

DID YOU KNOW.....?



THIS MONTH'S PRAYER REQUESTS



What is the oldest book in the Old Testament?
 Many scholars agree that Job is the oldest book in the Bible, written by an unknown Israelite about 1500 B.C. Others hold that the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) are the oldest books in the Bible, written between 1446 and 1406 B.C.

What is the youngest book in the Old Testament?
 The book of Malachi, written about 400 B.C.

What is the oldest book of the New Testament?
 Probably the book of James, written as early as A.D. 45.

What is the youngest book in the New Testament?
 The Book of Revelation is the youngest book of the New Testament, written 95 A.D.

O yes, dear Lord, I reflect on all the deliverances You have wrought in my life, and my heart sings in praise and gratitude to You. Blessed be Your Name forever. Amen

Please give thanks for answers to prayer:

- Continuing large numbers of children attending Friday Club. Also that some parents are bringing them and seeing God's work
- Where God has been working amongst our families and friends

This month, please pray for

- Tara's friend Claire, whose husband tragically took his own life recently leaving her and three young children
- The family and friends of Enid O'Laughlin who died recently from meningitis at the age of 19
- Our teenagers sitting Junior Cert and Leaving Cert examinations
- Wisdom for Kathy's missionary leadership team as they consider their future plans
- Shane & Katie returning to Ireland from Ukraine on 11th May.

Please continue to pray for

- Healing for all those who are sick or recovering from operations
- Those who are still waiting for decisions from the authorities about their legal status

THANKS FROM LOUIS

I would like to thank everybody for their kindness, support and words of sympathy over the past few weeks; your prayers and thoughts are a real comfort to me at this time. *Louis*

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Louis

ENNIS EVANGELICAL CHURCH

To Know Jesus Christ and Make Him Known

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Now on the Web!
www.ennisevangelicalchurch.org

The EEC Newsletter



This church is a New Testament community of faith. Our teaching and practices are based on the Bible. We seek to serve our local community, reaching out with the love, hope and salvation, found through faith in Jesus only.

Tell Us About It!
 If you've got some news make sure you tell us about it! Call Tara on 085 7196961 or email tara.mcmahon@genworth.com

Copy deadline is shown on the calendar overleaf

NEWS IN BRIEF

New Deacon - Tom O'Connell has been elected by the members to serve as deacon. Please pray for him and Matthias in their ministry as deacons and indeed for the elders too as they seek to know Jesus Christ and make Him known in our community.

Child Protection Training - Another training session is planned in May. Please let Grace know if you would like to attend.

Wanted for Uganda - If you have (or know anyone who has) an unwanted **sewing machine** or any old **maths** or

science books, then please contact Margaret Wade.

The machines, which can be in any condition and either working or broken, might seem good only for the scrap heap but they could represent a lifeline for Ugandan women trying to help themselves and their families out of poverty. Likewise the school books might have served their purpose here at home, but they are in such short supply in Uganda, where the Fields of Life Barnabas Mission Team will be undertaking educational projects again this year.

Ladies' Conference - Seven

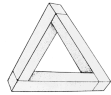
Oaks Hotel, Carlow: "God is Closer Than You Think!" See Margaret or Regina for details.

New Arrival - for Cairtriona and Cio, and grandparents, June and Nailor, on the birth of Caelen, 7lb 10oz, on 27 April. Congratulations & Praise God!

Free to good home
 Solid pine circular dining table, extends to seat 6. Contact Ruth.

Do you have news, a need or something to offer? Let us know by the copy date and we can include it next month!

PERSPECTIVE



One day a father of a very wealthy family took his son on a trip to the country with the firm purpose of showing his son how poor people live.

They spent a couple of days and nights on the farm of what would be considered a very poor family. On their return from their trip, the father asked his son, "How was the trip?"

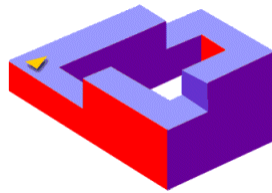
"It was great, Dad."

"Did you see how poor people live?" the father asked.

"Oh yeah," said the son.

"So, tell me, what did you learn from the trip?" asked the father.

