

TIME FLIES

"WOW" where did that year go? I can hardly believe it is a year since our last Plumline News went out.

January and February were spent getting the New Year underway in Huntingdonshire Community Church (HCC) and Plumline, then it was off on sabbatical until June. That was a very relaxing time, spending a month in New Zealand, a week in Singapore, some time at home, attending a conference, and finally time in Scotland.

During our sabbatical we spent a lot of time focusing on the future of Plumline and our call, specifically asking "What should we be doing with the next 20 years"?

We came home with a clear sense of direction. Since then we have been busy discussing the way forward with our core teams in Plumline and HCC. We hope to begin sharing that publicly early 2008.

Julia has become a student again. In September she embarked on a two year course of further counselling training. This, together with her work schedule within HCC and Plumline, is proving stimulating but very busy.

Just before midnight on 28th November we became proud grandparents, celebrating the birth of William, Jonathan and Sarah's first child. Needless to say we are rather excited about this new phase of life for the Matthews clan.

In May I sustained a back injury whilst I was walking. It appears to be recurring disc trouble but I'm now undergoing physio treatment for it.



In October I suffered another back and neck injury after falling from a ladder. Recovery has been slow and I am still battling headaches.

The Grapevine celebration over the August bank holiday was again well represented by Plumline churches and in November around 90 leaders attended our annual leaders conference which this year we held in Galway, Ireland.

We are seeing growth in the Plumline family which now consists of around 30 churches and ministries at the core. Many of those churches link into and serve

hundreds of other churches and thousands of people worldwide.

Churches and ministries

It's interesting to see how the Plumline family is developing. We find ourselves increasingly acting as an Apostolic family of care, support and accountability for both churches and specialist ministries.

Many of you will know that my early years were spent as part of a roving evangelistic team with Good News Crusades. Then for the past 25 years I've been involved with planting churches. It seems to be in my DNA, and I have thoroughly enjoyed being used by Father to serve in this way.

Specialist ministries do not always fit easily into neat boxes or local churches. However, they often still long for a place to belong and to receive love, wisdom and accountability. As a family, Plumline is made up of churches and ministries with very different callings, identities and styles, but we share the same DNA or core biblical values. Ensuring everyone can work together makes for an exciting life.

In conclusion please pray for me as I look to outwork the vision set before me, particularly a clear call to mentoring seven men in seven parts of the world developing seven Apostolic networks. More of that and future plans in the New Year.

Julia and I and the Plumline core team thank you for your ongoing love and support. May 2008 be full of Father's grace upon you. (but, please Lord, can it go a bit slower than 2007 did?).

Simon Matthews
Team Leader
Plumline Ministries International

Grapevine 2008

Join us at the Grapevine
International Celebration 2008

Friday 22nd – Tuesday 26th August

at the Lincolnshire Showground

more information available from the Plumline
Administration office

Saturday 1st March 2008
Mediation Training Day for those
interested in finding out more about how
to handle disputes. HCC Centre

Friday 2nd – Monday 5th May 2008
Spring 3 family weekend hosted by
Plumline Ireland. Kilkee, Co. Clare

Saturday 14th June 2008
Plumline Leaders' Day, open to all
those in any form of leadership within the
Plumline family. Venue to be confirmed

Other Plumline Events & Dates

Monday 17th – Wednesday 19th
November 2008

Plumline Leaders' Conference

An opportunity for all those in leadership
positions throughout the Plumline
family to gather together for fellowship and
encouragement. Hothorpe Hall,
Leicestershire

NEWSLETTER

CARLOW CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CELEBRATES AN OUTSTANDING MIRACLE

Ciaran was born on the 23rd November 2006 in the Coombe Hospital Dublin with serious congenital anomalies. Shortly after his birth, the medical team discovered that Ciaran's heart arteries were connected in the wrong way. In a condition known as the transposition of the great vessels, oxygenated blood coming back from the lungs was being pumped back again to the lungs instead of being sent to the rest of his body.

Thanks to an incredibly astute medical diagnosis, he was immediately rushed to Crumlin Hospital for Sick Children where he underwent emergency life saving surgery to put a hole in his heart and allow blood to flow to the rest of his body. However, because his body had been starved of oxygen, Ciaran suffered brain damage in 6 places and remained motionless for the first few days of his life.

