

Paul Bennison's

CHRISTMAS NEWS

Well, annual newsletter in reality!

"I know that my Redeemer lives... I myself will see him, with my own eyes...." Job 19:25 & 27

Where has 2009 gone? In some respects, it has passed quicker than any year I've known: in other respects, it has been the longest year I can remember! I'm writing this (as usual!) in November, so let me be amongst the first to wish you a very blessed and peaceful Christmas, and one of joy. For many people I know, circumstances dictate that 'merry' might not describe the season, but the truth is, whatever we are going through, God is STILL God, and joy is ALWAYS there for us, a choice, the gift of God that gives us strength. What a remarkable God: what an undeniable truth - the joy of the Lord IS our strength. That God gave us Jesus, to ensure that whatever promise God has made, it is YES because of Jesus, is totally overwhelming. What can we live through, go through, or experience, that is not covered by the promises of God? There may be times when joy, or the fulfilment of God's promises seem a long way off, but they most certainly ARE there. Rejoice, and be glad, because of Jesus.

The past twelve months have seen many high points, some incredibly low points, some real blessings, and some tough struggles. But Jesus, whilst promising life in all it's fullness, also promised that in this world we will have trouble.... BUT, He's overcome the world. While my experiences this year pale into nothing compared to those of many others, trouble has been there trying to bring me down to the level of those who don't believe in Jesus, but there WILL be victory, because the Bible is true! More about the 'trouble' later.... God has still been showing himself strong, doing 'the stuff' as that amazing man of God John Wimber used to say.

My apologies for not sending out any other 'official' newsletters this year: but many of you will have received pretty frequent email updates or, hopefully, snail mail letters, as the year has passed. As we look back over the past year, so much has changed in the world, relationships between countries, wars, governmental impropriety and corruption, as well as the ongoing recession affecting an increasing number of lives. Many of us are victims of the attack of the enemy in his various guises, but God is still God, and where evil abounds, there, grace will abound the more!

The year began on a bit of a flat note, as I was really looking forward to going to Alaska in January, but, sadly, it was postponed until 2010. Now I'm unable to go in 2010 due to the foibles of US immigration, but I'm still looking forward to getting there one day! (More about those foibles later!).

During the course of the year, it has been a real privilege to be in **England, Northern Ireland** many times(!), **Scotland, Sweden** (twice), **Finland, Colombia** (twice), **Romania** (6 times, one still to come), and the **United States**. I've preached in many churches in the UK this year, which is always a privilege: **Bangor & Keady** (Northern Ireland), a great time speaking at the men's weekend away from Bangor West Church, in White Park Bay, right next to the amazing Giant's Causeway; **City Church, Plymouth & Maranatha, Exeter** (twice each); a fantastic weekend with **Loose Baptist Church, Maidstone; Old Town Community Church, Eastbourne** – wonderful morning meeting, but the evening 'meeting' here was with the fantastic Vocal Band, led by my long time friend Gerry Page, and they performed in The Drive pub, in Eastbourne, interspersing songs with me sharing a testimony of something amazing God has done. The place was packed, and I lost count of the number of people I prayed for, many of them not-yet-Christians, and some testifying to feeling God touch their bodies. We need more of that sort of 'meeting'! Did the same with them on Bexhill-on-Sea seafrost in August....the church has left the building! Hallelujah! Also visited **King's Church, Epsom**, led by good friends Doug & Chris Croucher; **King's Church, Addlestone**, which has been like a second home for me for over 20 years!: **St Luke's Church, Maidstone**, a lovely day at Rhino Eric & Pat Delve's church; **The Detling Bible Week, Pevensey Bay Baptist; King's Church, Wellington**; a home fellowship in **South Milton, Devon, Christian Fellowship Church, Hollywood** (no, not that one, the Irish one!); **Brownhill Road Baptist Church, Catford; Green Street Green Baptist, Orpington** – another Rhino church, pastored by John & Yvonne Pressdee; **Kilmarnock prison, churches in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Cathcart**, the **'Body & Soul' new age fair in Glasgow**, and time with the great staff and team from **Scotland's Healing Rooms**.... Wonderful time with them. God's doing a fantastic work there through Steven and Helen Anderson and their fast growing team. Still to come this year.... Romania, Belfast Full Gospel meeting, and possibly a new church, The Leper House (great name for a church, huh?!?!).

