



PLUMBLINE MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

"I will make justice the measuring
line and righteousness the plumbline"
Isaiah 28:17

outreach • equipping Christians • training leaders • church planting

NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011 EDITION

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International

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- Roy Wheeler
- Paul Brown
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Dear Friends

One of the great things about being a granddad is that I get to tell lots of stories again. At this time of the year, we remember the great story of the Saviour being born, and we think about Mary and Joseph as part of that. Over recent months, Mary and Joseph have been one of my main preaching themes. There are three things that stand out to me about them:

1. God did an amazing thing through very ordinary people
2. Their past did not determine their future
3. They said yes to the call of God on their lives.

God does amazing things through ordinary people. Mary is chosen to be the birth mother of Jesus, and Joseph is chosen to be the surrogate father. What a great call – to be the parents of the Saviour of the world! Scripture tells us that Mary found favour with God. Does this mean that she somehow deserved to be blessed in this way? I think it more likely that it just shows us that God loves and favours *all* His children and wants to bless and use them, which is a demonstration of His amazing grace to us despite our fallenness. Through the death of Jesus, we all enter God's grace and favour – He wants to do amazing things through you and me.

Secondly, Mary and Joseph's past did not determine their future. They had no experience of being parents, let alone parents of the King of Kings. We may struggle sometimes with feelings of

unworthiness and inexperience in responding to the call of God on our lives, just as I am sure Mary and Joseph did. But God did not call them on the basis of their experience and past, but on the basis of His ability to use them. The enemy is quick to point out to us our lack of experience and our failings in the past, but the gospel is great news. Jesus came to forgive us all our sins, to set us free and take us into God's destiny for us. Our past does not need to determine our future.

Mary and Joseph said yes to the call of God. What would have happened if they had said no? Sadly they would have missed God's call on their lives, but God's will would still have been outworked, as instead He would have called others to this great honour of parenting Jesus. We have a free will and we can say no to something God is calling us to – and we can miss at least that part of His call on our lives. That's scary! In relation to something that was a huge challenge to fulfil, I once heard Reinhard Bonnke the evangelist say to the Lord, "Lord, why did you call me to this? Couldn't you have called someone else more able?" The answer came back: "You were my third choice – the previous two said no."

Have lots of fun over the Christmas season, tell some stories and go into 2012 with a fresh passion to say yes to God's will and plan for you.

Love
*Simon and Julia
and all in the Plumblines team*

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CHURCHES IN ENGLAND

Capel Community Church

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 01473 311368

City Life Church Cambridge

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 01223 360011

City Life Church Luton

www.loveluton.org
info@loveluton.org
 01582 415528

Colchester Area Community Church

www.colchesterareacommunitychurch.org.uk
cacc@plumblineline.org.uk
 01206 863030

Fenland Community Church

www.fcc.uk.net
info@fcc.uk.net
 01354 651983

Huntingdonshire Community Church

www.hccuk.org
church@hccuk.org
 01480 411665

Narborough Congregational Church

www.narboroughcongregational.org.uk
mick@narboroughcongregational.org.uk
 0116 2841729

Newmarket Community Church

www.newmarketcommunitychurch.org.uk
admin@newmarketcommunitychurch.org.uk
 01638 662667

Trinity Life Church Royston

www.tlc-royston.org.uk
mail@tlc-royston.org.uk
 01763 230350

PLUMBLINE LEADERS CONFERENCE 2011 REPORT

The annual Plumblineline Leaders Conference was held on familiar territory this year at Hothorpe Hall in Leicestershire and was attended by church and ministry leaders from England, Ireland and France. It was a wonderful time of fellowship, worship, teaching and ministry. One person remarked: "What struck me most of all was the strong 'family' atmosphere. I felt the love, encouragement, warmth, hospitality and most of all the wonderful presence of the Holy Spirit."

Simon opened the conference talking on the theme of 'Little Things Matter' and how the feeding of the 5000 started with just one small packed lunch, encouraging us to do all the little things well because big things are made up of lots of little things. The guest speaker was Dave Smith from [Kingsgate Community Church](http://www.kingsgatecommunitychurch.org.uk) in Peterborough, and he spoke about key principles of growth in a missional church, based on Acts 1-2.

