

# ICM News

*The Banner of the Truth in Ireland*

The magazine of The Society for Irish Church Missions, Spring 2008

## *A labour of love*



***At Christmas, a team from ICM travelled out to Mexico to put their faith into action. Find out what happened on pages 4,5,6,7***



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# Col passes on baton in apprentice training

## MTS UPDATE



**Col and Jacquie Marshall**

In 2 Timothy 2:2, the apostle Paul instructs Timothy, "...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

In 2 Timothy, the teacher of God's Word is given a four-fold charge: to guard the gospel (1:14), to share in suffering for the gospel (2:3), to continue in the gospel (3:14-15), and to proclaim the gospel (4:1-2).

The Ministry Training Strategy (M.T.S.), developed in Sydney, Australia, has taken this charge seriously and has been training godly and faithful people for the ministry of the Word for over 30 years.

Over the past number of years, a group of churches in Northern Ireland and in the Republic have been training ministry apprentices using the Ministry Training Strategy.

From September 2007 to February 2008, these churches have hosted Col Marshall (Director of MTS for 25 years in Australia), and his wife Jacquie, to train ministers to be trainers of MTS apprentices in the local church. During their time, Col also engaged in training all the

members of the local church to be partners in the ministry of the Word.

Col trained approximately 40 ministers in both the North and the Republic to be trainers of MTS apprentices, using the course he has developed, entitled 'Passing the Baton.' He also spent a great deal of time meeting with

trainers one-to-one to encourage and support them. Both he and Jacquie also engaged in ministry in local churches. Their ministry has been of great benefit to us all and we will miss them as they return to Australia. However, we hope they will return in the not too distant future.

A number of Churches already have apprentices in place, and it is our prayerful hope that more Churches will be identifying and equipping apprentices to be the next generation of gospel workers in Ireland and overseas.

The next step is a 'Passing the Baton' conference in Cork this Spring where 6 ministers will be trained to be M.T.S. trainers in that region.

Trevor Johnston will be leading and developing M.T.S. in the North and I will be doing the same in the Republic.

We both ask for your prayerful support of this strategic ministry. Our aim under God is to have apprentices training over all Ireland in the local church and then deploying them to the four corners of this island and abroad to carry on the baton of gospel ministry.

*Sean Martin*

## A TRIBUTE TO THE REV MARTIN WYATT GARNER

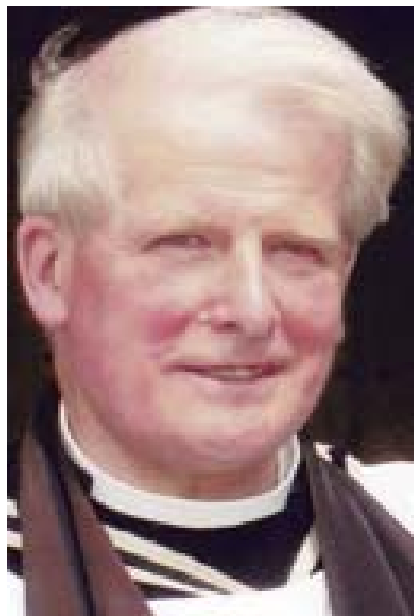
It is with a real sense of loss that we record the death of the Revd Martin Garner. Although he had been unwell following a road accident, his passing came as a great shock.

Martin was ordained in 1966 for the parish of Coleraine but spent the rest of his ministry in England. In Coleraine he met Audrey, who proved a splendid help in his work.

The moving tribute he gave at her funeral will long be remembered.

Martin was a faithful preacher of the Gospel, exercising an expository ministry, delighting to open up the Scriptures.

He was a diligent pastor in the different parishes in which he served, with a genuine love for his people. Martin had a great memory for names. He was witty,



with a fund of stories, all of which endeared him to his flock.

His interest in Irish Church Missions goes back over many years and we are greatly indebted to him as Chairman of the Trust, a task he fulfilled with great acceptance over a long period.

He had a wonderful grasp of every department of the work.

