



Guernsey's martyrs

During the Reformation a Huguenot preacher persecuted by Mary Tudor's cohorts sent family members to Guernsey for their safety, but in 1556 they were convicted of heresy for rejecting Roman Catholic teaching. Sentenced to death by the island's ecclesiastic authorities, Katherine Cawches, Guillemine Gilbert and Perotine Massey were partially strangled, then burned alive. When Perotine Massey fell on her side her stomach burst open and a baby boy tumbled into the fire. The island's Bailiff (incidentally a Jerseyman!) ordered it to be thrown back into fire where it was reduced to ashes alongside its mother, grandmother and aunt. *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* said that this appalling incident showed the whole world 'the Herodian cruelty of this graceless generation of popish tormentors'.



When Elizabeth I succeeded Mary, the Bailiff and the Dean were summoned to London where, on disavowing their Roman Catholic faith, confessing their guilt in murdering the baby and begging for mercy they were heavily fined and dismissed from office. Their horrible crime triggered the sudden demise of Romanism on the island and Puritanism thrived there for over a century.

Back on my native island recently to preach at the 190th anniversary celebrations of La Villiaze Evangelical Congregational Church, it was stirring to read the plaque the church had placed on the site, a few hundred yards from where I once lived. Let us make the best use of the liberty we currently have to spread the gospel of God's grace!

'As much as I can, as well as I can, for as long as I can'

Revisiting Uncle Sam

Even after crossing the Atlantic well over 150 times and speaking at more than 400 convention and evangelistic missions on the other side of the ‘pond’ I always look forward to visiting our North American cousins, and this last visit was both refreshing and fruitful.

Joyce and I began in **Lexington, Kentucky**. Our long-time friend John Sartelle had resigned from a large church in Tennessee as he wished to downsize his ministry, but God has so signally blessed the move that Tates Creek Presbyterian Church now has to hold two Sunday morning services to accommodate the crowds! Preaching at all three Sunday services gave me the sense of being part of a forward move and it seems that the ministry touched on some significant issues. After the final engagement a lady showed me a copy of *Right with God* and told me that she had come to faith in Christ while reading it. One could not have finished on a higher note!

Our next stop was **Jackson, Mississippi**, and the First Presbyterian Church, where I have had the privilege of preaching many times over the years. Ligon Duncan and Derek Thomas (a British ‘import’) spearhead a fine team and God has so blessed the work that the sanctuary is being radically remodelled to double its previous capacity of 700. Preaching at ‘First Pres’ is always a delight and this was no exception, with a well-taught congregation latching on to the ministry with obvious enthusiasm.



Three docs in a row! Duncan, Blanchard & Thomas

A flight to Atlanta put us in place for services in **Sugar Hill, Georgia**. Grace Baptist Church of Gwinnett has a very small membership, but under David Shaw’s leadership it has developed a huge heart for the gospel. We have a number of dear friends at Grace and I always try to include them in any trip to the USA. In spite of their own obvious needs they have a great concern for missions and encouraged me to take one whole session on Project Albania. I needed no second invitation!

Our final stop was in **Charlotte, North Carolina**. Several very close friends took us to Mount Mitchell, the highest point in the States east of the Rockies, for three delightful days of relaxation and the autumn colours of millions of trees took one’s breath away. A visit to the Billy Graham Training Centre in Asheville, NC, was an added bonus, and leading a prayer time there a meaningful experience. Back in Charlotte, services at Durham Memorial Baptist Church provided a fine finish to the trip, and not even the deluge of deskwork waiting for me when I returned home could take anything away from one’s thankfulness for God’s gracious enabling on the entire trip. God bless America!

Albanian update

There is wonderfully encouraging news about Project Albania, launched in the last issue of *Newsline*. A target of £19,000 was set, with the aim of translating, editing and publishing in Albanian several thousand copies of each of five of my evangelistic books in the Popular Christian Apologetics series. Thanks to the generosity of *Newsline* readers and others, and in answer to much prayer, over £17,000 has already been received!

