

ICM News

The Banner of the Truth in Ireland

The magazine of The Society for Irish Church Missions, Summer 2007



New move for John

Congratulations to John McClure (pictured), who was ordained a Deacon at Lisburn Cathedral, Co Antrim, on Sunday 24th June. John will be serving with Dean John Bond at Skerry Church of Ireland, Broughshane, for two Sundays a month, and the rest of the time continue his deputation work for ICM in the province. 'My main goal is developing the work of ICM, and speaking about drugs, alcohol and the tragedy of the rising number of suicides in our society', said John. 'We are giving a lead on that throughout the churches'.

INSIDE



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MTS pioneer will help train leaders in Ireland

We are delighted to announce the forthcoming visit of Col and Jacquie Marshall to Ireland.

Col spent many years as the National Director of MTS in Australia.

MTS is the Ministry Training Strategy, a two-year apprenticeship for men and women who are considering full-time gospel ministry.

The apprentices work alongside experienced ministers in a variety of settings, with the understanding that ministry is both caught and taught.

It is a time of discernment as well, and many of the apprentices go on to do formal theological studies.

MTS was started by Col Marshall and Philip Jensen in Sydney 30 years ago.

By God's grace, they have seen hundreds of men and women trained to be Christian leaders.

Based on 2 Timothy 2: 2, it aims to develop men and women in godly conviction, character, and competence.

Col & Jacquie will be spending five months in Ireland to train leaders and future apprentices as we develop MTS in Ireland.

The aim of MTS in Ireland is to train up a new generation of gospel workers who can faithfully and skilfully teach the

Bible to the people of Ireland and reach nations as well.

Col will also help ministers develop a training mindset in local churches, to not only train others to do ministry, but also to train them to train others.

This is how the ministry of the gospel multiplies.

We are excited about Col and Jacquie's forthcoming visit, and we ask for your prayers for them and the ministry of MTS, that through it all the Lord Jesus would be glorified and his gospel proclaimed faithfully.

Anglicanism – a Protestant

In his book, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason* (Paternoster, 1997), Nigel Atkinson demonstrates that Richard Hooker (1554-1600), regarded by Anglicans as one of its foremost theologians, was not someone who believed that the doctrine and teaching of the Church of England was a via media between the teachings of Roman Catholicism and the Reformed teachings of Geneva.

Indeed, Atkinson demonstrates that Hooker was as convinced of the Reformed doctrines of the Reformation as his Puritan opponents.

This is important in that many today, following in the footsteps of John Henry Newman and John Keble, who represented the High Church Oxford Movement in the 19th century, still mistakenly believe that Anglican doctrine is a half-way house between Rome and Geneva.

Though the views espoused by the Oxford Movement and kept alive in the High Church tradition are regarded by many as normative Anglicanism, the truth is that these views are alien intruders into classical Anglicanism.

If we want to discover the definitive characteristic of Anglicanism in terms of its doctrine and teaching, then we must go back beyond the Oxford movement of the 19th century to the title deeds of Anglicanism, written by the Reformers in the 16th century.

Commenting on this foundational period within Anglicanism, Canadian Anglican, Dyson Hague, in his book *Through the Prayer Book* (London, 1932) writes:

'England's church arose at the Reformation from the deadly sleep of mediaevalism with two books – the Bible and the Prayer Book... The Church of England was not born at the Reformation... but it was born again... It stood then and it has stood ever since with two books: one, the secret of its transformation, the Bible; the other, the expression and exponent of its reformation, the Prayer Book.'

In other words, if we want to discover the true characteristic of Anglicanism, that which has given it its shape, theology, teaching and liturgical practice, then we need look no further than the Bible, the Edwardian 1552

Book of Common Prayer (confirmed by the 1662 edition) and the 39 Articles of Religion.

Though some have vainly tried to posit that the 1549 book represented the real position of Anglicanism, it is true to say that this book was itself only a half-way house on the road to the full Reformed Prayer Book of 1552, which more clearly defined the Protestant Reformed position that had not been possible under the religious policy of Henry VIII (for a convincing argument on this, see Diarmid MacCulloch's *Thomas Cranmer*, Yale University Press, 1996).

The reading and teaching of God's Word was the overwhelming characteristic of Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* and this in turn set the defining characteristic of Anglicanism.

