

icmnews

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the banner of the truth in ireland



North Cider or South Cider?

the magazine of the society for irish church missions

ICM irish church missions

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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A new generation of believers is needed

Eddie Coulter

One of the things that struck me very forcibly at the ICM-Crosslinks Conference, SOW, which you will read about on the back page, was the enthusiasm of a whole new generation of young people to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

How refreshing it was to see many young people consider giving their whole lives in service to the Lord Jesus and willing to go out in mission to the world.

Nor is it an easy thing for them to consider or do. They may have youth and energy on their side, but evangelism, mission, church planting, does cost a lot.

“It is our hope in ICM to recruit, train and deploy spiritually qualified and equipped people for the work”

The cost may include giving up a promising career in medicine, law, engineering, or some other professional job; it may include giving up the security of family in order to go it alone to pioneer in a different city or country.

Added to that, there are the financial costs. They simply don't have the financial resources in themselves to make it happen.

Going into full-time Christian ministry, evangelism, church planting, or mission is certainly not an easy step for any young person to make. But Ireland needs a new



Teaching at the SOW Conference

generation of keen, eager young believers to reach a new generation and communities.

It is our hope in ICM to recruit, train and deploy spiritually qualified and equipped people for the work.

The people are there to be trained but they need the help of the wider Christian community in order to do it.

This is where we need your prayers and help. Please do consider becoming a mission partner supporter, praying and giving to ICM Mission partners.

We have enclosed a brochure on Cormac Walsh, our own ICM-produced Mission Partner, and ask you to prayerfully consider supporting him as he goes to Ballina.

We have also enclosed a general brochure, 'Introducing of ICM', and would ask you to please pass this on to a friend or colleague whom you think would be interested in ICM's work.

Once again, along with all our staff and workers, we want to thank you so much for your prayerful and financial interest that allows the work of the Gospel to flow through ICM to the people of Ireland.

Eagerness to engage at Bible training school both exciting and encouraging

At the end of May, I headed off to Opovo, Serbia, to help run a week-long School of Biblical Training.

Working alongside me were two Church of Ireland rectors, Bryan Kerr of Lisbellaw parish and Bill Press of Annalong parish, and a Church of England vicar, Iain Broomfield from London.

SBTs are a new and exciting development by Crosslinks which aim to equip participants in the skills of preaching the word of God.

It was a great pleasure and privilege to work closely with such a variety of young Christian men and women

The ICM church plant, Immanuel Church Dublin, supports Crosslinks' missionaries in Serbia, Chris and Lotta Strajnic, and last year I was involved in inaugurating the first SBT in Serbia.

Based in the Hub Bible School, the SBT offered two levels: a first year level in preaching Mark's Gospel; and a second year level on teaching the Epistles, with special focus on Philipians.

Due to adverse economic circumstances in Eastern Europe and especially in Serbia, fewer students were in attendance at the college and hence numbers were slightly down on last year.

Nevertheless, there was an eagerness to engage in the text that was exciting and encouraging for the future growth of the Gospel in Serbia and beyond.

Students were from a range of countries in the Balkans such as Croatia, Bosnia, Macedonia and Serbia. Many are at college in preparation for church planting or serving in churches throughout the Balkans. The college itself, under the leadership of a gifted young principal, Zladjan, is involved in church planting in the local community and works closely with Chris and Lotta in training students for Gospel ministry.

It was a great pleasure and privilege for the SBT team to work closely with such a variety of young Christian men and women, to prepare them for future Gospel work.

The SBT team and their teaching offered a new and fresh perspective on doing Gospel ministry. As in many countries, often the culture rather than the Scriptures can dictate how ministry is carried out.

For example, in Serbia, among many Evangelical Churches, it is not the custom for the Scriptures either to be read publicly in the meeting or expounded.

More commonly, a time of praise and singing is followed immediately by the pastor reading a portion of Scripture which forms the springboard for another message he brings to the congregation!

However, one of the chief challenges of the SBT to participants is to see the centrality of God's Word in ministry – God's work is done God's way through the proclamation of His Word.

Eddie Coulter



Participants in the (SBT) School of Biblical Training, which was held in Opovo, Serbia, at the end of May



Eddie Coulter (centre) with, from left, Lotta Strajnic, Rev Brian Kerr, Chris Strajnic and Rev Bill Press at a monastery in Vojvodina



A fond farewell, as the team are waved off from the Hub in Opovo, Serbia



Disciple makers - don't plant a church without them

David Martin

For many churches, 'church planting' or 're-planting' or 'church transfusions' (where a larger church sends some of its members to a smaller, struggling church to give it an injection of desperately needed new life) has recently moved up the priority list.

Many churches are no longer settling down to simply take care of themselves, but are looking to break new ground and start new communities. And of course this is to be greatly welcomed and encouraged.

If you want to be involved in planting the church of the future, start laying the groundwork in your own life today

There are few reasons, if any, to stand in the way of church planting, even where it seems there are enough existing churches already. No single church can reach each and every person in its local area.

And of course, for the church intent on planting new congregations or starting entirely new churches, there is any amount

of material available to help them to do just that. Plans, strategies, projections, pitfalls to avoid, people skills you will require, pulling together your team, putting your ideas into action...the list goes on.

And not for one minute am I out to dissuade any of us from getting as much of this material as is helpful and making the most of it.

However, just before we get too excited and start encouraging one another and our leaders to begin a new meeting, or send half of us away to start a new church, it might be worth slowing down to consider something very important.

Church planting must be a priority, but it must also be said that it will involve a certain amount of pain. The work involved in starting anything new is demanding, difficult and very often disappointing.

Alongside the excitement of church planting, there are many stories that have ended painfully. Instead of growing the church, such church planting ventures have split the church or, worse, seen it retract.

Now, part of the reason for this perhaps lies in the fact that those who are part of



Tough lessons: Church planting is demanding, says David Martin (right)

such new ventures have not counted the cost beforehand.

They may have had many reasons for wanting to be part of something new, but to struggle, to sacrifice and to grow in servant-heartedness was not what they were looking for. And the result is tragic, for them personally, for the church corporately and for the gospel globally.

So, in this short article please do not hear me discouraging church planting. We in Irish Church Missions, along with many others around this country are intent on investing all our energies into working hard at planting new churches.

Instead, I'm encouraging us all personally, before we start anything new with others, to get experience in the field of sowing the word in other people's lives now.

If you want to be involved in planting the church of the future, start laying the groundwork in your own life today by struggling, sacrificing and learning to serve others for the sake of the gospel where you currently are. This way, when the sheen wears off the new church plant, you'll be ready to really get going.

If you have been affected by issues raised in this article, please use the suggestions below: Marshall and Payne have written very helpfully about this in 'The Trellis and the Vine'. It's a must-read for anyone serious about growing the church.

You can also get a taste for what they say at www.vinegrowers.com For more general topics on church planting also visit www.redeemercitycity.com/blog.jsp

AGM, Society of Irish Church Missions
The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Society for Irish Church Missions is being held in London on September 8. The meeting is open to the public. For details, please contact the Dublin or Belfast office.



Building a church from scratch in Ballina

Brendan and Carinne Meyerink

No money, no people, no place to meet? That, for some, is a nightmare; for others a dream.

“What on earth are you doing here?” is the question we always get asked when people hear our accents and wonder why an Australian family of six would move to Ireland at this time.

They are even more astounded when we tell them we are here in Ballina, County Mayo, to plant a church, a *protestant evangelical church!*

While this question has been a great conversation starter, it is also one we have often asked ourselves during our first year here in Ireland.

What are we doing here? God has called us to Ireland to plant a church, a church that is focused on sharing and preaching the Gospel into a community that feels let down by institutions that it used to trust and also a people desperate for some hope in dark economic times.

We have no doubt about our call to this beautiful but suffering island. *But how do we plant a church....or, more importantly, where do we start?*

Recently we spoke on this same topic at the SOW Church Planting Conference, held by Crosslinks and ICM in Belfast.

One of the questions that someone asked us after one of our workshops was, “What did you do, the very first day you arrived

in Ballina?”

The answer was simple; basically we spent the day studying our new town, opening up our eyes and hearts to the people around us and looking for opportunities to connect. In many ways, what we did this very first day has been a model for our whole ministry plan here in Ballina.

We have focused on two key things during our first year here in Ireland; cultural learning and building relationships.

“We are already seeing God answering our needs in a powerful way and fulfilling the dreams He has given us ...”

Being Australian, we didn’t think we could come here and simply start a church that we felt comfortable with and know works in an Australian context.

We knew that this wouldn’t work in a culture that, while Western, was still vastly different to our own. Paul writes in Corinthians, *“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”* 1 Cor 9:22 (NIV).

We have striven to understand the Irish people, as well as the context in Ballina, and are allowing our church to grow out of that understanding, rather than from our own pre-existing ideas.



Brendan, Carinne and family

Sometimes these cultural differences have not been easy to adopt, learn or accept, but God has used this time to stretch us and also challenge us to rely on Him for every decision that we make. Building relationships has been of the utmost importance in our short time here in the West of Ireland.

We have worked long and hard to develop significant friendships with people, gaining their trust and learning from them what it means to be Irish! The reason for this has been two-fold. Not only do we want to see God’s gospel proclaimed here in Ballina, we also need friends, as we have left all our family and friends behind in Australia.

Our kids (we have four of them ranging from 1 – 7 years) have been a great help in this and we seem to always have the neighbourhood kids coming in and out of our house!

Through mother and toddler groups, craft nights, neighbourhood gatherings,

barbecues (weather permitting!), bible studies, mentoring programs, sporting clubs, school meetings and many more; we have been able to connect to a vast number of people. By adopting an open, hospitable and non-judgemental attitude, we have also been able to establish lasting, growing relationships with many.

We are challenged by these words, *“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.”* 1 Thess 2:8 (NIV)

We haven’t started our church yet, but we know that God will use us to plant a church here in Ballina very soon.

We are excited about Cormac Walsh (ICM mission partner) coming to join us this summer and we hope to begin meeting for a Sunday service with a small group of people towards the end of the year.

How this church will look, where it will be held and what style it will be, is all in God’s loving plan and we trust that it will evolve naturally out of a community of believers who want to make the Gospel known here in the wild west of Ireland.

One thing is for certain, it will be a church that keeps the Gospel at the centre and wants to see lives transformed by its power.

Even though we started with no money, no people and no place to meet, we are already seeing God answering our needs in a powerful way and fulfilling the dreams He has given us to see His kingdom grow in this land.

Please pray that a church will be planted here in Ballina, that it will grow, that more people will join us with a passion to serve the West of Ireland and that more churches will be planted!



A time to be silent and a time to speak

John Roache

Ecclesiastes reminds us that “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1)

Recently I was out on the streets with some others doing street evangelism.

It was a seemingly normal day and a small crowd had gathered to listen to the presentation one of the team was giving.

Afterwards we each went over to talk to different people who had stayed to hear the talk.

I began speaking to a woman standing nearby, starting off with the usual line of: “So what did you think of the message?”

It wasn't long before she started to open her heart; she had deep hurt from the past.

I tried to say a few things about Jesus and the gospel, but after I had said what I could, I felt at a loss for words; this was a woman in need of the Lord's healing.

Sometimes in Evangelism we think there's a set formula to use on everyone, but we forget that everyone has a story, everyone's coming from different backgrounds and experiences and the Lord Jesus always met people at where they were in their lives.

We spent some time talking as she poured out her heart, but I could barely muster any words, not knowing what to say. I really felt out of my depth.

Later on as I reflected, I was reminded of the verse from Ecclesiastes that says there's “a time to be silent and a time to



“There are times we need to just sit back and be a listening ear for people.”

speak.”(Ecc 3:7). I guess this was one of those times. Sometimes we can rush in with hard words which are just too heavy for people (though we should always speak the truth), and there are times we need to just sit back and be a listening ear for people.

In Isaiah we read of Jesus: “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out” (Isaiah 42:3).

It was a lesson from the Lord to me, to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

Though we should always speak the Gospel “for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Rom 1:16), let us also be attentive to the leading of the Spirit, to know when to speak and when to listen.

Prayer Diary...

Day 1 Pray for ICM's special outreach to International Students, the Dublin International Outreach (DIO) for two weeks beginning on the 10th July. Pray for the organization, the participants, who are coming from different countries, those attending and follow-up work.

Day 2 Pray for Immanuel's plans for evangelism and training of students. New training sessions and outreach are planned for various venues in the city of Dublin in the new academic term, October – December 2011.