Carolyn Spring from Spring Ministries (www.springministries.org.uk) spoke about working with survivors of sexual abuse, and how we need to learn to come alongside people in their suffering rather than offering quick fixes. Following on from a significant prophetic word from Alan Ross at last year's conference, she talked about some of the paradigms that need to change in church if we are to become 'spiritual hospitals' and see people whose lives have been devastated set free and restored.

A team from [City Life Church Luton](http://www.citylifechurchluton.org.uk) ("fresh-faced youngsters" as another speaker described them!) shared their journey as a church reaching out to the 18-30 age group, and how having been planted from [City Life Church Cambridge](http://www.citylifechurchcambridge.org.uk) just a few years ago, they are also "called and sent" and are now planting out a new congregation next year into Exeter.

Rosemary McAuley from Ireland shared passionately about "divine connections with God" and talked about the generational connection that we need, with the old passing the baton onto the young. This theme was taken up in an evening time of prophetic worship, praise and prayer, and one person prophesied that, "The most important people in Plumblineline aren't here yet ... They are the children, the young people, the youth."

[Godfrey Birtill](http://www.godfreybirtill.org.uk) led worship throughout the conference and there was an exceptional sense of the anointing and presence of God during these times. Simon spoke briefly on the final morning about faith for finances and then showed a Bill Hybels video *Leading in a New Reality* (available on the [resources](http://www.plumblineline.org.uk/resources) page of the Plumblineline website) on how the Western world has been hit by a 'rogue wave' with the collapse of the financial markets in 2008.

Next year's conference will again be held at Hothorpe Hall and early booking is recommended as there will be fewer rooms available than in previous years. The talks from this year's conference are all available for download at www.plumblineline.org.uk.



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PLUMBLINE LEADERS DAY — SATURDAY 21 JANUARY 2012

Everybody in a position of wider leadership within the Plumblineline family is invited to the next Leaders Day at the HCC centre in Huntingdon on 21 January from 10am to 4pm. This will be a day of sharing, equipping, prayer and encouragement for one another.

Leaders from every sphere of church life are welcome, including small groups, worship, children's work, pastoral teams as well as senior leaders, eldership and trustees. Email Simon on s.matthews@plumblineline.org.uk for more information.

CHURCHES IN IRELAND

Bridge Community Church, Arklow

www.bccarklow.ie
r.holden@bccarklow.ie
 00353-402-33784

Carlow Christian Community

www.carlowchristiancommunity.com
seamus@carlowchristiancommunity.com
 00353-59-9140754

Galway Christian Fellowship

www.gcf.ie
gcfgalway@gmail.com
 00353-91-752989

Hope Community

Roscommon
www.hopecommunity.ie
info@hopecommunity.ie
 09064-89110 or 087 2193171

Kilkenny Community Church

www.kilcomchurch.org
kilcomchurch@eircom.net
 00353-56-7703906 / 00353-87-0605855

New Life Christian Fellowship, Lurgan

www.nlmweb.org
nlcf@ic24.net
 02838-881470

New Life Church, Killarney

acdreher@eircom.net
 00353-64-6630595

River of Life Midlands Christian Family, Athlone

<http://theriveroflife.webs.com>
riveroflife@eircom.net
 00353-9064-76840

THE GOD WHO HEARS THE CRY OF THE OPPRESSED

by Carolyn Spring (Huntingdonshire Community Church and Spring Ministries)

It's Egypt. You're a Hebrew. You're a slave. You're building an empire for a nation that worships the sun and the moon and a whole shed-load of animals. You're building temples for them, you're building storehouses for them, you're building military bases. All day, every day, without a break, you have to make bricks. The sun that you're supposed to worship burns you all day, and if you don't make your quota you are beaten. Then you're supposed to make your quota, but without straw, so overnight your workload is doubled. Oh, and your boss just killed your baby too.