In the Preface to the Prayer Book, he wrote that he was concerned to get back to the custom of the 'ancient Fathers' of the church, *'that the whole Bible... should be read over once every year...'* that both the clergy and the people should be stirred up to godliness and *'might continually profit more and more in the knowledge of God, and be the more inflamed with the love of his*



“The aim of MTS in Ireland is to train up a new generation of gospel workers”

Col and Jacquie Marshall

t & Reformed Confession

“The Church of England was not born at the Reformation... but it was born again...”

true Religion’.

From the beginning of Anglicanism, the Church of England put the greatest possible emphasis on teaching and instruction. What’s more, so that there would be no doubt about the interpretation of the Prayer Book, the Reformed Protestant ethos of the Prayer Book was underlined by two further standards of doctrine, the Homilies, and the 39 Articles of Religion.

The *Homilies* were two books of sermons given to aid the local clergy in the preaching of the Word of God. The *39 Articles of Religion* are analogous to the Confessions of the continental Protestant churches and act as the standard of characteristic

Anglican doctrine.

The language of the Prayer Book is that of Anglican devotion, but the language of the Articles is that of Anglican doctrine, and both are unmistakably Protestant and Reformed.

This is the argument of Paul Zahl in his book, *The Protestant Face of Anglicanism* (Eerdmans, 1998), where he maintains that Anglicanism has been stamped decisively by classic Protestantism.

However, this ‘Protestant face’, he claims, has been worn away by liberal and High Church doctrines that have crept into successive revisions of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Within the Church of Ireland today, the Protestant origin of Anglicanism is being downplayed, largely because of the new ecumenical atmosphere that has arisen since Vatican II.

Many people are uncomfortable in describing Anglican doctrine and teaching as Reformed and Protestant, though this is how we, in the Church of Ireland, officially define our teaching and doctrine (see the Preamble and Declaration of the General Convention of 1870).

One recent correspondent to the *Church of Ireland Gazette* (25th May 2007) underlined this anti-Protestant mood within the Church of Ireland when he wrote:

‘For my part, however (and I know that within Anglicanism I am not alone), I am an Anglican, but assuredly not a Protestant’.

Worldwide however, the majority of Anglicans are keen to maintain the Protestant emphasis on the teaching and preaching of the Bible, the Reformed doctrines of faith as outlined in the Articles, and the supremacy of Scripture to teach and guide in all matters.

Like Hooker, many Anglicans, especially in the two-thirds world, regard Scripture as the final authority on all matters, and tradition and reason as servants to help us understand Scripture, not masters that lord it over Scripture or partners that have equal weight with Scripture.

Historically and theologically, the defining characteristic of Anglicanism is its Reformed and Protestant doctrine, reflecting the teaching of the Bible itself.

BIBLE STUDY 1

Paul's message comes from God – first to last

Romans 1

1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God – 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him and for his name's sake, we received grace and apostleship to call people from among all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith. 6 And you also are among those who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

Sometimes you hear it said that Paul distorted the simple message of Jesus and misled people by writing about his own ideas about Jesus.

But, as verse 1 above tells us, this couldn't be further from the truth. The Apostle Paul, from his own writings, saw himself as a servant of Jesus Christ and his message something that he received from the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 1: 12, he writes: 'For I would have you know brothers, that the Gospel that was preached by me is not man's Gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.'

In other words, as we read the Apostle's writings we can be confident that what we hear is Christ speaking to us through his specially 'set apart' servant.

The message that Paul delivers is God's from first to last – the Gospel of God (v 1). It's not man's message, which we are at liberty to change when we feel like it. The Gospel is God's message to the world and our part, like Paul, is simply to deliver it faithfully.

It's a message that God outlined in the Old Testament, (v 2), where he promises to bless the nations by liberating man from judgement for sin and restoring him into relationship with himself. And this promise, preached by the prophets, is linked to a special figure, who would crush the power of



evil, overturn the curse of judgement and bring us into right relationship with God.

The Gospel of God therefore focuses on Jesus (vv 3-4), who as the descendant of David is God's King to rule over our lives. Though always the Son of God in eternity, his resurrection from the dead declares him, in history, to be God's Son.

And what's more, this Gospel declares him to be Lord, that is, the one with all power and authority whom everyone is called to serve.

In other words, Jesus Christ is no mere religious figure like a Mohammed

or Buddha or a Confucius, but stands far above any of them, as the one to whom we are to submit our lives.

Therefore, the Gospel demands a response from us (vv 5-6).

If Jesus is Lord of all, then he is the rightful ruler of our lives and we must no longer rebel against that, but obey the call of the Gospel to repent and put our faith in Christ.

This message is for all the nations and it is for us personally. We need to ask ourselves, 'Am I living as if Christ has no right to rule my life? Or is my life submitted to this Jesus, as the Gospel of God says it should be?'



English Corner students and below (L-R): Willman, Sandro, Shama, Marius and Glauca.



ICM'S 'English Corner'

Bolivia, Argentina, Brazil, Hong Kong, South Korea, the Maldives, China, Italy, Poland – just some of the countries represented in ICM's Friday afternoon 'English Corner'.

Here, around 30+ students come to practice their English

conversation skills, enjoying lunch together and making new friendships with people from all over the world.

ICM's building at 28 Bachelor's Walk is within a five-minute walking radius of many of Dublin's 'Schools of English'.

Many international students from every continent come to Dublin to learn English and to work in Ireland for a designated time. Our prayer is that God will richly bless this summer programme of friendship and outreach.



Yemane Gadissa is a member of the ICM church. Here, he explains how the church in his native Ethiopia has survived persecution – and contrasts that with the situation in Ireland.

Shackles off at last for church within Ethiopia

I think by this time I can claim to be a Dubliner – with an Ethiopian accent! A substantial amount of time has elapsed since I've come to know Irish people.

What often strikes me about them is their love and respect for men which has been enduring the test of time.

Presumably, this embedded ethos of goodness is rooted in Christianity that was a norm of living some years ago.

Thank God for the peace, security, and abundant life that this people enjoy.

Nevertheless, let us continue to pray for their spiritual life, which has been blurred by the material world.

The ideal way to do this is by creating partnerships with evangelical churches that are labouring to restore the spiritual life of this community.

The Irish Church Mission is a beacon of hope to that end, backed by multidimensional strategies.

As I'm planning to go back to Ethiopia for some time, the burden of Irish Church Mission is what I carry to my mother church, Nifas Silk Mekane Yesus Congregation (NSMYC).

NSMYC is one of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (EECMY) Congregations in the eastern part of the capital, Addis Ababa.

It is a relatively young congregation with about 500 'full' members (entitled to take part in the Holy Communion after basic teaching on Christianity).

NSMYC is blessed with devoted leaders like the Rev Dereje Jemberu



The congregation at Yemane's home church.

(vice-president of EECMY and president of NSMYC) and the Rev Tamiru Deressa, Pastor of the congregation.

Under their leadership, this congregation is widening its vision by extending gospel witness from the city to countryside.

NSMYC offers two services on Sundays, one in the morning in Amharic (the national language of Ethiopia), and the other in the afternoon in Afan Oromo (the most widespread language in the country).

Liturgy, prayer, bible reading, creed, hymns, choir, Lord's Prayer and the Lord's Supper are some of the

components of our Sunday service.

Like other Mekane Yesus congregations, there has been significant growth in NSMYC over the last two decades.

Two main reasons underlie this.

First, the fierce persecution under the last regime has gone and we enjoy freedom of religion. The persecutors are the preachers now!

The second reason is even more fundamental. God is working in our churches.

What He promised the scattered people of Israel many years ago has also been fulfilled in our lives.

... currently studying for a Master's Degree at Trinity College. Ethiopia is growing after being freed from a time of religious persecution in Ireland, where such freedom is taken for granted.



Worship can be enjoyed again free from persecution at Nifas Silk Mekane Yesus Congregation.

He said to them, 'I will whistle for them and gather them in, for I have redeemed them, and they shall be as many as they were before' (Zechariah 10: 9, ESV). Because God is working powerfully in our churches, the history of our churches has radically changed.

Under the last regime every attempt was made to erase God from the hearts and minds of the people.

'No God' was the mantra of those dark days. Some churches were closed, church possessions were confiscated, and imprisonment of Christians was commonplace.

However, since He is the Lord of all nations and His promise is for all of us, God has shown us His wonderful work by restoring our churches.