In sending his gift, one close friend suggested that *Right with God* should be included in the project. Having come across so many people converted through reading it (one within a few days of my friend's suggestion) I agreed, and the way has been cleared for this to be done. However, to include it within the present budget would mean reducing the print run of *Does God believe in Atheists?* from 2,000 to 1,000, but I feel that this would be a backward step. It would be far better to add 5,000 copies of *Right with God* to the project and raise the target required to £21,000. Even with this addition, we are within £4,000 of meeting all our needs and I am confident that by the next issue of *Newsline* the new target will have been met.



Translation work on the first two booklets, *Where is God when things go wrong?* and *Evolution: Fact or Fiction?* is well under way (our photograph shows Doretta Niven working on the second of these) and they should be published in March. Interest is already being expressed in both of these titles and it looks as if there will be a strategic use for them among the 500,000

Albanians living in Greece. I have recently been told that young Albanians are devouring *The Da Vinci Code* as if it was history and not a ridiculous fable, so with this in mind *Why believe the Bible?* will be tackled next. Another translator is already working on the mammoth task of translating *Does God believe in Atheists?*

Please join us in fulfilling this exciting vision, which will be a significant help to our Christian brothers and sisters seeking to spread the gospel in what was once declared to be the world's first atheist state. Gifts should be made payable to **Sarnia Evangelical Trust** and sent to my home address. Please indicate if you wish your donation to be Gift Aided as this will greatly increase its value.

Return to 'Europe's Korea'

In my good friend Geoff Thomas's report on a visit he paid to Northern Ireland last year he referred to it as 'Europe's Korea'. It is easy to see why. For uninterrupted Christian heritage, church attendance, steady depth of commitment by so many believers and support for missionary causes, I know of no country on the continent that surpasses it and invitations to return to the province are eagerly accepted whenever my schedule allows.

With Howard Williams (the world's best 'gofer'!) my last Popular Christian Apologetics tour there began in **Tandragee**, Co. Armagh, at a Baptist church pastored by a long-time friend, Billy Reid. A good Saturday night attendance got the tour off to a bright start and there was a lovely sense of God's presence at the Sunday morning service. Billy had done most of the early work in setting up the tour, so it was a special joy to serve him in the ministry of God's Word.

A Sunday afternoon drive took us to **Ballymoney**, Co. Antrim, a town of which I have many happy memories. Evangelistic campaigns and other ministry there take me back well over thirty years and it was in Ballymoney that I put the finishing touches to the manuscript of *Right with God* in the early nineteen-seventies. On this occasion we were at Ballymoney Baptist Church, ably led by Steven Curry, who had decided to abandon the normal evening service in favour of a straightforward apologetics evening, a decision more than justified by seeing the church packed to capacity. The exceptional attendance owed much to the fact that some time earlier the church had distributed a copy of *Ultimate Questions* to every house in the town. The meeting went exceptionally well, with lively questions and the sense of an engaged response from the audience. It was even more encouraging to meet or hear of at least five people who had been converted when I was preaching in Ballymoney or elsewhere in Co. Antrim in previous years. We left the town for our tour base in Magherafelt very thankful for such a full and fruitful day.

Monday meant a two-hour drive for an engagement in **Enniskillen**, Co. Fermanagh. Brendan Jones, a local businessman, recently transformed a set of broken-down (but Grade II listed) farm buildings into a grand modern suite of facilities, including a conference or meeting room seating 200, a superb large kitchen, an upstairs meeting room and two two-bedroom town houses. Knowing what the buildings were like beforehand made it difficult to believe that such stunning facilities could have risen from the ruins. A one-off Monday night in a rural setting does not usually augur well for attendance, but by the time the meeting started extra chairs had had to be brought in to the main meeting room for a memorable evening on the subject 'Has science got rid of God?' that has already generated plans for a similar event next year. A 'follow up' time in the kitchen, layered with typical N. Ireland hospitality, meant that we did not get back 'home' until the early hours of the following day, but we would gladly endure the same timetable again!