If we stop and really think about what this was like, rather than either dismissing it as a kids' story or skimming it as just the prelude to Moses' dark but triumphant showdown with Pharaoh, then we might understand how significant the rest of the story is. Because the Scriptures say that God sees the Israelites' misery, He hears their groaning, and that He comes and does something about it (Exodus 3).

That's the reality of the God I know, the God who hears the cry of the oppressed and does something about it. I work with the oppressed – people whose lives have been devastated by trauma and sexual abuse, people who know more than enough about suffering. And when they ask me, as many do, what I think about suffering and why God allows it, I try not to give them glib answers about all things working together for good. But I do point them towards a God who hears the cry of the oppressed and does something about it.

When Jesus stood up in the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61, his opening words were, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4.18). That name, 'the LORD' is a translation from 'Yahweh'. Yahweh, I AM, is the name by which God revealed Himself to Moses, the name through which the Exodus was enacted, the liberation of the Israelites out of Egypt, out of slavery and misery and suffering. So Jesus is saying, "The God who hears the cry of the oppressed has anointed and enabled and empowered me to help people out of their suffering."

This Exodus-God not only empowered Jesus but *was* and *is* Jesus. And He cares deeply about our suffering. He doesn't turn a blind eye to it. He doesn't deny that it is there. He doesn't tell us to just get over it. He comes down, in human form in the person of Jesus, to do something about it. And now, through the Holy Spirit, He wants to empower His church to do something about it too. The church is the body of Christ, the arms and hands and feet and eyes of a God who hears our misery and is concerned about our suffering.

But sometimes church can be the worst place to be if you're suffering. We can minimise people's distress and give them cheap answers and quick-fix Scriptures. I'm always struck by the fact that God didn't tell the Israelite slaves in Egypt to just give thanks and count it joy. He came and did something about it. Jesus on the cross is the ultimate representation of a God who cares deeply about our suffering and suffered Himself in order to do something about it. And now He's giving that task to us as the church, as His body, to see people's misery, to hear their groaning, to be concerned about their suffering, and to do something about it. God is looking for church-fuls of 'Moseses' who will say to the Pharaohs of this world, "Let my people go." God hears the cry of the oppressed and He wants to do something about it through you and me. That's exciting, and scary. And it's good news too.

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**"HELPING TO HEAL"
TRAINING DAY**

Helping To Heal is a new training day run by Carolyn Spring on the subject of how churches can support adult survivors of child sexual abuse. It is suitable for church leadership and pastoral teams, as well as survivors of sexual abuse, and any other interested parties. It is running on 3 March 2012 and 29 September 2012 at the HCC centre in Huntingdon.

For more information: www.springministries.org.uk

OTHER MINISTRIES AND FRIENDS

Tanzania Africare (Nigel and Barbara Double)
doublen@parliament.uk

Ministry and orphanages of **Lapson Mbewe** in Malawi and Mozambique
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Elim Pacific Ministries, Guam
 Rob and Allison Zimmerman
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Kingsgate Community Church,
 Peterborough
www.kingsgateuk.com

UPDATE FROM THE PHILIPPINES

by Roy Wheeler

Since Robert Garton, the founding pastor of New Life Community Church on Cebu Island suddenly went to be with the Lord in January 2011, responsibility to lead the church has passed to his widow, Nelce, who has felt that the Lord has called her and is enabling her to undertake this task. This is in addition to her other responsibilities, including for her aged father's practical needs; as mum to Chara, their 9-year-old daughter; and her full-time employment as Toledo city's Chief Veterinary Officer. As the head of a local authority department in a largely agricultural community, Nelce has a very important position which takes her to other islands both to attend and to speak at seminars and conventions.



At home, Nelce has good support from Chara's live-in nanny who attends school with Chara to assist her physically in view of her special needs, having cerebral palsy. The nanny's husband and another young lady work for the church and undertake many of the day-to-day activities under Nelce's supervision, who uses her lunch breaks to meet with them for instruction and discipleship. Nelce is an energetic person but admits that at times she does become tired and understandably she is also missing not having Rob alongside her. Please pray for her.