Day 3 A new vestry has been elected for Immanuel church. It is an international vestry with members from Ethiopia, Iran, Australia, the Czech Republic, and Ireland. Pray for wisdom and unity, as well as encouragement in the work of the Gospel.

Day 4 A number of young couples from Immanuel have been married this summer. Pray for Larry and Clodagh, Chris and Ali, as well as Gerard and Deirdre. Pray that they may build a strong, godly, Christ-honouring married relationship and home.

Day 5 Pray for Jillian Lyttle, who is finishing her MTS apprenticeship in ICM. Jillian has just got engaged to Rob, a worker with IFES in N. Ireland. Pray for them as they make preparations for marriage and for Jillian as she takes up a job in Speech Therapy in Omagh. Pray for their future plans for serving the Lord together.

Day 6 Pray for more young men and women to join the MTS programme to be trained in Gospel work.

Day 7 Pray for ICM to be able to recruit, train and deploy more Mission Partners, or missionaries for Ireland. Pray for ICM to be able to raise practical support for them.

Day 8 Pray for ICM's first Mission Partners, Brendan and Carinne Meyrink and their young family (Kian, Rory, Ryder and Arwen) in Ballina. Thank God for the Bible study and Christianity Explained course they've started.

Day 9 Pray for Cormac Walsh, who is joining Brendan and Carinne in Ballina. Pray that in the summer he may be able to find accommodation in Ballina, ready to start work in the late summer. Pray that financial and prayerful support will come in to help him.

Day 10 Pray for the staff in N. Ireland. Mrs. Barbara Lowndes, Secretary in the Belfast office. Pray for Mr. Murray Hunter, ICM's Company Secretary.

Day 11 Pray for Davood, for more opportunities to train Christians in the 'Engaging with Islam' course. Davood has begun a second meeting for Iranians each month in ICM. Also, thank God for the Iranian church meeting in Belfast and the new meeting in Londonderry.

Day 12 Pray for MTS apprentices, Monica, Ivan and John. Pray for growth of godliness in their lives and for the many one-to-one Bible studies and small group Bible studies they are engaged in.

Day 13 Pray for Miss Ruth Bridcut, ICM Women's worker, as she settles into ICM. Thank God for the successful women's conference held in Immanuel and continue to pray for Ruth's work amongst women and also as she leads the Sunday School

Day 14 Pray also for David Martin, his wife, Honor and children, Caleb and Abigail. Pray for David as he leads the ministry in Immanuel and for plans to develop Gospel ministry in the church.

Day 15 Pray for Jeremy Haworth and his wife Claire. Jeremy has special responsibility for the student work and is also engaged in study for a Master's degree.

Day 16 Pray for Mrs Olive Stewart, the ICM secretary in the Dublin office. Olive also does much administration work and manages the affairs of the ICM building in Dublin. Thank God for the gift of administration and for this work.

Day 17 Pray for the Superintendent as he endeavours to develop the work of the mission, goes on deputation work, and seeks new Mission Partners to be missionaries in Ireland.

Prayer Diary

Day 18 Remember the work of John McClure, for his work among people with addictions, his work in St. Michael's on the Shankhill Road, his deputation work on behalf of ICM, his work among the suicidal and families affected by suicide, the many one-to-one meetings and other meetings he attends in his ministry, such as the 'Helping Hand'.

Day 19 Pray for Mark Ryan, who is employed part-time by ICM to do evangelism among the marginalised and those with addiction problems in Dublin. The work of 'Happy Hour' is growing, with the homeless being fed and the Bible taught.

Day 20 Pray for the work of the Trustees of ICM and for Rev Brian Courtney, Chairman of ICM. Pray for wisdom for the Trustees in making decision to forward the work of the Mission. Pray for the AGM in September and the task of financing the work of the Mission.

Day 21 Pray for the growing work of 'English Corner'. Thank God for the many overseas students who are coming to church as a result of it.

Day 22 Thank God for the Gospel Ministry Training scheme for young Christian workers in the city of Dublin. Pray for plans for the autumn, that many more young men and women would be trained in teaching the Scriptures to others, both Christian and non-Christian.

Day 23 Pray for growth in prayerful and financial support for the work of ICM.

Day 24 Pray for the use of the ICM theological library. This contains books of Reformed Evangelical scholarship. Thank God that many students are beginning to make use of it.

