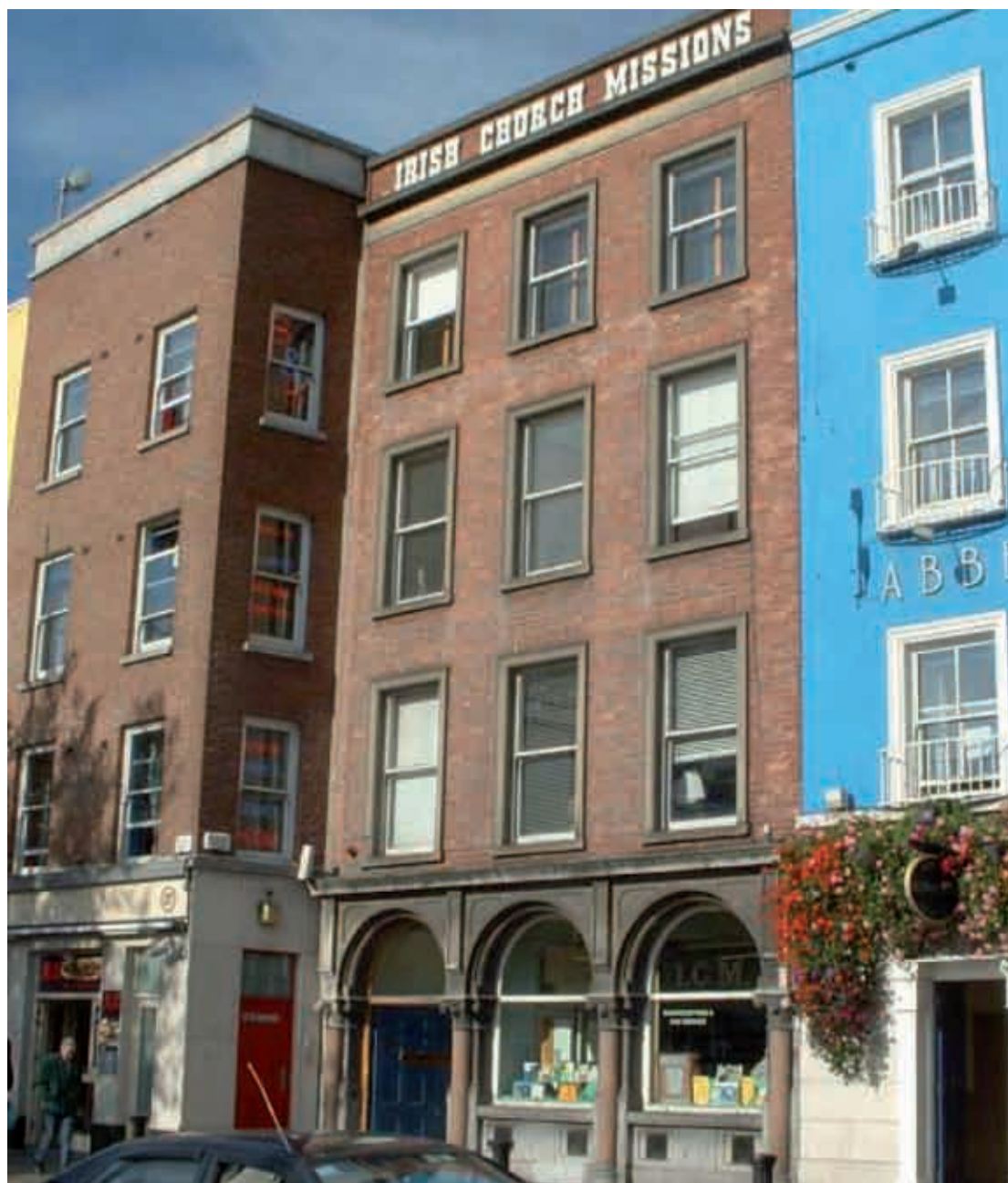


# ICM News

*The Banner of the Truth in Ireland*

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

## ***Beacon of hope in city of Dublin***



***Thousands of people pass its doors in the heart of Dublin every day. The Irish Church Missions is as relevant now as it has ever been. See Pages 2&3 for two recent testimonies.***

### **INSIDE**



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welcome at  
ICM church P3**



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# How could I know God would open the door to my heart in Ireland?