If I can serve you & your church in any way where faith, healing, and expectation are concerned, I'd love to hear from you and be with you!

DIARY/AGENDA

November 2009

- 20-25 **Scotland**
20 Kilmarnock Prison, Edinburgh
Celebration, Edinburgh
21 Glasgow Psychic Fayre,
Cathcart Church, Glasgow
22 Glasgow Church
24 Healing Rooms staff & team

26-30 **Romania**

December 2009

- 1-9 **Northern Ireland**
6 The Leper House Church (tbc)
7 Full Gospel Meeting, Belfast

10-14 **Romania**

15-17 Visit family in Cornwall

17- Jan 4 **Northern Ireland**

2010

January

- 5-7 Rhinos (Accountability Grp)
8 Childswickham
House of the Open Door Celeb'tn
10 Worcester River Church
15-17 Maidstone Loose Baptist
29-31 Ayr Southside Christian Fell'ship

February

Sierra Leone (tbc)

18-22 **Romania**

March

9-30 **Colombia** Cali + other cities

April

8-12 **Romania**

15-30 **Pakistan**

- 16-21 Faisalabad
22-29 Karachi

May

1-10 **Philippines**
Bayugan City

SWEDEN & FINLAND

If you've been reading my newsletters for some time, you'll know that I love **Sweden**, having visited a number of times in the past 2½ years.... Two visits this year, in April, when there were many meetings, including a prophetic forum in Orebro, over a couple of days. That was a special time, and even more so as I got spend time with my dear friends Vello and Ingalill Vaim, who hosted the forum. God did a lot in those meetings, and there was also a 'first'.... Ingalill was translating for me, and, early on in second evening, was totally hit by the power of the Holy Spirit, and got so 'drunk' she couldn't speak or stand up. It was hilarious, and she couldn't continue: translation is a real art/gift, it's not just knowing another language, and there aren't too many good translators, so I was a little concerned. But, into the breach stepped V&I's daughter, Elise, , who had never translated before but took over from her mum superbly. God did a lot of blessing that night! Back at 'The House', in Gothenburg, the church I talk about everywhere as a model of what church should be, it was wonderful to be with Ulf and the guys for a few days. Again, a 'first' here! My great friend and prophet, Heidi Plympton, should have been with me in Sweden, but was unwell. So I called her the day before one of the meetings, and asked her to get a word from God for the church: boy, did she! It was LONG! No way could I have transcribed it over the phone, so, during the meeting, I called her, and she delivered it 'live' via me over the phone....

Amazing weekend altogether.... Then on to Boras, great time there, Ralingsas, to speak in a number of meetings and in the local Bible School. Back in Gothenburg in June, with Heidi this time!, and to a meeting on a small island off the coast of Sweden: great time there, with many, many not yet Christians there, and at 'The House', which once again was a blast! It was great to be part of a wonderful wedding at 'The House', too, with Henrik and Jackie inviting us to their wedding by the lake.... Wonderful day!



Heidi, Paul, and Else Marie Christiansson, from The House, Gothenburg

First trip to **Finland**, freezing cold (-25C, -13F), many meetings in just 6 days, but God did some amazing things. In Turku, a Lutheran Church, 3 ladies Tarja (cancer), Oili (Multiple Sclerosis), Anja (virtually blind).... Tarja wrote a few days later stating 'I (physical therapist HEALED of cancer), Oili (22 years in a wheelchair if I recall correctly) standing almost all the time, upright, power in her legs and arms, Anja's sight is much better....' Wonderful! God is so good! In Turku also, Maia, I guess in her 60's, chronic scoliosis, struggled to walk: saw her a week later, totally upright, and swimming 2kms a day! Miina, a young lady about 17 years old, also with severe scoliosis (her left shoulder was 2½ inches, 7cms, lower than her right, so obvious just to see her walk that her back was so out of alignment): she testified the following Sunday that she'd gone home after the 1st meeting, and walked into a room with a low hanging lampshade, which she'd always been able to pass under: this night, she walked INTO it, as her back was straight, her shoulders level, and her spine in line... Many, many more healings and miracles in both Sweden AND Finland.... Cancers, bronchitis, frozen shoulders, facial nerve damage, all healed, and much more....

