



NEWSLINE

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

No.10

May 2006

HE IS NOT HERE!

A recent (and first) visit to Egypt was a real eye-opener. Although 95% of its land is desert it has a population of over 77 million, of whom 87% live near the banks and delta of the Nile, the world's longest river. Over 90% of Egyptians are Muslims (mostly Sunni), while only a tiny minority are evangelical Christians.

Egypt makes much of its nearly 4,000 years of recorded history, flagged up by its amazing ancient monuments. Tombs, temples and



museums are major tourist attractions, while the west bank of the Nile is peppered with pyramids for forty miles, running north from Dashur to Giza, where the series is dominated by the massive tomb of Kheops, guarded by the celebrated Sphinx. One of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, it is 450 feet high, occupies thirteen acres of land, and has over 2.5 million blocks of stone, many weighing over ten tons. The pyramids were built as physical representations of the sun's rays and as 'staircases' leading the dead pharaohs to the sun god Ra. Yet these mighty rulers, once so dominant, now lie prostrate and powerless.

What contrasts there are between these miserable myths and the Christian certainties of an empty tomb and a risen Saviour! Firstly, *we have a Man in heaven*. Jesus did not abandon his deity when he came from heaven to earth, nor his humanity when he returned from earth to heaven, and when we come to him in prayer we come to one who is able to 'sympathize with our weaknesses' (Hebrews 4:15). Secondly, *we have a Mediator in heaven*. In the place of our failure and sin Jesus presents the atoning sacrifice of his perfect life, so that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Thirdly, *we have a Master in heaven*. Unlike the pharaohs, Jesus is a living Ruler, calling us to live in a way 'worthy of the gospel' (Philippians 1:27) and making available to us 'everything we need for life and godliness' (2 Peter 1:3). Egypt was an eye-opener — not least in reminding me of the glories of Christ.

Book Briefs

When I began full-time Christian service in 1962 it had never entered my head that writing books would form any part of my ministry, though I was (and remain) fascinated by words and am hugely indebted to countless authors whose works have enriched my life and work. Now, ministry in print is a major part of my service for Christ. The following notes will bring you up to date with recent developments.



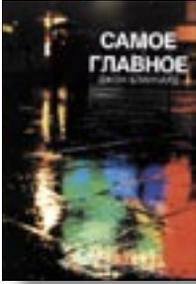
More blessing *The Beatitudes for Today* was very kindly received when it was first published in 1996 and a subsequent reprint has now run out. Day One has produced a splendid new version (pictured) which is available at Christian bookstores or direct from Day One Publications, Ryelands Road, Leominster HR6 ONZ.

Convincing others There continues to be a consistent demand for *Why Believe the Bible?* and it is good to hear from those to whom it has been a help, not least as a valuable tool in their personal evangelism. A recent reprint by Evangelical Press means that it remains in stock.

Eastern impact It is many years since I preached in Czechoslovakia (now the Czech and Slovak Republics) but that part of Eastern Europe has always had a special place in my heart. I was therefore delighted to hear recently that *Evolution: Fact or Fiction?* (pictured) had been translated into Czech by Jan Suchy and recently released by a Christian publisher in Roudnice nad Labem. The Creation vs. Evolution debate is very much alive in Eastern Europe and I trust that this booklet will be of great help to many in the coming days.



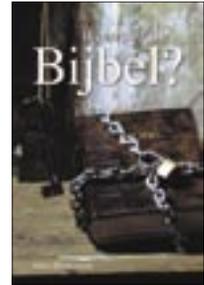
Two for Poland Although *Right with God* was first published thirty-five years ago, The Banner of Truth Trust reports that it continues to be in regular demand and that there are currently plans for a Polish translation to be produced for use in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. *Has Science got rid of God?* is a mere two-year-old 'baby' by comparison but it has also attracted foreign language interest and Fundacja Legatio has plans to publish this title in Polish later this year.



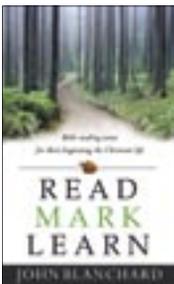
Questions, questions.... The demand for *Ultimate Questions* continues to amaze and Evangelical Press tells me that a further reprint of 411,000 copies has recently arrived from the printers. These included 23,500 in three English versions (NIV/AV/NKJV), 23,000 in Albanian, 20,000 in Spanish, 20,000 in Russian (pictured), 11,000 in French, 10,000 in Afrikaans and 5,000 or more in each of another sixteen languages, including, for the first time, versions in Bemba (Zambia) and Xhosa (South Africa). Other new translations are currently being prepared.

