



18,298 days later!

On 10 October 1958 I was in Ebenezer Methodist Church, St Peter Port, Guernsey, acting as General Secretary of the 'Guernsey for God' Campaign, which was then coming towards an end. On 10 October 2008 I was back on the island, doing an interview for BBC Guernsey and speaking at a special evangelistic dinner held at La Grande Mare Hotel to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the campaign.

'Guernsey for God' was a remarkable and perhaps unique event in the island's history. Beginning with a growing vision in the local NYLC Branch it eventually had the support of virtually all the island's Protestant churches. Over 1,000 people from around the world registered as prayer partners and regular united prayer meetings were well supported. The largest church on the island, seating some 1,100, people was hired for seventeen nights and at times was packed to capacity. An afternoon Ladies Meeting attracted some 900 people and a united Sunday School rally about 800. The total attendance at campaign services was about 15,000 — roughly equivalent to one-third of the island's population at that time.

The evangelists were NYLC's Frank Farley and Raymond Castro and they were supported by Reg and Grace Tomlinson and Peter Jackson, the Gospel Witness Trio. WEC missionary Len Moules spoke on Missionary Night and evangelist Tom Rees on the closing night of the campaign. 'Guernsey for God' made a marked impact on the spiritual life of the island and was held around the time when over twenty members of the NYLC branch were called into full-time Christian service.

Being invited to return 'home' fifty years later to celebrate the event was a very special privilege. Some people are reluctant to 'look back' but there is both Old and New Testament encouragement to do so, firstly to thank God for the 'great things he has done', secondly to learn from the experience of others, and thirdly (using William Carey's words) to 'Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God'. May the Lord graciously bless all true gospel witness in Guernsey in the coming days!



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

Joyce



Regular readers of *Newsline* will know that my wife Joyce had a malignant colorectal tumour removed in June and then began extended chemotherapy discovered for metastases that had been in both her liver and lungs.

know that my wife tumour removed chemotherapy discovered in both

After three months of treatment she had her first CT scan in early October and the results were generally excellent. The lesions in her lungs had not altered measurably in size or number, but marker lesions in the liver had reduced by about 50% and there seemed to be a 30%-40% reduction in the size of all the liver lesions. We are so thankful for this.

She was then pressing on with her second three-month chemotherapy cycle when she had an attack of bronchitis, followed by a heavy cold. She had nearly recovered from this when she had a more severe attack of bronchitis and the Royal Marsden Hospital postponed her next scheduled infusion as well as prescribing additional medication for her. This proved to be effective and we were both grateful when she was able to have her next infusion on 11 December.

The interruption in her regimen means that we do not now expect her next CT scan to be until the third week in January, and this will give us an up to date indication of her condition.

We are very grateful for your continued prayerful support. Please pray for Joyce's continued recovery and that we will both be given all needed grace, patience and wisdom as we go through this testing time together. We both rest in the assurance of God's unfailing goodness and grace and in the knowledge that he remains able to heal by medicine or miracle. We continue to be encouraged by the prayerful support of many hundreds of God's people (including many we have never met) and are grateful for the countless messages we continue to receive.

If you are on the internet, you will be able to access a blog on the Home page of my web site — www.johnblanchard.org — and I will arrange to post updates there from time to time, including an early report on the next CT scan. Please visit this to keep in closer touch than *Newsline* will allow.

Thank you !

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

A big surprise ... and a great offer!

Some *Newsline* readers will be familiar with the superb Travel Guide series produced by Day One Publications. They trace the stories and travels of well-known Christian preachers and leaders in church history, such as John Bunyan, John Knox, C. H. Spurgeon, William Wilberforce, William Carey and Martyn Lloyd-Jones. The volumes are superbly produced and each one has some 150 photographs as well as maps, drawings and other helps in tracing the subject's story.

Nearly a year ago Day One asked whether I would be willing to be the subject of a Travel Guide, with Brian Edwards, the General Editor of the series, as the author. I rejected the idea out of hand and the more they persisted, the more road-blocks I put in the way (including insisting on unanimous backing by the Day One board before I would even consider collecting material).



Eventually I caved in and began to dig back into my old records and to let Brian have the data on which he would base the story. Amongst other things, this meant raiding a dusty loft and wading through hundreds of items, including every newsletter or magazine produced by the Guernsey branch of NYLC, NYLC nationally, MWE and Christian Ministries over the last 54 years since my conversion, to say nothing of countless photographs and slides. The story gradually came together and as *Newsline* goes to print Brian is checking the final proofs before publication, which will be in February.

Reviewing the past years has been a humbling reminder to me of God's amazing grace and goodness, and I have been praying for months now that he would graciously use this unexpected publication to his glory.

The Travel Guides retail at £10.00, but regular *Newsline* readers will have received an exclusive offer.

If you are not a regular *Newsline* reader, you may still order as many copies as you wish at **£8.00 a copy post free**. Send your order to Newsline Offer, Day One Publications, Ryelands Road, Leominster, HR6 8NZ (Tel: 01568 611473) no later than 30 April.