Courage is going from failure to failure

without losing enthusiasm.

Winston Churchill

I'm so grateful to the Rhinos, the amazing group of men I have the privilege of being a part of. It's not so much an 'accountability' group, but a bunch of covenant friends who love each other, care for each other, cover each other's backs, beat each other up when we need it (most of them don't need it!), and pray for, prophesy over, affirm, anoint, and re-commission each other. I know that I can turn up to our regular 'spread over 3 day' get togethers frazzled and down, and by the time I leave, I know God's STILL God, and my life is back on course.... For those who don't know, 'Rhino' has nothing to do with the wild beast (though we are quite a wild bunch!). It stands for 'Really holy if naughty occasionally', which, as many of you know, would suit me down to the ground! Over this past year, they have blessed and helped me through the 'interesting' experience of United States immigration (!) and brought wisdom, blessing, and insight into the situation.

COLOMBIA

(the colours of the flag! Same for Sweden....Finland is blue & white!)

I know, you're thinking.... he's off again, eulogising about trips to Colombia! I can't help, it's just SO good there, and, it seems to those who go with me we all agree it's like ministering under an open heaven. I'd have to say it's high on my list of 'favourite' places! Two trips this year, both fantastic: the first in March, with my dear friend and Pastor in the USA, John; Alan from Bangor, NI; and Dave & Clare from England and a few other places.... The second in October, with the same people, minus John, who had major and very urgent heart surgery in August. God and the surgeons did a great job on John, thankfully, but we missed the lovely old geezer being around! (geezer, for those who don't know, is 'bloke': for those who don't know bloke either, it = good man!).

Both trips included visits (now a fixture, I hope in the Colombia itinerary) to the port city of Buenaventura, where I was speaking at an evangelistic healing meeting – we all took part, and there were dozens saved, and a huge number of people healed. A man with major hip problems and two walking sticks/canes walked out without the sticks: a deaf man heard: cancers were healed: scoliosis was healed.... We lost count of the number of people healed, but all of us saw God do some wonderful miracles that evening. On the first day in Cali, after the long haul from the UK and the USA, we were greatly 'blessed' to discover that, within a few hours of arriving, we had 4 church services in one church, beginning at 7am! I gallantly stepped up to the plate and offered to do three of them (!), with John speaking the other. It was an amazing day.... Probably 7-800 in each service, hundreds responding for healing AND salvation. In the afternoon meeting (7, 9, 11 am, 4pm!), God gave Dave a word to share with the church about 'waterfalls' – a few moments later, with the rain pouring down outside, the ceiling over the church platform caved in, pouring thousands of gallons of water over everything and everyone.... Dozens of testimonies preceded that, including four ladies all testifying of being healed of cancer in the morning meetings, one of whom said 'I felt God's hand go into my brain and the tumour as you prayed for me'.... Wonderful! So many incredible meetings in the 16 days....

In La Sirena, a small suburb of Cali, the church was absolutely packed to the ceiling... so, so hot, but the presence of the Lord was there, and there were a number of healings, and a few people saved, too.... Palmira, a new church to me, packed to the doors, with dozens and dozens being prayed and ministered to.... Back to the church with the great name, 'Adoradores' (Worshippers – what better name for a church can you think of than that?), where it was just so thrilling to see Carmen, the mother of the Pastor, Edier... I'd prayed for Carmen in July 2008, when she had 2-3 months to live, with cancer in the liver, kidneys, and bowel: that night, she felt the cancer leave her, and 8 months later, she greeted me at the door of the church, 6 months after she should have been dead! What's more, four of her doctors had finally had to concede that she had been supernaturally healed.... I could go on and on with stories from churches and hospitals... but need to get to October's trip!



