD come to your church to speak, to tell them... ☺



In November, all being well, Mark Marx, Healing on the Streets founder, from the Causeway Coast Vineyard, Coleraine, is going with me to Cali, maybe Bogota & Ibague too: to launch HOTS there... along with, hopefully (!) Simon Allaby 6:19 Trust), Alan Gouck (my special mate - you know him!), Gerry Page, and Glyn Moreton (Eastbourne) – a dynamite team! Watch this space...maybe the whole next newsletter will be about Colombia! SO looking forward to you guys all being there.....

And, as you can see in the picture on the left, the Rhinos boys have finally gone global...the only 'risk' though is the excess of enjoyment of each other's company, friendship, and ministry.....

DIARY

JULY

ROMANIA, ISRAEL, EGYPT (tbc)

24 BRIDPORT CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

25/26 WEYMOUTH, HEALING ROOMS

AUGUST

(Was planning Australia, but now...)

19 US EMBASSY INTERVIEW

SEPTEMBER

AUSTRALIA

30-2 OCT LOOSE BAPTIST CHURCH, MAIDSTONE

OCTOBER (RHINOS 4-6!)

MEXICO

NOVEMBER

COLOMBIA

So, a busy year so far: busy to come, for which I thank God. I'm as always so grateful for your prayers, your love, invitations, and support. I could do (and would be) nothing without you. I'd really value your prayers in the whole health arena: imminent 'threats' of diagnoses for various things, have, thankfully, come and gone. But, as someone whose passion is to pray for the sick, I'm very aware of my 'vulnerability' in that area for attack from the enemy.

I'd value your prayers, too, for finance: the recession has meant that my regular gift support has dropped dramatically, at a time when I have the rent of the house in Ireland, as well as all the USA associated costs (massive!). If you can help, I'd always be grateful to hear from you: Stewardship are an immense blessing, processing the gift support I do have (P O Box 99, Loughton, Essex IG10 3QJ: Paul Bennison, Acct 20028331). Cheques to the address below are always a wonderful blessing too!

Again, I want to thank God for the amazing 'Rhinos' group of men, who love me, carry me, beat me up, bless me, re-commission me. Thank you, guys, all of you. You're first in my diary every year.... God bless you all, reading this, astonishingly this summer! **Paul Bennison, 61 Belfast Road, Bangor, Co. Down BT20 3PW (07976529325 or 02891 456947)**

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