



July 2015

## Jump in – or stay safe?

*I stood in the churchyard, holding a piece of paper, full of regret.*

In our church in Zimbabwe we sang a song at Sunday School which goes something like this:

“We jump in to what you’re doing,

Shake us out of apathy,

Lead us out to where you’re going,

Take us up to eternity...”

I’m a bit hazy about these words but there were actions to go with it, of jumping forwards and backwards, as you can imagine. I love that idea of jumping into what God is doing, of stepping into what he promises for us and claiming the gifts and blessings he wants to give us.

Or we could just stay on the edge and look on wistfully.

Or stand in the churchyard, regretting, too late. This is what happened to me.

I’m pretty sure I prayed this morning, “Lord, what do you want me to do today?” In fact, I remember, because at morning prayers (Tuesdays 9.15 all welcome), Richard Bacon pointed out the funny sentence in Psalm 94 before verse 7 which says, “Today, if you hear his voice...” and turned it into a prayer: “Lord, if we hear your voice today, what will we do?”

Well, I did hear his voice today. And I blew it.

It was a lovely sunny lunchtime, so I took my lunch outside to the spiritual garden. There were a couple of people having an in depth discussion on the bench the Mothers Union donated and which has become a favourite lunchtime space in the summer months for

local workers and wanderers. So I positioned myself further away on the grass, politely out of earshot. After my lunch (tasty leftovers from Mayann’s women’s lunch which put me in a good mood) I decided to pray. “Pray for the people on the bench,” I thought. Ok, so I did, that God would bless them with clarity and wisdom in their discussions.

Then in my mind’s eye there came a picture of a train engine, and a carriage being uncoupled from it. Just like that. No reason why I would be thinking about trains. (I rarely do!) But there it was. “Oh no, God,” I said. “You probably want me to go and share that with them, don’t you.” I waited. “I just made up that train thing, didn’t I God?” (Searching desperately for some reason why trains might have been on my mind today). Nope. Nothing there. “Really, God?” You want me to walk up to some complete strangers and say, “Er, excuse me, but I was praying for you and I saw this thing about a train?” They’ll think I’ve gone off the rails.”

I got up, awkwardly tidying my picnic as I played for time. I’ll get out of sight, I thought, and see if I have the courage to do it. I skulked by the door. I know, I’ll write them a note and leave it on the path where they’ll see it on their return. So, I went inside, dumping all my things and finding pen and paper. I confessed my cowardice to Andy Smith who was closing up Open church (Tuesdays, 9.15 -3.00, all welcome!) and he kindly didn’t call me an idiot. “Leave them a note!” I thought, as I made a coffee and wrote it down. “It’s a bit cowardly but what a wonderful story if one day someone stands up in church to give their testimony. Well, they say, It all started one sunny afternoon with a strange note. I was in the churchyard...”

I finished the note. I drank a bit of the coffee. I went outside with the oh- so brave note, and a handy stone from the prayer room to weight



it down – no grateful and stirring testimony some months hence if the note’s blown away, I thought. Placed the note just where they couldn’t miss it. Just needed to creep round and spy out that they’re still there.

They weren’t.

Now who knows what reception I would have got if I had gone up to them. Who knows if the picture was helpful or not. If nothing else it would have given them a good laugh once they got back to work! Why would I fear the scorn of a stranger more than wish for the blessing of the Father upon them? I will never know if I was to experience the excitement of being a visible part of God’s plan for someone. But I would have known the peace that comes from having been obedient.

Maybe another time I will be able to “Jump in” to what God’s doing, and step into the promise, rather than sitting wistfully on the edge wishing I had possessed the courage to hear and obey. What about you? Are you the sort who jumps, or stays safe? I’d love to hear if you ever acted upon a whim that seemed to come from God, and what happened next. Writing this is the only thing I can think of to redeem the situation now, because perhaps someone somewhere will think, Well at least I’m not *that* bad. *I* could do that!

“Today, if you hear His voice...” what will you do? I am really looking forward to- and fearing whether I am up to – a second chance.

### Prayer

#### Think Smaller Prayer Challenge Update:

Make sure you pray for your chosen family over the summer, as some will find the

summer holidays difficult due to finances, work or behaviour problems.

And as soon as the Messy Church publicity is out, why not pop a postcard through their door or give to them in person, inviting them to our first session on Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> September.

If you never got round to choosing a family to pray for, it’s never too late to begin.