My name is Francis Aguilar and I am from the Philippines. I'm working as an architect here in Dublin.

I grew up in a Catholic family. When I was in secondary school, I was very active in church. I served as a knight of the altar.

I even planned to enter the seminary to become a priest, but I felt I was not called for it.

During college, I began to go to church less and less, because I began to think that you don't become a good person just because you go to church every Sunday.

That was how I thought, because I observed that in the church where I attended, the people I knew who attended church regularly didn't change their attitudes.

They looked like good people when they were inside the church, but after that, they did the same old things that are not good; like saying bad words, being disrespectful to others.

For me, doing good things was enough to please God and I didn't know that there were more things God wanted me to do until... I met a girl who

## BAPTISM TESTIMONY Irish Church Missions, February 2007

shared with me what God had done for her and her family, how God had blessed her so much and how joyful it is to become a Christian.

She invited me to church and shared the good news of salvation. That time I didn't take it seriously and I left the Philippines for a job here in the Republic of Ireland.

She encouraged me to look for a church here in Ireland. At first I attended a Catholic mass before I saw the Irish Church Missions Church.

For several weeks, I hesitated to go into the Mission Church, until one Sunday morning, I saw the door open for the first time and felt that God led me here.

Everybody in ICM gave me a warm welcome, made me feel comfortable and at home. Everybody is nice and friendly.

I began to attend church regularly and started the Christianity Explored Course with Pastor Eddie.



Francis Aguilar

I came to realise that Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin, judgment and hell and that I need to repent of my sins and accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Saviour and have eternal life in heaven.

I know my life has changed now. I feel so blessed. I never thought that here in Ireland, God would open the door of my heart and save me.

I want to live by trusting and obeying Him. I know that it is not easy to do, but I believe that God will help me.

I have now been baptised at the church, because this is one way of following what Jesus has commanded.

I am cleansed from sin through Jesus Christ who died on the cross for us.

Please pray for me as I continue to know Christ more, and may I grow in faith with Him.

## Young Rebekah creative in her support for ICM!

ICM would like to express a very big *thank you* to **Rebekah Johnston**, one of our youngest supporters from Mullabrack Parish in County Armagh.

Rebekah has shown her support of ICM by making and selling some beautiful cards and then giving the proceeds from the sales to help ICM achieve its aim of advancing the

kingdom of God in Ireland.

The card pictured was presented to John McClure, ICM's Northern Deputation Secretary, at Mullabrack Parish Church during a recent visit.

Inside the card was a cheque for £100!

Well done Rebekah – and thank you for your support and generosity!



# ***When I saw ‘evangelical’ my heart was filled with delight***

## **YEMANE’S TESTIMONY**

My name is Yemane Gadissa. I was born on July 13, 1969 in Ethiopia, a country in East Africa with over 78 million people.

Right now, it's Spring and Irish people are walking around without hats on. But, as a man from a country with '13 months' of sunshine, I am still wearing overcoats.

Two things are difficult in Ireland: acclimatising to the ever-changing weather conditions and to the colloquial Irish accent.

The second is very challenging, especially in areas like shopping. But it is fortunate that there is no haggling over price – you pay and go!

I came to Ireland in September 2006, to take my Master's degree in Educational Management and Leadership in Trinity College, Dublin.

Now, six solid months have gone since I said farewell to my beloved wife Bizunesh Bulcha, my two children, Miracle and Gemachis Yemane.

I am thankful to God who planned and fulfilled His promise for my study abroad. This has not happened by accident, but it is a fulfilment of the plan he had for me from the early days of my childhood.

I am highly indebted to my father, Gadissa Aleku and my mother Kibitu Abdissa, for their endeavour to shape my life towards the will of God, from which I benefited a lot. '... Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come' (1 Tim 4: 8).

When I came to Ireland, it was my worry to find a church in which the gospel of Christ is preached with its true meaning.

In the second week of my arrival in Dublin, walking to my university, I read 'Evangelical bookshop' on one side and 'Irish Church Mission' on the other side of a building which was overlooking the Liffey River.