POINTS WEST



After the cancellation of the Popular Christian Apologetics tour of Scotland because of Joyce's surgery and rehabilitation it was good to get back on the road for a similar tour taking in two West Country counties and South Wales. For two days before it began I did some research (and a lot of travelling) in Dorset, North Devon and Somerset before linking up with Howard Williams in Calne, ready for our first engagement.

This was at Emmanuel Evangelical Church, **Chippenham**, a very healthy offshoot from Ladyfield Evangelical Church, in which I had preached several times over the years. Emmanuel meets in Hardenhuish School and the Sunday morning service was a time of Harvest Thanksgiving. I have found that no time in the regular rhythm of the year gives a more obvious opportunity to preach on earthly life's relevance for eternity and this was a very special occasion.

After lunch with our delightful hosts David and Greta Margetts we left for Wales and an evening service at Llanelli Free Evangelical Church, **Llanelli**, pastored by Philip Swann. I had served his late father Derek Swann in churches in both England and Wales and had also shared convention platforms with him, so being back with Philip was a special joy. The church was comfortably full for the service, which was tailored to reach outsiders more effectively, while a follow-up meeting held afterwards in the church hall was so packed that people were standing in the corridor and kitchen nearby. The questions were very useful and gave further opportunity to share the central truths of the Christian faith.

We stayed on in Llanelli for a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting organized by the Evangelical Church but held in Zion Baptist Church in order to accommodate the expected crowd. With the numbers attending this was a wise move. There was a fine spirit in the meeting and the questions were exceptionally good, one of the most interesting coming from a pre-teen lad who wanted to know God's take on handicapped people.

The next day we left for two engagements in the **Cardiff** area. The first was a pastors' fraternal at Pill Du Farm, the



St Mellons Baptist Church

home of Andrew Christofides, the pastor of St Mellons Baptist Church. Pill Du Farm is the longest 'long house' in Wales and Andy and Jill were the perfect hosts. Only a few men came to the meeting, but they had key roles in the area and after I had spoken for a time on the need for the church to re-connect with the outside world we had a very helpful discussion, especially on the respective places of apologetics and direct gospel preaching. In the evening, the meeting in the church was very well attended and again the Q and A session was uninhibited and helpful.

The following morning gave an opportunity for both of us to catch up on administration before the short journey to **Caerphilly** in time for a meeting with church leaders in the home of our hosts, Cyril and Margaret Smith. Apart from Howard, Cyril and myself, there were just two local pastors and a young evangelist who had travelled all the way from Aberystwyth to meet me. This hardly looked promising, but for two hours after I sat down the flow of conversation barely stopped for a moment. I have rarely been in a meeting of Christian leaders where the interchange was so fluent and helpful.

Caerphilly is perhaps best known for the cheese that bears its name and its 13th century castle, the largest in Wales and the second largest in Britain (next to Windsor). An encouraging attendance at Neuadd Parc Hall made for a fine end to our day — and to the Welsh part of our tour.

Back across the Severn and on to **Bradford on Avon**, Wiltshire, for our next engagement. Once again a local church had decided to hold the meeting at a secular venue, this time the delightfully located St Margaret's Hall. Built in the late 18th century as a specialist dyers house, it became a cinema in 1904 and more recently a community hall with excellent facilities. There were about 170 people at our meeting and the feedback afterwards confirmed our sense that the visit to this ancient market town had been very worthwhile.

Our last stop on the tour was in **Cheltenham**, Gloucestershire, for a rally at Cambray Baptist Church, in which I last preached many years ago. The pastor, Tim Welch, had recently moved from Jersey, so there was a Channel Island connection. The attendance was slightly down on what might have been expected, but there are always local factors that affect this. A final burst of questions added to our conviction that these tours help to meet a real need, and as Howard made a late-night dash back home to Manchester and I drove the 111 miles to Banstead we were both grateful for God's gracious provision and enabling during the previous eight days.



Back on the road

Ministry to medics



Some months ago I received an invitation to speak at a meeting to be held at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Engagements in colleges and universities are not uncommon, but this was a 'first' and I gladly flew to Dublin on 30 October.

The college was granted a Charter in 1784, giving it power to control the practice of surgery and to make provision for surgical education. Prior to that the surgeons were grouped with barbers! It moved to its present location, facing St Stephen's Green, in 1810 and adopted the motto of the French College of Surgeons: *Consilio Manuque* ('Scholarship and Dexterity'). A further Charter was granted by Queen Victoria in 1844, instituting a Fellowship which divided graduates into Licentiates and Fellows.

Faithful members of Christian Unions in our colleges and universities are among my heroes in the faith, often functioning in a difficult and antagonistic environment. The Christian Union at RCSI has generally tended to struggle and (somewhat unusually) has no regular weekly meeting. Instead, it strongly encourages its members to attend meetings at their adopted local churches.



