

## COMING ENGAGEMENTS

At the time of going to print, these are my engagements for the next four months. For up to date news log on to [www.johnblanchard.org](http://www.johnblanchard.org). Please pray for God's enabling as I speak at these events — and if possible plan to attend any that are being held in your area.

- September**
- 2 ORKNEY: Finstown [Info: 01856 761328]
  - 3 ORKNEY: Westray [Info: 01857 677226]
  - 4 ORKNEY: Orkney Science Festival [Info: 01856 761328]
  - 5-7 PITLOCHRY: Deeside Christian Fellowship Church (Aberdeen)  
Men's Activity Weekend
  - 9\* MOLD, Flintshire: Ebenezer Baptist Church [Info: [HugDw@aol.com](mailto:HugDw@aol.com)]
  - 20\* LONDON: Gunnersbury Baptist Church [Info: 020 8987 2965 or 020 8723 2410]
  - 21 LONDON: Gunnersbury Baptist Church [Info: 020 8987 2965 or 020 8723 2410]
  - 26\* LONDON: Enfield Evangelical Free Church: [Info: 020 8363 3364]
  - 27-28 CARDIFF: St Mellons Baptist Church, Ty'r Winch Road, Old St. Mellons [Info: 029 20779290 or 029 20333349 or [andy@achristofides.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:andy@achristofides.fsnet.co.uk)]
- October**
- 3\* RAMSEY, Cambs : Association of Grace Baptist Churches (East Midlands)  
Annual Assembly at Salem Baptist Church [Info: 01487 815568]
  - 18-21 UNITED STATES: Emmanuel Baptist Church, ENID, Oklahoma.
  - 22-24 UNITED STATES: MacArthur Boulevard Baptist Church, IRVING, Texas
  - 26-29 UNITED STATES: Independent Presbyterian Church, MEMPHIS, Tennessee
- November**
- 16 THORNTON HEATH, Surrey: Brigstock Manor
  - 21 CAMBRIDGE: Lunchtime meeting at Cambridge University
  - 21 RAMSEY, Cambs: Evangelistic rally at Salem Baptist Church [Info: 01487 815568]
  - 22 CAMBRIDGE: Cambridge University
  - 23 CAMBRIDGE: Cambridge Presbyterian Church [Info: 01223 473449 or [ianhamilton@ntlworld.com](mailto:ianhamilton@ntlworld.com)]
  - 28\* LONDON: The Borough Hall, Greenwich [Info: 020 8692 3810 or [william.gardner@btopenworld.com](mailto:william.gardner@btopenworld.com)]
  - 29\* LONDON: All Saints Parish Church, Wandsworth High Street [Info: 020 8392 1356 or [geoff.coyne@virgin.net](mailto:geoff.coyne@virgin.net)]
  - 30 LONDON: Wandsworth [Info: 020 8392 1356]
- December**
- Reserved for research, study and writing. Please pray that I might have all needed insight and energy as I work on the manuscript of the next publication in the Popular Christian Apologetics series.

\*Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting when I will be speaking on 'Does God Believe in Atheists?'



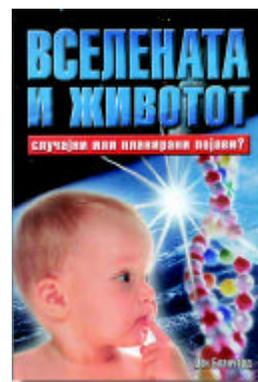
Four-monthly notes from John Blanchard, with news of his ministry

No.2

September 2003

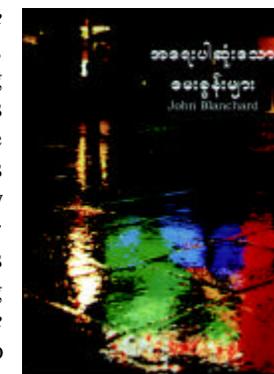
## In other words

I recently learned that five languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese) can reach almost the entire world population. Evangelical Press has already published some of my books in all five of these — and in some forty others. There have recently been two particularly interesting publications.



From Skopje there is news of a Macedonian version of Chapters 13-14 of 'Does God Believe in Atheists?' This is being produced by Revelation, the publishing house of The Rainbow Bible Centre, under the title 'Universe and Life: By Chance or Design?'. The first printing is just 500 copies, but a missionary society has been asked to consider sponsoring a further 5,000. The intention is to use the book widely among students, especially in Sts. Kiril and Methodius University in Skopje. Dr Ivan Grozdanov, Founder and President of The Rainbow Bible Centre and a university professor has written to say, 'We believe this book will be a great blessing amongst the Macedonian intellectuals.'