His interest went far beyond the task of presiding at meetings, taking, as he did, a personal interest in the members of staff. His letters of encouragement in his beautiful handwriting were much treasured. We are the poorer for his passing, but rejoice for him that he is with the Lord he served with such faithfulness. Martin is remembered with great affection. Our deepest sympathy to his daughter, his three sons and grandchildren.

# Our Gospel opportunity

## ENGLISH CORNER

THE world has come to Dublin. Walking through Dublin city centre, it can often be a struggle to hear an Irish accent, because so many different nationalities have come here to work and to learn English.

This is no accident; behind this is a Sovereign God in control of everything, even the places where people live. As Paul says in Acts 17 (c.f. v26), He is at work in all things for His glory in bringing His plan for the world to completion.

Because of God's providence there are thousands of international students here studying English. God has given us, as His people here in Dublin, a great opportunity for people from many nations to hear the gospel; and it is our responsibility as His people to use faithfully those opportunities.

One of the ways Immanuel seeks, by His grace, to make the most of this opportunity is through 'English Corner'. This is a café-style evangelistic meeting every Friday over lunch where many international students come to practice speaking English and explore Christianity.

Let me give you a brief idea of what English Corner is all about.

**Our Aim: To Glorify God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

The Bible clearly teaches that the ultimate end of God's work is for His glory (see Ephesians 1:6,12,14; Isaiah 43:7; Romans 9:22-23, 11:36 etc.). This should be our aim in English Corner (as in everything).

**Our Priorities**

**1. Proclaiming the Gospel Faithfully and Clearly**

Paul declares that he is not ashamed of the gospel because "it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), the gospel is God's and it is His power to save. There is no other gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). There is no other way that people can be declared to be in a right standing before God than through the gospel, which is all about Jesus. Therefore, we too are to unashamedly proclaim the Gospel and to do so boldly. We are to proclaim it faithfully, keeping from the temptation to "tamper with God's word" (2Corinthians 4:2), not changing it if people find it unpopular or if it causes offence; but holding firmly to it, recognising that by changing it, it becomes no gospel at all and won't bring anyone from death to life. We are to proclaim it clearly as Paul sought to do (2Corinthians 4:2), and especially so in our context as many of these international students have limited



Simon Donohoe  
MTS Apprentice

English (otherwise they wouldn't have come to study English!). In all of this our focus needs to be on Jesus (2Corinthians 4:5), because the gospel is all about Him. The Gospel is Christ centred, so must we be.

**2. Proclaiming the Gospel in Dependence on God in Prayer**

Nothing can happen in our own strength for "Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labour in vain" (Psalm 127:1). The work of the gospel is God's work. He has given us the responsibility of faithfully and clearly telling the gospel, yet it is He who equips us to understand and teach His word. He has given us the responsibility of proclaiming the word of life, but it is only He who can open blind eyes, it is only He who can give life to the dead (Ephesians 2). Apart from Him we can do nothing. Therefore in everything we do we must show a humble dependence on Him in persistent prayer, begging that He might have mercy and bring these international students to bow the knee before Jesus as Lord.

**3. Proclaiming the Gospel in The Context of Loving Relationships**

The best context for telling the gospel is the context of loving relationships.

Obviously the most loving thing we can do is to tell them the gospel which is God's power to save (Romans 1:16), praying that God might have mercy on them and grant them repentance and faith; yet we also want to be committed to doing this in the context of a loving friendship. This will mean taking a genuine interest in these international students, wanting to help them in learning English, sharing our own selves with them as well as the gospel as Paul did with the Thessalonians (1Thessalonians 2:8).

**4. Equipping God's People to Know and Tell the Gospel**

There is a small team of 'Immanuelites' who serve as part of the English Corner team and we want to help equip them to know the gospel and communicate it clearly to others. It is our prayer that as they hear the gospel taught faithfully and clearly from the front and as they seek to share the gospel in conversation around the tables that they would grow in their convictions as to what the gospel is and that they would be prepared to tell it boldly, faithfully and clearly to others. Alongside this there are a number of Christian students who join us on Fridays, these also we want to serve, building them up in the prayer that when they return home that they will be equipped to tell the gospel to friends and family.

