My Summer Ministry, 2004

Robert C. Newman
Teaching Sunday Schools

- Topic "Responding to Objections to Christianity"
- A six-week series for the "People of the World" SS class at Cherrydale Baptist Church, Arlington, Virginia
- A five-week series for the "Discover the Word" SS class at McLean Bible Church, Fairfax, Virginia
- Both ran the same Sundays ½-hour drive apart!
Cherrydale Baptist Church

- Founded (1913) in the house I grew up in
- Has perhaps 500 members
- Seeking to reach out to the unchurched community
- "People of the World" is a SS class for internationals, esp. grad students at GWU
McLean Bible Church

- A seeker-sensitive mega-church, with attendance around 9,000
- "Discover the Word" is an adult SS class that my brother Jim often teaches.
The Series

• Began with sketch of what the Lord wants us to do based on 1 Peter 3:15: "Be always ready to give an answer…"

• Broke up into small groups to assemble ten common or difficult objections to Christianity.

• These were tabulated to form the basis of the course.
Most common at POW

- If God is good, why does He allow evil and suffering? (5/7)
- Why does Jesus/Christianity have to be the only way? (5/7)
- Does God exist? Can we prove this? (4/7)
- Christians are hypocrites, and Christianity has a bad history. (4/7)
Most common at DTW

- Christians are such hypocrites! There are too many hypocrites in the church! (6/7)
- How can Christ be the only way to God? (5/7)
- Why does God allow bad things to happen, especially to good people? (4/7)
- Jesus was just a good man; why should I think he is God? (4/7)
- I'm a good person. (4/7)
- The Bible was written by mere men. (4/7)
Objections Categorized

- Objections about God
- Objections about Scripture
- Objections about Jesus & Salvation
- Objections about Christians
- Objections about Other Religions
Trip to the UK

• A 3 ½ week trip to England, 30 July to 23 August, which also included brief visits to Wales & Scotland
• Main purpose was vacation, to see more of the country
• But also wanted to engage in ministry while there
• A third purpose was to see some places my ancestors allegedly came from
Ministry in the UK

• Spoke twice at Ashford Congregational Church, in the W suburbs of London
• Spoke once at L'Abri Fellowship, in Greatham, Hampshire
• Spoke five times at Hartshill Bible Church, in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
• Spoke once for a picnic of the Blurton Free Baptist Church in the Stoke area
• Spoke once at Leeds Messianic Fellowship
• Spoke once at the International Presbyterian Church of West Ealing, west of London
First Weekend

- Flew from Washington Dulles to London Heathrow Friday July 30
- Stayed at home of Dave and Sue Legg
- Visited British Museum Saturday
- Spoke in their church Sunday morning and evening
Over Nova Scotia
The Leggs

- Dave
- Sue
- Stephen
- Philip
- Harry
Ashford Congregational Church
Talks at Ashford

• Morning Service: "Psalm 90"
• Evening Service: "Discovering God’s Fingerprints: Why the Christian Faith Makes Sense"
Monday-Tuesday 2-3 Aug

- Monday: Travel to British L'Abri
- Gave talk "Doing Science in a Theistic Universe"
- Answered questions
- Tuesday: Traveled to Oxford
- Met my nephew Matt, toured Oxford
- On to Stoke-on-Trent
Travel by Train

• Had a 22-day rail pass that allowed travel anywhere in England, Wales & Scotland
• So most of my travel was by train
British L'Abri

• L'Abri Fellowship was founded by Francis and Edith Schaeffer in 50s in Switzerland.
• Now have fellowships in several countries, including the US, UK and Korea.
• These are study centers for helping people see that Christianity has the answers to our modern problems, both social and personal.
L'Abri

- Located about an hour SW of London
- In the village of Greatham, in Hampshire
- L'Abri Fellowship was given the old Manor House
L'Abri People
Matt Stempler at St. John’s College
Oxford, Christ Church College
CS Lewis, JRR Tolkien, and Dorothy Sayers belonged to an informal group called the Inklings.

They met regularly at this pub to discuss their writing projects.

