

# SPIRES AND STEEPLES

Church news from across the district



## Different Strokes

by Philip Brown

When is the right time to think about eternity? I mean if there is a concept of timelessness that continues forever that will be the lot for all people, when is it a good time to think about that?

Is it when things are going well, when money is not the usual problem or when relationships are alright? Is that a good time to reflect on God's goodness and prepare ourselves for an eternity of being with God? At such times people are usually consumed with the gifts of life and forget the giver.

When the wheel of life turns to the bad times and illness strikes or a relationship is crushed of life is that a good time to seek after God? Often at such times people turn from apathy to opposing God and pleading injustice.

In Warsaw there is a museum dedicated to the 1944 uprising of the Polish people against the German occupiers. In two months tens of thousands were killed. Many people were executed and the wholesale destruction of life and property was horrible. During this war millions were killed without any significant re-evaluation of spiritual values.

People still acted as though the values of this world were permanent and refused to think about eternity.

Revelation, the last book of the Bible is a vision of the future. In chapter six, awful imagery tells the history of the world. It contains visions of awfulness!

Such horror should drive people towards God but the reality is different. Whether people of influence and power or commoners with little or no importance in the scheme of things the reality of God is avoided until it is too late. This world will come to an end when God will shake his own creation like a rag doll and eternity will explode as a truth before the eyes of all. God has offered his love to people now. It will not always be so. The time to think about eternity is now – it is the only time we have!

# Church reopens after flood damage

WORSHIPPERS at Newry Baptist Church will return to the church this weekend almost five months after it closed after it was extensively damaged by flood.

Thousands of pounds worth of damage was caused to the Downshire Place premises after pipes burst in the third floor toilets at the end of December.

Flooding caused a number of roofs to collapse as well as saturating carpets and wallpaper, leaving the premises closed to its 70-strong congregation.

However, Sunday services resumed throughout the continued closure of the church during repair work thanks to the helping hand of management at the WIN Industrial Estate.

Phillip Brown, Pastor of the Church, said: "The day the thaw started was the day we discovered the damage.

"There was a burst pipe in the bathroom upstairs, which brought two ceilings beneath it down.

"We had to get new ceilings and new floors just to fix the place and get it back the way it was, but it gave us an opportunity to update the building."

Pastor Brown said the church was indebted to management at WIN for facilitating their Sunday services since January.

"Thankfully the folk in WIN Estate were extremely good to us. They were really, really helpful," he said.

"They don't open at all at the weekend but they have opened and closed the building every Sunday for services for us, which was tremendous for us because we would have been in a right pickle had the not helped us out."



PHILIP Brown, the Pastor of Newry Baptist Church, views the new-look premises. The church was closed for almost five months after flooding in December caused major damage.

Worshippers will be keen to get back to the new-look church, which has undergone extensive repair work, including new roofs, new carpeting and has been freshly painted.

Outlining the Church ethos, Pastor Brown added: "Our congregation from all arts and parts, different nationalities,

different cultural backgrounds, different political backgrounds and we function with that, because Christ is the drive, not culture, not politics, nothing else.

His words direct us as to what are the important things and what aren't the important things."



## Weekly Wisdom

by Raymond McLernon

A FATHER was out walking with his young son when the lad asked if he could borrow his dad's walking stick, to which the father agreed.

As you might imagine that walking stick soon became a Golf Club to hit stones with and a 'scythe' to slice the heads off dandelions and other weeds.

By and by however, the boy poked the walking stick into a nest of ants that went scurrying in all directions to seek out a place of refuge.

The boy became very upset because he had disturbed the tiny creatures and had caused them to run away frightened and he immediately came crying to his father to see if he could explain to the ants that he didn't mean any harm and wanted them to know that he really loved them.

But his father said 'I'm glad you have such a tender heart toward these little ants, and I would love to explain that to them, but I can't speak their language'.

This simple incident reminds us how sin causes us to run in every direction as we seek a place of refuge for our souls yet we never can find it in this old world.

But the Lord Jesus Christ is the great and only refuge for the soul of man.

It doesn't matter what language we speak or where we come from, the remedy is the same for all men ... the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin ... when we repent of it and trust Him for full salvation!

Christ is our Refuge! Are you hiding in Him?

## Newry nun pens Priests' song

NORTHERN Ireland's internationally renowned clerical singing stars The Priests have collared a musical nun from Newry as one of their newest songwriters.

Sister Briège O'Hare has been recruited to write a special hymn for the tuneful trio who have sold millions of their albums throughout the world.

Sr Briège has been writing songs for years at the Poor Clare Monastery at Faughart, near Dundalk in Co Louth.

Seven albums of her work have been released.

But now she has received the blessing of The Priests, who will sing her latest composition, Lord Teach Us To Pray, at a festival in Armagh in July.

"I am a big fan of The Priests and I am over the Moon at the prospect of hearing them singing one of my pieces," said Sr Briège.

"I'm not a singer myself and I get another nun from the Mercy Order, Sister Marie Cox, to record my songs."

Sister Briège, who is originally from Newry, has never met the platinum-selling group before.

Fr Eugene O'Hagan and his brother Fr Martin, together with Fr David Delargy, juggle parish life in Northern Ireland with international appearances, including a performance for Pope Benedict last September.

The Priests' latest recruit has insisted she won't let her new-found stardom go to her head.

"I have absolutely no thoughts about following them into the charts," she said.



PIONEER pupils - Bishop John McAreavey has presented pioneer pins to Year 8 pupils of St Joseph's Boys' High School. Pictured getting his from the Bishop is Redas Zarzeckis as teacher Josephine Matthews looks on.