We would greatly appreciate your prayers for all of this work, as the Bible teaches we are unprofitable servants and can do nothing by ourselves. Please pray that these aims would be fulfilled in English Corner and that through English Corner God would be glorified in the proclamation of His gospel.



# *Building a home, and*



***Superintendent Eddie Coulter hands over the house to the delighted Montoya family***



***The team found that the weather wasn't always what they expected***



***Most people in Juarez live in extremely basic conditions***

December 27, 2007, and Dublin Airport is awash with excited jet-setters queuing for check in, weighing of bags, passing through security ... and some disposing of toothpaste that just isn't allowed on flights any more!

Among the crowds were a group of twenty travellers, who were quite visible, if not for their cheery smiles and team-like banter, then for their bright green tee shirts labelled "Immanuel Church, Dublin". These twenty delegates were travelling to

Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA, with a stay of 3 days, before journeying onto Juarez, Mexico. It was in Juarez that the team would link with a local mission and build a house for a Christian family.

Irish church missions curate Sean Martin had held a post in Las Cruces for a year and a half before moving to Dublin, and during this time Sean had participated in two builds already. Seeing what a benefit this was in not only being on a team and doing physical work, but also having a

hand in providing a home for somebody, Sean hatched the idea that an Irish team, backed by Irish Church Missions, was extremely feasible and an opportunity not to be missed.

After a few months of spreading the potential of the trip to people associated to ICM, whether through university students, or attendees to Immanuel, gradually a team of around twenty surfaced. "Gateway mission" would be the ministry the team would partner with. For

# and building friendships



ys that warm



c conditions



The team settle into bunks during their stay

a number of years Gateway have been hosting teams in the second fastest growing city in Mexico. The Mission have a compound there that accommodates the teams for their duration in Juarez.

In addition, they provide the leaders that teach and guide what will mostly be a group of inexperienced labourers in the construction of an actual house.

However, all building materials needed to be bought before the team arrive. Therefore, it was up to us to raise the

financial support before we left to cover all expenses. This took place in a number of ways. Home churches of the team members gave towards the trip; there were breakfast mornings to raise awareness among neighbours. There was even a music concert in the middle of Dublin city, where the best Christian artists the county has to offer performed to a packed and delighted crowd, all proceeds going towards the cost of materials needed to build the home! It was not long before

God met the very real financial need for the building to happen. From Dublin airport, we began a trip that included two stop-overs before reaching Albuquerque. After nearly missing a connecting flight in Denver Colorado, we arrived, albeit shattered and with no luggage. The plan was to stay in Albuquerque for a few days to adjust not only to the time difference, but also to the altitude, as we were now a mile high above sea level! It was here that we got to see some of the sights, such as

# HOW THE TEAM WORKED TO



the white sands, Santa Fe, and Walmart! But it also gave us time to get to know our latest member, Michael Jonson. Michael is a member of Sean's old church in Las Cruces and decided that working with the Irish could be a worthy challenge. Michael also graciously picked us up from the airport and drove the outfit everywhere we needed to go. At the appointed time, we headed south toward the border of Mexico. It's easier getting in then it is

leaving! The first morning on the worksite was an eye-opener. After months of planning and anticipation, we were finally here, and there was no time to lose. Within minutes, saws were cutting, hammer's hammering, and wood assembling. By lunch time on the first day the frame was up and the roof on. Labouring in this way was very satisfying. There, standing, was something substantial and visible that could be put down to hard team work.

Every member would probably tell you different things that they found tough in building the house. Whether it be nailing down the roof, insulating the inside, or applying "stucko" to the outside walls, there was always enough work for people to be doing, and every little thing that was done, was part of the greater whole in building a home. After two and a half days of intense but fun work, the three-roomed house was

# TOGETHER TO BUILD A HOUSE



finally completed. The only outstanding task was to hand over the keys to the Montoya Family.

This was to be an emotional morning. We all assembled in the main room of the house and opportunity was given to the team to share publicly thoughts on their experience of the past number of days. Following that, the members of the three generation strong Montoya Family expressed their immense thanks and

gratitude for the team being the "Hands of God" in providing them with a home that will last them a very long time. With the small surplus of funds raised for the trip, we were able to purchase a stove with a table and chairs to reside in the kitchen of the house.