Here in Dublin, although there are many splendid church buildings and complete freedom of religion, there are very few people in churches.

However, I hope and I believe, sooner or later this will change.

It will be heard in this country when people say to one another 'let us go to church'.

This is true not only from my Ethiopian experience point of view, but because we have unshaken word from

God for the last days about His church which says:

In the last days the mountains of the Lord's temple will be established as chief among the mountains it will be raised above all hills and peoples will stream to it. Many nations will come and say, 'Come let us go up to the mountains of the Lord of Jacob. He will teach us His ways, so that we may walk in his paths'... (Micah 4: 1-2).

Therefore, as an individual I like to encourage brothers and sisters in the Irish Church Mission to keep on in their blessed plans which, of course, requires perseverance.

BIBLE STUDY 2

Blessed Assurance

1 John 5: 1-5

1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. **2** This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. **3** This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, **4** for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. **5** Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Have you ever wondered whether or not you're really a Christian? Maybe you've been a Christian for a very long time, always attending church, but you're not sure if you're the genuine article.

If so, 1 John is for you. Maybe you're a newer Christian, struggling with sin in your life, seemingly making little progress, and you've started to wonder whether this is real or maybe wishful thinking. If so, 1 John is for you.

Or maybe you haven't had an emotional experience or 'conversion story' and so you're not really sure what's happening or if anything has happened at all. Well, wherever you're at, this first letter of John is God's gift to us – it's proof that we can be assured, and indeed God wants us to be assured.

In verses 1 to 5, there are three things we can look for in our lives that can assure us we are children of God. The first is in verse 1: 'everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God'.

Being born of God is the new birth. The term used to describe this is 'born-again'.

Regrettably, this term has taken on a negative connotation, due to cultural attachments or bad experiences. But it is the Lord Jesus Christ who first used this term in John 3: 3 when he said that you must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Now, Jesus is not speaking about an emotional experience. It is usually a process over time, and you may not actually feel any different when you confess faith in him.

That's alright, because Jesus is not talking about an experience. He is talking about faith in who he is and what he has done – this is the way the



Sean Martin

new birth is brought about.

So, if we don't feel any different, if no fireworks have gone off and we wake up feeling no different, how can we know if we've been born of God and have a true faith? How can we be assured?

John gives us the second answer in verses 1b & 2, love: '...and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.

This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God...' If we love the Father and love our brothers and sisters in Christ, it's living proof we're the genuine article.

Loving God and others is hard at times.

Our sinful nature causes us to love self and to serve self first, and that's the way our world operates.

But to become members of the Kingdom of God is to take the radical step of putting God and others first (Luke 22: 25-26 'Jesus said to them, 'The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that.

Instead, the greatest among you

should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serve).

It requires daily dying to self (2 Corinthians 5: 14-15 'For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.

And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again)'.
It's counter-cultural, and it takes God's power working in us to make that shift.

It's hard work.

Again, the love John speaks of isn't about emotional experiences. Not that those are wrong, it's just that they come and go.

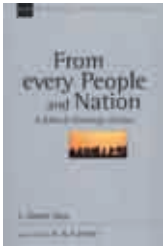
If all of our love is based on feelings, we're going to be in trouble when they go. That's why marriages often hit trouble when the honeymoon phase ends.

The love John speaks of is a mature love, which chooses to love God and people even when we don't feel like it. It's an act of the will. And to love God and neighbour is to fulfill the Law of God.

The way this love is expressed is through obedience (verses 2 & 3), and that's the third way we can be assured that we are really born of God. Obedience isn't the way to gain God's favour. God favours us freely through His grace and the gift of His Son. Obedience is the way we manifest our love to God. Jesus says so in John 14: 21. Obedience is gratitude for grace received. So, faith in Jesus Christ, expressed through love for God and neighbour, expressed through obedience to God's commandments, lead to assurance. What a blessing!

BOOK REVIEWS

Israel's multi-cultural lesson



One of the first things that strikes visitors to Dublin is the multi-cultural make-up of the city. This is reflected in church attendances, where some congregations can have up to a

dozen different nationalities in church at any one time! In front of our very eyes we are seeing God's promise of blessing to the nations being fulfilled.

