



Paul B's

Summer news

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Where to begin....!?!?

That was the 8 months that was...!

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If someone had told me when my last newsletter went out what would happen between that event, and sending out this one, I'd have never believed them! Talk about a roller-coaster ride! I'm beginning to write this newsletter on the 6th of the 6th of the 6th, and it would be easy to look at world news – the earthquake in Indonesia has just occurred, governments riddled with corruption and lack of wisdom, increasing murders, and so much more – and feel that someone other than God has his hand on our planet, but the truth is that God is doing amazing and abundant things across the globe, and it is an increasingly wonderful privilege to be a minute part of the establishing of the Kingdom of God here on earth.

So many good and amazing things have happened in the past eight months.

love, grace and mercy in all the places He allows me to minister, preach the gospel and pray for the sick.... More details of these events further on!

I was just reading again about John the Baptist, who was often confused, but who was the proclaimer of the Kingdom; rough, tough, misunderstood by many, unskilled, not academically qualified, misrepresented by others, passionate, but the one who heard God and then delivered the goods. Much of that 'pen-picture' applies to me (though of course I'd love to BE like John the Baptist in most respects!!!), and my heart's cry is that I long to hear God better, and to 'deliver the goods' with increasing power and fruitfulness...

THE AMAZING

More of this to come, but it was wonderful seeing God move sovereignly in the Colombian prisons; seeing healings of many sorts in some devastatingly poor places, and in the more wealthy too; seeing an increasing number of people accept and enjoy the salvation of God as lives moved from darkness into light as the glorious power of the gospel became a reality; and again, more personally, knowing the incredible sustaining power, peace, and grace of God as my own life has gone through a series of events – physical, emotional, personal, and practical – which once I would never have thought I could handle. God is SO good, so faithful, and I am so grateful that he uses the foolish and the weak to do what we (I!!) alone could never do. I'm still in the middle of an enormous upheaval (crisis??!) in my life, but I know God is mercifully leading me into something new and exciting....

Tell them...the Kingdom of Heaven is near. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, raise the dead. Freely you have received, freely give"

Jesus, Matthew 7

THAT is the Kingdom....on earth, as it is in Heaven!

THE GOOD

...the best of which (for me personally!) was getting to spend time with Joshua, Katy, Ethan (4) and Seth (18 months), my daughter, son-in-law and grandsons (pictured above with granddad!) in Texas in December, and then again just recently in June: for various reasons it hadn't been possible to see them for a while. I just LOVED being Granddad....!!! (never thought I'd say THAT, about being Granddad, either!) Distance grand-parenting isn't easy, but I don't think I've ever felt so blessed in a very long time...

...in churches and places spread as wide as Newport News, Virginia; Stillwater, Oklahoma and Bellaire, Texas. 7 weeks over 2 visits in Cali, Colombia; Orange County, California; Plymouth and Addlestone, England and Bucharest Romania, and in 3 major Cali prisons plus the 'big' hospital – I really do want to thank God for his ENDLESS

Colombia

It seems every time I write a newsletter, Colombia features increasingly. And always better than the last time! Well, this is no different! Two visits - December & March - were very different, but as always, very fruitful. It is still a traumatic country in many respects (over the 7 weeks there I personally witnessed a number of murders, which is pretty salutary and traumatic) but I have never once felt unsafe, and I am always astonished at what God is doing there.

*"In the prisons,
God just 'turned
up' in such
amazing power
and presence. It
was like revival!"*

Long-standing relationships with a good number of pastors in Cali are such a blessing; it is a privilege to have the opportunity to preach in their churches, see salvation and healing come, and churches grow. An amazing number of new friendships are being built too. One with a whole network of 55 or so churches which is just growing in leaps and bounds, and whose apostle, Jhon Alexander, just happens to have turned 17 years old in April... this network is wide open to my involvement, and in one of their churches in March, it was a delight to pray for many of the 200-strong congregation for healing, after having seen a good dozen or more give their lives to Jesus.

Another wonderful new relationship is with Gilberto Velez, Pastor of an amazing church in the worst part of downtown Cali. Gilberto is also Chaplain to the prisons, his wife Chaplain to the University Hospital; they have opened up not only their churches (they have more than one, including a youth church in Siloe (pronounced Sill-o-ay, where most Colombians fear to go, and where they want me to preach in September), but also the prisons and now, officially, the hospital where so many miracles have occurred, and did again in March. One young man in hospital, shot seven times 3 days earlier, sat up and hugged me as God restored him, and the bullet wounds in his body just sealed up (like the finger of God touching and cauterising them) ... Another older man, in desperate pain & dying, with a bullet wound in his neck wept and held me as God healed him. I could fill page after page with such stories, but space doesn't permit (maybe you could invite me to your church to tell the stories!).