When I saw 'Evangelical' my heart filled with delight. This may be because the word 'Evangelical' is also the first word of my mother church in Ethiopia, 'Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus'.



*Yemane Gadissa*

***“I am grateful to God, who guided my feet to this lively church”***

I entered the bookshop and after exchanging greetings, I asked the shopkeeper, Mr Dezi Ferguson, whether there is a gathering for worship or if it is the historical name given to the building, remembering what I heard in Ethiopia that so many churches in Europe are redundant. Dezi told me that there is a gathering and all are welcomed on Sundays at 11.00am.

On the next Sunday I joined them and I am grateful to God, who guided my feet to this lively church. Teaching and preaching the gospel, experiencing agape love and prayer for all is at the heart of this church service. Life with brothers and sisters in Irish Church Mission is extremely delightful. Their desire is to glorify God, their question is how to reach the people, their joy is serving Jesus, and their burden is for the lost. Love is meaningful with them.

My gratitude is extremely great to the superintendent of this church, Eddie Coulter, who received me in Christ and took my entire burden on himself in the land totally foreign to me.

I like Ireland. From their natural behaviour point of view, the Irish are people who are really comfortable for God: innocent, lovely, friendly, honest, and caring. When I think of them, the word of God in Mark 10: 21, which says, 'Jesus looked at him and loved him...' comes to my heart.

In this verse, the man the story is about is a rich young man who wants to inherit eternal life. He was a good man and that is why Jesus liked him when he looked at him. But, the question is: why did he turn away his face from what his soul was longing for, from eternal life?

His possession eclipsed the meaning of life with Christ and became an obstacle to him. It is unfortunate when what God gives us obscures our relation with God and separates us from God.

It is my prayer that this beloved people of Ireland turn their face to their saviour, and worship their creator to live forever with Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim 1: 10).

# ***Our task is to provide home-grown shepherds***

***'Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field' (Matthew 9: 38).***

Just before Jesus tells us what to pray, Matthew describes the harvest field into which Jesus wanted his Father to send workers. He says, 'they were harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd'.

They were lost and leaderless, not knowing where they were or where they should go in the future. A troubling picture of the world back then and a picture that is no less true of our world today. It drew out the compassion of Jesus, who in turn prayed that his Father would send out workers into this harvest field.

Many times over the last two years in ICM, we have been forced to come to terms with our 'harvest field'. The empty promises of wealth are slowly surfacing in Irish society; the influx of foreign cultures and with them new religions has brought many confusing questions; and the growing rate of depression and suicide, especially among university students, cries out for an answer. Jesus' analysis of his day as being harassed and helpless rings



**David  
Martin**

frighteningly true for us today.

However, Jesus reminds us that this is his Father's harvest field. Amid such confusion we are not alone. Jesus tells us his Father is the Lord of the harvest and for this reason we should pray for more workers to labour in his field.

This is one of the most important reasons why we at ICM are putting so much emphasis on student ministry.

We recognise the dangers and complexities of our harvest field. We understand that it belongs to God.

But we do not want to neglect the importance of raising up new workers, who will be fully equipped to serve effectively for the Lord of the harvest.

We have had many encouragements recently, especially in 'The Bible Talks', our Sunday evening church for students and post-grads. God has been increasing our numbers and growing the depth of our fellowship.

It is from among this group of people that we pray that God will raise up more and more harvest workers, equipped and trained to tackle the toughest of terrains.

It is our aim in the next five years to be able to plant a new church from The Bible Talks, with a 'home grown team'. This will involve challenging all who are committed to The Bible Talks today to be thinking about the future. It will need commitment, resolve and people who are prepared to labour, 'struggling with all his energy', to get the job done. It certainly will mean students staying in Dublin after they finish university, instead of being dazzled by the bright lights of other major cities. It certainly will need financial support and investing today for the church of tomorrow.

Above all, it will need prayerful dependence upon the Lord of the harvest. Please join us prayerfully as we seek to reach out, build up and send out.