The college has only two semesters a year, from October-December and February-June, and the CU arranges just one major evangelistic meeting in each semester, though each meeting also has a follow-up event. I was asked to address the subject 'Where is God when things go wrong?' and it was a privilege to do so, especially bearing in mind the potential situations in which the students might find themselves during

lifetimes given to a wide range of medical practices from surgery to physiotherapy. Free copies of *Where is God when things go wrong?* were made available afterwards, and every one was taken. Pray for the work of Christian Unions in universities and colleges — and especially for the small group of believers who seek to be faithful witnesses among the student body of 4,000 presently studying at RCSI.

ALBANIAN UPDATE

Regular *Newsline* readers who contributed to Project Albania will be encouraged to know that our contacts there are continuing to work at bringing the projected goals to completion. The major news is that the massive task of translating *Does God believe in Atheists?* has been completed and the work is now being edited. It had been hoped that the book could have been published at the end of last year, but the immense amount of work involved has delayed this a little. We can certainly anticipate publication in the early part of this year and I have been invited to return to Albania for the official launch.

In the meantime, the translation of *Has science got rid of God?* is nearly complete and should shortly be in the editor's hands, so it is fully expected that this title will also come on stream this year. With *Right with God*, *Why believe the Bible?*, *Where is God when things go wrong?* and *Evolution: Fact or Fiction?* already being widely used, this would give six titles completed, and with *Can we be good without God?* next on the 'runway' we expect to have at least seven titles translated, published and in use by the end of this year.



As reported in the last issue of *Newsline*, all of these titles, and the others to follow, will be published under the banner of Albania Evangelical Mission, which will help to establish a wider distribution network and make the titles more readily available to churches and other Christian organizations working in Albania and among Albanian-speaking people in the neighbouring countries of Serbia-Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Greece.

Please pray for God's continued blessing on this important project, asking that it might be used to his glory in bringing many to faith in Christ.

COMING ENGAGEMENTS 2009

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.

Please note that because of Joyce's illness I may have to withdraw from a scheduled engagement at short notice, though hopefully this will not be the case. If you plan to attend I suggest you contact the organizers shortly before the date concerned.

- Jan** 4 LEATHERHEAD, Surrey: Fetcham Community Church (meeting at Fetcham Infants Village School, School Lane) [Info: 01732 372983 or cilla@gotadsl.cl.uk]
30* BRIGHTON, E. Sussex: Montpelier Place Baptist Church [Info: 01273 748168 or simonfield86@gmail.com]

The rest of January is reserved for study and preparation

- Feb** 13* BRIGHTON, E. Sussex: Brighton & Hove City Mission, Calvary Church Building [Info: 01273 609484 or tonysmith@bhcm.org.uk]
22 LOWER KINGSWOOD, Surrey: Lower Kingswood Evangelical Free Church, Smith Lane – Church Anniversary [Info: 01737 813418]

The rest of February is reserved for study and preparation

- Mar** 7-8 JERSEY: Quennevais Evangelical Church, St Brelade [Info: 01534 744984 or rdavies@jerseymail.co.uk]
21* DEVIZES, Wiltshire: West Lavington Village Hall, Sandfield [Info: 01373 826727 or pastor.davies@blueyonder.co.uk]
22am SMEATHARPE, E. Devon: Newhouse Baptist Church [Info: 01404 861313]
22pm UPPOTERY, E. Devon: St Mary's Church [Info: 01404 891243 or nickandgrete@hotmail.com]
23* TORQUAY, S. Devon: Torquay Town Hall [Info: 01803 664059 or colin@flavelchapel.com]
24* TAUNTON, Somerset: Octagon Chapel [Info: 01823 491018 or cyrilaston@talktalk.net]
25* HONITON, E. Devon: The Honiton Motel [Info: 01404 47545 or honitonrobinsons@tiscali.co.uk]
26* BRIDPORT, Dorset: Chardsmead Baptist Church, Victoria Grove [Info: 01308 456101 or stanblack2225@tiscali.co.uk]
27* BARNSTAPLE, N. Devon: The Roundswell Community Centre [Info: 01271 328813 or davidwvec@talktalk.net]
28 BARNSTAPLE, N. Devon: Men's Breakfast at Whiddon Valley Evangelical Church [Info: 01271 328813 or davidwvec@talktalk.net]

- Apr** 10 READING: Beech Hill Baptist Church, Chapel Lane, Wood Lane – Good Friday Service [Info: bermarywilson@googlemail.com or 0118 988 4689]
15-24am SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Gauteng, including Johannesburg, East Rand, Horison, Hyde Park, Ferndale, Blaigowrie, Germiston, Edenvale, Honeyridge, Brackenhurst, Midrand, Cambridge and Pretoria [Info: John Joubert - JJoub@global.co.za]
24pm-26am SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Eastern Cape, including East London and Kingwilliamstown [Info: Alistair Wilson - aiwilson.dumisani@gmail.com]
26pm SOUTH AFRICA: Engagements in Western Cape, including Cape Town,
-3 May Somerset West & Claremont [Info: Peter Temple - peter@christianbooks.co.za]

* *Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting*