

our people

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DR CongoDioceses of Bukavu,

Egypt (with Ethiopia & North Africa)

North Africa)
Province of Alexandria

Kenya

Diocese of Kajiado; Urban Development Programme, Nairobi

Nepal

Human Development Community Services; SD Church

Rwanda

Dioceses of Kibungo & Shyogwe

South SudanDioceses of Ezo. Ibba.

Kajo Keji, Maridi, Olc & Yei

Tanzania

Diocese of Kondoa

Uganda

Dioceses of Luweerd & Madi West Nile

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contents

Encounters that Awaken: expansive living

A Divine Encounter: witnessing this Holy mystery in the life of SS





Compass Points:
multi-directional ministry

An Unexpected Arrival:
encountering the God of the global
church in the forests of South Sudan

A Place to Pause: restoration and remembering in Nabugabo, Uganda

Snippets:
CMSI News

Cover image: Nabugabo Uganda visit, 2025





This issue's theme invites us to consider what it means to live expansively — to stretch beyond the limits of our own experience.

"If we just live within ourselves, or if our lives are determined by our own needs, our wants, or our desires, it's a very small world."*

Spoken almost 20 years ago, these words of Eugene Peterson are as significant today as when they were first uttered. Perhaps even more so. With global connectivity and a 'world' of information in our pockets, we can be fooled into thinking we see the whole picture. We may feel globally connected, yet our feeds often narrow our view, reinforcing what we already think. We can so easily reside in the limited space of our own imagination.

This is the where the power of story comes in. Through the lives of other people – a teacher in Nepal, a minister in Burundi, a young girl giving birth in a forest – we are invited into a world larger than ourselves. Shared stories help us to look up and out. Our lens is widened. Our imaginative landscape is given greater scope.

The life of Jesus – his story – and the whole Biblical narrative offers us the most

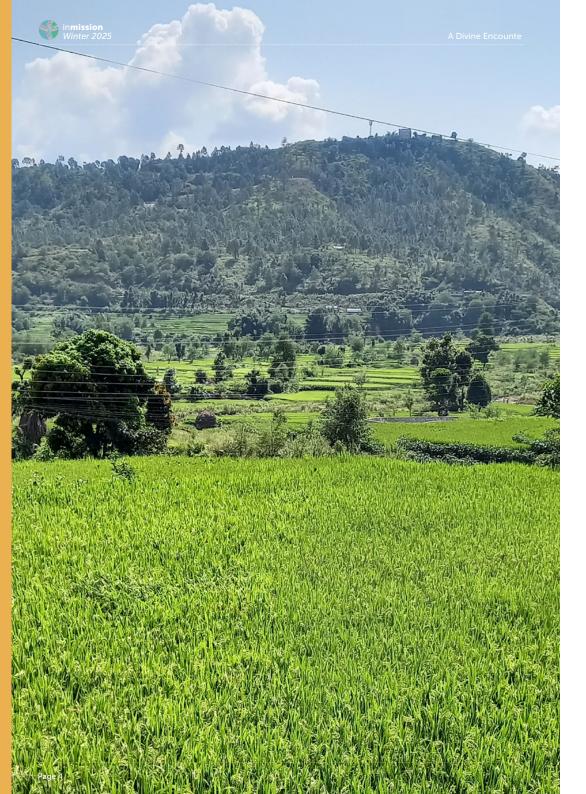
expansive story possible. One which, at its very heart, will not only change the course of individual lives but has fundamentally altered the trajectory of life on this planet.

One of the many advantages of being part of the global church is that we get to see the next part of God's story being played out. We are given another narrative through the lives of people in other places that awakens perspectives that are different to our own. We are gifted the opportunity to live more expansively.

We hope that the articles in this issue will encourage you to see beyond your usual parameters. As friends close to home and those further afield share their experiences of global fellowship, may you be reawakened to the divine mystery of God — the one who is always at work, drawing all people and all places into his story.







A Divine Encounter

Witnessing this Holy mystery in the life of SS, CMSI's Local Mission Partner in Nepal

Time together can be transformational. This is something the Rev Scott McDonald can attest to after meeting CMSI's Local Mission Partner, SS, from Nepal. In autumn 2024, SS spent some time in Ireland visiting churches and was the keynote speaker at our annual Ignite conference. Many of you will have enjoyed his company and benefitted from his wisdom during that visit. His ability to offer deep insight in the most gentle manner had a powerful effect. Rev Scott shared some reflections with us:

"When SS was in Newry we got to share some quality conversations in the home of Gordon and Ruth Patterson where he was staying. His humility and quiet assuredness was enlightening, encouraging and challenging.

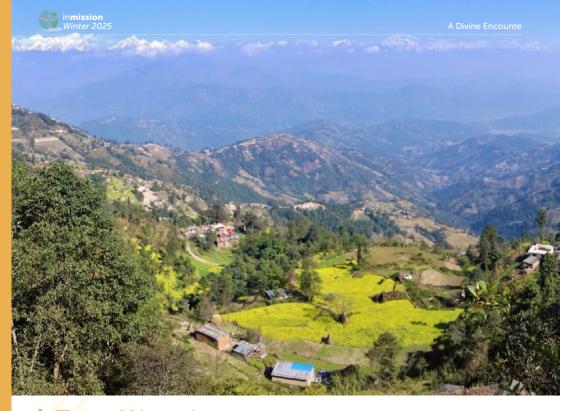
He clearly had a real relationship with the Lord Jesus which evidently flowed out from a lifechanging encounter with Christ. This resulted in a thoroughly comprehensive reevaluation of everything he had previously based his world view on. Becoming a follower of Jesus, for him, was not the "icing on the cake" of all that had gone before but

a total transformation of his deepest held beliefs and a new direction in the course of his life.

In the West it has been said that in our evangelistic efforts, we have called many to conversion but few to discipleship. There may be a lot of truth in this for us here, but it would not be true of SS. In surrendering his life to Christ – in the cultural setting of Nepal – he has counted the cost and picked up his cross. In acknowledging this, I was intrigued by the infectious joy he had in his faith and with his insatiable thirst for more experience and knowledge of Christ Jesus.

Image: Nepal





The world is coming to us – the Great Commsission is on our doorstep!

We talked at length and prayed in unity. It is such a privilege and blessing to be a part of the Body of Christ which consists of brothers and sisters from around the world. We believed the same things about faith and understood the same incontrovertible basics about mission – it is not an optional extra but fundamental to faith. It is an imperative of the Gospel that we share what we have received. In these things we were as one.

That being said, in SS I saw something deeper than simply relating information about God to others. There was an underlying energy and determination about him. An urgency to get on with it. This was not at all unsettling, but inspiring; not off-putting, but thought provoking. Indeed, his relationship with Christ imbued his whole life – it coloured all

his interactions, affected his every decision, dominated his very thinking. While we claim to believe the same thing about mission, it is being practiced by SS in a wholly self-sacrificial way. In him I could see a totally counter-cultural and costly lifestyle. I could see Matthew 9:35 – 10:42 being lived out. To be a follower of Jesus is to do the things that Jesus did in the way that he did them. Here and now. For SS, and the theology students he trains back home in Nepal, this way of life is the only biblically faithful way to live.

I have a lot to learn about discipleship and distinctive Christlike living from SS and from followers of Jesus from other nations and cultures. We share the same faith, but they have a unique and sometimes very different perspective."



This encounter with SS clearly made a strong impression. So much so that Rev Scott shared with us some of the effects over the last year.

In his leading of two parishes in Newry, there is a renewed focus on discipleship and distinctive living. Regular Bible study and prayer, as well as an Alpha course, is seeing church numbers grow. And not just among people born in Ireland! **Newcomers from Nigeria, China, Iran and** other places are helping the parishioners of Newry experience the joy of global fellowship. Indeed, The Grove church plant, under the leadership of Pioneer **Evangelist Natalie Trainor, is another** wonderful consequence of connecting with the global body of Christ. Rev Scott said — "The world is coming to us — the **Great Commsission is on our doorstep!"** The enthusiasm for a deeper life with **Christ that Rev Scott saw in SS is bearing** fruit through him, here in Ireland.





Having spent 5 weeks in Ireland in early summer 2024, Rev Arsène Mafurebe understands something of the challenges involved in cross-cultural sharing. As the Development Coordinator for the Diocese of Gitega, Burundi, he has a unique insight on being a 'bridge' between worlds. Acting as such for a team from Armagh during their visit, Rev Arsène reflected on their time in Burundi:



"The Diocese of Gitega hosted from September 19 to 29, 2025 a team of four from Armagh Diocese: Ven. Elizabeth Cains, Rev Derek Kerr, and Davina McAllister, along with Rev Dr Keith Scott from CMSI.

During their stay, the team travelled very long distances over roads that were rugged and potholed, ate food unfamiliar yet rich with local flavors (they enjoyed Burundian pineapples and small bananas, a lot), and ventured outside their comfort zones to an environment with intermittent electricity, water and wi-fi that came and went unpredictably.

