

ICM News

The Banner of the Truth in Ireland

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More than 90 members of the congregation voted on the new name for the church

Immanuel - the new name for ICM church

September 16, 2007, was a very special Sunday in the life of the Mission Church of Irish Church Missions.

More than 90 people from both the morning and evening congregations gathered together to vote on changing the name of the Mission Church to 'Immanuel Church'.

Testimony

During the morning service in the Mission building at Bachelors Walk, Dublin, the congregation heard testimony from a representative group of those now attending the

Sunday gatherings at Irish Church Missions.

Immanuel Church is composed of many different nationalities, which reflects God's mission in the world, to call a people out of different tribes, nations, languages, and cultures to be his one new people in Christ.

The name literally means 'God with us', and as an Anglican Evangelical church, committed to the Gospel, Immanuel seeks to reflect God's purpose in the world, to gather a people to himself from every corner of the world.



Murly, a church member from the Philippines, cooked much of the food for after the service



Deidre, who shared her testimony

The mission field on our doorstep



Eddie Coulter

John Owen, the great Puritan writer and theologian, when he came back from Ireland in 1650 where he had seen the English forces, under Cromwell, decimate the Irish, preached to the English Parliament and pleaded for another kind of warfare: "How is it that Jesus Christ is in Ireland only as a lion staining all his garments with the blood of his enemies; and none to hold him out as a Lamb sprinkled with his own blood to his friends? ... Is this to deal fairly with the Lord Jesus? - call him out to do battle and then keep away his crown? God hath been faithful in doing great things for you; be faithful in this one - do your utmost for the preaching of the Gospel in Ireland".

Owen's words point up the fact that political Protestantism has long dominated the history of this island and always at the expense of the Gospel. At a time when political Protestantism seems to have made its peace with the forces it has opposed in N.Ireland, surely it's now time for a different kind of Protestantism to make itself



It's now time for a different kind of Protestantism to make itself known

known all over Ireland. Protestants who love the Lord Jesus, who love the Gospel, and who love their neighbour need to preach Christ the Lamb of God to the Irish people, as John Owen long ago begged the English Parliament. Northern Ireland has long been blessed by men and women of the Gospel and has sent out missionaries to all parts of the world. The Republic of Ireland is a mission field on our doorstep. Jesus has told us to go out into all the world. The experience of modern Ireland is that the world has come to us! Ireland is in need of the blessing of the Gospel that only



John Owen

Reformation Protestants can give. Please don't misunderstand. This is not a call to a Protestant culture or evangelical sub-culture; it is not to become unionist or 'orange', or to become British, or to give up Irish cultural identity.

The call of the Gospel that Reformation Protestantism proclaims is a call to finding a new identity that transcends all earthly loyalties or citizenship. It is a call to become a citizen of heaven, and to live in the world as one whose life is under the governorship of Jesus Christ. Everything else we identify with, whether politically, culturally or socially, pales into insignificance in comparison to our Gospel identity in Jesus. This is the kind of Protestantism that Ireland needs today- people in Christ who love God, who love their neighbour, and who proclaim the Gospel to all.

John working at

John McClure is involved in many areas in Northern, but due to their sensitivity, it is not always possible to give details about them. However, here is an overview of some of the work he carries out

DRUGS

John has been heavily involved in the Tigers Bay talks and has helped to bring families together. Local people have been urged to tell police who is dealing the drugs.

They have been told to contact John or others if they are frightened, so that the details can be passed on.

John meets other community representatives, as well as the police and politicians such as Nigel Dodds.

It is quite clear that the people of the area want the drugs off the street and for the dealers to be dealt with by the police.

The UDA also want zero tolerance of drugs and say people will not be classed as informers if they tell the police about these people. If not, more lives will be lost through drugs.

John has been inundated by churches wanting to know more about suicide, drugs and alcohol, as these are such major issues today throughout our land. John was invited with Northern Ireland Health Minister Michael McGimpsey to speak at the opening of the Suicide Awareness Group in west Belfast recently.



John was then asked by Mr McGimpsey to speak at Stormont on the issue of suicides and what the churches can offer. "Ian Paisley junior and Caitriona Ruane were among the politicians at that meeting and they were all very supportive."

John would like to see money allocated to churches, to train the laity and new ordinands in suicide awareness. John is to draw up a case for this to be done.