Please pray that God will graciously enable those involved in this demanding work and use the booklets already in print to point many people to Christ.

Double Dutch Although I have never preached in Holland, there is quite an interest in my ministry over there and a Dutch translation of *Why Believe the Bible?* (pictured) has recently come on stream. Details of this can be obtained from Evangelical Press or from B. V. Uitgeverij De Banier, Utrecht. In addition, our friends at Day One tell me that a Dutch translation of *The Beatitudes for Today* has recently been released.



Spanish treble A missionary organization in Spain is working on the translation of *What in the world is a Christian?* and *Invitation to Live* and it is hoped that these will both become available in the near future. Editorial Peregrino, a Spanish 'sister company' of Evangelical Press, also has plans to publish *Evolution: Fact or Fiction?* some time this year.



Forty years young! *Read Mark Learn*, published in 1966, was the first book I ever wrote. It was specifically intended for new Christians and was structured around forty-five daily Bible reading notes going through Mark's Gospel, but has been widely used by others in their personal devotions as well as by numerous study groups. In addition, countless free copies are sent out every year to people from all around the world who write in to say that they have come to faith in Christ through reading one of my evangelistic books. Evangelical Press has recently published a new edition

(pictured) to coincide with the book's fortieth anniversary. Please pray that it might continue to be used to help many people beginning the Christian life to make the reading of 'the living and enduring word of God' a vital part of their spiritual journey.

Albania

potholes and potential

Albania must be the pothole capital of Europe. One begins by driving on the right, but thousands of craters force a change to the middle or left hand side of the road, manoeuvres somewhat compromised by the fact that oncoming traffic is doing the same thing!

Already having had no consistent evangelical witness from immediate post-apostolic times until the latter part of the 19th Century, Albania, slightly larger than Wales, was declared the world's first atheist state in 1967, then pulverized by years of brutal Communism. All places of worship were closed by force, Bibles were destroyed and *the word for 'God' was officially removed from the Albanian language!* Yet God had not left himself without a witness and a new generation of believers is emerging, even though one church leader told me that there were probably fewer than 2,000 Christians in the entire country.

My first meetings were in the Way of Peace Church in Lushnje, whose pastor, Berti Dosti, was converted while an officer in the Albania Army. The Lushnje church has some forty members but a much wider influence through the allied Victory School where 400 students learn English and computer skills on a part-time basis. A valuable Friday morning session for church leaders was followed by a public meeting that drew 150 people, including many unconverted. My interpreter, Florenc Mene, told me had read all 650 pages of *Does God Believe in Atheists?* in two sittings! — and had been praying for three years that it would be possible for him to translate it into Albanian. I dearly hope that his prayer will yet be answered.

The next day found me in Patos, a town of 24,000 founded on the oil industry, where a morning meeting was held in the Palace of Culture, a stark pile of concrete that hardly reflected its grandiose name! The local church has only 20-25 members, yet 100 people came, some 80% of them unbelievers. The pastor said he had never seen such a thing before (and can we imagine it happening on a Saturday morning in England?). Then on to the larger town of Fier and to meeting of 150 people in the



A full house in Fier Public Library

Public Library where I spoke on ‘The Search for Truth’. There was rapt attention from all age groups and virtually all the free evangelistic literature on offer was taken. It was also hugely encouraging to see nearly twenty people signing up to join a follow-up Bible study course.

The Sunday morning service in Fier’s Way of Peace church was memorable for its attention and warmth and for the number of unconverted people who came in as a result of the two previous meetings in the town. The church’s leader is Will Niven, a gifted British missionary who with his delight Albanian wife Doreta is exercising a fine ministry in Fier, Patos and elsewhere. Will also translated for me in that afternoon’s meeting in the Public Library, where yet again some 50% of those attending were unconverted.

Any impact my ministry in Albania may have had on others is more than matched by the effect it had on me. I was deeply moved by the faith, love for the gospel and concern for the lost shown by many of God’s people, especially in the light of the terrible trauma the country has suffered in recent years. This visit has already triggered a determined effort to support them in the days to come. Watch this space!

JOIN THE TEAM!

Thank you for reading *Newsline*. If you have not seen it before and would like to receive future copies (by post or e-mail) please let me know at

‘Sarnia’, 81 Lambert Road, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 2QU

Telephone 01737 357501

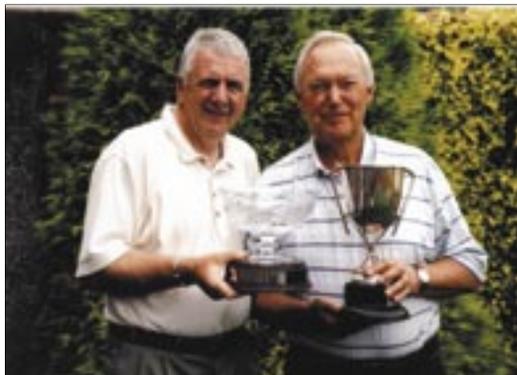
E-mail: jb@johnblanchard.co.uk

Of some value!