The outlook was not good and the whole medical team gathered together to break the news to the family. Corrective heart surgery would be required but unless Ciaran's brain healed up beforehand, the medical team could not risk doing the operation and causing further brain damage. Thompson and Olivia Akinwunmi-Streets, Ciaran's parents were told that he would be dead within one year unless there was a major breakthrough. At best, they could expect Ciaran to have profound mental and physical handicaps, most likely cerebral palsy. Rather than lose hope and resign to fate, Thompson, much to the surprise of the medical team, declared that he had faith that God would heal his son. "I remember telling the team of consultants that the Lord that I serve is capable of turning any conditions around." The principal consultant responded by saying "Well, we respect faith" and quickly moved the discussion on. At this point, many friends and church members started to pray fervently, believing God for a much needed miracle. Some verses came to life – John 9:3: Neither this man nor his parents sinned but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life; Psalms 91:16: With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.

God began to show his hand and before long the brain injuries were healed. Ciaran started to move his arms and legs, the MRI brains scans showed up clear and the surgeons were able to perform surgery to rectify the anomalies in the arteries. His progress from the heart surgery was so good that he was out of hospital in a week. Today, Ciaran is one year old, completely well and off all medication. The consultant has said to Thompson and Olivia "you have restored my faith, you now have a living witness".



CELL CHURCH WITH A DIFFERENCE IN THE PHILIPPINES

Earlier this year, Roy & Dorothy Wheeler, Co-Pastors of Colchester Area Community Church, visited New Life Community Church (NLCC) in Toledo city on the island of Cebu for the church's 10th anniversary celebrations. In addition to ministering in the Sunday and mid-week meetings, the visit included baptisms in the sea and Roy & Dorothy taught at a 2 day conference for pastors and leaders of other churches on the island which was very well received by all who attended.



Robert and Nelce Garton

A visit was also made to the very crowded local prison where Roy preached (with NLCC's Pastor Robert interpreting), surrounded by the 200 male and female prisoners, in the extreme heat and unbelievably cramped cage-like cells. Gifts of soap, tooth brushes and tooth paste were distributed to prisoners as a simple expression of a God who cares.

UPDATE FROM NIGEL AND BARBARA



The long parliamentary summer recess had a personal focus for Barbara and me; on Saturday 4th August we had a wonderful day celebrating our daughter's wedding to Alex. This was preceded earlier in the week by an engagement announcement by Matthew, and now two weddings are in the pipeline for 2008. We

had expected that the recess would be opportunity for much needed holidays and a visit to Tanzania, but half way through our first holiday week I received an emergency phone call putting me on standby for a snap general election. What happened is now history but we came extremely close to being on the campaign trail. Leaflets were drafted and some candidates had copies printed in readiness, now stored for a future date in 2009/10, and I had compiled a replacement web site and uploaded it. On the 6th November the Queen's speech opened the present session of Parliament where some lively exchanges are expected on the European constitution and the embryology bill. We are busy planning the prayer breakfast for late June when Gary Streeter MP will be the chairman.

When attending a candidates' fellowship weekend a couple of years ago I was struck by a comment shared by one of the participants. It went something like this "as we grow older we do well to recognise that seeds we sow today will be of oak trees that grow, that we ourselves will never sit under". Coaching others remains a key part of the focus of life and ministry and Barbara and I are entering a phase of life where part of serving is opening doors for others for their future as leaders or politicians. This is in addition to serving alongside those who are already in positions of responsibility and influence. After more than six years at Westminster it is encouraging to look back and see how the spiritual climate is changing, not with huge leaps but by gently building friendships and time spent praying together. Now is not a time to grow weary and give up but persevere with faith and patience.

WELCOME TO NARBOROUGH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

It is great to see the Plumblin family growing, but how much do we know about the churches within the family? In this issue of Plumblin News, we find out a little more about the latest church to join Plumblin, Narborough Congregational Church.

Narborough Congregational Church's history starts back in 1662 when Matthew Clarke MA, then the rector of the Narborough Parish Church was evicted for his nonconformist stand alongside 2,000 other clergymen of the Church of England. He and a few other like-minded people met together in a house not far from where the current church building stands. A small square chapel was built in 1706 which was then extended in 1771. In 1883 there was a further extension and the church was "turned round" – so the front door became the back door!

But what is a Congregational Church? The Congregational movement was founded on the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own affairs and yet still help one another in the service of Christ.



Today the church owns three buildings; the Church, the Manse and the Robjohn Hall. Sunday morning worship is held in the church whilst the Children's after school club is held in the Robjohn Hall. The Manse is currently being rented out to help provide some income for the maintenance of the buildings.



l to r: Lesley, Mick, Deb, John & Hilary



ALF style Sunday morning worship

In 2003 the church was left without a minister. A new leadership structure was formed with Mick Sawyer, Lesley Dryell, Hilary Simpson and John Sanders. They were joined by Deb Sawyer 12 months later. Deb and Lesley are both employed by the church on a part-time basis.

Around 25 people come along on a Sunday morning ranging in age from 20 and 87 years. An after school club – About Life and Faith (ALF) – is held each Thursday with 26 children attending.