The other new title is yet another version of 'Ultimate Questions', this time in Burmese. David Mang Sum, Founder and Director of The Christian Missionary Training Centre in Yangon, Myanmar has written to say, 'This booklet is one of the best available in Burmese. It will be very effective to reach educated people as well as uneducated people. The message of the book will surely lead even atheists to know the living God.' Harvester Baptist Church, also founded by David Mang Sum, has eleven 'internal missionaries' and has a goal of sending out a further eight this year. It is intended that 'Ultimate Questions' will largely be used by these missionaries, who are under strict instructions to use them wisely.



# UPDATE

**To Russia with love** After a great deal of obstruction by Customs and the payment of additional import tax, it has been possible to deliver 160,000 copies of the Russian translation of *'Ultimate Questions'* to Moscow, St Petersburg and Yaroslavl. A message received by Evangelical Press from one group of Christians in Moscow reads: *'We are so glad that 'Ultimate Questions' finally arrived. Our prayers and hopes have been answered. Thank you so much that you helped us with these books. Honestly speaking, this book is the most popular among our readers and the best one for all people who write us for the first time. Many of them have not a clue of who God is or what faith is. I would surely recommend this book to everyone who is working in the field of evangelization, spreading the Good News as our Lord told us to.'*

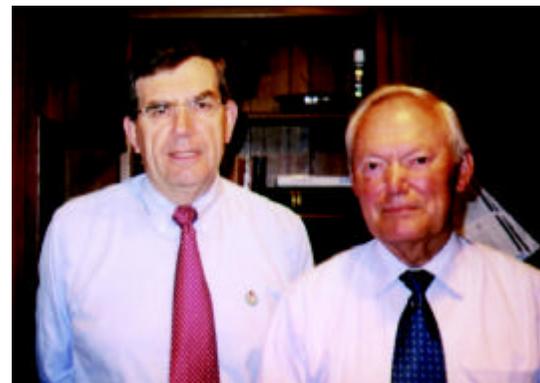
**Slip into Smiths!** The previous issue of Newline said that *'Is God past his sell-by Date?'* was on sale at W.H.Smith bookshops, but because of the group's somewhat complicated ordering system this was rather jumping the gun. However, *it is now available!* The more the W.H.Smith Group sells, the more it will order — and the greater the potential to make the book openly available in the secular market place. Please help to make this happen! Ask for it by author, publisher and ISBN number — which is 0-85234-500-3.

**On air** I recently had another excellent opportunity to do an extended telephone interview with Radio Kilkenny, majoring this time on the person on the resurrection of Jesus and the authority of Scripture. Radio Kilkenny's Vicky Sandell is a sympathetic interviewer and she wants to be actively involved in a Popular Christian Apologetics tour of Ireland being planned for next year.

**Avid reader!** A man from Devon writes: 'I read your book *'Right with God'* when I was thirty years of age and became a born again Christian. I have never looked back. I have read it fifteen times since, from cover to cover. Thank you so much for this book!'

**Far-sighted** The Royal National Institute for the Blind is to prepare a Braille version of *'Evolution: Fact or Fiction?'* as well as making it available in large print and as a talking book.

After a greatly appreciated day off on the Monday (yes, I did play golf!) Tuesday saw me in **DUNDEE**. My host told me that the city was famous for 'the three Js' — jute, jam and journalism. The first of these has gone, the second is in decline, but the third is flourishing. The Steeple Church is part of a complex of buildings which houses the first (unofficial) Reformed church in Scotland, and dates from 1789, though it is entered by the 15<sup>th</sup> Century St Mary's Tower, the oldest building in Dundee. Unfortunately, our event clashed with an important business meeting of the church, but many visitors meant a good attendance, including a number of Chinese students. The meeting was chaired by David Robertson, Minister of St Peter's Church, where one of his predecessors was Robert Murray M'Cheyne. David told me that ten years ago there were less than ten people in the congregation; now there are 80-100. The Church of Scotland is in serious decline, but it good to hear of such encouraging exceptions.



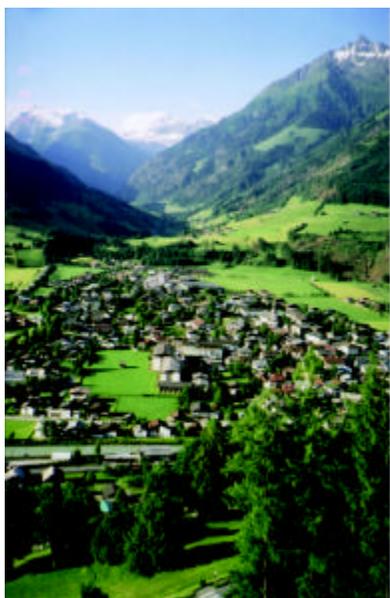
With Dr Sinclair Ferguson

From Dundee I headed for **GLASGOW**. The city's motto used to be 'Lord, let Glasgow flourish forever through the preaching of Thy Word and the praising of Thy Name'; now it is just 'Let Glasgow flourish'. The deletions speak volumes! Many of Glasgow's gospel lights have been extinguished, but none shines more brightly than St.George's Tron, where Sinclair Ferguson had such an effective ministry until his recent move to the United States. As the Foreword writer

for *'Does God Believe in Atheists?'* he made an ideal chairman for our meeting, attended by well over 500 people in spite of a local heatwave. There has been excellent feedback from the meeting and one prays for lasting impact.

North-west again for the final meeting of the tour, in **KIRCALDY**. At one time the world centre for the manufacture of linoleum, Kircaldy is now the hub of Scottish spiritism, with at least six spiritist churches advertising in the local newspaper. Neil MacMillan, the enthusiastic minister of a local Free Church of Scotland, felt that his church would be too small for our meeting, so switched it to Newcraigs Evangelical Church. The new venue was packed to the doors, with many visitors including a local Egyptian Coptic priest and some of his church members! The meeting matched the opening night in Wigtown for its alert response, lively questions and warm fellowship and was a very heartening way to end the tour.

An eleven-hour drive home through bad weather and terrible road conditions did rather put a damper on things, but did nothing to detract from a sense of thankfulness for such a fine tour. Major denominations in Scotland report about a 20% decline in attendance over the past eight years, yet in some places there also signs of vigorous spiritual life. Long may these grow and increase!



Mittersill

## Alpine apologetics

Munich International Christian Church is a strategic fellowship in the heart of Munich. Founded in 1985, it is now energetically led by the American pastor Steve Henderson. Its aim is to meet the spiritual needs of English speakers in the international community surrounding Munich and it does so through a busy centralized programme and a network of small groups meeting weekly for fellowship, Bible study and prayer in homes throughout the Munich area.

The regular congregation is drawn from over 20 different nations, about 60% from the UK and the United States. Others are from South America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and New Zealand. As many as 90% are professionals working with high-tech multinational companies.

Every year the church arranges a long Bank Holiday Retreat at Schloss Mittersill, in Austria, 2½ hours drive south of Munich and overlooking the beautiful Pinzgau valley. The original castle was built in 1150 and after being destroyed during a peasants' revolt in 1526 was rebuilt two years later. During the Second World War it was commandeered by the German military, but in 1967 it was bought by the International Fellowship of Evangelical Students to be used as a Christian Conference and Study Centre.

This year MICC invited me to be the speaker for all the adult sessions. I had anticipated doing a series of 'normal' Bible studies, but was eventually asked if I would devote all the sessions to various aspects of apologetics. I can't remember a more tightly packed schedule for such an event. The first meetings were at 7.30 in the morning and the last informal fellowship each day finished a long way past my normal bedtime! Afternoon breaks in such idyllic surroundings were delightful, but soon it was 'back to business', to tackle subjects aimed at equipping God's people to witness effectively to atheistic, agnostic and sceptical friends. One session was entirely given over to questions and answers and gave a great opportunity to fine tune points made in the more structured sessions.

At the last night barbecue (including Kasebockwurst and marshmallow roast!) it was encouraging to hear testimonies from those who had found the retreat stimulating and helpful. With a good percentage of men and women in the 20-40 age range the potential in such a weekend was exceptional and I am thankful for having been given the privilege of being part of it.

## University challenge

Universities have always provided great opportunities to present the gospel to young men and women who are doing a great deal of thinking about meaning and purpose, life and death, morals and ethics. In recent months I have had the privilege of visiting four well-known universities and of reaching into hundreds of lives.

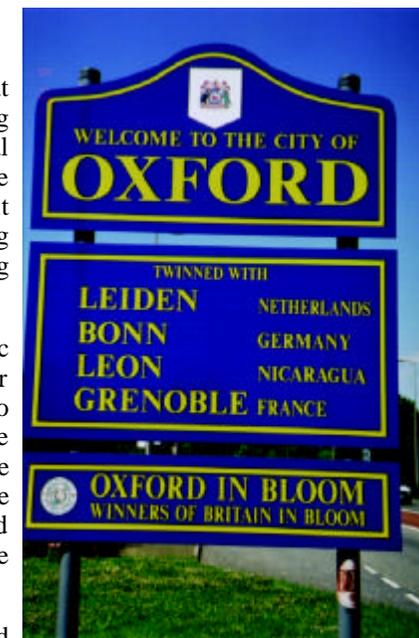
A lasting memory of **Southampton** is a Noahic downpour that had me wondering whether anyone would feel able to make their way to the building in which the meeting was to be held, but a good number got to the lecture theatre and gave an excellent hearing to the message. Conversations afterwards showed that there had been an impact among some of the students.