HELPING THE ADDICTED

On Tuesday nights and Thursday lunchtimes, those with drugs and alcohol addictions meet in Crosscollyer Street in

north Belfast, for a time of praise, prayer and Bible study. Those attending pick they hymns and prayers themselves.

The meetings have been running now for seven years, and a good percentage have stopped taking drugs and alcohol. Most importantly, many now know the Lord as their saviour.

SUNDAY AND MIDWEEK ENGAGEMENTS

This year, John was ordained as a Deacon, and is serving at Skerry Church of Ireland in Broughshane for two Sundays a month.

He thanks Dean John bond for his encouragement and help in this role. On other Sundays, John travels around different churches, telling people about ICM and its work, north and south of Ireland.

During the week, he speaks to various groups, such as Mothers' Unions, Mens' Societies, and at Bible Studies.

PEACE MOVES

John has been involved in talking to all parties at Stormont and to those on the ground who can affect things, to bring peace and stability within the communities.

Suicide - a challenge

Suicide – we hope it will never happen to anyone we know. But suicide is a reality.

The possibility that suicide could claim the life of someone you know cannot be ignored.

In response to Protect Life: A Shared Vision, a government strategy for suicide prevention within Northern Ireland and to help tackle the growing number of suicides in our

society, a unique study day recently took place for church representatives across the Northern area.

The seminar was co-ordinated with the Northern Health and Social Services Board, Ballymena Strategic Partnership and the Churches Council for Health and Healing.

The seminar, on November 21, reflected on some of the

key issues for pastoral workers and focused on the importance of working collaboratively across a range of sectors to highlight the importance of suicide prevention.

Pastoral

Many church representatives from the Northern area came together for the study day on suicide.

The event addressed the pastoral challenges facing clergy as a result of the growing numbers of suicides. Gabrielle Nellis, co-ordinator for Suicide Prevention with the Northern Health and Social Services Board, is working to help develop and co-ordinate actions within existing and newly developed partnerships. Gabrielle explained the important role churches could

the cutting edge



Alcohol addictions



Power-sharing in Northern Ireland



Drug addictions

ge for the churches

play in terms of prevention, intervention and post-prevention support.

She also outlined the overall aims of the Protect Life strategy launched in 2006, to reduce the Northern Ireland suicide rate, bereavement support and community/voluntary and statutory partnership working. John McClure represents the churches on the regional SSIB

(Suicide Strategy Implementation Body) and chaired the event.

He said: "As a key point of contact for many within the community, church leaders are often the people that individuals or families will turn to in a time of need.

Awareness

It is vital that there is a high level of awareness within the church family and that

information is readily available in terms of advice and support."

Kieran Quinn, Psychiatric Liaison Nurse, talked about suicide awareness and the applied suicide intervention skills training available from the health board.

Stephen Williamson talked about the theological issues surrounding suicide.

There were also speakers from a range of support organisations, both statutory and voluntary.

Representatives of the Presbyterian and Roman Catholic churches shared their experiences of delivering pastoral care in the community and the challenges this presents in modern society.

BIBLE STUDY

Hope for the World

Isaiah 9: 1-7

Christmas is nearly on us, and soon choirs throughout the land will be performing Handel's magisterial "The Messiah."

It's a favourite of many for good reason – a reminder of what God the Father has done for us in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, into the world to procure our salvation.

When most think of Handel's Messiah, the tune often remembered is, "O unto us child is born." This child spoken of in Isaiah chapter 9 is the hope for the world.

Isaiah was a death-bed prophet. Israel was in the throes of death as it was a bleak time in their history.

In 1:2 we see they have rebelled against God, in 3:1 judgment is pronounced against Jerusalem and Judea, in 6:9-10 we see they are spiritually blind and deaf and hard-hearted, and in 8:9-10 the Lord accuses them of consulting mediums and necromancers rather than Himself. The result is that they will be thrust into utter darkness (8:22).

And so Isaiah prophesies forthcoming judgment in the form of the Assyrian Empire, whose armies are gathering on the borders and casting a gloomy shadow over the land.

Rebellion

God used Assyria as an instrument of judgment against the sinful rebellion of Israel. Isaiah had warned the people over and over, but their hearts were far from God even though they worshipped Him with their lips (Is. 29:13). Thus utter darkness awaited them.