Over the past 3 years we have attempted to refurbish our 3 buildings that were badly maintained. We thank God for his provision over this period. We also thank God for bringing us into the Plumblin family. As a church we have faced many close and traumatic deaths this past year and the spiritual support we have received from Plumblin has been a huge blessing especially to the leaders as they attempted to comfort the congregation.

We'd really value your prayers into the following areas:

- Young families to join our fellowship.
- A musician/worship leader to join our fellowship.
- An overall leader to emerge.
- Three community events planned for 2008.

EXPANDING INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA

Since 1997 Plumblin have sought to help The Apostolic Church of God – a network of churches established by Pastor George Lampi – in the rural areas of the African countries of Malawi and Mozambique. These are two of the world's poorest nations.

Roy & Dorothy Wheeler, Co-Pastors of Colchester Area Community Church, have been on hand to give advice via email and to make visits. Plumblin Ministries have also provided speakers and financed several large conferences for church leaders and pastors. In addition practical help has been given, including the care of orphans, food and other basic aid in times of serious famine and floods, Bibles for believers and bicycles for pastors, and a vehicle for the ministry.

In the past year a spiritual son and co-worker of Pastor George has, with George's blessing, begun to develop his own network of churches. As a result we are now helping two ministries – The Apostolic Church of God and the newer ministry of Lapson Mbewe.

The following are extracts from an email received from Lapson Mbewe which give us both an exciting and challenging glimpse of what we are involved with through this overseas relationship:

I am in Mozambique visiting church branches. We would like to thank God for all that you are doing for us and the church. The help we are getting from you is really helping us and made our calling from the Lord easy and we are being able to minister to folks without any problems. Many people are committing their lives to God and new church branches are being opened.

I am travelling with six pastors from Malawi. We stopped overnight at the Muloza border post after an 8 hour drive then set off again the following morning into Mozambique for a further 8 hours to a district called Postalshire. This is where we had our first meeting. We really thank God that we arrived safely at Postalshire for the roads in Mozambique are not that good. Almost 300 brothers and sisters gathered here and 20 pastors representing their churches. There was one pastor who travelled for three days and nights to the venue to meet us to share the need he had. I was so moved by him. He has been a pastor for almost 15 years and he has started 25 church branches preaching from a tract. He has never used a Bible in his churches nor have any of his fellow pastors. Why? Because they have no money to buy a bible. I had some bibles with me and gave him 10. Many people gave their lives to the Lord during the evening service here.

We then travelled to Nanjiri, a further drive of 5 hours. Here many people came and it was really amazing to see how the Holy Spirit ministered to folks. During the evening it was really so touching to see many coming to the Lord. People who have received Jesus as their personal Saviour want to be baptised but there is no river nearby. We trust God is going to do something for these people as 105 people need to be baptised. The pastor here has only one Bible in the church.

In a place called Tchetcha we met with around 435 brothers and sisters. It was so challenging to see that people could sing all night long on a very cold night. At this meeting there was an old woman who came with her grandson who had no shirt on. Imagine a young boy spending a night without even a cover on! The meeting was really a blessed one and many gave their lives to the Lord. The Pastor from this church has had his house set on fire by people who are against the work he is doing.

With love, Lapson and Team

PLUMBLINE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Related churches in England

Bridge Community Church, Ipswich.
Tel: 01473 429623

City Life Church, Cambridge.
Tel: 01223 503358

Colchester Area Community Church.
Tel: 01206 863030

Fenland Community Church, March.
Tel: 01354 651983

Huntingdonshire Community
Church. Tel: 01480 411665

City Life Church, Luton.
Tel: 01582 511315

Narborough Congregational Church.
www.narboroughcongregational.org.uk

Newmarket Community Church.
Tel: 01638 662667

Trinity Life Church, Royston.
Tel: 01763 230350

Related churches in Ireland

Bridge Christian Community, Arklow.
Tel: 00353-402-33784

Carlow Christian Community.
Tel: 00353-503-40754

Galway Christian Fellowship.
Tel: 00353-91-752989

Galway Christian Fellowship (West).
Tel: 00353-9155-5884

Grace Ministries, Co Mayo.
Tel: 00353-9643-973

Kilkenny Community Church.
Tel: 00353-56777-1857

New Life Church, Killarney.
Tel: 00353-64-36334

New Life Christian Fellowship,
Lurgan. Tel: 02838-881470

River of Life Midlands Christian
Family, Athlone.
Tel: 00353-87-7926602

Other related Churches, Ministries and Friends

Holy Cross Ministries, London

Elim Pacific Ministries, Guam.
Rob and Allison Zimmerman.

Email: elimpacific@netpci.com
Peterborough Community Church.

Tel: 01733 311156

New Life Community Church,
PO Box 7, 6038 Toledo, Cebu,
Philippines.

Ben and Heather Rex.
West Bengal, India.

Tanzania Africare: (Nigel and
Barbara Double), consisting of

Anthony and Lis Williams (Singida),
Aaroni Mabondo (Dar es Salaam),
Lazaro Nyalandu MP (Parliament).

Apostolic Church of God in Malawi
and Mozambique. George Lampi.

Ministry & orphanages of Lapsom
Mbewe in Malawi and Mozambique.

Stephen & Becky Hudson. Versailles,
France.

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Double, Paul Brown.

If you have any comments or news
articles, or if you wish to make a gift
to cover the cost of producing the

newsletters, please contact
the Plumblin Office.

CHOOSE LIFE

The Choose Life Project, headed up by Graeme and Fran Wylie, recently launched a DVD on suicide awareness as an outreach primarily to youth. The DVD was promoted to secondary schools in Ireland with over 150 orders received for use in RE lessons. Feedback has been very positive and RTE are interested in producing a programme for national TV. Additionally a number of bishops and clergy in the west have asked for training for the clergy and laity to help them deal with the epidemic. It is planned to start reaching schools in the north, following a spate of 15 year olds who have taken their lives there.

For more information visit www.chooselife.ie

LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION

During the year the usual morning meeting of Fenland Community Church (FCC) was invaded by a camera crew. A small team came to video the church as part of the process of preparing a DVD on behalf of Prospects, who work with adults with learning disabilities, and Through the Roof, who work with children. The aim is to produce a short documentary on people with learning disabilities, their faith and the church.

CHURCH IN 8 HOMES

Following an experimental service earlier this year, Fenland Community Church has been asked to take a short service each month in a home for adults with physical disability. FCC now takes services in 8 homes in the Fenland area.



HCC celebrates 25 years

NEW ELDERS IN IRELAND

During the autumn months a number of our churches have been putting eldership teams in place or adding to their existing leaders. It usually marks a significant stage in the life of a church when they develop their own indigenous leaders.

- In Arklow, Nigel and Heather Snell joined Robert and Helen on their leadership team in September.
- In Galway, Sean Doheny and Joe Fitzgibbon were added to the eldership team in October.
- In Carlow, Jenny, Thompson, Ann and Joram were placed in leadership with Seamus in November.
- In Athlone, Trevor Hill appointed Diane and Tony as elders in December.

Many of these have already been functioning in key leadership roles, but it is important to recognise their calling and release them to full functioning with the laying on of hands. It has been my privilege to partner with the local leaders in this process, often with prophetic impartation and confirmation.

10TH ANNIVERSARY

Athlone celebrated their 10th anniversary a few weeks ago. Trevor and Diane Hill moved there from Galway to join Tony and Maureen, Gary and Jackie and Annie in 1997. Since then the congregation has grown to such an extent that the Methodist church was packed for the anniversary service.

An anniversary dinner was held in a local school and Alan Ross, a prophetic ministry from Scotland, was the guest speaker for the weekend.

20TH ANNIVERSARY

Kilkenny Community Church celebrated their 20th anniversary in October. Danny and Margaret Keating went to Kilkenny in 1987 and began the fellowship. Danny and Margaret left about 9 years ago and Danny has since died, but Margaret was there to celebrate the occasion and was presented with some souvenir Irish Crystal. Eamon and Amanda Burke have been leading the church for the past 9 years.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

Huntingdonshire Community Church celebrated its 25th Anniversary this year. The church started in 1982 when 15 adults and a few children began meeting together in the home of Dick and Jean Jennings in Hemingford Grey. The milestone was marked with an anniversary cake and bar-b-que together. "We thank God for all He has done and for His faithfulness to us over the last 25 years", comment founders Dick and Jean Jennings.

ALL ABOARD!

The Athlone church, in conjunction with the Baptist church have been given a bus for outreach work. The bus is fitted out as a mobile coffee shop and is shared jointly by the churches. May it be a blessing in reaching the needy with the Gospel!

TRAINING TEAM FOR IRELAND

Trevor Hill plans to start a 2 year project in September 2008 with a view to beginning a new church in a town in the Midlands area of Ireland. A training team will form an embryonic Christian community in this new town in conjunction with the Athlone church.

We are looking for people who want to be trained in Christian ministry for one or two years and be involved in an on-the-job setting. Biblical training will be provided through the Growing into Your Ministry (GYM) course which is based on Christian Academy. Team members will get involved working part-time in the community, and on specific outreach projects as well as meeting as an embryonic church. Anyone interested should contact Trevor on +353 (0) 87 7926602.