## ***2 for 3 challenge – thank-you***

Recently ICM expressed its thanks to its supporters that had taken up the 2 for 3 Challenge at a supper in St Saviour's, Dollingstown. Eddie Coulter and David Luckman provided a presentation of the work of ICM, and supper was served to end the evening.

We would like to convey a very big thank you to everyone who made the evening an enjoyable success, and we are very appreciative of the continuing support we experience.



***Some of the ICM supporters at the thank-you supper.***

# Stigma and Taboo

For much of the past 2,000 years of western European history and culture, suicide has been the subject of a powerful taboo.

It has also been attended by equally significant social stigma.

It is extremely important to distinguish between stigma and taboo.

Taboo provided a prohibitive and socially protective limiting factor; stigma is a mark of infamy and disgrace and is therefore punitive, with the power, and perhaps the intent to demean.

Twentieth century developments in the scientific study and application of psychology and psychiatry have worked largely to erase the suicide taboo and to neutralise the stigma, removing both a layer of responsibility and the guilt associated with blame.

Traditional Christian teaching has generally regarded suicide as a crime – a view which finds support in many moral codes.

There is not, however, any direct



John  
McClure

support for such a position in either the Old or the New Testament.

Various suicidal events are mentioned but without either specific condemnation or penalty.

Perhaps the most celebrated New Testament example is that of Judas Iscariot, whose death by his own hand is specified in Matthew 27: 5 without comment.

Like the alternative account of the death of Judas in Acts 1: 18, there is an

unexpressed element of something like satisfaction ringing through Matthew's silence.

In general terms, the background to the development of the Christian view depends upon acceptance of the proposition that all life derives from and belongs to God; it is his gift and we are accountable to him for it.

The act of suicide may be interpreted, therefore, as an act of rejection both of God and of his gift.

The biblical emphasis generally is on a joyous acceptance of life, and not its rejection, as the gift of God. Not that there is any pretence that the experience of humanity is universally joyful; the Book of Job is an antidote to any such view.

Job's faith in God does not make his misery in life the least bit more bearable – possibly the reverse; even so, despite depression and mystification as to why such adversity should have been visited upon him, Job eschews self-harm.

# Link people so vital

Communication is vital in this fast modern world.

Some people are better at communicating than others. Take for instance the current President of America, George W Bush, famous for communicative faux-pas' such as 'the greatest threat to our country's interests is those who would seek to harm us and we need to get them out of harm's way'.

On the other hand, my daughter, aged three, is a great communicator.

'Would you like some peas with your dinner?' I would ask.

'No, I don't like peas', comes the reply. Well, you can't get much clearer than that!

Recognising the need for clearer communication has spurred the staff at ICM to develop better links with supporters. We feel that identification of 'Link People' in congregations is a necessity for a deeper and fuller relationship between the Mission and its supporters.

That sounds great, I hear you say, but what is a Link Person? Put simply, a Link Person is someone who forms the vital communicative link between ICM and supporting congregations.

The Link Person is the Missions first point of contact when the need arises for ICM to inform supporters of meetings or training events available to them that are provided by ICM.

Recently letters went out to supporters in Northern Ireland asking them to identify a Link Person within their own congregation. So far the response has been good, but there is still plenty of room for others to take up the mantle of Link Person for their congregation.

But why go to all that trouble when ICM can simply contact parish ministers? Rectors get many things thrown at them in the daily routine of caring for a parish. Lots of letters from different Missions land on the desk, and it is not always possible to fulfil requests that Mission agencies place on the



rector's time. It makes more sense for supporting parishes to have a Link Person and thereby not burden rectors with another responsibility.

ICM would like to host a 'Thank You Supper' for our Link People on Friday 18th May 2007 at St Saviour's, Dollingstown, starting at 7.30pm. We hope that all identified ICM Link People will come and join us.

Thank you for your continued support. It is greatly appreciated.

# Love, lust... and all those other thorny subjects of life

ICM wants to bring the gospel to the people of Ireland. But where to start? There are so many areas of life we can address, all pressing in on us, wanting attention.

We all need to be trained in the scriptures, how to read and apply them to our everyday life.

The idea of bi-monthly topical seminars was raised and the fruit of it was our first gathering in October, looking at the area of guidance.

There has always been fascination with how God guides us and Christians over the ages have struggled with decision-making – ‘Does God have a plan for my life?’, ‘Should I marry...?’, ‘Should I take this or that job?’

David Martin led us through studies which addressed how to discern God’s will and how to discern what is best.

The next seminar in November was ‘Love, Sex and Marriage’. Sean challenged us with what God thinks about this area of our lives and how we are to live ‘self-controlled, upright and godly lives’ in a world which doesn’t want to live God’s way, let alone listen to what he has to say.

Society sees sex as a commodity: it is an idol in our culture.

In Romans 1, Paul teaches that we worship and are controlled by sex and this is obvious wherever we look – television, movies, magazines.

Sex sells.

The problem is we now confuse love with lust and the other person becomes



Lois Hagger

an object of gratification. God sees sex so differently to us.

Sex is to be within the context of relationship and we understand this from the Genesis account, where God created the man and the woman for a monogamous, life-long commitment to one another. It is here we see fellowship at the deepest level. God isn’t anti-sex and neither is sex evil. In fact, the Bible celebrates sex (Prov 5: 18-19; 1 Cor 7: 3-5).

In the final talk, Eddie gave us a broad but concise overview on the Bible’s teaching on marriage.

Marriage is God’s idea (Gen 2: 19-25); the elements to marriage (Gen 2: 24); why did God intend men and women to marry?; God’s prescription for husband and wife.

The day concluded with a panel answering questions from (mainly) students about dating, divorce, contraception and having/not having

a family. It was a great day for us all, having addressed an area of life which generally many are confused and silent about.

Our most recent seminar in February was Christianity, Depression and Suicide. In Ireland the rate of attempted and successful suicide is escalating out of all proportion.

Recently at UCD, during the first term of the academic year, five young men committed suicide. This is tragic for the person who has taken their life, but also for family, friends and the community who are left to deal with this grief. Dr Andrew Collins, a psychiatrist from Belfast, led us through this seminar from a medical perspective.

As a Christian he showed us from Scripture (Psalm 42) the reality that depression strikes anyone. Yet despite our feelings of hopelessness the question the psalmist asks ‘Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?’ is answered with ‘Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.’ Many of us at one stage or another will be touched by depression and even thoughts of suicide. This seminar helped us to be prepared for this event and to see the warning signs in ourselves and in others.

Thanks for your prayers and financial support for the ministry of ICM.

Check ICM website for seminars Love, Sex and Marriage and Christianity, Depression and Suicide.

## From ICM baby to MTS

My name is Dorothy Bridcut and I started MTS part-time here in ICM at the end of November.

I’m from Dublin and, as daughter of a previous superintendent, I’ve been attending ‘The Mission Church’ since birth!

I qualified as a physiotherapist in 2002 and worked full-time as a physio until the end of November.

I am now working part-time as a physio and part-time doing MTS.

MTS or ‘The Ministry Training

Strategy’ gives you the chance to experience different types of ministry ‘on-the-job’ while also being trained.

At the moment I am meeting some of the women in the Church and some female students for one-to-one/group bible studies.

The aim is to encourage each other towards godliness through the reading of God’s Word together and praying.

I also have the privilege of meeting weekly with Lois Hagger, who is my MTS trainer.



Dorothy Bridcut

# Yoga... not the harmless aid to health it appears

We live in the age of the two and three car family, with overseas holidays perhaps twice a year. In terms of material fulfilment, many people have it all.

Yet, in my dealings with so many people in the Mission bookshop, I continually experience a thirst, a hunger for something of more lasting value.

Many people tell me they have 'tried' the Christian walk but did not experience the comfort they had expected – so they began to get involved in new age therapies.

The biggest crowd puller is Yoga.

As anyone reading this article will realise, yoga has a very acceptable face. It is practiced in many church halls so is, therefore, condoned by clergy of various denominations.

Yoga is often recommended by health professionals as a means of relaxation and inner peace.

So the fact that the practice of yoga is endorsed by many clerical and professional people has given yoga a wide acceptance in society today.

Yet many people come to me feeling uneasy about yoga and what it really means.

So what is yoga? What does it mean?