But a new dawn arose. Isaiah sees that God will bring about a transformation. This begs the question: 'How does the move from 8:22 to 9:1 occur?' Well, verses 1 to 7 in chapter 9 are couched in past tenses.

The future is written as something that has already happened! It's as if Isaiah casts himself forward in time and then looks back on the mighty acts of God.

For Isaiah it's certain: that's why he places the penetrating light of 9:1-2 in immediate proximity to the utter darkness of 8:22.

He sees things with the eye of faith – faith allows those walking in darkness to see the light ahead and to be sustained by hope.

The Lord God transforms the darkness into light, just as in Genesis chapter 1 when He created the universe. Look at the movement in 9:1-5: from gloom, anguish and contempt



Sean
Martin

to glory (v.1), from darkness to light (v.2), a multiplied nation with increased joy (v.3), the yoke, rod, and staff of the oppressor are broken, and the battle garments become fuel for the fire (v.5).

Notice how all the activity is from God's side. This is all His doing. These verses don't express a prediction – they express a fact. They are brimming with confidence in God. When we experience darkness and hopelessness in our lives, we face a choice: look at our present circumstances and conclude that God has forgotten us, or we can recall God's past mercies, remember His present promises, and make affirmations of faith, renewing a fresh trust in who He is and what He has done.

This is not wishful thinking, but confidence in God's almighty and transforming power. This radical transformation is brought about by a single event: a birth. Verse 6 is the ultimate root of all that is done. It's about Jesus Christ, and note the emphasis is on the mere fact of his birth. In his coming, his Incarnation, all that will result from his coming is secured at once.

That's why Simeon can look at baby Jesus in the temple and say, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation" 33 years before the first Easter (Luke 2:30). It's why Isaiah can say the things he says to people who are in darkness and despair.

Ministry

It is no coincidence that in Jesus' earthly ministry, he lived in Capernaum in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali to fulfill the prophecy of Isaiah.

The first places to experience utter darkness (Isaiah 9:1), were the very places where Jesus began his ministry and brought hope (Matt. 4:12-16).

Look at what Isaiah says: he's the Son of God (v.6) and the government is upon his

shoulder (v.6). Furthermore, he is given four royal titles: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace. No higher titles could be given, and to ascribe them to anyone except God would be blasphemy. But this child is no less than God Himself in human flesh: the Incarnate Son of God. Christ's Kingdom in verse 7 is described as lasting and peaceful, a sovereign rule, a kingdom that is established and will be upheld, and eternal. Christ's Kingdom cannot be shaken. It will endure unto the ages of ages.

Jesus Christ is indeed the hope for the world. It is through him God the Father "has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the Kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:13-14). Jesus is the Son given to us by God. He is the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. The Alpha and the Omega. We must trust in him alone and accept no imitation. He is our hope because he is God's gift of love to us.

Persecution

The world desperately needs to hear this. 2007 has been a bleak year: continuing war in Iraq, genocide in Darfur, persecution of Christians in Eritrea, AIDS orphans in Malawi, and the multitudes of people blinded in their minds by the god of this age so they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Cor. 4:4).

Light has shone. Jesus Christ has come. His throne has been established. His Kingdom endures.

He will come again in glory. Isaiah's message is a beacon of light in a world beset by darkness, brokenness, and sinful rebellion. So we need to pass this message on to others.

As it is written in Romans 10:14-15, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

And how can they preach unless they are sent?

As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" Isaiah proclaimed this news to Israel.

Let us proclaim it to the nations. For to us a child is born. To us a Son is given. And his name is Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God.



The meal after the Iranian service



Two musicians (above) from Elam played Iranian musical instruments and led singing in Farsi

Iranian service wonderful time of celebration

A special Iranian Sunday service was held in the afternoon of Sunday, September 9 at the Mission building in Bachelors Walk, Dublin.

In this meeting we were joined by Farsi-speaking and Iranian Christians from Elam, a Farsi Christian missionary organization based in London. We had our largest number of Iranians, including families, and were delighted to hear testimonies, music, songs, and stories of God's grace to Iranian people, especially within Iran itself.



God's lesson for the changes in Ireland

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

Evidence from last year's census reveals, among other things, that Ireland is the fastest growing small country in the world.

The population has swelled by 322,645, lifting it to 4.2 million. In addition, apparently no other European country has a younger population - with the average age remaining close to 33.

Experts now predict that the numbers could rise well over the five million mark in the next 12 years and reach six million in a generation.

With such an explosion in population growth, we all know, whether we live in an urban or rural setting, the country is struggling to keep up.

Transport, health, education are all stretched to breaking point and so are many of our churches.

It is not uncommon for there to be at least 10 different nationalities meeting in a relatively small sized church on any given Sunday.

This presents a particular type of challenge especially for those who arrive here as Christians.

Of course leaving home and starting a new life has always been, in a large part, what it means to be a student.

But the rate at which many more people, apart from students, are re-locating, immigrating or even seeking refuge in another city or country has dramatically increased.



David
Martin

For those who arrive in any new city or country either as student, worker, or refugee there are a whole host of questions to be answered, but for the Christian, they must see their move from God's perspective.

Paul, in his famous Mars Hill speech, has a throw-away line that is so helpful for all those who move, settle and start a new life in a different place. He tells us in Acts 17:26 that God 'made from one man every nation of men...and he determined the times and set for them the exact places where they should live'.

So Paul clearly taught that God not only knows the times and the places where all men

will live. He actually determines the times when and places where we live, so that 'we should seek after him'.

This has a number of implications for us.

Firstly it means that we need to understand that no one is here today by mistake. Many people who move from their 'place of origin' are particularly susceptible to the idea that life has no meaning.

Lasting deep relationships are particularly hard to create especially with people from different countries who may only settle in one place for a number of months.

The lack of a permanent place and community can produce a sense of meaninglessness. But Paul understands things differently.

He knows that it is no mistake when God brings his people together even from across the world, if only for the briefest encounter.

Secondly, it means that no one is here today because they were made to come by the will of another man.

Many people looking for asylum are particularly vulnerable, confused and lost precisely because they

believe that their life has been ruined by a government, a political party or a dictator.

It is almost impossible for them to see beyond their immediate circumstances and look to the God that Paul spoke of on Mars Hill.

But if we apply Paul's point to their confusion it means that God knew they were to move before they did.

He knew they were to move before any government decided or dictator came to power.

He determines the times and exact places for us to live.

It is not up to the decisions of men but has been decided by the Creator himself.

Therefore, if the Creator himself makes the decision, it also means that no one is here today even because they chose to live in Ireland in 2007.

If the will of another man did not put us here, then our own power and strength did not decide for us either.

Paul tells us that God decides 'the when and where' of our lives - so that if we are not a Christian we should seek after him and if we are a Christian we might grow to know and serve him more.

The normal Christian life is one that is grounded in the eternal purposes of God.

It is only with a firm understanding of his character and nature that we can begin to understand the changing face of Ireland and humbly rejoice in what he is doing.

God not only knows the times and the places where all men will live. He actually determines the times when and places where we live, so that 'we should seek after him'

BOOK REVIEWS

Making a stand for God's Word

Jude reminds us in his letter to "...contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints." (Jude 3).

In this short study, John Piper introduces us to three men whose lives show that they understood this; namely Athanasius, John Owen and J. Gresham Machen.

All three men stood for the truth of God's Word, even when this meant opposition, unpopularity, threats, exile, sickness and suffering.

They took no pleasure in getting involved in controversy just for the sake of an argument; rather, they were prepared to contend out of a deep love for the Lord Jesus and His people, recognising

'Contending for Our All'

'Defending truth and treasuring Christ in the lives of Athanasius, John Owen and J. Gresham Machen'
by John Piper

Published by Inter-Varsity Press

that when the gospel is at stake our all is at stake.

In Athanasius' words, "Considering that this struggle is for *our all*...let us also make it our earnest care and aim to guard what we have received" (pg 20).

Piper's book, as with his other biographical sketches, is a great reminder of the value of church history.



He introduces us to Athanasius in his lifelong battle for the deity of Christ against the Arians; John Owen the Puritan pastor and writer, whose great desire was for holiness – both his own and others'; and J. Gresham Machen the seminary founder

who contended for the gospel in the midst of liberalism.

However, Piper doesn't stop there. He goes on to show the profit of looking at the lives of Christians from the past, how we can learn from their example and the way they stood for the truth, reminding us that the battles they fought are not too dissimilar to the ones we need to fight today. Specifically, as he looks at the lives of these three men, we are challenged to recognise the need to contend for the gospel in our day and to do so in a godly and gracious manner.

Well worth investing in and digesting!

SD

Setting record straight on homosexuality

This is a book for EVERYONE, a must read. The four Appendices are worth their weight in gold.

Gender and sexuality issues being so prevalent, the author has collected six true-life stories of people struggling with their own particular homosexual problems, and another half dozen stories of mothers, siblings and spouses who woke to discover sexual deviance in a loved one.

The book is readable and helpful, creating awareness and concern for ALL parties. It concludes with a study guide on homosexuality both inside and outside the church.

What Some of You Were

Stories about Christians and homosexuality

edited by Christopher Keane

Part one offers up the personal experiences of Christopher, Ann, Jack, Emma, Dazza and Robin, each one telling their own story of awareness, confusion, angst and frustration.

Jack details his struggle and speaks of being on a journey, but at the time of writing confesses, "...I am uncertain how it will end."

On the other hand Christopher became a Christian while at

the same time being attracted to other men.

In the end he concludes, "I shudder to think what may have happened to me if I had gone to a counsellor (or a church) who had not upheld the Scriptures and had affirmed me in my homosexuality (as many do). If that had happened I may well have been dead from AIDS now. Many of the people I knew when I was part of the gay community are now dead."

Of special interest is what each one says about the helpful and unhelpful

encounters they had with Christians.

And finally, as mentioned above, the Appendices are great.

I especially appreciate the first one entitled HOW WE WENT GAY, by Tony Payne. In it he contrasts the Usual Story, i.e. the popular portrayal, with the Untold Story that changes the statistics dramatically.

I've read, reread, quoted, purchased and distributed several copies of this book and now I want to encourage you to do the same!

Mickey Walker



The Top 100 Questions (Biblical Answers to Popular Questions) Richard Bewes Christian Focus

This book by the Rev Richard Bewes, the well established Christian writer, is a treasure trove of information and a must for all those involved in Christian outreach.

All those awkward questions that would have you checking various

reference books for explanations are found in this single volume. It answers questions about the universe we inhabit, the truth we believe, the Bible we read, the way we behave, the Christ we follow and it also deals with 50 difficult Bible passages.

Every issue and every question is tackled in a simple, logical way, enriching both the scholar and the browser. I cannot recommend this book highly enough, both as a vehicle for teaching oneself and as a means for teaching the Christian message. DF

Happiness isn't so hard to find ...

How do we seek contentment? Do we seek it from what the world offers us? Where do we look?

As Christians, there is only one place to find true contentment.

If we believe the Bible's message to us, then contentment means to know Jesus and knowing how valuable our relationship with Jesus is.

We all have issues in life and discontentment is often an underlying factor.

We look around and sense a lack of something – relationships aren't as we'd like them to be; for some there is a deep yearning for a spouse; within marriage there might be loneliness and our ideals on marriage haven't been fulfilled; there may be friction in the family, parents whose children have been a disappointment and the list could go on.

It may be difficult circumstances; chronic health issues, depression or a medical condition which has no cure; a couple who remain childless while they watch their many friends time and again joyfully announce another pregnancy.

The world isn't as it should be and sometimes life can be really hard to make sense of. But in the midst of all this God's Word brings to us much reassurance.

The Bible is very real in the way it looks at life. God never promises that life will be easy. However, God speaks about



Lois Hagger

contentment in the context of the Christian life.

In the world there is a restlessness which comes from not being at peace with God.

The world thinks God is irrelevant, a joke, until there is a crisis. A world without God is all about making the best of life now.

Sadly, Christians get drawn into this way of thinking. We want what we don't have and the media seduces us into thinking that if we had this car, that address, a better home or a better garden then life would be great.

In Psalm 73 we read of Asaph who, when he looked around himself, saw what others had and he envied and coveted.

Verse 4 'They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from the burdens common to man; they are not plagued by human ills; v12 –

'always carefree, they increase in wealth'.

The Bible says what we think in our hearts; 'Why do others have what they have and I don't? Why is it that God seems to give good things to some and not to others? And yet, even in the midst of plenty, we still lack contentment.

So, what is biblical contentment? What does God say about all this? In Proverbs 30:7-9 we read the thoughts of Agur.