In his book, *From Every People and Nation – a Biblical Theology of Race* (IVP 2003), J Daniel Hays shows us very clearly that from the beginning of the Bible, God's focus is universal.

The picture in *Revelation 7: 9-10* of God's people drawn from every nation, tribe, people and tongue, worshipping the Lamb before his throne, is the ultimate fulfilment of God's promise to Abraham in *Genesis 12: 3*, that through his seed the nations of the earth would be blessed.

Hays is particularly keen for Christian readers to rediscover this universal focus of the Bible, writing

from his context in the United States, where racism, even among Christians is still quite prevalent. He highlights the multi-racial aspect of God's blessing by especially focusing on the part played in the Old Testament by the Cushites, black Africans, who lived in the Nile region to the south of Egypt.

These people (often referred to as Ethiopians in the Bible), along with the other multi-ethnic non-White groups in *Genesis 10* make up a significant component of the nations whom God intends to bless.

The author underlines the role of the nations in Israel's history.

Israel leaves Egypt as 'a mixed multitude' (*Exodus 12: 38*); Moses marries a black African wife, a Cushite (*Numbers 12: 1*); Phinehas the priest, whose zeal for God (*Numbers 25 and 31*) becomes a model for subsequent generations (*Psalms 106: 30-31*), is quite literally 'the Negro'.

His name explicitly indicates that he is a Cushite; Ebed Melech, the Cushite or Ethiopian who saves the prophet Jeremiah is blessed by God (*Jeremiah 38: 7-13; 39: 15-18*) and

represents the future inclusion of the Gentiles who have faith in Israel's God.

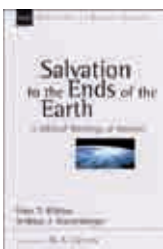
Hays highlights Israel's role as a light to the nations, noting its failure and the prophetic promise of a faithful servant, who would take on the role of Israel and bring God's blessing to the nations. In claiming to be 'the light of the world' (*John 8: 12*) Jesus fulfilled the role of Israel, reaching out to the nations through his own ministry and in his commission to his disciples.

Paul describes the promise to Abraham ie, the blessing of the nations, as the Gospel (*Galatians 3: 8*), and of course Revelation ends with that picture of an innumerable multitude of believers from every nation, tribe, people and tongue around the throne of God.

An accessible scholarly treatment, this book helps us reflect theologically and biblically on our view of people from overseas. As we look at our multi-ethnic congregations we should be delighted that here already we have a visible reminder of the promise of God to bless the nations.

EC

A timely word on Anglican Evangelism



Richard Turnbull is the new Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, a training college for those hoping to be ordained into the Church of England. A clear Evangelical, his forthright approach

in promoting the historic Evangelical basis of Anglicanism sits uneasily in a denomination that has strayed far from its Reformed and Evangelical roots.

His book, *Anglican and Evangelical?*, analyses the relationship between Anglicanism and Evangelicalism and makes the argument that Anglicanism's roots in the doctrines of the Protestant Reformation mean that developments within the Anglican tradition such as Anglo-Catholicism, theological liberalism, and liberal catholicism, are 'strands of opinion' detached from its core identity.

Though these brands of Anglicanism may dominate in some western branches of the Anglican Communion, they actually do not represent the heart

of Anglicanism. Historically speaking, these strands of opinion are cuckoos in the nest, taking over something they never originally built!

Turnbull analyses not only the heart of Anglicanism but also that of Evangelicalism, highlighting that at its core are four key elements – including submission to the authority of God's Word. Though strands within Anglicanism today recognise the primary position of Scripture, they do not submit to it as the final authority in matters of doctrine and practice, as Anglicanism historically teaches and as Anglican Evangelicals do.

Secondly, Evangelicals, like their Reformed Anglican forbears, don't merely talk about the importance of the Cross of Christ, they emphasise penal substitutionary atonement, which is the very heart of the teaching of the New Testament on Christ's death on the Cross.

Thirdly, the key focus of Evangelical spirituality is relationship with the Lord of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. Evangelicals are people who know

Christ, who love Christ, whose religion is not a set of rules and propositions, but is defined by a personal relationship to Christ.

And fourthly, Turnbull argues, Evangelicals are those who are marked by an urgency to see transformation in the world, in the lives of people, through evangelism, mission, and conversion.