The following day saw us at the Baptist church in **Moirá**, Co. Down, where it was a special joy to link up again with Eric Clarke, with whom I shared many years of

happy service while on the staff of MWE and whose work on the Board of Christian Ministries was so greatly appreciated. Eric and others had worked hard in setting up the meeting and the church was virtually full. In the course of my message I mentioned the Cambodian Marxist dictator Pol Pot's 'killing fields' in Cambodia, not knowing that one of its survivors, Sokreaksa Himm, was in the audience. His compelling book *The Tears of my Soul* (I had devoured it by the time I got back home) tells of him being clubbed with a hoe and thrown into a mass grave with his murdered father, brothers and sisters and of how he feigned death, escaped and was later brought to faith in Christ. It was a privilege to spend time with him and to share our common passion for the gospel.



Our next stop was at BBC Radio Foyle in **Londonderry**. When I asked the presenter/interviewer just before we went on air how long we had, he replied, 'As long as it takes.' This is more than unusual with today's tight broadcasting schedules, but I was given nearly twenty minutes to answer questions about the relevance of Christian apologetics in today's post-modern world. It was a remarkable opportunity. Londonderry Baptist Church, under Joe Flanagan's leadership, was the venue for the evening meeting and once again it was difficult to get all the people in. One church leader told me that there were more people present than at the official opening of the superb new church building a few years ago. There was a fine spirit in the meeting, when (it being the fifth anniversary week of what has simply become known as '9/11') I majored on the sovereignty of God over even the most dire events we face in today's world.

On our last day in the province we travelled to the east coast town of **Larne**, Co. Antrim, where Larne Baptist Church (Pastor John Gault) had booked the McNeill Theatre in the town's fine Leisure Centre for a public meeting. Although deeply touched during the

1859 Revival, Larne has a reputation of being hard going for Christian work, but well over 150 people came to the meeting, which was marked by a series of penetrating questions, largely centred on creation. Before the meeting began, a man came to name the day on which he came to Christ while reading *Ultimate Questions* and to say that his family had subsequently been converted. After the meeting another man told me that during three years of extensive treatment for a brain tumour, 'reading *Does God believe in Atheists?* saw me through'!

Once again, Ulster left me with a host of heart-warming memories; plans for the next tour there are already under way!

Serving the King at Queen's



Among the Christians for whom I have a special regard, few rank higher than students who strive to maintain solid, biblical witness in their chosen university, college or school. Often hampered by small numbers and frustrated by heavy schedules and sometimes opposed by those with a hidden agenda to stifle a Christian voice, the going can at times be very tough.

These thoughts were much in mind when I spoke recently at Queen's University, Belfast, at the invitation of its thriving Christian Union. Queen's University was founded by Queen Victoria (as The Queen's University in Ireland and as a non-denominational alternative to Trinity College, Dublin, which was controlled by the Anglican Church) and was made up of colleges in Cork, Galway and Belfast.

Queen's opened in 1849, the first university in Northern Ireland, with ninety students taught in the magnificent building designed and built by Charles Lanyon. In 1908 the three original colleges were dissolved and replaced by Queen's as we now know it, with 300 buildings catering for some 24,000 students.

The Christian Union took over the 400-seater lecture theatre in The Medical Biology Centre for a special outreach meeting, but by soon after the advertised starting time these were all filled and eventually something nearer 500 students were crammed in. A *Daily Mail* article by John Humphrys three days earlier and headed 'How can there be a God? provided the lead-in for my assigned subject: 'Where is God when bad things happen?'; and for some 90 minutes I had the privilege of expounding God's sovereignty over *all* events in the universe and of responding to a stream of intelligent questions. After the meeting I was able to speak one-on-one with many other serious enquirers and I left the university deeply thankful for the whole evening.

Queen's has over 70,000 alumni living in some sixty countries. Graduates continue to include a steady stream of fine young Christians who by the grace of God can make a significant impact in their developing world. Do pray for the vital work of Christian Unions!

Extended offer on New Book



The last issue of *Newsline* had advance details of *The Complete Gathered Gold*, which has some 16,000 carefully chosen quotations from hundreds of authors and others, covering over 600 subjects. The book was published in October and although there has already been a very encouraging response to it, Evangelical Press has kindly agreed to extend the special offer it originally made to readers of *Newsline*.