At an MWE staff meeting many years ago the legendary Lindsay Glegg, then president of the movement, asked me what I did for recreation or exercise. When I replied that I was too busy to engage in either he replied, 'My boy,' (every man was 'My boy' to him!) 'as I told Billy Graham, Alan Redpath, Stephen Olford and others, you must take up golf. It will add years to your life.'

The Bible says that bodily exercise is 'of some value' (1 Timothy 4:8) and in my case I do believe that Lindsay Glegg's words have come true, with golf having become a major fitness factor in my life and a delightful way of releasing the pressures involved in concentrated ministry.

Winning several dozen competitions along the way has been an unexpected bonus, especially the Ryder Trophy, presented to the Free Church Ministers Golf Society by God-fearing Samuel Ryder in 1902, twenty-five years before he gave the 'other' Ryder Cup! Capturing this prize four times since 1994 has been surprising but special: I think Lindsay Glegg would have approved!



Howard Williams, my indispensable partner on Popular Christian Apologetics tours, also knows what it is like to get into the winner's circle and I was delighted that at last year's Christian Golfers' Conference in the Republic of Ireland he deservedly won the Robert McLauchlin Memorial Trophy. Needless to say, any games we can squeeze into our busy tours now have a distinctly competitive edge!

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

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 that are being held near you.

- May**
- 6-7 (am) GREENOCK, Inverclyde: Orangefield Baptist Church
200th Anniversary. [Info: gordon.davey@red5audio.com]
 - 7 (pm)* BURY, Lancs: Radcliffe Road Baptist Church.
[Info: Saul.Hickey@Rochdale.Gov.UK]
 - 8* CHESTERFIELD: Walton Evangelical Church.
[Info: 01246 231002 or pastor@waltonchurch.org]
 - 9* POYNTON, Cheshire: Poynton Baptist Church.
[Info: 01625 859036 or admin@pbc.org.uk]
 - 10* KENDAL, Cumbria: Parr Street Church. [Info: 01539 722121
or e.addison@bigfoot.com]
 - 11* LIVERPOOL: Bridge Chapel, Garston. [Info: 0151 281 9716 or
info@bridgechapel.com]
 - 12* LEEDS: City Evangelical Church. [Info: mike.wildsmith@ntlworld.com]
 - 26-26 IRELAND: Westport, Co. Mayo: Christian Golfers Conference.
- June**
- 8* BIRMINGHAM: University of Birmingham. [Info: 07855 095523 or
TJP309@bham.ac.uk]
 - 9* CHEAM, Surrey: Christian Viewpoint/Activate Lunch at St Paul's,
Howell Hill. [Info: george@s-hughes.freeseerve.co.uk]
 - 10 WANTAGE, Oxon: Grove Free Evangelical Church
25th Anniversary. [Info: 01235 762730 or margaret.barber@btinternet.com]
 - 13* IRELAND: Lucan Presbyterian Church, Lucan, Co. Dublin.
[Info: 01 6280217 or office@atipc.com]
 - 14* IRELAND: Drogheda Presbyterian Church, Drogheda, Co. Louth.
[Info: 41 9802860]
 - 15* IRELAND: To be arranged
 - 16* IRELAND: Bandon, Co. Cork. [Info: 21 4774251 or ptjeffers@eircom.net]
 - 17* IRELAND: KILKENNY, Co. Kilkenny: Kilkenny Presbyterian Church.
[Info: 56 7786681]
 - 18* IRELAND: Greystones, Co. Wicklow: [Info: 1 2876030 or
brian.egan@nordeal.com]
- July**
- 2 LONDON: Trinity Road Chapel, Tooting. [Info: 020 8675 1192 or
lumb.stedfast@ntlworld.com]
 - 5* BARKING, Essex: Men's Night at St Patrick's Church.
[Info: 020 8594 1960 or gordon_sue@ntlworld.com]
The remainder of July is reserved for research, study and writing.
- August**
- 3-4 FELIXSTOWE, Suffolk: Eastern Counties Bible Convention.
[Info: 01473 725701 or Derek.bailey@tiscali.co.uk]
 - 5 FELIXSTOWE, Suffolk: Evangelistic Dinner at Bethesda Baptist Church.
[Info: 01394 275671 or Pastorcro@aol.com]
The remainder of August is reserved for research, study and writing.

* Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting