When I preached in the Czech Republic in May it was thirty years *to the day* since I first did so. That was in 1968, when I preached at the 70th anniversary services of Brno Baptist Church, and I recall an afternoon service that lasted four hours and included five sermons, of which I preached two!

My recent visit was to the first Shepherds’ Conference at Sbor Bratrské Jednoty Baptistu in Kromeriz, about forty miles east of Brno, and led jointly by Alois Klepacek, who was born in Romania, and Dr Lance Roberts, an American missionary. Delegates were slow in registering, and the leadership had toyed with the idea of asking me not to travel, but in the event the church was virtually full for all the main sessions.

Dr Todd Roberts, an American missionary serving in Croatia, and four local men led seminars on ‘The Sufficiency of Scripture’, and all the conference sessions were streamed online and recorded on DVD and CD. I was also interviewed for Czech and Slovak newspapers by Jan Titera, whose father Pavel had interpreted for me on previous visits.

Although the country is now free from Communist domination, the past two decades has seen a severe decline in robust evangelical life. In a Eurobarometer Poll in 2005, fewer than 20% of those interviewed said that God existed, and in a 2011 census, 62.4% of those responding indicated that they were atheist, agnostic or ‘irreligious’, while 30% did not believe in ‘any sort of spirit, God or life force’. I am told that materialism and postmodernism are rampant and that many churches enthusiastically embrace liberalism and ecumenism. According to a recent secretary of the country’s Baptist Union, none of its churches now holds a Sunday evening service.

All the sessions were enthusiastically received and every delegate received a copy of the recently-published Czech edition of *Meet the real Jesus*, the third of my titles now in that language. If funds become available it is hoped to publish further titles, and if doors open for me to serve other churches in the republic I would count it a privilege to run through them.

'As much as I can, as well as I can, for as long as I can'
Exactly a year after our previous visit, Howard Williams and I returned to the USA in April, this time for ministry in seven different states in the course of a trip that covered nearly 12,000 miles.

We began in *Xenia, Ohio*, where Cornerstone Bible Church had organized a three-day conference under the title ‘Major Points from the Minor Prophets’. The arrangements for the four-session conference were excellent and in the mini-hymnbook printed for the event every item included was perfectly related to the subject announced for each service. It was a model of how this should be done! It was also heartening to hear of two young men who had been converted through reading *Ultimate Questions*, further endorsements of the way in which the Lord has graciously used the booklet over its twenty-five years.

Our delightful hosts for the conference were Ron and Pam Robertson. I had introduced them to each other over forty years ago when leading a Holy Land Tour, by the end of which they had already begun a relationship that led to their marriage and later to the birth of their son Peter, my link in planning the conference. As you can imagine, our time together was something to be treasured.

After the last service we flew to Charlotte, N. Carolina, to meet briefly with friends Joyce and I had known for at least twenty years. Audrey Jackson’s husband Paul had died earlier in the year and I wanted to meet with the remaining members of what we used to call ‘the Charlotte gang’ and to pray with them, and especially with Audrey, for God’s sustaining grace during the painful days they were all facing. We managed to find a spot in Charlotte’s busy airport and valued this time together.

We then boarded another flight for Greenville/Spartanburg on our way to The Reserve at Lake Keowee, S. Carolina. The Reserve is a very special place, so far from ‘the madding crowd’ that residents call it ‘The Bubble’. We both needed some R & R and we benefitted hugely from meeting up with friends and from the arrangements made for us by Trey Lee, someone I have known and cherished as a praying partner for over twenty-five years. At the eleventh hour he was able to get us tickets for the final practice day for the Masters
golf tournament in Augusta, Georgia (via someone responsible for redesigning part of the course), so we drove there for the day and soaked up the ‘buzz’. As it was his first visit, Howard may not yet have recovered!

Two other things enhanced our days at The Reserve. The first pastor ever to invite me to his church in the United States was able to travel from Georgia to spend a few hours with me and our time in fellowship and prayer was memorable for us both. I served Bob Richardson in Pontiac, Michigan, for a week in March 1969, marking my seventh year in full-time Christian service; now it seemed to have been only a few years ago. The second blessing was to preach at a Good Friday service in the superb Founders Hall. Trey has a Bible study there every Friday (and for some months has been using *Truth for Life* as a basis for this) but about three times the normal number came for a simple service on this significant day.

We next drove across the mountains for a series of engagements in Johnson City, Tennessee, beginning with an Easter Day morning service at Heritage Baptist Church.

It was great start to our time there, with 500 in the sanctuary and a further 200 joining in by simulcast, while an evening service ‘visiting’ a Minor Prophet brought the day to a lovely end.

Our superb hosts in Johnson City were David and Sue Temple. My links with them go back to South Africa and are strengthened by the fact that David is President of Saratoga Technologies, Inc., the company that manages my web site. He invited me to speak to the company’s Johnson City staff on the Monday morning, a message carried to its other Tennessee locations by videolink. It was also lovely to hear from Sue Temple that *Read Mark Learn*, the first book given to her when she was converted, set her on the way to daily Bible reading. While in Johnson City I also spoke at East Tennessee State University. The attendance was not as large as the organizers had hoped, but the feedback afterwards was positive and it was good to hear that my evangelistic books continue to be used there and in other universities.
A few hours by car and plane found us still in Tennessee, this time for engagements at Independent Presbyterian Church, Memphis, an old stamping ground that I had not preached in for about ten years. ‘Wednesday Evenings@IPC’ are always a delight, with ample food and time to preach the Word to several hundred people, and this was no exception. Joining us at Memphis was Crawford Telford of Christian Television Association. He enjoyed getting what he called ‘excellent’ footage for a documentary he is preparing, both then and at a 6.30 Men’s Breakfast the next morning when some eighty men came to begin their day with a meal and ministry.

The following morning was a ‘first’ for me — a session at Westminster Academy, one of 250 members of the Association of Classical & Christian Schools. I was very impressed by the structure, discipline and courtesy in a school that is firmly committed to a classical approach to education in the light of a biblical worldview. With logic and rhetoric built into the model, it was no surprise to get thoughtful questions ranging from the alleged disconnect between science and philosophy to Occam’s Razor (a line of philosophical reasoning claiming that the simplest answer is often the best).

A very special encouragement at Memphis came in the form of a letter from a married lady who came to Christ when I preached at a students’ conference on Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, in 1985, and wanted me to know of her progress in the faith; a precious moment!

The next day Crawford Telfer (camera frequently in use) drove with us to Birmingham, Alabama. A serious delay due to a horrendous crash on I 78 changed our plans for that evening, but we were in position for three Sunday services at Briarwood Presbyterian Church, under the fine leadership of my long-time friend Dr Harry Reeder. Morning services at 8.00 and 10.55, carried on radio, were centred on Holy Communion, and it was a privilege to preach on God’s love at Calvary to 1,000 people at the first service and 1,500 at the second. The evangelistic evening service, again with 1,000 in attendance, focussed on the person of Christ, and there was an encouraging response to the ministry.

Another long drive took us to Jackson, Mississippi, in time to share in the 175th
TRAVELS

anniversary services at First Presbyterian Church, where I have often preached over the years. Eight preachers shared the ministry during April and it was a privilege to take part in this historic series. Another opening at FPC was a 7.00am breakfast Bible study for a small group of men, mainly surgeons and lawyers, who have met in this way for nearly twenty years.

Two flights then took us to Grand Blanc, Michigan, for a weekend’s ministry at Berean Baptist Church, whose pastor, Bob Dickie, is a Board member of EP Books. As ever, gracious hospitality prepared the way for Saturday and Sunday preaching — and Bob Dickie ensured that people had good exposure to EP titles, including the two ‘Milestone Year’ productions, Hear Me Carefully and Major Points from the Minor Prophets.

Minutes before making our way to the final service, we discovered that a booking error had me scheduled to fly from Boston to London during the time I would be preaching! A flurry of telephone calls, one of them transatlantic, got me a seat on the following day, though it did mean paying another fare. Hurrying to church, I then felt very calm and unusually upheld as I preached — and was able to use the incident to contrast uncertainty with the blessing of eternal security. We left the USA grateful for God’s protection, provision and enabling, and for the prayers of Newsline readers and countless friends in our home churches and elsewhere.

A medical appointment in Mississippi!

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.
When Howard Williams and I went to Scotland in June I did so with special enthusiasm, as our first three days were to be on the Isle of Islay. As a war-time evacuee from Guernsey I spent four years there, living on a remote farm and even learning to speak Gaelic. Crawford Telfer and Malcolm Turner of Christian Television Association were delighted to get very useable material at East Carrabus Farm, Newton Primary School and Bowmore High School (now Islay School).

Our excellent hosts were Rob and Gwen Barlow. Rob is Minister of the iconic Round Church, Bowmore, opened in 1769 and the oldest building on the island holding weekly public worship. We began with two open air services, one on the seafront at Port Ellen and the other in Bowmore’s town square. Very few people stopped to listen, but both services were valuable disciplines for me, and it was a privilege to help local believers lay down these public markers.

A Sunday morning service in the Round Church (said to be this shape ‘so that the devil would have no room to hide!’) was deeply moving as I brought a message prepared a few hours earlier and emphasizing the danger of Christian faith being a performance but not an experience. I was then rushed to St John’s Church, Port Ellen, for another very moving and well-attended service. Our evening service was in Islay Baptist Church, Bowmore, which was packed for the occasion. Pastor Jim McNulty shares with Rob Barlow a passion for the gospel in a very difficult setting. Islay’s 3,000 inhabitants are scattered over 240 square miles...
(there are more sheep than people) and its eight distilleries flag up a particular social problem.

The CalMac ferry started us on our way to Dalry, in Ayrshire, and to an evening meeting in Trinity Church. In miserably wet weather the attendance was much bigger than expected, the body of the church comfortably filled. I had been asked to speak on ‘Where do we go from here?’ and there was a gripping silence as I spoke about death, judgement, eternity, heaven and hell. It was special privilege to serve a long-time friend The Rev. Martin Thomson and lovely to enjoy again the hospitality he and his wife Lorna provided.

A long drive north took us to Inverness for a meeting in Inshes Church. This was our fifth visit to Inshes, and our last under the superb leadership of Alistair Malcolm, who retired three weeks later after a God-honoured ministry. The chosen subject was ‘Why believe the Bible?’ and excellent questions helped to make it a fine evening. We stayed with Alistair and Ann Malcolm for our three nights in the area and their delightful hospitality made it difficult to say our last ‘official’ farewell.

Next came the superb Free Church in Smithton. Led by David Meredith, the church’s recent progress was reflected in a large attendance, close attention and searching questions, and in Howard being swamped at the book table. The second local engagement was in Elgin, where Elgin Baptist Church, led by Matthew Swanson, was virtually full as I presented three major facets of our human make-up that point to a Divine creator.

Major hold-ups on the A9 meant a five-hour drive south to Dunbar, less than twenty miles north of the English border. Grace Community Church, enthusiastically led by Andy Dalrymple, is a recent church plant of Musselburgh Baptist Church, and has a Sunday congregation of 25-30. It hired the new Bleachingfields Community Centre for the event and well over 100 people came in spite of dreadful weather. Andy told me that such a meeting had not been held in Dunbar for many years. Encouraged by many taking free evangelistic literature, he has since written to say, ‘As a result of being there, one young man has agreed to come to our church with his wife, and there have been some significant conversations with key individuals, including the manageress of the community centre. We thank God for your visit to us and hope that we might see you back with us again in the near future.’

Our final two engagements were in New Restalrig Church, Edinburgh, where our friend David Court is the Minister. Pouring rain affected the Saturday night attendance, but not the spirit of the meeting and it was especially encouraging to hear from a missionary that Does God believe in Atheists? is required reading at a seminary in Pakistan. An exceptionally good Sunday morning service brought our latest Scottish trek to a fine end. Howard and I are both anxious to return!
COMING ENGAGEMENTS 2012

Please pray for God’s enabling and blessing at these events.

**SEPT 2**  (PM)  BALLYMENA, Co. Antrim: Ballymena Baptist Church, 18-22 Main Street, Ballymena
[Info: 028 25 2259 or 07980 184139 or ken.poston@talktalk.net]

7-9  ITALY: Grazia Church, Portomantovano, Lombardy  [Info: andrea.artioli@tiscali.it]

11* BRENTFORD, Middlesex: GlaxoSmithKilne Multi Faith Network

16  LONDON: Grove Chapel, 96A Camberwell Grove, London. SE5 8RF  [Info: 020 7277 2767 or reuel@hagios.co.uk]

21-23  BANSTEAD, Surrey: Filming with Christian Television Association

25  BALLYMENA, Co. Antrim: United schools meeting in Ballymena Baptist Church, 18-22 Main Street, Ballymena
[Info: 028 2563 78922 or ken.poston@talktalk.net]

25*  BALLYMENA, Co. Antrim: Ballymena Baptist Church, 18-22 Main Street, Ballymena
[Info: 028 2563 7822 or ken.poston@talktalk.net]

26*  BANGOR, Co. Down: Hamilton Road Baptist Church, Hamilton Road, Bangor
[Info: 028 9145 4546 or johnnymcclaughlin@hotmail.com]

27*  LISBURN, Co. Antrim: Carr Baptist Church, 321 Comber Road, Carr, Lisburn BT27 6TA
[Info: 028 9263 9872 or cliffordmorrison@cbbsb.co.uk]

28*  COOKSTOWN, Co. Tyrone: Cookstown Baptist Church, Burn Road, Cookstown BT80 8DR  [Info: ASAsloan@aol.com]

29  ENNISKILLEN, Co. Fermanagh: The Stables, Derrygore, Enniskillen
[Info: 028 6862 1135 or 077 9866 0050 or Brendan.jones@lineone.net]

30  BELFAST: Newtownbreda Baptist Church, 43 Newtownbreda Road, Belfast BT8 7BQ
[Info: 028 9064 9402 or trevor@newtownbredabaptist.com]

**OCT 4-5**  CZECH REPUBLIC: Tent meetings with Baptist Church, Prague 13  [Info:lancesandy@gmail.com]

6  CZECH REPUBLIC: Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, Ostrava  [Info:lancesadny@gmail.com]

7  CZECH REPUBLIC: Czech Baptist Church, Brno  [Info: lancesadny@gmail.com]

18*  BURY, Greater Manchester: Radcliffe Road Baptist Church, Radcliffe Road, Bury BL9 9LH
[Info: 0161 762 9476 or thomasoking77@gmail.com]

19*  WORKINGTON, Cumbria: Emmanuel Church, 13 Corporation Road, Workington. CA14 2PG
[Info: 01900 268512 or 0771 557 9000 or pietersent@gmail.com]

20  WOODFORD, Cheshire: Christian Vision for Men Breakfast at Deanwater Hotel, Wilmslow Road,
Woodford SK7 1RJ  [Info: Northrop@talktalk.net]

20*  LIVERPOOL: Dovecot Evangelical Church, 424 East Prescot Road, Liverpool L14 2EH
[Info: 0151 480 4195 or cainz@blueyonder.co.uk]

21  ASHTON IN MAKERFIELD, Greater Manchester: Cave-Browne Evangelical Church, Heath Road,
Ashton in Makerfield WN4 9DY  [Info: 01942 256498 or info@cave-browne.org.uk]

28  IPSWICH, Suffolk: Bethesda Baptist Church, 9 St Margaret’s Plain, Ipswich IP4 2BB
[Info: 01473 255035 or terrygreen56@talktalk.net]

**NOV 4**  LONDON: Grove Chapel, 96A Camberwell Grove, London SE5 8RF
[Info: 020 7277 2767 or reuel@hagios.co.uk]

11  BANSTEAD, Surrey: Banstead Community Church, Banstead Junior School, The Horseshoe
[Info: 07854 863618 or dan@bansteadcommunity.org.uk]

**DEC 30**  BANSTEAD, Surrey: Banstead Community Church, Banstead Junior School, The Horseshoe
[Info: 07854 863618 or dan@bansteadcommunity.org.uk]

* Indicates a Popular Christian Apologetics meeting