A purchase like this in Juarez would set back the average family a lot financially, so the Montoyas could not believe the generosity shown by the Lord and his

people. In return, the team were treated to a fantastic brunch which consisted of the local Mexican speciality, tomalley! God must be praised for this fantastic occasion in visiting and serving Mexico. Every aspect ran smoothly and all team members look back to that time where they were able to serve the Lord their God practically, in serving their brothers and sisters in a different Land.

**Len Carolan**

# View from the pew on church development

IS big really all that bad?

It is a question every pastor at some stage finds themselves asking. Not that they already have a mega-sized church, but they might like to.

There are many books on the subject. Some simply offer helpful tips.

More recently, however, because of a growing interest in church planting, many are offering faithful Biblical principles on church growth and development.

Topics can include detailed analysis of what the church actually is and therefore what the church should actually be doing; the centrality of the word of God and the need for proper handling of the scriptures; and even discipline within the church – a forgotten practise that almost everyone would prefer not to remember.

The ironic thing is: churches that practise such Biblical principals appear to be the ones that are growing today!

Now, most agree that we are not interested in playing the numbers game. Faithfulness is what it is all about. Numbers are no measure of success.

However, as a past apprentice used to remind us, people are important and we want to see more of them.

So, is big all that bad? What follows is not a theological discussion. I'm breaking all the rules and looking at it from the perspective of a person in the pew. I want to submit some criteria we all might use when choosing a church and then argue that big can actually be beautiful.

**What are the deciding factors people use when choosing a church today?**

Lots! Today people use many criteria when choosing a church. These include music, 'energy', length, overall style or 'feel', activities outside 'normal' meeting hours, the quality of preaching, ethnic make-up, social diversity or lack thereof, because their friends go, it's where everyone goes, the vision and enthusiasm of the leader/s, or even because 'no one speaks to me'. There are any number of reasons why people choose one church over another. Some are motivated by very reasonable and understandable concerns. As people move around more (especially the tertiary educated and developing world



David Martin

**By and large the most decisive factors centre around the 'aesthetic package'**

communities) many want to settle in a church in their new country of residence. Others want to make a different church their home as opposed to the one their parents go to. Some may choose a church based on theological concerns - perhaps a new pastor has taken leadership or the church is being influenced by a particularly strong 'new wind of doctrine'.

However, the criteria many people use have taken a certain direction in recent years. By and large the most decisive factors centre around the 'aesthetic package' of the church meeting and 'activities' offered throughout the week. Style and feel, the energy and emotion of the church gathering have become, in some cases, the most important reason. And by and large such features are usually determined by the size of the church, the level and means of congregational participation, the length of the meeting, even the lighting and sound. 'If it looks good, it feels good, therefore it must be good, and look at how many people agree with me – the place is packed!'

Of course we must be extremely careful about 'giving the crowd what they want'. Knowing our own hearts, we would not naturally preach judgment, hell and the need for repentance. Our church services should emphasise sin and the setting aside of pride. They should emphasise grace, and the undeserved gift of life. They

should hold out faith as the wisest and only alternative to leading lives of meaningless materialism.

If we are playing only to the crowd, we might not say all that needs to be said. But if we are saying it, shouldn't we be saying it really, really well – removing every barrier and obstacle so as many people as possible can hear and understand and receive. This is when big can be beautiful.

**What are the advantages to big churches?**

Well, for a start, a crowd certainly attracts a crowd. There is much to be said in favour of large church meetings, where people who normally would not gather together come with a shared aim to give thanks and respond to God.

Secondly, the depth and even range of emotion can be heightened in larger crowds, and usually the standards of music, communication and overall presentation are more polished and 'slick' than you would find in a smaller church. All of this helps to fuel a sense of ownership among those who attend.

This in turn creates a 'come and see' mentality among the members, who will talk enthusiastically about 'their' church with family and friends who do not attend. Even fellowship in small groups/home groups can also be very enriching as different ages, ethnicities, and social boundaries are broken down in the light of the gospel.