Day 25 Thank God for the success of the SOW Church Planting Conference held in May by ICM and Crosslinks. Thank God that it has had a significant impact on many young people and pray that many of them will give themselves to serve the Lord as missionaries in Ireland or overseas.



Day 26 Pray for the development of ICM Supporters' meetings in N. Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and that many people will become enthusiastic for the work of the Gospel in Ireland.

Day 27 Thank God that ICM has a good working partnership with many evangelical churches and missionary groups in Ireland. Pray for the Dublin Gospel Partnership with which Immanuel works closely and for Aontas, an alliance of Irish Evangelical Churches seeking to reach Ireland.

Day 28 Pray for all those on summer holiday to be refreshed. Pray for the Superintendent on Sabbatical during the summer and hoping to do some study on recent church planting in the Republic of Ireland.

Day 29 Pray for the government and all those in authority in the Republic and in N. Ireland. Pray also for all those in the Republic of Ireland and N. Ireland who are going through very difficult financial problems. Pray that they will find their hope in Christ.

Day 30 Thank God for the encouraging teaching week the Superintendent conducted with others recently in Serbia. Thank God for the enthusiasm of students and pastors to teach the word. Pray for an increase of teaching and expounding the Scriptures, both overseas and in Ireland.

Day 31 Pray that ICM might be an encouragement and support to Gospel ministry in Ireland.



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Streams of grace...

the place of the local church in church planting in Ireland today

Acts 13:1-3

¹ In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. ² While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." ³ So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

Times have changed in modern day Ireland. Figures from the 2006 census in the Republic of Ireland show that after Catholicism, the second largest 'faith' group in the Republic is those who have 'no religion'. Recently, 'Atheist Ireland' celebrated this with an international conference in Dublin where the High Priest of atheism, Richard Dawkins was the guest speaker. Gone are the days when Catholic priest and nuns roamed the streets being greeted with respect, people

went to church in their droves, and what church authorities said was law! Modern Irish people are not interested and are not listening.

Things are not much better for the Protestant population of the Republic either.

The Commission on Ministry Report to the Church of Ireland General Synod in May this year sounded the death knell of the Church of Ireland in the west of Ireland.

continued on page 16

gone are the days when priest and nuns were greeted with respect as they roamed the streets

In his report, Archdeacon Gary Hastings of Galway talked about ‘the end of the church of Ireland as we know it’, arguing that within 20 years small rural parishes in the west will have disappeared.

Urban churches may last a little longer, but given the marginalization of religion in mainstream European and Irish culture, they are ‘as doomed as any small rural parish’ (pp.402-404 General Synod Reports 2011).

Time to man the lifeboats and die slowly?

That may be one way of facing up to the realities of church decline in Ireland.

Or time to abandon biblical teaching in favour of an all-inclusive ‘anything-goes’ by way of belief approach to it all? That seems to be the conclusion being hinted at in the Commission on Ministry Report.

Or is it time to actively plan for and work for a whole new generation of Christ-honouring, biblically faithful churches that are gathered and meet in new ways?

Perhaps the example of the church in Antioch, where Christians were first called Christians, can give us a clear pointer to the future direction Christians need to take in 21st century Ireland? Here was a local church that had an enormous impact. From this one church, individual missionaries and teams of missionaries were sent out (Acts 13:3; 15:36-41; 18:22-23) to evangelise and plant churches all over Turkey and Greece.

Because of this one church, people were



evangelised and churches planted in Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth and Ephesus! John Calvin, the 16th century Protestant Reformer, remarked in his commentary on the church in Antioch that God had so poured his grace on this church that ‘streams of grace flowed from it to other places’. He went on to make the further remark: ‘So, even in our time, God enriches certain churches more than others, so that they be nurseries for propagating the teaching of the Gospel’.

Isn't that an amazing challenge to churches

today? Here is a picture of what our local church could be and what it could do for the Kingdom of God in Ireland today.

Our church could be a source from which ‘streams of grace’ flow into other parts of our country, town or city! After all, isn't that what Jesus said would be true of the individual Christian? ‘Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him’ (John 8:38).

If it is true that grace should flow from individual Christian lives to others, how much more is it true of the local church?

Could our local church be so faithful to the Gospel and in training our people for Gospel ministry that it acts as a kind of nursery, to produce all kinds of Gospel workers who could flow out from it to bring God's blessings to other parts of the town, city or region?

How could we do this and what should we do?

Perhaps we should look at Antioch? How did it become such a church with such a ministry that ‘streams of grace’ flowed from it to others?

We learn two things from the verses above that give us a clue.

First, God's concerns were their concerns. They looked upwards, not inwards.

Here was a church made up of diverse nationalities, cultures and social background, as the names of their leaders (v.1) plainly tell us, but yet who were totally united in the Gospel and God's concerns.

Here they were fasting and worshipping the Lord together (v.2), but for what purpose?

Well, from the conclusion of the story (vv.2b-3), it seems it was for the purpose of how to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus to go and make disciples.

The Spirit-given consensus was that it was time to release a missionary team.

Barnabas and Paul would be released for the mission to which God had already called them. God's concerns were their concerns.

many churches no longer preach the Gospel... they have lost their way

They recognised that God’s concern is all about mission – spreading the Good News of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes, the reality of the local church is that God’s concerns are God’s concerns, but our concerns are about ourselves and our own domestic church issues!

If we are to be a church from which ‘streams of grace’ flow, we need to make sure that the cause of Jesus is our number one concern above all internal concerns!

How serious are we as a local church about making God’s concerns our first priority? The more we do, the more likely our church can make a difference, perhaps even sending out teams, or missionaries, who evangelise and church plant in our towns, cities and country.

Secondly, they put God’s concerns into action. They did not merely theoretically recognise the importance of mission – they did it! Two of their best teachers were actually sent out. Paul and Barnabus went out, evangelised and planted churches.

Furthermore, these planted churches evangelised and planted other churches, copying not only the example of Paul, but also the example of Antioch, by being prepared to release their people, such as Timothy from Lystra, for the work of the Gospel in other places.

There comes a time when we need to take courage as a church and simply obey the Lord’s command to start evangelising.

Amazing things can happen when we do. ‘Streams of grace’ begin to flow.

The evidence of the book of Acts is that the most effective way of evangelising towns, regions and whole countries is to plant churches that evangelise and plant churches.

The reality in Ireland is that we need such new church plants to reach Ireland.

Why? Many existing churches and mainline denominations are no longer preaching the Gospel – they have lost their way.

Whole communities in Ireland, such as working class men, students, addicts, business communities and a host of others, are not being reached by existing churches.

Many young people have ‘voted with their feet’ and left. New generations of Irish people are not hearing the Gospel.

Should we simply accept this and refuse to adapt in order to reach them? Not at all!

We need existing churches to make God’s concern for the spread of the Gospel their number one concern.

When the Gospel is central in the local church and people being built up in the Word, such churches will be like a nursery, raising up fresh Gospel workers for Ireland.

Perhaps they’ll even copy Antioch and send out teams of missionaries, who return to be refreshed, and then go out again! ‘Streams of grace’ that bring new life!



‘Devoted’: Immanuel Women’s Conference

Ruth Bridcut



It was such an encouragement to have approximately 30 women from Immanuel Church including some guests, coming together in the Irish Church Missions building for a Saturday morning in May, considering how they could be more ‘Devoted’.

With the title based on Colossians 4 v 2, “Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful”, we considered the subject of prayer, as we heard two Bible passages explained and took part in discussion groups.

Basing our morning on Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, we were first reminded from Ephesians 1:1-14 of all that God has done for us in the Lord Jesus Christ, of every spiritual blessing which we have received.

This was the motivation for Paul’s first prayer for the Ephesians in chapter 1 verses 15-22, where he prays that the Ephesians would know God better, knowing his blessings, and incredible power, seen when Christ was raised from the dead. We were also encouraged to imitate Paul’s priorities when we looked at another of his prayers in

Ephesians chapter 3, vs 14-20. Here, Paul prays for the Ephesians, that Christ would dwell in their hearts, and that they would know Christ’s love more and more.

As we often pray for tangible needs, which God longs for us to ask for, the morning was a helpful reminder to also bring our spiritual needs before God.

There was time for building deeper friendships with other ladies within the church over coffee and lunch, and in discussion groups, when we shared practical struggles with prayer and prayed for one another.

It was encouraging that a cross-section of our women could attend, including local and international students, young mothers, those in paid work, and those working in the home.