The Sunday preaching is shared by a number of people including Nelce. As well as the Sunday services, the church has a mid-week evening prayer meeting, a Barnabas group for High School students, and the 'Superkids' club for children on Friday afternoons.

Nelce is considering coming to England with Chara next year to visit Robert's aging parents in Suffolk and to maintain the link with the Plumblineline family, via Roy and Dorothy (of the Plumblineline team) and with Colchester Area Community Church, which was Robert's home church before he first went overseas as a missionary.

A SOUTH AMERICAN WINTER

by Paul Brown, Royston

Paul and Ruth Brown from Royston spent most of July and August in South America, visiting friends and churches. This was a sabbatical break, in between handing over the leadership of Trinity Life Church earlier in the year and starting new things in the Autumn.

"We based ourselves in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina," writes Paul. "The country has been experiencing revival to varying degrees since the 1980s and there are many big churches. There are amazing reports from the evangelistic campaigns that happen regularly throughout Argentina but we weren't able to see that for ourselves as July is mid-winter when the tent missions take a break.

"We were more impressed by the small expressions of church – a cell church run by a family passionate to reach their district of Buenos Aires; the congregation of 50 in a nearby town who were so welcoming and invited us to preach; the radically-changed lives of inmates at the top security Olmos Prison who run church behind bars. We came away impressed by people's hunger for more and by their understanding and expectation of a God who works miracles in everyday life.

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CLARITY COUNSELLING

(part of Plumblin
Missions Ltd)

Julia Matthews
MBACP, MACC
Higher Professional Diploma
in Counselling

Julia offers counselling to anyone over the age of 16 years. Her many years' experience in pastoral work, coupled with secular professional training, enables her to not only support but offer real help to people in need of time and space to focus on working through the challenges of life.

For more details and a free first session, contact Julia on 07960 781758 or email j.matthews@plumblin.org.uk



**SUNDAY
20 MAY 2012**

Join us for a day together as a family of churches.

The venue will be Burleigh Hill Farm, near St Ives, Cambridgeshire.

More details to follow but in the meantime email news@plumblin.org.uk for further information.

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"It was great to spend time with our friends Patrick and Carol Wang who work with Carlos Annacondia, a well-known crusade evangelist. And it wasn't all ministry – we spent lots of time as a family, being tourists, playing and watching football (as you have to in Argentina), eating ice cream and lots of beef (ditto) and going on trips to the Andes, the Iguazú Falls and to Uruguay.

"We are very grateful to all those who generously helped pay for the trip, and to God for leading us each step of the way. We have learned once again that he is always faithful to fulfil his calling."

Since returning home, whilst continuing to be part of TLC, Paul has started training as a school teacher and Ruth has started a new job training volunteers at a college in London.



OUR CALL TO POLAND

by John & Liddy Entwistle (Huntingdonshire Community Church)

After 39 years in banking, John took early retirement from Barclays in September 2006. We together sought the Lord as to how we might continue to serve Him. For a good many years we had been involved with a humanitarian aid project called *Vision for Israel*, but in asking the Lord what was on His heart, the answer was, "I am burdened for My brothers, the Jewish people. I do not want My church to remain ignorant or be misled."

The next stage was in November 2006 at the Plumblin Conference when we were reunited with Wladek Wiglasz, the Pastor of a Pentecostal Church in Zamosc, Eastern Poland, with connections to Plumblin and Roy and Dorothy Wheeler in particular. During the conference we ended up praying for Wladek along with some other people, and during this time there was a prophetic word that one of the couples praying would be called by God to align themselves with Wladek. We went back to our seats feeling that no way could it be us!

As we were leaving Hothorpe, John got talking to Wladek, and the subject of the Jews came up. It became apparent that we had a lot in common. To cut a long story short, we visited Wladek and his family in summer 2007 to pray and share our hearts. We returned feeling positive about this being the right direction. In November 2007 we attended the Plumblin Conference in Galway. There we had a prophetic word from Diane Hill, and another from Rob Zimmerman. Together with what the Lord had already said, these words indicated that God was calling us to Eastern Europe to speak His heart to the Christian churches concerning His plans for the Jewish people and the responsibility of Gentile believers.

