

## **Tom Dowling – Irish Mission Worker – Kilkenny**

### **“Sharing the gospel”**

Since joining the Irish Mission ten years ago, by the grace of God we’ve seen a good number of people come to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and a lot of people challenged with the truth of God’s Word. Over the past year, we’ve been involved in a number of different ministries focused on sharing the Word of God, and building bridges for the gospel into the community.

Most of the outreaches I’m engaged in are ongoing weekly events – door-to-door visitation, Christianity Explored Courses, Outreach/Discipleship Bible Studies, Faith InDeed (ministries of mercy), Market Evangelism, Street Light (Saturday night tea/coffee/gospel street outreach), Millennium Court Children’s club and Kilkenny Christian Bookshop.

One of the challenges I face is to find fresh ways of making meaningful contact with people. Often we run events but find it difficult to get people to attend. Or in our daily lives the numbers of people we meet are limited, so we find that the best way to contact people is by going to where they are – their homes (door-to-door), or by meeting them when they are out and about shopping (Market Evangelism) or out socialising (Saturday Night Street Light).

**Door-to-door visitation** provides great opportunities to listen to people, and to have many encouraging exchanges about the gospel. I rarely come home without having had one or more meaningful gospel conversations.

**Market Evangelism** takes place during the Farmer’s Market on Thursdays from 9am until 1.30pm from our pop-up gazebo on the Parade, just outside Kilkenny Castle. Literature is given out, gospel conversations are engaged in, relationships with stall-holders are built up, and people from many different countries take literature and ask hard questions.

Just before writing this, my wife Helena and I spent the morning doing this outreach and chatting with those who approached us. Examples of contacts today:

An extended conversation with a man from Chicago covering a wide range of biblical topics. As he left he wanted a selection of all the leaflets we had on display and expressed a great hunger to read them;  
a long chat with a young couple from Tipperary. The girl became a Christian a couple of weeks ago and was hungry to know more;  
a child who wanted a New Testament and whose mother assured him that she would read it to him;  
a previously contacted stall-holder who today gave us a gift of a plant called “Balm of Gilead”, adding that it has a name which comes from the Bible.

I find this outreach particularly encouraging, as it is the people who are interested who initiate the approach, and it is lovely to be available and see a conversation open up that could only have been orchestrated by the Spirit of God.

**StreetLight** takes place two Saturday nights per month in the city centre. We set up the pop-up gazebo, put on the hi-viz “Faith InDeed” jackets, and give out free tea and coffee, which gives us lots of opportunities to engage people, young and old, in conversations about the gospel, and to give out gospel leaflets.

#### **Prayer points:**

- Please pray that God will make the good seed of His Word grow, and that many people, young and old, will come to know Jesus as Saviour and be built up in their faith.

- Give thanks for all those in Kilkenny who actively take part in these and other ministries, and pray that the Lord of the harvest would send more labourers into His harvest field, especially to help with door-to-door visitation, Millennium Court Children's club and Street Light.
- Please pray for the opening up of further opportunities to run Christianity Explored/evangelistic Bible Studies with individuals and groups. Thank you.