Some New Testament references are 1 Tim 6:6; Heb 13:5. In Philippians 4:10-13 we read of Paul's secret of contentment. In every situation he has learned the secret, which is not dependent on, or affected by circumstances.

In the end, it's all about Paul's relationship with and confidence in Jesus; he knew the sufficiency and goodness of God in Christ Jesus.

Yet notice in v12 he 'learned' this secret; it wasn't instant.

If we recognise that our value is found in Christ then we understand what contentment is all about. Not only are we to recognise our value in Christ, but we need to remind ourselves of the character of God as we eagerly await the Lord Jesus' return.

It is important to focus on God's character as this gives us perspective for ourselves and this world. We see things differently when our loving heavenly Father is at the centre of life.

God's love is seen on every page in the Bible and especially at the cross where

his precious Son gave his life for us, a people who did not love him. We keep failing God, yet he keeps on loving us. The extent of God's wisdom is seen in Romans 11:33f.

We don't always understand God's wisdom (Isaiah 55:8-9), or why he does things in certain ways. We may even question him, thinking our ways are better. God, in his wisdom often says no to the good things we painfully long and pray for. Or in his wisdom he can take these good things away too.

By saying that God doesn't know what is best for us shows that's we're not trusting God's wisdom. God is both loving and wise. But we also need to know that God is sovereign, an attribute which brings great comfort. God is in control of this world and completely able to bring about his purposes, even in the midst of our circumstances.

In Matthew 6:25f we're exhorted not to worry but to seek God first; to have the right perspective on life. We're much more valuable than sparrows, we're made in God's image. We may actually be convinced of this as in our thinking but emotionally we struggle.

Our universe isn't ruled by fate or chance philosophy but by an infinitely powerful, personal, all loving, all wise, all sovereign God.

We may not know what this lifetime holds for us but we can be assured that God will be with us every step of the way; we're in safe hands. Rom 8:28-29

MTS Apprentice: Simon Donohoe

Greetings! I've just joined Irish Church Missions in Dublin as a Senior Apprentice and have been asked to briefly introduce myself, so I'll try not to keep you too long!

Who am I?

My name is Simon. I was born and raised in Dublin; I grew up south of the city in the little town of Shankill and have been very privileged to have been part of Crinken church for a number of years.

A bit of history?

Let me quickly give you a short summary of my life so far using two significant events!

First (and by far the most significant), a move from death to life! Since being a young boy I was taught the Bible, and I continued up through the Sunday Schools and youth groups of Crinken church, therefore hearing the gospel many times. Yet, due to my hardness of heart, it wasn't until I was 17 that, by God's grace, I finally understood the gospel, and

turned and put my trust in the Lord Jesus.

Second, a move from Dublin to London! For the past two years I have had the very great privilege of spending two years doing the Cornhill Training Course in London and working with Emmanuel Church, Wimbledon. These have probably been two of the most formative years of my Christian life. Cornhill aims to equip men and women to understand, handle and faithfully teach the Bible; alongside this I had the opportunity to put all this into practice as I served on the staff team of Emmanuel under some very godly leaders (from whom I've learnt an incalculable number of lessons).

What now?

Well now I've just made a move from Emmanuel to Immanuel!! In September I returned to Dublin to join the work at Irish Church Missions and Immanuel Church Dublin



Simon Donohoe

as a senior apprentice. I'm here for a year full-time, during which I shall be involved in a number of things including: sharing in the work of preaching on Sundays, leading a Bible study group, meeting up with individuals to dig into God's word together and helping with the School of Christian Ministry; among many other things.

Through my time here, as I do all this I shall be building on what I've been doing at Cornhill as I gain further experience in what it means to be involved in ministry of the word and prayer; and, by God's grace, to grow in my

godliness, in thinking biblically and in the work of prayerfully preaching and teaching the Bible. I pray that during my time here I might faithfully serve Jesus and His people here in Dublin.

Looking to the future?

As I look to the future my prayer is that I might serve Him faithfully all my days as I wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus. As I strive to do this, by His grace, I am looking to serve Him long term in Ireland, prayerfully preaching and teaching His word. All the while needing to recognise, with the author of Proverbs, that, "The heart of a man plans his way, but the LORD establishes his steps." (Prov. 16:9).

Do I need prayer?

Yes, yes and yes! Why? Because, apart from Him I can do nothing. Please pray for my godliness and love for the Lord Jesus, and that I might faithfully teach His word and love His people.