In analysing the relationship between modern day Anglicanism and Anglican Evangelicalism, Turnbull points out that there is indeed much in common and much that divides.

Because of developments in Anglicanism away from its Reformation roots, Anglican Evangelicalism will always have to live with tension within Anglican denominations where liberals and Catholics dominate, and they are left with no option but to maintain and proclaim their distinctiveness.

This is a timely book and one that is highly recommended as a statement of who Anglican Evangelicals are, and how they see themselves within Anglicanism today.

EC

Christian soldier faces battle with antagonism



ICM shop talk

Dezi Ferguson

The Ireland I grew up in and the Ireland of today are vastly different.

The Ireland I knew was predominantly Roman Catholic, whereas today it is a melting pot of beliefs and no beliefs at all. Many people over the years have become openly anti-religious.

I give one example; recently I was changing the shop window display to show a variety of Bible translations. I could not help but notice a gentleman gazing at the Bibles with a somewhat contemptuous facial expression.

He came into the shop and confronted me by stating very strongly that people like me are trying to fool people into believing there is a God, when reality showed everything came as a result of evolution.

I invited him to sit down and have tea together. He accepted and this new situation created a better listening atmosphere for both of us.

'I believe', I said, 'that creation versus evolution is a biblical, spiritual issue but, for the sake of fairness, we will also approach the issue from a non-biblical perspective'.

The man gave a positive response to my suggestion.

'The Bible', I said, 'is very clear on this whole area of God and creation'.

Genesis 1: 1, the first book and first verse of the Bible states: 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. The man's immediate response was 'You know my view on that, I totally reject it'. I then asked him



to read Psalm 14: 1. 'The fool in his heart says there is no God'.

He took offence at me for he felt I was attacking him, but I stressed this was God's word speaking to him. I asked him to reflect on the statement – why is a person a fool not to believe in God?.

The Bible answers that question and I asked him to read Romans 1: 18-20. We spoke in great detail about these verses, in the sense that man has no excuse for not believing in God, for God has given us the evidence of His existence by what He has created.

I could sense that he was not comfortable with what was being presented, for it was challenging his present way of thinking.

He reminded me at this point that I said I would also discuss the issue from a non-biblical aspect. 'We will look at the issue of creation or evolution from the aspect of evidence and what does the evidence tell us'.

'Take for example', I said, 'two rooms, one room a total and utter mess, the other room, really clean and neatly organised'.

'When we observe the two rooms', I asked, 'what is the obvious conclusion we come to?'

'One is being looked after the other is not', he said.

'Even though we have not seen who is taking care of the tidy room the evidence tells us it is being cared for'.

'Let us now transfer that common sense logic to the order and care of the universe'.

I could see that this approach was also challenging his present mindset. I asked him not to respond to me but to go away and the both of us would reflect on our talk and that he would be welcome to return for further talks if he wished.

I take this opportunity to thank all our supporters and friends in the work of ICM.

Don't let our culture water down Gospel

DAVID MARTIN COMPARES AND CONTRASTS THE EMERGENT CHURCH AND THE EMERGING CHURCH

Some of you will know that over the past few years a new movement called 'The Emergent Church' has been the focus of much debate.

The movement started in reaction to an uncompromising dead orthodoxy in many of the mainline American denominations.

The leaders of this new movement were appalled at the laziness of the established churches to engage with culture.

In reaction to this failure they broke ranks and started 'doing church' in a relevant and contemporary way.

Much of what they did proved very successful, as their churches thrive and buzz with thousands of non-churched people professing faith in Christ as Lord.

Sadly however, in many of their attempts to be relevant they have compromised on 'the faith of the gospel' (Col 2: 7; Phil 1: 27).

Instead of challenging and reforming culture with the truth about the good news from God to us about his Son, they have let culture decide the content of the gospel.

The old doctrines about the authority of scripture and penal substitution, to mention a few, have been significantly revised in many of the more prominent 'emergent' churches.

To make matters even more confusing there is a growing coalition amongst other churches, especially in America, who refer to themselves as 'emerging'.

This is not to be confused with 'emergent'.



David Martin

This coalition of 'emerging' churches is a trans-denominational movement that, like 'The Emergent Church' detests the cultural inflexibility of the established churches and yet unlike 'The Emergent Church' is not prepared to let culture have the final say.