The three have had a powerful effect on evangelicalism.
Mid-Week at Stoke

• Arrived Tuesday evening 3 August
• Stayed at home of Phil & Joy Roberts, church planters at Hartshill Bible Church
• Used their place as a base for day-trips and over-night trips in the north
• Spoke five times at their church in various venues over a two-week period
Home of Phil & Joy Roberts
Stoke-on-Trent

- The major pottery center in the UK
- Home of many potteries, including Wedgewood
- This scene is from the Spode Pottery Works
Roberts' Bible Study
Brecon Beacons, South Wales
Evangelical Theological College, Wales

- Equivalent of a seminary in the USA
- Phil's oldest son, Alister, recently graduated from here
2nd Weekend, 6-8 August

- Visit to Chester on Friday
- Visit to North Wales on Saturday
- At Hartshill Bible Church on Sunday
Chester

- An ancient Roman city; name from Latin *Castrum* = fort
- Only English city still having walls all the way around
North Wales

- Train trip to Llandudno, a beach resort
- Dominated by high plateau, Great Orme Head
- Have cable cars and tram railway to ascend from shore to top
Llandudno, Wales
Hartshill Bible Church

- Meets at The Willows School
- Phil preached morning service, on Jesus as our example
- I gave my PowerPoint talk that evening "Discovering God’s Fingerprints"
Mon-Tues 9-10 August

- Monday to Liverpool
- Monday evening, talks to Phil’s Bible Study group
- Tuesday to York
- Tuesday evening to Holme-on-Spalding Moor
Liverpool
Bible Study Group

- Monday evening group, meeting at Roberts’ home
- Gave two talks:
  - "Evidence of God in Cosmos & Conscience"
  - "Scientific Problems for Scientific Creationism"
York

- Inside York Minster
- Tomb of one of the Archbishops of York
Holme-on-Spalding Moor

- A village between York and Hull
- Apparently the birthplace of one of my immigrant ancestors, Thomas Ellithorpe
- He was born about 1600 and came to Massachusetts in the 1630s.
Wed-Thurs 11-12 August

• Wednesday to Hadrian's Wall, which the Romans built as a barrier across England to keep out the Scots

• Thursday to Glasgow, Scotland
Hadrian's Wall
Bagpipers in Glasgow
3rd Weekend, 13-15 August

- Friday to Leeds to speak at Leeds Messianic Fellowship
- Saturday to Stoke to speak at picnic of Blurton Free Baptist Church
- Sunday:
  - Phil preaching on Jesus as savior
  - Lunch at home of Tom & Christine Morrow
  - Evening talk, "Astrology: Is Your Destiny in the Stars?"
Leeds

- By train to Leeds
- Stayed at home of Bunmi and Bukki Ajayi from Nigeria
- Spoke to Messianic Fellowship on "Jesus, the Testimony of Prophecy & History"
Barbeque at Park Hall
Sunday at Morrow Home
Talk at Hartshill Bible Church

• Sunday evening at The Willow School
• Power-Point talk:
• "Astrology: Is Your Destiny in the Stars?"
Mon-Wed, 16-18 August

- Monday visit to Lake District
- Tuesday visit to Lancaster
- Wednesday by car to Peaks District
- Wednesday evening: Last talk at Hartshill Bible Church, "Prophecy: Ancient and Modern"
Lake Windermere
View from Orrest Head
Lancaster

• The Castle at Lancaster
• The ancestral residence of the Dukes of Lancaster
• The current Duke of Lancaster is Queen Elizabeth II!
Lancaster

- Stained glass windows in the Priory of Lancaster, founded 1094, now a parish church
- Ate lunch in the Priory refectory
The Peaks District

- One of the many picturesque valleys in the Peaks District National Park
Last Weekend, 19-23 August

• Thursday, by train to Richmond, west of London
• Friday, some ancestor hunting
• Saturday, to Bath, a Roman bath and 18th century spa
• Sunday, speaking at the International Presbyterian Church, West Ealing
• Monday, fly home!
Richmond

- A small city in the west suburbs of London, on the Thames River
- The location of one of the royal palaces
- This is a retreat center there
Holy Cross Church

• In Greenford, NW of London, built 11th century
• George Gardiner, an immigrant ancestor, was baptized here in 1600
Paul Levy

- Met with pastor of the International Presbyterian Church for lunch Saturday
- His predecessor was Nick Perrin, now on the faculty at Biblical
Bishop's Stortford

- St Michael’s Church
- The current building dates from the 1400s
- But there was a church on the site in the 700s
- James Howe was married here 1628
Hatfield Broad Oak

• A small village a few miles east of Bishop’s Stortford (NE of London) in Essex
• Here James Howe was born in 1598.
• He died 104 years later in Ipswich, Massachusetts.
Bath

- The only hot springs in England
- Used by the Romans as a bath from 1st century AD
- The same pool (with lead Roman liner) still in use today
- Became a resort town in 1700s
International Presbyterian Church

- Presbyterianism is not common in England, being largely Scots
- This congregation was founded by associates of Francis Schaeffer
- I spoke at the evening service, giving my talk on God's Fingerprints.
Back Home

- Returned to the Washington, DC area on Monday, 23 Aug
- Total trip was 25 days
- Spoke 11 times
- Returned just 2 days before my mother died