And there are many other advantages that larger churches have over smaller ones, like general recognition in the local community. Pastors can specialize rather than having to be generalists. They in turn can produce material to train and build up other local and regional churches.

So, big need not necessarily be all that bad. As those not interested in numbers, we cannot afford to use this as an excuse for laziness. Faithfulness may not mean success in the world's eyes. More often than not, it probably will mean small numbers and a committed few, but let us not forget everyone else.

We should look to God, who delights to give the growth and do our utmost to ensure the gospel growth.



## BIRTHDAY GREETINGS TO ICM VETERAN KAY

*Immanuel recently celebrated the birthday of Kay Hannigan, who at 95 years of age is their oldest member. Kay is pictured with her daughter, Hazel Bridcut and granddaughter, Dorothy Bridcut, who is an MTS Apprentice.*



## WEDDING BELLS FOR FRANCIS AND GIFT



*ALL those at Irish Church Missions were delighted at the recent marriage of Immanuel members Francis Aguilar and his wife, Gift. Francis, who gave his testimony in the Spring 2007 edition of ICM News, was baptised at Immanuel. He is an architectural engineer and Gift is a doctor. Congratulations to them both.*

# Building a Gospel Bridge

THE most common way that Christians seek to evangelise people is to build a bridge of friendship and then, when that much-prayed-for opportunity arises, cross that bridge by sharing the gospel. When that moment appears, we often try to share every aspect of the gospel all in one hit. An alternative way of sharing the gospel with those you know now or those friendships of the future is to 'build a gospel bridge'. To build a gospel bridge is to develop friendships, strengthen friendships and maintain friendships by evangelising your friends and contacts. This doesn't mean that you tie your friends up, sit them down and read chunks of John and Romans to them and then get them to pray the prayer of repentance. Maintaining friendships with our unbelieving friends is an important part of living out our Christian faith.

What I mean is, from the very beginning of a friendship make Christianity part of this friendship. The key idea is that you share your belief in Jesus as you share your life with someone.

## **It takes courage**

This doesn't make sharing the gospel any easier. It still takes courage to talk about Jesus Christ, eternal life and judgment. We are fearful of our friends' reactions and the outcome. But we should fear judgment on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess 1:8-9).

This approach puts the gospel in the proper perspective. If your salvation through Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the most important aspect of your life then your unbelieving friend ought to know this about you. Is it possible to have Jesus at the centre of your life but never let anyone else know? This is not meant to put you on a guilt trip. For there are many friendships I have had over the years where I let my fear stop me from telling them about God's goodness to me in forgiving me through his Son's death in my place. I would often pray for these friends, but over time people move away, you have new friends. After a while these friends aren't prayed for. I often wonder where these old friends are. Do they believe now?

So how do you communicate or show the importance of the gospel in your life? The key is to share your Christian life with your friend (as opposed to your life minus Christianity). Talk about the fact that you



Lois Hagger

***The sharing of your joys and struggles is particularly important***

are a Christian. When asked what you did on the weekend, mention that you went to church, or bible study, or a church conference. Introduce them to members of your church or bible study; invite them to events you think they'd be interested in; bring up your sure hope of eternal life, and even be bold in talking about your personal struggles and joys in terms of being a Christian.

The sharing of your joys and struggles is particularly important. People tend to dismiss Christianity as a cold religion that belongs in a building with a cross on it, while other religions/gods, such as Buddhism and relativistic thinking are about people and the here and now.

## **Joys and struggles**

By sharing your personal joys and struggles – for example the joy of understanding an issue that has confused you or the struggle of accepting suffering in this world – you will change your friend's perception of Christianity. Christianity will change from a dead, distant, staid and non-relevant 'thing' into a personal belief that affects every aspect of your life. This will have a huge impact on their thinking, discovering that Christianity is a real, liveable and trustworthy faith.

By having the gospel at the forefront of your friendships, you will see that you are likely to have deeper friendships. As you talk about your beliefs and how they impact on your life, your friends will

understand you better and will probably respond by sharing more of what they feel, think and believe.