As part of a week-long, well organized and very fruitful Popular Christian Apologetics tour of the north-east I had a remarkable meeting in **Durham**. Claygate United Reformed Church has only 30 or so members, but has a great influence among students, and of the 200 people who came to a meeting held in the church about 90% were from the university. There was excellent feedback during the presentation and a barrage of questions during the time provided for these. Durham was a real highlight of the tour.

During the same tour I also went to the university in **York**. As is so often the case in universities, attendance looked decidedly thin a few minutes before the scheduled starting time, but eventually the students piled in to the lecture theatre and provided challenging interaction during the Question and Answer session.

In **Oxford**, the university's Christian Union invited me to one of their 'Big Issue' lunchtime evangelistic meeting. As the event coincided with the last week of term the organizers were afraid that the attendance might be a little low, but in the event extra chairs had to be put out to cope with the numbers. Time constraints prevented a Question and Answer session, but after the meeting CU members were soon busy talking to students who wanted to follow up what had been said and I had good conversations with a number of atheists and agnostics who wanted to discuss the issues that had been raised.

At all four universities I offered free copies of *'Meet the Real Jesus'* to any who were seriously interested in knowing more about what it meant to become a Christian and well over 100 were taken. May God graciously use them to bring students to the Saviour!



## NORTH OF HADRIAN'S WALL



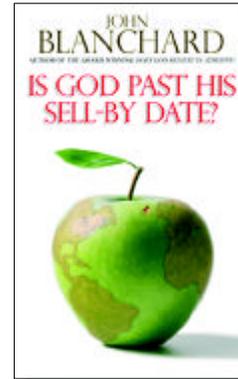
The Forth Bridge

Five years in the Hebrides as a Second World War evacuee left an indelible mark on me and has given Scotland a very special place in my heart. I was therefore delighted to take the Popular Christian Apologetics 'roadshow' (as some friends call it!) to Scotland in June, holding meetings in six further cities and towns and completing the segment of the 'all counties' goal lying north of the border.

The tour began in **WIGTOWN**, in the far south-west. Because of its large number of bookshops Wigtown is acquiring a reputation as 'Scotland's Hay-on-Wye' — quite something for a town with a population of 1,000! Local Church of Scotland minister Martin Thomson is doing an excellent work in and around the town, something confirmed by nearly 200 attending the meeting. A lively response and excellent questions made this a fine beginning to the tour.

On to **HAWICK**, in the Borders, dubbed 'The Home of Cashmere' but more sadly marked by serious spiritual decline. The town's motto, *Teribus y Teriodin*, is thought to be an imprecation to the pagan gods Thor and Odin and the whole Borders region is recognized as being a desert as far as biblical Christianity is concerned. Yet there are a few positive signs and Neil Combe, Minister of Teviot Church, is seeing some encouragement. The meeting in Hawick was larger than expected, but seemed to lack some of the sparkle of the previous night.

From Hawick I made my way to **EDINBURGH** for a Saturday night rally and a Sunday morning service in New Restalrig Parish Church. Scotland's capital, dominated by its magnificent castle, is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe and always a joy to visit. David Court, the energetic young minister of New Restalrig, had recently suffered a severe and complicated fracture of the leg, so was sidelined for the weekend, but under his leadership the church is experiencing steady growth, with the midweek prayer meeting attended by many in the 20-30 age range. Our audience was larger than expected, very alert, and eager to ask penetrating questions. The Sunday morning service, swollen by many visitors, provided an excellent opportunity to preach the gospel.



## New Video

One of the videos recorded in South Africa has now been released — yet it was not one of those I went to film! The unexpected production is entitled '*Is God past his Sell-by Date?*', though it is not a summary of the book of the same title. Instead, it looks at three remarkable characteristics of mankind that are agreed on by everyone, from atheists to Christians, yet point powerfully towards the existence of God.

With a running time of 58 minutes, it explores these in some detail, using relevant and up to date illustrations and quotations, and closes with a clear gospel challenge.

The video is produced by ICC, Silverdale Road, Eastbourne, E.Sussex BN20 7AB and can be ordered by post, by telephone (01323 643 341) or by e-mail ([info@iccrecords.com](mailto:info@iccrecords.com)) The video costs £9.99. ICC has also produced an audiocassette of the same material and this is available for £5.00.

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## Truth on tape

At the final Christian Ministries Houseparty I preached a message entitled 'No apologies for apologetics'. An exposition of 1 Peter 3:15, this is now available on tape and can be obtained from Onesimus Books and Services, P O Box 170, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 5XN. (Telephone/Fax: 0117 9109308 E-mail: [OnesimusBooksUK@aol.com](mailto:OnesimusBooksUK@aol.com))

Details of all other tapes, together with videos and books, can be found on my website: [www.johnblanchard.org](http://www.johnblanchard.org)

### KEEP IN TOUCH!

If this is your first copy of *Newsline* and you would like to receive future copies (by post or e-mail) please let me know.

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