The son answered: "I saw that we have one dog and they had four. We have a pool that reaches to the middle of our garden and they have a creek that has no end. We have imported lanterns in our garden and they have the stars at night."



Our patio reaches to the front yard and they have the whole horizon. We have a small piece of land to live on and they have fields that go beyond our sight. We have servants who serve us, but they serve others. We buy our food, but they grow theirs. We have walls around our property to protect us, they have friends to protect them."

The boy's father was speechless. Then his son added, "Thanks, Dad, for showing me how poor we are."

Isn't perspective a wonderful thing?

Makes you wonder what would happen if we all gave thanks for everything we have, instead of worrying about what we don't have. Appreciate every single thing you have, especially your friends!

What you see depends on how you look!

HAVE YOU THOUGHT

Of any ways you could show loving-kindness to those around you? There may be someone in our church who could really use a baby-sitter or a friend or neighbour desperate for a break caring for an aged or infirm relative. Could you sit with someone for a few hours, giving up a little of your time to allow someone else a little freedom?

Or perhaps you know of someone alone in the community who would welcome a bit of company once in a while or someone who needs a hand with some task or other.

If we want more folk to know the love of Jesus, more souls saved, what simple act of love could you perform this week, this month ... ?

AN TEACH SOLAIS

Saturday 19th April saw the official opening of The Listowel Christian Fellowship's new building. Louis, Kathy and I headed down with 5 of our teens to join our brothers and



sisters in Christ as they celebrated the fruition of a vision that began 17 years ago.

The opening ceremony began with the cutting of the ribbon by the Mayor of Listowel Councillor Pat Loughnane, and the unveiling of a plaque on which was inscribed "Ni Neart go cur le cheile" meaning "There is no strength without unity". Then over 250 people crowded into the new building to share in a service of thanksgiving and worship to God.

It was wonderful to watch a presentation on how the building came to be. What a witness to neighbours, work colleagues and friends of church members, who attended the service. They were told how God's people had so willingly given their time, finances and resources to see the building come into being. At one point the Pastor, JP Walsh, shared how he had put his "first Bible" into a plastic bag and buried it in the foundations of

Carrie reports on developments in Listowel ...

the building. He said that this was a symbol of their desire that everything done in the new building & in their fellowship would be built and based on The Word of God.

Throughout the service there was a huge emphasis on how Great and Faithful our God is. The singing was wonderful and it was so nice to spend time with God's people in another part of the West.

After the service we enjoyed the hospitality of the Listowel fellowship to its fullest. A wonderful tea, complete with a spread of fabulous desserts, tempted every palate present and it was all served by the pleasant entourage of young members from the fellowship (many of them camp friends of our teens). We had time to share fellowship and food with old and new friends and some then stayed on for the evening and enjoyed a concert performed by members of the fellowship, both young and not so young!

To see photos of the new building or to read more about the Fellowship in Listowel check out www.listowelchristianfellowship.ie

Please pray for the witness of our brothers and sisters in the area of Ballybunion/Listowel and also for all those from the locality who attended the service, that they would want to return to hear more about Our Great God.

Youth Zone! VIA

True Worship by Manuel

I still remember when the thing that seemed most wrong to me about our church was that we had "boring worship". Of course, back then I had very little idea what worship really was!

From speaking to other teens/young adults, the type of "worship" done in churches seems a popular issue in Western Christianity. Often young people in our churches want "new" or "modern" music, and it seems to many teenagers (including me at that age) to be the deciding factor in a church's quality.

Although I have only aged slightly since then (I am now 20), by the grace of God I have matured much spiritually - though I am still far from reaching my goal. I think I have finally realised why the "style of worship" is probably teenagers' favourite involvement in the church, and this is what I would like to share with you in this article.

Firstly, there is a misunderstanding about worship itself. The Bible defines it this way: *"Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship."* (Romans 12:1).

Notice it doesn't say your "voices or singing is worship", it goes much, much further! For the believer, worship is done *with your whole body!* And please don't get me wrong; Paul doesn't mean you should jump around! "Body" here is used in the sense of "life" - offer up your whole lives, every single thought, every single action, every motive, everything. This is the first commandment!

Love the Lord your God with **all your heart** and with **all your soul** and with **all your mind** and with **all your strength.** (Mark 12:30).

What do you think about when you're bored? What do you do in school when no

Christians are around? How do you speak outside church? How do you treat your parents? Is the Lord your first priority in all things? This is true worship. Teenagers, listen very carefully: If you call yourself a Christian because you sing nicely in church or raise your hands, but then go to school and act just like your non-Christian friends, you have not understood what worship is. Too long did I waste my life not understanding worship; please don't make the same mistake!

And finally, the reason, I believe, why music style in church is the hobby-horse of most churched teenagers: because *having strong preferences for music requires very little knowledge of the Bible or of God.* Looking back, I now see the root cause of my obsession with the music in church - I did not understand what the Bible taught about true worship. In fact, I didn't really know what the Bible taught about anything.

Today there are megachurches with state-of-the-art music & sound systems, filled with 20,000+ people who are immature believers or not even believers to begin with. I beg you: Don't become a shallow Christian, fighting battles over music in church and listening to famous worship leaders, instead of fighting the spiritual battle *against your own flesh* and reading Scripture, which is the sword of the Spirit.

If you want to become a true man/woman of God, you must do simply two things: Read the Bible and obey it. That's it. And I don't mean read a 1 page devotional (man wisdom) and then 1 verse of the Bible (God's wisdom). I mean *study the Word of God and obey it unconditionally!* Then you will become a true worshiper and a man or woman after God's own heart.

PERSECUTED CHURCH - CONT.

listening and being there for her. Gradually, she also began to be open to God's Word. She let God into her heart and He was able to heal her from the inside. She became physically and mentally healthy again. We started to think about how we could smuggle her into South Korea. When we mentioned this, she said, "No, I don't want that. I want to go back to North Korea. My friends need to hear about Jesus Christ!"

We tried to talk her out of it. She fasted for seven days and didn't change her mind - she wanted to go back to her home country. Then we trained and prepared her for her return. We gave her a small, thin Bible. Esther shook her head. "I want to take a study Bible with me, with footnotes and annotations. Otherwise, I won't be able to provide any teaching, will I?" We gave in, even though it increased the risk of her being caught.

After she crossed the border, initially we didn't hear anything from her. After some time, one of my colleagues managed to get in touch with her. Everything had gone well. She had arrived safely in the village where her friends lived. All her friends came to faith through her testimony.

In the Middle East, many people are coming to faith through dreams or visions of the Lord Jesus. How do North Koreans become believers in their own country?

They become Christians in four ways. First and most importantly is through a family member, who may have become a Christian, for example, in China and then shares the Lord Jesus with their family. Secondly, people are brought to the Lord through healing. It frequently

happens that people are healed on their deathbeds following the prayer of a Christian. In North Korea, there are a number of believers who were already Christians before Kim Il Sung came to power (around 1945). It is remarkable how many of these Christians have received the gift of healing.

Thirdly, people who are delivered from spirits are very open to the Gospel. In North Korea there is an intense spiritual battle going on. Many people are possessed, and some Christians are driving out spirits. Finally, evangelism is conducted through a variety of networks offering aid. Christians are helping one another with food, clothing and medicines. Christians share what they do not use with non-believers, and in this way they demonstrate the love of God.

What to pray for:

- That North Korean Christians will be strengthened with God's love and peace
- That God would move in power, setting the prisoners free and enabling believers to worship in freedom
- For a positive response from the Open Doors' campaign for China to respect the rights of refugees

Fact about North Korea:



Kim Il-sung was the founder of North Korea and the country's first and only president. Following his death in 1994, he was not replaced but instead received the designation of **'Eternal President'**, and was entombed in the vast Kumsusan Memorial Palace in central Pyongyang.

PERSECUTED CHURCH - N KOREA

The **World Watch List** ranks countries according to persecution and limitations on religious freedom.



North Korea has topped the World Watch List for six years in a row now. There is no other country in the world

where Christians are being persecuted in such a horrible and relentless way. Christians have been beaten, arrested, tortured, or killed by the authorities because of their religious beliefs. An Open Doors local source estimates the number of underground Christians to be at least 200,000, and it's likely that there are as many as 400,000 to half-a-million believers. At least a quarter of the Christians are imprisoned for their faith in political prison camps, from which people rarely get out alive.

The following questions and answers are edited from an Open Doors interview with Simon, who is in charge of their work in North Korea.

During the great famine in the 1990s, vast numbers of refugees crossed the border. Is this still happening?

Simon: Relatively few North Koreans are still trying to cross the borders. The border is guarded by the best North Korean soldiers. On the Chinese side, there are fences many kilometers long, and cameras have been installed. North Korea, too, is in the process of erecting fences. Besides this, the North Korean army has laid booby traps – pits with bamboo

spikes in them. Fleeing is practically impossible, unless you have a paid "guide" and you bribe the soldiers on the North Korean side. Sometimes you even have to bribe the Chinese soldiers.

Most of the refugees leave their country because of poverty and hunger. Others leave because they have already been imprisoned previously for some so-called offence. Are there also Christians who are fleeing because of religious persecution?

This hardly ever happens. Most Christians want to stay in their country. One day, North Korea will open up. They want to experience that moment in the land of their birth, because then they will finally be able to bring about the fulfillment of their dream: the re-opening of the churches of their forefathers. Besides this, most Christians do not see their country as a "hell," but as their workplace. How can they now leave the place where God has set them to work?

It is incredible that some refugees come to faith and then return. Can you give an example of this?

All right, I'll give an example of a courageous young woman. Let us call her Esther. She was 19 years old and severely malnourished when she reached China. She went through an extremely difficult time. As a refugee without rights, for three years she was abused by Chinese men. Esther became severely traumatized. At a certain point, she was staying with a Chinese woman and did not want to see anyone else. Her hostess approached one of my colleagues, who managed to get through to Esther, mainly by

Kidz-2-Kidz FRIDAY CLUB

Mrs McGinn's New Rule

Contributed by Tara

(Read Exodus 20:3-17; James 2:10)

"Mrs. McGinn posted a new list of Class rules today" Greg complained to his parents. "She says she's tired of everyone acting up but these rules are impossible. And she's really coming down hard on us if we break a rule." "Well, then you better be sure to know the rules and follow them," replied Dad.

The following day at school, Greg's pencil point broke. He glanced at Mrs. McGinn. She wasn't looking his way, so he tapped his friend Brad on the shoulder. "Do you have an extra pencil?" Greg whispered. "Greg Harris," thundered Mrs. McGinn. "You shall not whisper in class! You broke a rule, and you'll have to take the punishment. You'll stay after school for three days, starting tomorrow." Greg tried in vain to explain.

When Greg's parents heard about it, Mother shook her head. "That's too bad," she said sympathetically, "but you did know the rule, so you really can't complain." Dad took out his Bible. "Tonight let's read some of the rules God gave," he said. Turning to Exodus 20, he read the laws found there. "No one could ever keep these rules," said Dad. "And God also told what punishments were to be given

for disobeying his rules."

"Were they as bad as Mrs. McGinn's?" Greg asked. "Sometimes the punishment was death," replied Mom. "Sin is a terrible offence to God and the ultimate judgment for sin is eternal death, which is punishment in hell forever." "But Jesus paid the penalty for our sin," added Dad. "We now may experience God's grace rather than the punishment we deserve. We need to simply accept what Jesus did for us."

Mother nodded. "Although God does expect his children to do their best to obey him, we don't need to fear eternal punishment. Jesus took the punishment for us." "I wish someone would take my punishment from Mrs. McGinn, too," added Greg with a grin.

How about you? - Are you aware that you have broken God's rules? You deserve the punishment that follows disobedience, but Jesus took that punishment on himself. The "Rule" now is that you must accept what he has done for you. Have you done that?

Key: Jesus Took Your Punishment

Memory Verse:

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Ro 8:1)

WHAT'S YOUR SHAPE?



If the foot itches, would the hand refuse to scratch it? Of course not. In the same way when there is need in one part of the body of Christ, another with the ability to satisfy that need should step forward to do so.

Good in theory but, in my experience, it doesn't always seem to work that way, yet I truly wish it would! There are many reasons for this but perhaps three of the key barriers are:

- Reluctance to 'get involved'
- Lack of belief in one's own gifts
- Fear of making a need known

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them (Eph 2:10)

Firstly, we were all put on this earth to make a contribution; God designed us to make a difference with our lives - to add to life on earth, not just take from it. We are all ministers, called to serve God by serving each other and where better to start than amongst our own brothers and sisters?

The next thing to realise is that we have all been shaped by God. We are His work of art, His unique design and He doesn't make useless things! We have all been blessed with natural abilities, God-given at birth and developed through the experience He has allowed us to have during life.

As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1Pe 4:10)

To help identify what these are, Rick Warren talks about our S-H-A-P-E¹.

In this article Philip asks "Would sharing our gifts help us become closer as a body of Christians?"

The acronym SHAPE stands for

Spiritual gifts
Heart
Abilities
Personality
Experience

I have yet to understand or experience Spiritual gifts, so it is the other 4 areas I want to concentrate on here.

Our **heart** represents the source of all our motivations - what we love to do. We instinctively care about some things and these are clues to where we could serve. What are you enthusiastic about?

Our **abilities** are the natural talents we were born with. Obvious examples are musical ability, being able to fix things or skill with words. And don't say: "Well, I don't have any" because you have dozens, if not hundreds lying dormant inside. The average person possesses 500 - 700 different skills and abilities and every ability can be used for God's glory.

As for **personality**, there is no-one just like you or me! Whether intro- or extrovert, thinker or doer, leader or team player, steady Eddy or trail-blazer, God uses all types. Our personalities will affect how and where we use our gifts and abilities. Like stained glass, our personalities reflect God's light in many different colours and patterns and this blesses the church with depth and variety.

Lastly, there is all our **experience**, knowledge and training to draw on. Just think how you have been shaped by all that has happened in your life - much of it beyond your control but allowed by God to fit you for His purposes.

(Continued on page 7)

... who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2Co 1:4)

This includes family, educational, vocational, spiritual, ministry and painful experiences and it is said that it is the last of these that God uses most to prepare us for helping others.

I feel we each have a responsibility to evaluate our own gifts - by all means with help from those who know us - and to be ready to use them to the benefit of others wherever possible.

No gift is unimportant nor any service too small. Every talent is worthy, that's why God gave it to you. This calls for sensitivity and encouragement towards those naturally more timid amongst us and warns against comparing one with another.

The last barrier is perhaps the hardest to overcome. People are naturally reluctant to admit they need help and don't like to feel 'beholding' to others.

The word 'naturally' is important here and perhaps one way to tackle this barrier is to remember that we are no longer natural men and women, but children of God.

Another case of good in theory you might say, and I agree. It will take more than exhortations from me or anyone else to get folk to trust in the motives of brothers and sisters who want to help.

So it is important that our motives not only *are* but *are seen to be* grounded in love for each other and offered for God's glory, not through pride in our 'own' abilities.

Trust will grow as we help each other with sensitivity. Help offered with love should not make a person feel inadequate just because they can't do the thing that God has gifted another the ability to do. A deed done out of true

sacrificial love needs no payment and should not make the recipient feel in debt.

We all have needs, both spiritual and practical, and God wouldn't have brought us all together with different blends of likes, skills, knowledge and experience, if He didn't want us to live cohesively.

Share with God's people who are in need. (Ro 12:13a)

We all share the same Holy Spirit and I believe it is this that binds us together as part of Christ's body. By learning to rely on and help each other with our various gifts can only draw us closer together as we discover more about each other in the process.

The final point I'd like to make is that by letting others help us within the church, we are helping them develop the very gift of giving (regardless of what it is they have to give). That, in turn, equips us to move outside the church walls and begin to serve our communities, sharing the love of Christ as we go.

So, what's your SHAPE? What has the Lord entrusted to you that you should share with others to His eternal glory?

I appeal also to our Elders, that they accept their responsibility both to encourage and to facilitate us in our ministry to each other. And not just for those with obvious talents or strong personalities, but to act as moderators to ensure ALL get the chance to help build up God's church in Ennis.

Post Script - *Since writing this a couple of months ago, the Lord has pointed me to various other scriptures and teachings, all confirming love's obligation to help each other. I'm coming to realise that sacrifice is the highest expression of love and contentment grows in the soil of selflessness*