The leaders of the emerging church movement are producing robust, dynamic, contemporary and yet thoroughly reformed churches.

They are theologically 'conservative' on matters of doctrine and lifestyle and yet radical when it comes to practising 'the faith'.

One of the most striking characteristics of an emerging church is its emphasis on mission, not to other cultures, but within the culture where they live.

Mission is understood not as a small part of church life, or as something that happens by a few in foreign countries, but as something that every church member is deeply committed to in their own home culture.

This means, for example, an emerging church does not place a great deal of importance on evangelistic

events or even evangelistic courses, since everything they do is understood in terms of mission.

Instead hospitality, caring for your neighbour, loving your enemy, even down to the style of music it uses, are seen as integral to mission.

This of course also means that every time a sermon is preached it is understood as an evangelistic event – whether it is from Leviticus, Proverbs or John.

The emphasis on mission essentially forces each member to ask the hard questions about their home culture and how they can call for repentance and faith in that culture.

To the theologically conservative, the emerging church's emphasis on 'loving your neighbour' makes it appear far too liberal, while to the liberals and emergent church leaders, their rigidity on theological doctrine probably makes them appear far too conservative.

Yet in the emerging churches themselves there appears to be no contradiction between these two complaints and the combination of reformed doctrine and radical practice appears to be bearing much fruit under God.

For further reading:

- *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*, D A Carson.
- *The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out without Selling Out*, Mark Driscoll.
- *Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches*, Ed Robert E Webber.
- *Pierced for Our Transgressions*, Jeffery, Oway, Sach.

Apprentices Appeal

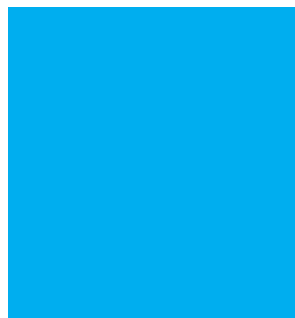
ICM is committed to training people today who can build the church in the future. They will be trained in Biblical Ministry and be equipped to serve in various contexts including our multicultural and student churches. Successful applicants will be:

- Men or women committed to their relationship with God.
- Convinced that the Word does the work in evangelism and discipleship.
- Receptive to training through personal training and practical experience.
- Hard workers, both as part of a team and on their own.
- Willing to get stuck in to a range of jobs and responsibilities.

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My MTS Apprenticeship



Len Carolan

The ministry training strategy has been a challenging and rewarding experience for men in the past ten months. ICM were bold enough to offer me this position at a time when I had just completed my fifth and final year in university. I was ready, if I had wanted, to enter the working world to teach Mathematics in secondary school.

However, I felt that time invested in serving the Lord in ministry, particularly in a university context, was something that I should devote myself to. So the opportunity came to help grow the existing student ministry of ICM with university students, and I came on board on a part-time basis.

MTS is, for the most part initiative. I would have to go and find a bunch of guys to meet during my three days a week to study the Word with. It was not long before this was happening and soon my days consisted of moving from one meeting place to another, spending quality time in the word with guys who shared a love for the Word and the Lord.

A one-to-one ministry like this is

beneficial in many ways to both parties. But for me the best part was that my knowledge of his Word was increasing, as I was spending more and more time in specific books of the bible, and this is, as Paul reminds us in Colossians 1: 10, is part of God's will for us.

The challenges didn't stop there. I've had opportunity to flex my ability of preaching the word of God in a meeting context. As many will know, the walls of ICM have been subject to some really gifted teachers of the Word, and no more true today, as every Sunday the Bible is taught faithfully and truly both morning and evening.

Part of my MTS experience is to help me develop in properly analysing a portion of scripture, to give a true exposition of what the word of God is saying. In the weeks leading up to the sermon I would meet with Sean Martin to see how I'm progressing with my main and sub-points!

Finally I would present my outline sermon to the ICM team for last minute advice and suggestions. All this has helped me greatly in an area where I hope to be competent in the coming years.

This year has seen Sunday evening bible talks growing, numerically and otherwise. It has been a privilege to see regulars come, their prime motivation being a thirst for God's word. To be a part of this work that God is doing, to help in the music and the teaching, is a delight and part of my reasonable service for the Lord.

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**The aim of Irish
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