MTS Apprentice: Honor Martin

I have been a Ministry Training Apprentice for just three months and it has not only been a steep learning curve, but an enjoyable and rewarding experience. I had worked as a barrister in Belfast for five years and it was a big decision to leave and undertake an apprenticeship.

I had enjoyed the people aspect of my job and am thankful that there are some skills which I can still use while learning many new ones.

I am working as a part-time apprentice and my week is divided between meeting women for one-to-one bible studies, meeting with my mentor Lois Hagger, taking part in School of Christian Ministry training on a Tuesday

evening and some administrative duties.

It has been a valuable experience meeting women from Church and reading God's Word together on an individual basis. These studies have helped us grow in our faith and knowledge of Jesus Christ and are useful in training others in how to lead one-to-one Bible study.

My weekly meeting with Lois is an opportunity for an in-depth look at a portion of Scripture, which has allowed me to see a section of John's Gospel in a new way and is giving me the necessary skills to properly analyse a passage of Scripture. We also work through and discuss MTS papers which range from 'Why do one-to-one Bible studies?'



Honor Martin

to papers setting out theological issues of which I previously had no concept.

All staff and apprentices are also involved in 'English Corner' which meets on a Friday. International students come for lunch and conversation and it has been a valuable ministry opportunity to invite students to Church. Some students have

responded positively and we continue to pray that they will accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

Church has seen growth in both the morning and evening services and this gives the apprentices even more opportunities to serve and praise God as many nationalities meet for fellowship and teaching.

I have no doubt my MTS apprenticeship will help prepare me for whatever ministry I may have in the future. I would recommend the MTS apprenticeship to anyone committed to the growth of the gospel and building the church, as it equips men and women to serve in many different ways for the Glory of God.

The bread and wine

A young Roman Catholic couple came into the shop recently. They said they were not biblical scholars but very aware that Jesus did say that we were to eat of his flesh and drink of his blood. "We, as Roman Catholics," they said, "believe we partake of his body and blood at the Communion Service, you as a Protestant don't believe this, so are you, in fact, going against the very words of Jesus?"

I thanked them for their interest in spiritual issues and their honesty with me. Over tea, I explained that the issue was both a Roman Catholic and a scriptural issue. Together we read John 6:22-71. Their response, after reading the text, which they said they never read before was "doesn't reading this show clearly we must partake of the body and blood of Jesus?" I asked them to reflect on John 6:61-64, showing them that it is the spirit that gives life and Jesus says "the words I have spoken to you are spirit", the flesh counts for nothing. These verses caused some surprise to the couple. We explored other texts - Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, Luke 22:14-20 where Jesus talks about



Dezi Ferguson

drinking the fruit of the vine, which is wine and not blood. As we discussed the points raised, I suggested, would it not make more sense that to drink and eat the body and blood of Jesus is, in fact, to absorb his teachings that they would become a part of us, making us true disciples of Jesus. After much conversation they began to agree.

It is also important, I said, to examine the issue from the Roman Catholic viewpoint. We read the Roman Catholic Catechism of the Council of Trent. It says this mystery is not to be judged by the senses. The mind and understanding must be withdrawn, for if the senses were to be used, using sight, touch, smell and taste, all the person would experience would be bread and wine. The young girl felt this was a strange teaching, not to use the gifts God gave us to discern the truth. She said it was an insult to God.

ICM shop talk

The catechism also states 'the pastor must also explain that in this sacrament are contained not only the true body of Christ and whatever appertains to the true nature of a body, such as bones, nerves and sinews.' As I read this section I could see the couple wincing. Both expressed the view that what I read was "scary". "Is it not strange," I asked, "that the Council of Trent catechism tells the Roman Catholic faithful to withdraw all their senses to perceive the body of Jesus, for if they did not, they would simply see bread and wine and experience bread and wine and yet the same catechism states that the bread contains all that appertains to a real body?" I voiced the opinion that those two statements were a contradiction of common sense. The young man responded it was the Bible that had the wisdom and not the catechism. "Would it be more accurate to say that the Bible is the Word of God, whereas the catechism contains the word of man?", I suggested. Both nodded their heads in agreement. They said they would return for further talks.

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Apprentices appeal

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

- ◆ Committed to their relationship with God
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