### Whole Life Resources

#### **Run Baby Run by Nicky Cruz**

##### **“The gangster who came to faith”**

Rhys Harris has written this edition’s book review, on one of the most famous testimonies about how there is no one so tough that God can’t reach him.

To read the review, follow the link below to see it on the church web site.

<http://christchurchdownend.com/book-review-run-baby-run-by-nicky-cruz/>

Well done Rhys. Who’s next?

We have many amazing books in the church library, and Tim Rawling has catalogued them electronically. Go to the link below on our web site and you can read all about the book, and even go straight to online shopping to purchase it. Well done Tim and Jon for sorting out this amazing resource. Do have a look.

<http://www.christchurchdownend.com/library/>

Have you visited the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity website yet?



“LICC exists to envision and equip Christians and their churches for whole-life missionary discipleship in the world. We seek to serve them with biblical frameworks, practical resources, training and models so that they flourish as followers of Jesus and grow as whole-life discipling communities.”

[www.licc.org.uk](http://www.licc.org.uk)

Last week's Connecting with Culture article on the Charleston shootings could equally well speak to last Friday's shootings in Tunisia. Richard Collins reflects on how to change hearts as well as legislation to protect the innocent.

Read it here:

<http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=2d890204e49f49d788e3a0b12&id=55af62b821&e=28b8d45227>

### Transforming work

Several members of our congregation took part in a pilot project run by Charles Hipplesley of LICC, helping them to see how God might use them at work, and transform the way they feel about it.

The *Transforming Work* course is now officially launched as an 8 session course with DVD and leaders guide. If you are interested in finding out more, ask one of those who attended the course (Jo Vickery can tell you who they were.) Why not run a course in your workplace for Christian colleagues, or with friends and neighbours at home.

<http://www.licc.org.uk/TW/image-bg/index.html>

### Faith in Homes

Here's an idea for prayer at home, as posted on Faith in homes website

[http://www.faithinhomes.org.uk/lego-prayers/?mc\\_cid=18a9a86afe&mc\\_eid=e572c669c3](http://www.faithinhomes.org.uk/lego-prayers/?mc_cid=18a9a86afe&mc_eid=e572c669c3)

### Lego Prayers

Take a lego or duplo brick each. Count the dots on it, and pray for one person you can think of per dot. Look at the colour: give thanks to God for everything you can think of in that colour. Build together with your bricks and the rest of your collection, giving thanks for what God can do when you all work together. With older children, talk about the things that make it hard to work together as a family, and the things you each really enjoy about being together. Remember to allow the children to speak without jumping straight in to tell them they are wrong. Forgive whoever knocks the tower down!

### Diary Dates

**Youth Service 10.30 am followed by Bring and Share lunch Sunday 6th July**

### Women's Events:

**Pudding Night 11<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

25 Ducie Rd Staple Hill BS165JZ 8.00 – 10.00 pm

All welcome: bring a friend or neighbour, and a drink or a pudding. The aim is for women of all ages mix and make friendships, and that non Christian friends might make some new friends at Christ Church.

### Men's Events

**Cricket Match v Downend Tues 14<sup>th</sup> July 6 pm** at Downend Cricket Ground. Speak to Paul Peterson if you'd like to play. Come and watch this match to celebrate the centenary of W G Grace's death.

## GROWING 4 LIFE



Pub skittles September 23<sup>rd</sup> more details to follow. Email [men@christchurchdownend.com](mailto:men@christchurchdownend.com)

Questions? Feedback? Ideas to share? Please contact me [family@christchurchdownend.com](mailto:family@christchurchdownend.com) or 07753233950

### Messy Church

Wed 23<sup>rd</sup> September 4.30 -6.30 pm Parish Hall.

A new way of doing church for all the family. Learn, worship and make friends together as a family through making, doing, playing, interactive worship and eating tea together.

**(First planning meeting for all who are interested in getting involved, Thurs 9<sup>th</sup> July 7.30 pm in church.)**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Anita'.

### Discipleship for All Ages

The family worker role has been changed to the title Discipleship for All Ages – to reflect the fact that everyone is welcome and all are called to grow, and go and make disciples, whatever their life experiences and circumstances. We would love to hear ideas about what particular ways the interests of single people might be encouraged. Do feed in ideas of what would be helpful; discuss with friends what part you might play; recommend any resources you have found helpful; search online to see what you can find.

To get the ball rolling, here is a website I found, recommending some useful books and articles. I haven't researched this on in depth: perhaps you would like to?

<http://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/ju stintaylor/2012/07/27/resources-on-being-single-in-christ/>