Another aspect is that you're telling the gospel in bits and pieces. Hence, the gospel is more digestible. People get to hear the ideas, think about them and digest them. Explaining the key concepts of the gospel will be easier because you have already broken the ground, even if you have only spoken about Christianity a few times. Also, when someone has already thought about Christianity in some way or another and hears the gospel it should 'stick' in their mind much better because they have some knowledge to which they can relate the new ideas.

Building gospel bridges will also create opportunities to invite people to investigate Christianity, by studying the bible with you, coming to an evangelistic talk or coming to church.

## **Extending friendship**

These opportunities will arise, God willing, because the gospel is part of your friendship already; you are not introducing something new but rather extending the friendship by inviting someone to understand the most important aspect of your life. This also means that an invitation to investigate Christianity is easier for the unbeliever to accept: they are just finding out more about something they already 'know' about.

It is important that as you announce the good news of Jesus Christ's death and call friends to repentance, that you do this in love. In fact, the driving force behind evangelism must be love. It doesn't require eloquence, creative flair or deep theological knowledge, but rather a loving heart and a desire to share the gospel. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, 'We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.'

It is also vitally important to remember the great truth that it is God who saves people. He is the one who has mercy and works in peoples' hearts. We do not determine who will be saved and who will perish; rather, our work is to faithfully announce the gospel and live out its truth.

Since this is the case, an important aspect of evangelism is prayer – prayer for the salvation of our friends, prayer for our own godliness and prayer to keep persevering and glorifying God.

MTS UPDATES

# A great opportunity

The past few months have gone very quickly as I have settled into my apprenticeship and been busy with various ministries.

**One to One Bible studies**

I have continued to enjoy and be challenged by the one to one bible studies as I meet with women from Immanuel Church. We have been doing a study called 'Just for Starters.' This is primarily for new Christians but is also a valuable study for those who have been Christians for some time. The 7 studies remind us of God's great saving grace and what it means to live as a Christian in respect of holy living, reading the bible, praying, Church and sharing our faith with those around us. This is also a useful training tool to equip women to do one to one studies with others.

**Christianity Explored**

Another challenging and exciting ministry this term has been the Christianity Explored Course which has been running on Monday nights.

This course looks at the entire gospel of Mark and the participants are encouraged



Honor Martin

to read this gospel throughout the course and do short home studies on selected passages every week.

We begin each week by eating together followed by a short bible study in Mark. Next we watch a dvd covering such things as who Jesus is, why He came and what it means to follow Him today.

After the dvd there is another opportunity to look at some questions arising from the talk or indeed any questions the participants may have about Christianity. While there may not always be answers to all their questions it is an invaluable time

for them to explore their view of Jesus Christ. It has been exciting for me to see the Gospel of Mark building the case for Christ and to see the increasing impact this has on those taking part.

Another important aspect of the course is building personal relationships so when the course finishes our commitment to them doesn't end. If by the end of the course they want to take things further we are happy to continue meeting to read the bible with them as we long to see those taking part commit to Christ.

**What comes next?**

I will be finishing my MTS apprenticeship in a short time as David and I are expecting our first child in March. While I will be sorry to leave my apprenticeship I am looking forward to the challenges that motherhood will bring and would ask for your continued prayers as I seek to use the training I have had in reaching other young mothers with the great news of the gospel.

I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to be an MTS apprentice and it has been a valuable experience which I am sure I will draw on for many years to come.

# Learning and growth

It's hard to believe I'm now in my second year of MTS! The time has just flown by! I hope this article gives a brief idea of what I've been doing in the last year.

The idea behind MTS, to expose apprentices to many different types of ministry, has definitely been true for me! The bulk of my time is spent meeting different women on a one-to-one basis studying the bible and praying together. We've also looked at what the bible has to say on different topics such as prayer and womanhood.

**Evangelism training**

Also we've done training courses on evangelism and how to do a bible study with a new Christian. It has been such a huge privilege to meet these different women to encourage each other and to spur one another on in our growth in godliness.

I also co-lead a women's bible study near where I live with some Christian women who live in the area. There is a mixture of



Dorothy Bridcut

both new and mature Christians and it has been a real encouragement to us all. At the moment we are doing an overview of the Old Testament but at the rate we are going it may well be next year before we are finished! The study has stimulated so many good questions and discussions, but through it all we are constantly reminded of God's faithfulness to his promises.

Over the last few years the number of children coming to Immanuel Church has been slowly increasing.

As a result at the end of last year with the help of a team of volunteers we set up a

Sunday school. I've been co-ordinating this team and helping with the teaching as needed. On any given Sunday we can have anywhere from one to ten children of all ages attending.

**Sunday School**

It is such a privilege yet such a responsibility to teach young children about Jesus and what he's done for them. We pray that through this ministry these children will put their trust in God.

As with the other MTS apprentices I help with English Corner and any other Immanuel Church activities that are happening. I also help Seán Martin with the ministry in UCD.

I continue to work part-time as a physiotherapist, which supports me financially and allows me do MTS.

So far MTS has been a great time of learning and growth and it has been a huge privilege to serve God in this way. Thank you for all your prayerful support in the last year.

# Waking up to Watchtower

ICM News is the magazine of The Society for The Irish Church Missions

The aim of Irish Church Missions is to promote the glory of God in advancing his kingdom among the people of Ireland

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Dezi Ferguson

## ICM shop talk

**He meant the Watchtower alone had the truth ... I sensed this could be an argumentative debate**

Watchtower views the Bible as the sole authority".

Then I proceeded to show him many Watchtower references showing clearly that you needed the Watchtower to understand the Bible; that a person "would go into darkness" reading the Bible alone; that the Bible cannot be understood unless you associate with the Watchtower organisation. We read and re-read the many references and I asked him, "if you need the Watchtower to understand the Bible and would go into the darkness reading the Bible alone, surely this gives a very clear message that it is not the Bible that is your authority but Watchtower publications?"

The man was ill at ease by what we had read, for it was all Watchtower material contradicting itself, and the confusion was coming from within the organisation. He

attempted to accuse me of "nit-picking" but I stressed that I personally had made no criticism of Jehovah's Witnesses, that it was, in fact, the organisation criticising itself.

I said, "We need to ask the question - is the bible sufficient unto itself for teaching and guiding us or do we need some other authority, some other guide, some other teacher? The Bible, I believe answers that question". I used the New World translation - the Watchtower Bible in quoting scripture. Together we read Matthew 4:1-11 where Satan tempts Jesus three times and each temptation is rebuked with a scriptural response. So here we have Jesus going directly to Scripture and this approach is endorsed by 2 Timothy 3:16-17 *All scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.* "Surely these texts", I said, "show clearly that the bible is sufficient unto itself and therefore logically we need no other authority or guide in the way of salvation"? I think the fact that I used only Watchtower material to refute his line of reasoning left him feeling vulnerable, so much so that he responded "I don't know what to say". In the next ICM News (D.V.) I will relate our talk about what the Watchtower teaches about Jesus. I thank all our supporters for their continual help in so many ways.

A mature young man came into the shop and remarked that he had seen a book in the shop window about Jehovah's Witnesses and was wondering could he speak to someone about this group. I explained that I research many belief systems and would be willing to discuss the teachings of the Watchtower with him. As we were having tea, I asked why he had an interest in Jehovah's Witnesses. He said he had been studying with the organisation for some time and would shortly be baptized as a member and wanted to hear the views of those who opposed the "truth". By this, he meant that the Watchtower alone had the truth and all other religions were teaching falsehood. I sensed this could be an argumentative debate. I said that from my experience, a religious group's teachings on the Bible and Jesus were clear indications about whether or not they were teaching the truth. In our talk I suggested that we would use only Watchtower material so that the both of us could see that there is confusion in the teaching of the Watchtower. He agreed and produced a copy of the Watchtower magazine which stated, 'the Watchtower published by Jehovah's witnesses continuously since 1879, is non-political'... 'and adheres to the Bible as its authority.' "That statement", the man said, "makes it clear that the Bible is our authority in all things and this is clear proof that we are in the truth". "Looking at that statement in isolation", I said, "would indicate that the