When I tell people the word yoga means to yoke or to unite with



Dezi Ferguson

**ICM  
shop  
talk**

something, they are unsure what I mean.

The objective of yoga is to unite oneself with Brahman and Brahman, the ultimate reality, formless, inexpressible, unknowable and unknowing, neither personal nor impersonal, both creator and all that is created. Brahman is all and all is Brahman.

People are shocked to hear this.

For a yoga practitioner, the ultimate truth and salvation is for him to realise that he himself is Brahman, that he and all the universe is one and the same being.

So is yoga a religion?

The classical Yoga Hindu Academy states, 'It most definitely is a religion, the religion of Hinduism and there are cultic aspects in the sense of intense devotion to a particular Deity or Guru'.

As a former yoga guru said, 'No

part of yoga can be separated from the philosophy behind it'.

When I show enquirers about new age philosophies such as meditation, and then from scripture, show how Christians should meditate, 'But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night' (Psalm 1: 2), one can see yoga meditation is designed specially to induce a state of trance which supposedly allows the mind to be drawn upward into a yoking with Brahman.

Sadly, people who are intending to practice or who are currently practising yoga continually tell me they are getting confusing signals from clergy as to whether it is a dangerous practice or not.

When we look at the Scriptures, we see clearly that Jesus eliminates this confusion in John 14: 6 'I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'.

I make it clear to people, that it is not Brahman or a Yoga guru, or some Hindu deity that will bring us to our heavenly Father.

This journey can only come about through Jesus and Jesus underlines this point by stating, 'He who is not with me is against me' (Matthew 12: 30).

I thank all our supporters for their continual assistance in so many ways.

## Urgent – Apprentices needed

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.

**For further information contact Eddie Coulter**

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# New ministry puts spring in my step

Spring is in full swing in Dublin, (or so say the Irish who claim spring begins on 1st February). At any rate, the term at UCD is well under way and the chaplaincy to UCD has got off to a good start.

I have been able to establish contact with a number of different students, faculty and staff, and am enjoying this new ministry a great deal. I have been appointed the chaplain/student adviser for the School of Architecture at UCD, which is a great fit since it is a very compact school with a 'family feel' among staff and students.

Naturally, my ministry extends to all the people at UCD, but Architecture is my home base. It is a wonderful privilege to bring the Word of God to UCD, and I ask for your prayer support for this exciting ministry.

Len Carolan, my ministry apprentice, is progressing very well in his ministry at ICM. Len is giving an evangelistic talk at the Trinity Christian Union this week and will be preaching his first sermon at the ICM student service in early March. Please pray for Len as he develops his gift of teaching God's Word publicly. He has already been with us for six months and we are delighted to witness his growth in godly character, conviction, and competence.

We are planning a mission trip to Juarez, Mexico over the Christmas break this year. Juarez is the fastest growing city in Mexico. It is on the border with El Paso, Texas and boasts a population of over two million. Many people from rural and southern Mexico move to Juarez hoping to cross into the USA for a better life. Very few achieve their dream. Most live in shacks with their families and struggle to make a living while being surrounded by gangland violence, kidnappings, and a



Sean Martin

booming drug trade.

Happily, a mission organisation called Gateway has a ministry based out of El Paso. Gateway exercises the extraordinary ministry of building free homes for Christian families in Juarez. Gateway takes church teams across the border where we assemble a home from scratch in just five days! On the final day, the church team meet the family and present them with a Spanish Bible and keys to a new home. It is an incredible way to support our poor brothers and sisters. Those who go on the trip grow in their own faith and have the experience of a short-term mission.

Proverbs 19: 17 says, 'Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed'. Our Lord is a champion for the poor, and to care for the poor is a part of being about His business. I had the privilege of leading two mission teams to Juarez during my time living in New Mexico, and each time those who went said it changed their lives.

Please pray that the mission will proceed, that enough people will sign up, that the necessary finances each person needs to raise will come through, and that the Lord will be glorified as we serve His people.

**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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## **New CD from Dave Luckman**

**Available now for only £5!**

**All proceeds to the work of Irish Church Missions.**

**Available from The Good Book Shop, Donegall Street, Belfast, or by contacting the ICM Belfast Office.**