This gorgeous little boy (the small one!) was in Club Noel, the kids hospita in Cali. He'd been dumped at birth by his mother, and had no name....about 6-7 months old the nurses thought... he was dying with AIDS and tuberculosis (which I discovered after he'd snuggled up to me, but I'm not in faith to catch stuff, just see it healed...!). We named him David, and Dunia, our doctor friend, checked up on him later in the week and he was free from both diseases, and now suitable for adoption... have to say I'd like to have taken him home!

October was just as blessed in Cali and Buenaventura.... Spent a whole weekend with once church, Alianza Cristiana (Christian Alliance). We'd been told it was quite a 'religious' church historically, which meant that none of us, humanly speaking, would 'fit' there! We were asked if we had suits.... Hmmm.... My last suit was about 30 years ago, and my dimensions have changed somewhat since then. Time with the leaders, kids, and a number of church meetings.... God came and smashed through the religiosity early on, and it was a tremendous three days with them, with people saved and healed. It was SOOO hot in Buenaventura this time though.... 45C (which I worked out to be about 115F) AND the humidity was 100%, so just moving made you wet... I've often had my clothes change colour when I preach in hot countries, but I think it's the first time my knees have sweated leaving nice wet circles on my trousers! Early on in the weekend, there were no fans anywhere near the platform....!

Our accommodation this time was in the mission house of the Baptist Seminary, and we were so blessed to be involved with the fantastic staff there. It resulted in an invitation to preach (had to buy a tie this time!) at the big Baptist church in the city. It was a great morning, and a huge response for ministry, with many instant testimonies of healing. It still just blows me away even after all these years.... Again, I could write about church after church, but right near the end, there were two major highlights. One was in a school called 'Encuentro' (Encounter), where we'd been asked to go and talk to students learning English, not knowing that it was a 'new age' school.... We had a marvellous time, with students asking us to give our testimonies, share stories about what God is doing worldwide, and answer numerous (very good) questions about faith. The other was to see a wonderful pastor, Umberto, with whom I'd prayed 2 years previously for new hips (he needed both replaced), and, in praying in Spanish, I'd got the word wrong for bones (huesos...) for which I prayed commanding 'nuevos huesos (it's similar, isn't it??? and it rhymes with nuevos)...new eggs.... Hmmm! I won't go into a long explanation here of what 'new eggs' signified, but he told the translator that his wife might be pleased! Umberto got his new hips, and – according to his wife – new eggs, too. Their grandson was in a coma, 14 months old, having had a whole grape stick in his windpipe 5 weeks previously, cutting off the oxygen to his brain, so totally brain dead, with no hope of recovery according to doctors. We prayed with Andres David for a while in Umberto's home (6th floor, Umberto's new hips got upstairs faster than any of us!). Two days later, we heard from Pastor Diego Reyes that Andres David had moved his limbs spontaneously, and two days later had opened his eyes (both things the doctor's said would NEVER happen), and there was LIFE in his eyes.... That was the last we heard, but the story doubtless unfolds....

VISAGATE!

I've sent out a few 'round robins' about the situation I've faced in the USA.... But in case you missed it, I was going back for some much needed rest and relaxation on May 26, when an immigration officer in Philadelphia decided that I wasn't going to be allowed in. After 5 hours 'held' in the immigration room, I was sent back to England, with the officer concerned having irrationally decided that I was trying to be an illegal immigrant, earn illegally, and soliciting business there. Hmmm! I thought if you wanted to be an illegal, you get in ONCE and then 'disappear' into a huge city or a fairly unpopulated state! The fact I had 12 in and out visas in the previous year (a good few of which were transit visas to Colombia and Barbados anyway) would seem to render his argument ludicrous! And I've never earned there, nor solicited 'business'...So began a process of applying for a different sort of visa. Discovering that many are being 'returned' (that's a very different thing to being deported) was a help (I didn't feel quite so victimised!), and not just people going to the USA from outside, but also people coming to the UK from the USA (we seem to let almost anyone in Britain, so quite how that works I'm not sure!). It includes well known people in the Christian world, too (Don Francisco, Brian MacLaren, Benny Hinn, all refused entry into the UK in the past 9 months).

The process has been long and arduous, involving huge amounts of paperwork, an immense number of questions answered, the refusal by the US Consulate in Belfast to issue a business visa (though I guess, as a missionary, I'm not a businessman!), and, now, the application about to go to US Immigration for Religious Worker Permanent Resident status. I've been asked by the church I've been very much a part of (for nearly 14 years, since first visiting there) – Restoration Christian Centre, Newport News, Virginia – to be their Foreign Missions director, a job which will embrace other churches in that particular part of the country. It's been a tough and seemingly endless 8 months, but many people have sent prophecies and words of encouragement that God is moving mountains. It won't change what I do and where I go, just formalise my role with them, and give me residency. I'd value your prayers as my great Christian Immigration lawyer, Gunnar Armstrong, in Pennsylvania, completes all the necessary information and submits the petition.... Hopefully that'll be the first week in December, and I'm praying that's when the mountains start to move! If anyone needs a good immigration lawyer, let me know: I'd recommend Gunnar to anyone.

Meanwhile, I've taken on a new UK home of my own, a massive step of faith, but one that is essential, in Bangor, N.Ireland. The wisdom of the Rhinos & my dear brother-in-law Derek and sister Vivien were instrumental in helping me make this decision. Address details below.

Next year is looking exciting, with a number of preaching engagements to kick off the new year in the UK.... after the essential couple of days away with the Rhinos, a great way to start the New Year. Then, with Pakistan, the Philippines, Uganda, and possibly Sierra Leone coming onto the radar, it'll mean learning about yet more cultures, and seeing God move in new places for me. Pakistan is particularly exciting, embracing Faisalabad and Karachi. Colombia will feature twice, as will Sweden, I hope, and I'm looking to go back to Finland, as it was spiritually a special time there this year, & others still to be arranged. *And I'd love to come to your church, if you want me to.... If you're in the USA, hopefully that might be earlier in 2010 rather than later!*

I just have space left to thank you for reading my lengthy 'tomes'....I hope they don't bore you! Special thanks to all who pray for me. It blows me away when I hear from people in all sorts of countries that they pray for me every day. I certainly need that. I value your support financially more than you'll ever know. I've lost a number of supporters in the past year due to the financial disaster that is the United Kingdom, including, quite recently, one of my longest and biggest.... Pray for the people concerned, not because I want their support back, but just that God would bless them and their businesses and finances. If you can help me as I take on the new commitment in Ireland, I'd be deeply grateful. Stewardship do a wonderful job for me in the UK – P O Box 99, Loughton, Essex IG10 3QJ (my account number with them is 20028331. I can send Gift Aid forms if you want one. Also, online, on the website – www.paulbennison.com – the 'giving' tab, or by mail to the address to the right, payable to me. God Bless you, thank you, and have a blessed, peaceful, and restful Christmas, and a 2010 that is brighter and better year than any that have gone before. Keep in touch!

With love and gratitude, Paul

Not everything is triumphal, though. There are always stories of people not healed, and, sadder still, those who die. I wish I had an answer for this, but I don't. There are certainly many reasons why some people don't get healed, but others, like with all of us, I just have to wonder why God, in his sovereignty, doesn't SEEM to answer, at least, not in the way we want him to. This year, two lovely young ladies have died: the beautiful Jenny Johnston, who SEEMED to be being healed of her brain tumour, and a lovely young woman, Diane: both in Northern Ireland, and the lovely Andy Wood in south London. Diane had cancer, too: and there was a point where healing, again, SEEMED to be happening, and then.... not. My goal, as Jesus promised, is to do what he did, and greater things: and Jesus never left anyone unhealed or in need of surgery, or with death imminent, so I have a lot to learn and a mighty long way to go....

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