The 704-page book retails at £24.99 (\$49.99 in the USA), but readers of *Newsline* can order it at £20.00 or \$40.00 (**both post free**) from Evangelical Press at Faverdale North Industrial Estate, Darlington DL3 0PH, on 01325 380232 or at sales@evangelicalpress.org. Please make it clear that you are a *Newsline* reader.

Here are some examples of the gems you will find as you turn these pages:

It is better to grow in grace than gifts — **Thomas Watson**

The man who kneels to God can stand up to anything — **Louis H. Evans**

Money has never yet made anybody rich — **Seneca**

He who has the smile of the ungodly must look for the frown of God — **C. H. Spurgeon**

Faith in Jesus laughs at impossibilities — **C. T. Studd**

The truth of Scripture demolishes speculation — **R. C. Sproul**

The first lesson in Christ's school is self-denial — **Matthew Henry**

We are immortal till our work is done — **George Whitefield**

Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory — **Thomas Brooks**

Thank you!

My warmest thanks once again to friends who have recently sent gifts through the CM Trust for the support of my ministry. Your fellowship is greatly appreciated. Gifts sent directly to my home address are always acknowledged personally at the time.

COMING ENGAGEMENTS 2007

At the time of going to press these are my engagements for the next four months. For up-to-date news of any additional meetings, visit www.johnblanchard.org. Please pray for God's enabling and blessing at these events — and if possible plan to attend any scheduled to be held near you.

- January** *The whole of January is reserved for research, study and writing.*
- February** 1-20 *Reserved for research, study and writing.*
21 Feb SOUTH AFRICA: Popular Christian Apologetics events in Gauteng, including services,
until meeting and seminars in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Roodepoort, Blairgowrie and
1 March* Brackenhurst [Info: jjoub@global.co.za]
- March** 2-4* SOUTH AFRICA: Popular Christian Apologetics events in KwaZulu-Natal, including Hilton,
Pinetown and Queensburgh. [Info: +27 (21) 6853663 or peter@christianbooks.co.za]
5-6* SOUTH AFRICA: Popular Christian Apologetics events in East London, Eastern Cape.
Info: +27 (21) 6853663 or peter@christianbooks.co.za
7-11* SOUTH AFRICA: Popular Christian Apologetics events in Western Cape, including
Cape Town and Villiersdorp. [Info: +27 (21) 6853663 or peter@christianbooks.co.za]
26* CHESTERFIELD, Derbyshire: Walton Evangelical Church [Info: 01246 203317
or simonjrob@hotmail.com]
27* CHORLEY, Lancs: [Info: Bernard Gooderham on 01257 234423 or
bernard@goodeggs.net]
28* DEWSBURY, West Yorks: Thornhill Baptist Church [Info: 0870 321 1795
or Daniel.grimwade@bigfoot.com]
29* LIVERPOOL: Bridge Chapel [Info: 0151 281 9716 or info@bridgechapel.com]
30* WIGAN, Greater Manchester: Bryn Baptist Church [Info: 01942
or paulhart@blueyonder.co.uk]
- April** 16* WESTBOURNE, Dorset: Christ Church, Alumhurst Road [Info: 01202 760952
or info@christchurchwestbourne.com]
17* SIDMOUTH, Devon: Emmanuel Baptist Church [Info: 01395 512273
or alistairmckenna@hotmail.com]
18* ANDOVER, Hants: Koinonia Independent Evangelical Church, Church Close
[Info: 01264 352728 or elder@koinonia-andover.org]
19* KINGSBRIDGE, Devon: Kingsbridge Evangelical Church, Fore Street
[Info 01548 857601 or dandj@clara.co.uk]
20* WANTAGE, Oxon: Grove Free Evangelical Church, North Drive [Info: 01235 210037
or pauljohn@hotmail.co.uk]
28-29 SIDCUP, Kent: Days Lane Baptist Church anniversary meetings
[Info: SPendrich@compuserve.com]

* Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting.

JOIN THE TEAM!

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