In three prisons, God just 'turned up' in such amazing power and presence. It was like revival! It seemed to take forever to get into the prisons, what with red tape and security, but wow, was it worth the wait! In Yumbo, a small prison, I preached and with my friend Malcolm, prayed for all the 'residents', many of whom Gilberto then led to the Lord and were healed. In Villa Hermosa (beautiful town in English - talk about a misnomer!), a prison of 4000 men, we were shut into one of the yards in the jail (without warders!). We had a roomful of men listening to the gospel, and responding, as God sovereignly touched their lives in the same way as Yumbo. In Palmira Prison (pictured on right), probably the one with the toughest 'community' (Mafia, drug barons, hit-men, guerillas, murderers, and so on) there are 5 courtyards, with 500 men in each. We were allowed access to one of these & once again were locked into the yard with the guards outside(!) - but there were manned gun-towers on the roof all around it! It was exercise time for the prisoners, so initially there was a huge amount of peripheral noise. At first only a handful of guys came to listen as Gilberto spoke. I guess the change to an English voice suddenly caused more and more men to stop what they were doing. In minutes, all the external noise had faded as men stood around the yard, filled the seats that had been put out, and listened. Men in the adjoining courtyard lined the bars of the corridor that separated the yards, so there were maybe 700-800 listening as I had the joy of sharing the gospel with them. Years ago I realized I was hopeless at gauging numbers, but we lost count of the number who were saved that day (high double figures, even three figures, according to the pastor, Gilberto). Then Malcolm & I prayed for dozens of men, many of whom were healed, and a good number instantly testified to their healing - thank you God!!!!. God set them free of many things; to see men, in this environment, in front of their 'hard-nut' peers, flat on their backs under the power of the Holy Spirit, many of them weeping, was just incredible.

Gilberto's church is 'populated' with converted and radically transformed convicts, so the likelihood of these men making it to Christian maturity and ministry is very high. In fact, one of the men in his church was jailed at 19 years of age for 90 years (he was 'hit' man for the most notorious drug baron in Colombia's history, Pablo Escobar). Having knowingly killed 45 men, he found faith in God through Gilberto's ministry 10 years into his sentence, was released 2 years later, and is now a treasurer in one of the churches...just don't argue with him over your tithe, I reckon!

It is a delight to see how the Pastors and churches respond to me and those I take with me. I very much have a 'home' base there church-wise in a great church pastored by my dear friends Hendrik & Teija Hoere (the church is called 'The Shadow of the Almighty'). Hendrik has offered his church, his office, and his facilities to be my base in Cali, and our friendship just grows and grows. Looking forward to September, and a possible 5-week trip to Cali with friends from England and the USA, as well as my 'home' church in Virginia, (including John the Pastor) who, without doubt, is one of my greatest friends!



Bullet holes gone!!
Someone else took the
picture so it is hard to see!
There's one right by my
thumb!



With Pastor Gilberto Velez at the
maximum security prison, Palmira

Over the past 20 years as I've travelled, there have often been times of great stress amidst all the blessing. In the normal run of events I have always thought I handled stress pretty well. The last few years have brought additional stress on a more personal level, but again, it seemed I could hold the full impact at bay without 'going under'.

7000 miles away from home, in Colombia in December, I heard news that my mum had suffered a very serious illness (vascular dementia) that had seriously affected her memory and some of her motor functions. Up until the time I returned home, it seemed I'd held THAT trauma in its place too, until I arrived at Gatwick Airport. Leaving with my luggage, I collapsed over the luggage cart unable to breathe. To cut a long story short, I collapsed again 3 days later, feeling like my chest was gripped in a woodworker's vice. Deciding that discretion was the greater part of valour, and that maybe a visit to the doctor was in order(!), I discovered my blood pressure was in excess of 240/140. Thankfully, all the tests came back in my favour, so the whole saga was put down to stress. I was back 'up and running' pretty soon. I soon received news that I had a deadline date to leave my flat (30th June), after which time it would be demolished and become 'proper' modern flats! Happy that information hadn't come in the middle of my blood pressure crisis, I have worked towards leaving on that date ever since.

My flat was in a large old Victorian house with 3 other self-contained flats, one of a pair of semis, the other being pretty derelict and sealed off. Until recently, all flats had been occupied, but as they became vacant they were not re-let. The one above me was due to be empty at the end of May. It seems the tenant left 6 weeks early. In late April, I returned home at 11pm from a 2-week trip to Romania (which had been good, but hard work), to find a 6-7 feet high steel fence blocking the entrance to the house & my flat where all my worldly goods were (not that I have very many!). It was a shock to say the least, and it seems there were 'crossed-wires' between the developer & the letting agent. The owner & I managed to get in some time later that night, but it has been a strange feeling living in 'Colditz' behind steel fences...

In May, I was in the USA to preach, and whilst there, at midnight on 23rd May, I received a call from a policeman standing outside my flat telling me it had been burgled and seriously trashed. Shock again, needless to say. I decided to stay in Virginia until my fixed departure date, to have some advance recovery time. I arrived home on the 28th to survey the damage and loss. A lot was stolen, some of it irreplaceable; I'm not sure as I write if the insurance will pay out because of the vulnerability of the house caused by the fences, but possessions are fine so long as they don't possess you (I've had to fight that one, believe me!). The worst feeling was of the violation of my home and belongings. A wonderful intercessor in Phoenix wrote to me and said 'Satan obviously hates you for making real inroads in taking territory away from him'. Years back, Jerry Saville wrote a book entitled 'Satan can steal your goods, but he can't steal your joy'. He can have what I own, and I wouldn't swap what has been stolen for that one afternoon in Palmira prison. Some wonderful friends came to help me tidy up the flat that morning – including one who got on a coach in Scotland after work, travelled all night, stayed 36 hours, and went back overnight and straight to work (thank you Graham, that was SUCH a blessing!). Thank you so much, all who helped over the following days too. Though everything was insured, my file with bills & receipts was stolen. Right now, it looks like that might be the insurers 'opt out' for paying up, as they require receipts it seems. Don't know what I'll do if they don't!

Well, the trauma didn't end there! Midday Saturday, all the electricity went off. We went outside to see if there was a local power cut. I know it had to be a 'God thing' that made Linda go around the back of the house. She rushed back to us announcing that the adjoining flat to mine was on fire...it has been empty maybe 3 months, but it was a very well-established inferno. Five fire trucks, a breathing unit, paramedics, police, the road closed for hours and we weren't allowed back into my flat for a long time. There is, apparently, forensic evidence linking the fire to the burglary and it seems the burglars returned for the rest of my things. When they found I was home, they set fire to the flat next door, right by the wall shared with my bathroom. That became a little TOO much then, so instead of tidying up, we packed for me to leave. Kind friends have offered me temporary homes (bless you & thank you George & Sian and Richard & Linda!). It really has become unviable to stay at the flat!

And here unpacks the next stage of the story! A prophetic word, 12 years ago, included 'you will live in the United States'; it seems after much prayer and talking with people to whom I have made my life accountable (and many others who pray), that maybe this is the time for that to happen. I'd really value your prayers for this, for wisdom, confirmation, provision; because of the nature of what I do many, many weeks of the year, ideally when I am home I need 'space' – the sort of space my own home gives me. Of course, if God says otherwise, I'll do what I do for the rest of the year, and sleep in other people's homes wherever they may be, but I AM praying that God will provide for me a place with an office/study (I'm not good at 'quitting work' when my computer & study books are in the room I sleep and relax in!!). One of the great guys on my accountability group, John Pressdee, cited Elijah's rooftop 'bolthole' as a necessity for me to unwind in, so please would you pray?? I have – humanly – no money to buy, my regular monthly support covers just about the cost of one trip a month, plus necessary bills, so I don't have enough to rent a place right now, either... The reality is that to buy in the USA is infinitely cheaper than the UK (£85,000/\$155,000 for a 2-bedroomed house with a kitchen fully fitted (equivalent to a small bedsit in England??!). Right now, the exchange rate for pound to dollar is so favourable and the property market so good there, it would seem the best proposition. Well, I guess if you don't have the £1,000/\$1,900 you need, you don't have £85,000/\$155,000 either, and faith for one might just as well be faith for another! It will cost around £600/\$1,100 to rent there.

I don't mind if I never own another property. It is 23 years now since God spoke so clearly to sell a house & use the equity to go through Bible school. But, if someone reading this wanted to invest for a short time (perhaps 3 years) then maybe at the end of this time, I could get a mortgage. I'm just investigating every possibility, so I would so value your prayers. IF this is right (and it seems it is), then I would go to a wonderful little church in Virginia which is already 'home' from 10 years of relationship with John & Mary, the Pastors, and a similar number of years of visiting. I have so many 'homes' in the USA, it could have been anywhere from Montana to Arizona to Minnesota! I'm not 'deserting' England! I will continue to be a part of my Accountability Group – it is important to me & I need it, if the guys will still have me! I will be back in England 4-5 times a year, which will be as much as I'm in England now. In the US, I'll just be based a little further west! I'd be doing exactly what I'm doing, just from another



Welcome to Colditz!
Just needs Steve McQueen on a motorbike, huh? And the fire gave the residents of my road a more interesting conversation topic! The burned out room was a little too close to my bathroom for comfort!



"The only faith you need is the faith to obey"

James Goll

With all the changes and developments, one of the things I know was that God wanted for me to keep a short 'diary' this year. It is so easy to fill up 18 months (or more) ahead, but that tends to make it virtually impossible to fit in anything else. It has worked well so far this year, and while I would rest a little easier to take up more, I know it is right to keep it short. With this in mind, just a few things are scheduled ahead, and I'm praying about how to fit all the other invitations into the coming months.

Your prayers for things planned, and still to be arranged, would be greatly appreciated!

June 9-14	Irvine, California, USA
June 14-18	Clearlake, Texas
June 23- July 9	Romania
July 11-13	Accountability Group
Mid July	Probable relocation to USA
August	Scotland, Romania
September 8 – October 15	Cali, Colombia

To be arranged: **Lahore, Pakistan** (Evangelistic/healing crusade); **Haiti** (preaching/teaching); **Cuba** (preaching/teaching); **Eldoret & Webuye, Kenya** (preaching/teaching); **Malawi; Tanzania; Rwanda; Zambia; Mexico**

PLEASE PRAY!!!

With so much personal news this time, I'll try and keep the reports of other places brief! It was great to visit long time missionary friends Stefan & Andrea Hall in **Stillwater, Oklahoma** ('O-o-o-o-k lahome where the wind...' yeah, I know!) and be involved with a church there that they had involvement with; I met them many years ago (Really 14 guys?!) in Ghana, where they ministered for many years. They are so on fire for mission. In Houston, as well as the delight of seeing my grandsons, it was great to be back with my good friend Yemi Ayedole's church, **Mission Cares**, in **Bellaire**. Yemi's church takes medical teams all over the world to do practical health care as well as share the gospel, so for me, it is a great church to be hooked into!

It is always so good to be in churches with huge hearts for mission. That can be said for **Restoration Christian Centre**, in **Newport News, Virginia** (which will be my 'home' church), and I am so looking forward to taking John, the Pastor, to Colombia for maybe 5 weeks in September/October. It is a church on the 'launch-pad', and it is a real blessing to preach there, and pray for people too.

God always seems to really bless the times spent with **City Church, Plymouth**, and with **King's Church, Addlestone**. Neither are big churches, but they are so supportive in care and prayer for me and the work I do. Like the Virginia church, there is the feeling of something BIG about to happen in both places.

Romania is like a second home now. Well, maybe third or fourth after Colombia and the USA! I have been so many times, witnessed so many changes, yet underlying all the change is still a great deal of poverty, and need. I recently read a book on 'Dictators' and it really helped me to understand the mindset of Romania, which had two such leaders (Ceausescu and Vlad Dracul - the Impaler!) in an 11 chapter book. It is not always an easy place to see spiritual change, but it is there, and my desire is to keep 'chipping away'

So many things to pray for!

- My greatest desire and longing is for more of God's anointing and power
- Relocation to the USA
- The practicalities of the move – accommodation, shipping costs for what is left of my home
- Financial provision – with so many 3rd and developing world opportunities, (see diary), I really need both God's, and your help, to fulfil them
- Pray for safety please, as what with health, the burglary and the fire, I realise that though God is my strength, shield, and protector, the enemy still wants to have a really good go at disabling me in whatever way he can! He ain't going to win, but I really would love to see him take less ground!

If you can help financially... Stewardship Sovereign administer all regular support (PO Box 99, Loughton, Essex IG10 3QJ, or 32 Highfields Mead, East Hanningfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 8AX). Gifts of ANY size are so valuable – 100 at £2-5 a month (gift aided) would really revolutionise my life! Please don't ever feel anything is 'too small' (or too big, come to that!). As well as all the ministry expenses, I have to replace some things from the burglary even if the insurance doesn't – like my home computer, my laptop, and some clothes!

In the USA, tax deductible gifts can be sent (payable to me) to John & Mary Crowder, 702 Soho Street, Hampton, Virginia 23666.
THANK YOU & BLESS YOU!!!!!!