As members of Immanuel church live scattered throughout the city, and Sundays are generally hectic, the Saturday morning meeting proved a good time to help build meaningful relationships with other Christian women in the church.



Mission? It's what God has done from the beginning

Jeremy Haworth

To know Christ is to possess life, real life. This was the theme of our recent Sunday evening sermon series here in Immanuel. We titled it "Passion for Life".

To possess this life is to want to share it, to give it away. To be changed by the gospel is to want to share the gospel. This is mission – taking the gospel of life into a dying and needy world.

We are not the inventors or the initiators of mission. God has been on mission from the beginning, seeking to bless and to give life.

From first to last, God is the initiating God, the seeking God; the God on mission. From Abraham the desert nomad, to Israel his people, to the church spread across the world - in each case, it is God alone who gathers.

We are simply called to partner with God in his mission.

The Bible is the story of God seeking for people. If we wish to be like God, we must lovingly seek lost people. His desire is that many more people would share the real life his people enjoy.

Of course, the life, death and resurrection of Christ is the climax of God's mission in the world. Christ Jesus is the one through whom people come into new life.

It is in Christ alone that life is found.

Our mission as a community of disciples in Immanuel is to point people to the Son, the source of life.



We do that by sharing his gospel. That is mission. We spent a number of weeks exploring this theme of Passion For Life; it took us at various points into the Gospel of John, Matthew and Paul's letters to Titus and the Ephesians.

In each case, the focus was the same: the power of the gospel to transform us, build up the church community and multiply disciples.

For me personally, as we look ahead to Dublin International Outreach, Ephesians has proved a great encouragement.

What does it mean to be in Christ, and what does this demand of us as we look ahead to DIO?

In Ephesians 2.11-22, Paul explains how through Jesus Christ, God has reconciled

those who were once alienated from him.

He then goes on to speak of how, through the Lord Jesus, God is bringing a new people into being - a people who will become nothing less than the very "dwelling (place) in which God lives by his Spirit" (2.22). Paul speaks about foreigners and aliens with no heavenly citizenship. He speaks about a people hostile to God and to one another.

And he speaks of how the blood of Christ is the gateway, the door, the place of access, for all people to come into unity with one another and unity with the living God.

As we anticipate welcoming people from many nations in the middle two weeks of July, it is vital that we share Paul's vision of gospel ministry. In Christ alone we all "have access to the Father by one Spirit" (2.18).

What does it mean to be in Christ, and what does this demand of us as we look ahead to Dublin Outreach?

Christ alone is the way to the Father. For people of every race and tribe and nation, Christ Jesus alone is the way to the Father; the only one who can unite people and bind them together as the household of God.

As ever, I pray and hope that the local students who make up the bulk of our Sunday evening service are continually challenged and provoked by the gospel as we open the Bible together. Join me, as I pray that they, too would know real life in Christ and strive to join God on mission in the world.

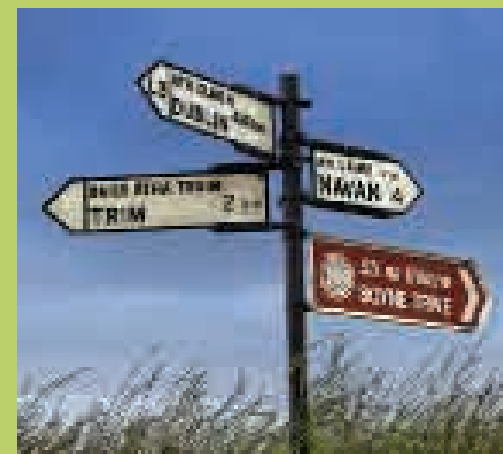
Wanted: more ICM Mission Partners

According to a survey by Aontas (an alliance of Irish Evangelical churches) there are around 53 towns in Ireland with a population of over 7500 with no evangelical witness.

About 17 of these towns are over 20,000 people. A recent academic report on Ireland projected that the Irish population will rise over the next two decades to something like 8 million people, gathered in or around 8 major cities, Belfast, Dublin, Waterford, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, and Londonderry.

Irish Church Missions is looking to place teams of Mission Partners in many of these key areas.

We are looking for Evangelical men and women willing for the sake of Christ and his Gospel to reach Irish people.



We are looking for people willing to be sacrificial, willing to give up at least 3 years in working to evangelize and plant new churches in many of these places.

For further details, contact Eddie Coulter in the Dublin office.



We pray Derry's Iranians will welcome the Word

Davood

"Since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:1-2)

As you know, we have started a new Iranian church in Belfast and our first service was on February 20.

The Iranians who attend are very open people and like to listen to God's word and I'm hoping and praying that God's word will change their lives.

Thank God that the new believers are taking their faith seriously and have started to help with the ministry

The meeting is growing as the people there invite others. It is great to see that they are not scared to talk about it to others. On June 18, I went to Derry to see more Iranians. I'm hoping to start a Bible study group once a month for Iranians, and eventually, if everything goes well, a monthly church service there.

I will keep you informed about this, but in the meantime please keep praying that the Iranian people in Derry will welcome the Word of God and that they will see that they can have hope and new life in Jesus.

The Iranian church service in Dublin is going well. Twice a month we have a service in our native language, Farsi. Thank God that the new believers are taking their faith seriously and have started to help with the ministry.

We have a few new Iranians that are coming to our meetings. Please keep praying that they will see the love of the Lord and the need for Him in their lives.

Many Iranians who come to Ireland do not stay long in Dublin as the government sends them to different cities around Ireland. Please pray that in the short time they are here with us, the Lord will grant us enough time to share the gospel with them.

ICM Supporters' meeting

A meeting for ICM supporters to hear about the work of the Mission is to be held on Saturday, December 10 at 11am in the ICM building, 28 Bachelors Walk. Key note speakers will be Brendan and Carinne Meyerink, and Cormac Walsh on their experience of church planting in the West of Ireland.



Speaking out: Davood

On June 5, I went to Sligo to meet some Iranians, to see how they are living and learn their needs. I went to a Methodist church and talked to the minister, Stephen Taylor. He is very welcoming to Iranians and gave me the opportunity to talk about Islam and my ministry to the Muslim people. The result is that a few members of his church want to do the 'engage with Islam' course.

One of the Iranian asylum seekers, whom we know and is a dear friend, received his residency here in Ireland recently. This is very encouraging and he is telling everybody how Jesus provided him with his residency! Hopefully, he will come soon to Dublin and I can spend more time

teaching him the word of God and that he'll be part of the ministry in Dublin. His name is Shapur. Please keep praying for him, that the seed of love will grow in good soil and he will produce a crop thirty, sixty or even a hundred times what was sown.

I know that most of you are praying for us, I heard of how you are praying in all parts of the world and you are supporting us greatly.

This is a huge encouragement to us and it helps us to stand firm. Thank you so much.

May the name of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ be exalted and draw many unto Himself.



The workshops and speakers gave plenty of food for thought

SOW Conference, Dollingstown

Around 80 people gathered in St Saviour's, Dollingstown, Northern Ireland on May 18&19, for the ICM and Crosslinks' SOW conference on church planting. Speakers from England, Ireland and mainland Europe shared their experiences in planting new churches in a variety of contexts.

The main speaker, Richard Coekin, who is senior pastor and director of Co-mission, a church-planting initiative in London, gave four excellent talks on the theological reasons and principles for planting churches.

He spoke of the need and urgency of evangelising and setting up new churches or revitalising old, established churches.

When people hear the word 'church', they think of a building, but the New Testament speaks of an assembly of people who belong to Christ. Church-planting is about the latter, bringing people to Christ and gathering them to teach, disciple, and train for faithful, godly living and witness to the world with the message of Jesus.

Conference members participated eagerly in the workshops, which included 'starting from scratch', growing churches which

plant, growing disciples who plant, planting in various contexts, both home and away. The workshops were very exciting. Much of the talk over dinner and coffee was on how this kind of church planting could be continued and stimulated in Ireland.

The conference organisers were greatly encouraged by the intensive engagement of participants with the workshops and the speakers, and the enthusiasm to go further.

This was particularly evident in the open question time with the speakers on the first evening. Many young people are willing to serve Christ as Gospel workers in Ireland and beyond and it is vital for agencies like Crosslinks and ICM to provide opportunities.

Our thanks to Rev Gareth Harron and the vestry of Dollingstown Church of Ireland for use of their building, the team of catering ladies from St Paul's, Lisburn, and especially to Val Ellis of the Crosslinks office, without whose organisation the conference would not have been possible.

Eddie Coulter