Since that time we have had other linked words from Jean Casling and Trevor Baker, a leader in Dudley. As a result we have been going out to Zamosc for about 3-4 months a year and ministering into churches in Eastern Poland and more recently the Ukraine. We are expecting to go into Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and maybe more countries as the Lord opens doors for us. Last year, we purchased a flat in Zamosc, using John's pension lump sum and we are now likely to be spending much less time in the UK.

Going forward, we will be looking to assist Wladek in Zamosc by helping with preaching, to free him up to visit the churches he is overseeing. We have been using our flat to offer hospitality to visiting ministries and will continue to do so.



UPDATE FROM FRANCE

by Elie & Judith Ferraro

"He called a little child and had him stand among them"
Matthew 18.2.

Children are certainly not a peripheral concern for Jesus. When God told us to open our home for four Monday evenings in August, we didn't plan the way they turned out. To our amazement, on His agenda for this time were the children and young people. He really did have them "stand among us!"

We started to worship all together, making available a few percussion instruments. At the start, apart from our two grandchildren, most of the children and young people (ten at the most!) weren't used to joining in or opening their hearts to God. This was to change radically as time went on.

Sometimes we sang action choruses together or danced. As we moved into sharing what we felt God was saying, quite naturally some children spoke up and shared pictures or impressions. We took these up and explained and applied them, praying them over each other. As the Mondays went by we found that the children were leading us into God's presence. Since then they have even served us adults great chunks of Bible and potent messages!

After a while, we encouraged the children and anyone else willing to create a collage or painting depicting something



Laëtitia, 12, loves making up personal choreographies as she sings and this encourages everyone to be more expressive in worship.

that God was telling them. Each time the work was deeply personal and significant. At some point Camille gave her heart to the Lord. One of her works had "Forgiveness"

written across it. For the second Monday she spent the week painting the words of a song to teach us and making sure her brothers and mother could sing it with her. She has also begun to share what she heard from God, using balls to illustrate in true childlike fashion.

Alicia came to realise one Monday as we were sharing that she too was elected by grace. Her picture was an open door, with the word "chosen" over it. When a hairy 14-year-old looks you straight in the eye, it must be God! Emmanuel cornered Elie on the last Monday and said, "Elie, we mustn't stop now – I've learned so much!"

No, we mustn't stop! These are tiny beginnings, inklings of the great move of God to come among the young, which others of the Plumblin family are experiencing too. We must continue to pray and to love and include the young, the very young. We must give them room, opportunity, training in the things of God. We are planning a two-day event for the children of the region in May 2012 in order to steward God's purposes among them. Please pray for us as we gather team and put that together.

As Geoffrey Bull in *The Sky Is Red* says, "God stakes his all in the child." Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

OPPORTUNITIES — NOT PROBLEMS!

by Tony Hodge, Newmarket Community Church

We live in a land of many opportunities! At least I think we must do because there are so many big problems around at the moment and mentors have repeatedly said to me that we should see not problems but opportunities.

The economic situation; moral decline in government, the media and homes; riots and lawlessness on our streets – opportunity is knocking big-time.

I read an article in a Christian men's magazine (*Sorted*, September/October 2011 issue) about entrepreneurs and innovators which reported that most people tend to believe that events happen as a result of circumstances beyond their control. However, the entrepreneurial type believes that events happen as a direct result of their actions or behaviour.

What is the Christian view? To see the events

of the day as things that happen around us, out of our control? Or to see a world where we can make a difference by our actions and behaviour?

I hope that's a rhetorical question: there's nothing passive about the gospel or the Christian walk – we're exhorted to "go and make", to "take every opportunity" and to "always be prepared" to mention but a few examples. What's more, we're made in the image of a God who brings order out of chaos, who sits on the throne and declares "I am making everything new!"

So what are you doing tonight? Watching the TV feeling you have nothing to do with events around you? Or will you be down the youth club, visiting someone in poverty, walking the street as a Town Pastor, or meeting your MP to offer to pray for them? Or perhaps you could be calling your church leader with that God idea for getting close to people with God's love, with the determination to make it happen.