Despite these challenges, they were always excited and eager to go and meet their brothers and sisters in Christ, including those living with extreme poverty in remote areas. The team members found joy in conversations (though translated), shared meals and communal prayers. Wherever





The Armagh team visit deepened the understanding of the love of Christ and a much-needed hunger to maintain unity in mission within the Anglican communion

they visited, they were asked: "muragaruka kuturamutsa kandi muze mugume mudusengera" – May you please come back again and keep us in your prayers. Personally, being a young minister, I was inspired to see people with 35+ years in ministry with the same passion for mission, eager to go the extra mile as if they were ordained the day before!

The experience of pioneer ministry within the Church of Ireland/Armagh Diocese as shared by Ven. Elizabeth encouraged clergy in the Diocese of Gitega not to be content with congregations that come to us. There are still big numbers of people unreached with the Gospel; our call to go out and share with them the saving Good News of Christ was renewed.

The Armagh team visit deepened the understanding of the love of Christ and a much-needed hunger to maintain unity in

mission within the Anglican communion. "It's hard to imagine that the Sunday before I flew to Burundi, I was sharing in my church about this country but I knew so little about it!" Ven Elizabeth said. Her surprise and newfound understanding of Burundi's context and challenges, to me, signify what partnership is all about: people learning to know one another, and willing to pray for one another.

As Bishop Aimé Joseph says: "Money doesn't make partnership, people do." We are glad Elizabeth, Derek, Davina and Keith made it to Burundi/Gitega, representing Armagh Diocese and bridging a praying partnership between two dioceses, two cultures, two communities, yet one people in Christ sharing the same 'Missio Dei', seeking to make of the nations, disciples of Christ."



Rev Arsène Mafurebe,Development Coordinator for the Diocese of Gitega, Burundi





Meeting Points

Davina McAllister reflects on her visit to the Diocese of Gitega

As part of the Armagh Diocese team visit to Burundi in autumn 2025, Davina McAllister represented the Mothers' Union Worldwide. She was enthused and inspired by the people she encountered. She witnessed resilience and an ability to endure which was previously unknown to her. There is much for us to learn from these friends of faith.



Reflecting on that same visit to Gitega you have just read about from Rev Arsène, Davina writes:

"Burundi is a beautiful country with wonderful scenery. But it is also a place of struggle and challenge for those who call it their home. I will take away memories of people moving their goats and cattle to access food. I will always remember seeing people farm every available piece of land through back breaking physical effort to provide food for their families. This is a place where extreme poverty is very evident. As we learned of the daily lives of local people, we realised that each day is a struggle for the majority to provide food for their families. This had a profound impact on me as I began to appreciate the complexity of the situations facing people as they tried to bring

about an improvement in their daily lives. At the same time, I was hit by the hope, joy and aspirations of everyone we met. It just shone through. The support given to the community by the Gitega Mothers' Union facilitators and the diocese through the adult literacy programme was gratefully received. This locally run initiative is headed up by MU President Madame Bénigne Barendegere - Bishop Aimé Joseph's wife who visited Ireland in 2022 for CMSI's Kingdom Voices conference. Gitega's MU enables thousands of women to read, gain numeracy skills and start up small businesses to provide for their families. It also facilitates community savings programmes and credit groups as well as teaching parenting, animal care and improved farming skills. It was a real blessing to see the community spirit and working together within their churches.



Meeting Points



So many people impacted me, but the faith of one particular man stood out - a member of Nyarunazi Parish, a rural congregation in the diocese. He told us of the difficulties of his early life as an orphan. He shared about an Anglican minister who took him in and cared for him after the trauma he had suffered. In gratitude, he farmed a small area of land for nine years, selling the products and putting the money back into the church. These funds mean that there is now a church building. They are at the stage of needing iron sheets for the roof in order to complete the sanctuary. He is concerned that damage could be done during the wet season without a roof and so he has turned to the diocese to request help in order to complete the new church. With many people having to walk between 2 and 3 hours to attend their nearest church, this is a story of hope from the ashes. In thanksgiving to those who shared God's love with him as a vulnerable child, he now sacrificially shares with the whole community."

Davina told us how this sort of generosity and sharing was seen by the team again and again, not least in the life and witness of Bishop Aimé Joseph Kimararungu and his dedicated diocesan staff. They support the people in practical and spiritual ways. Along with the Mothers' Union, they reach out to the whole community. They are teaching and training catechists to lead rural churches. These individuals travel vast distances to attend monthly Bible classes. They also support ministers and Sunday school teachers with monthly meetings, who again travel long difficult journeys to attend. With such a demonstration of Christ's love in action, it shouldn't surprise us that the growth of the Anglican church in Burundi is rapid. Davina told us that she found the whole experience truly inspirational.

Another individual who made a significant impact on her was Rev Arsène Mafurebe, the writer of 'Fellowshipping Together' on pages 8 and 9 of this issue. Indeed, many of you will

have met him during his visit to Ireland in May 2024. Davina described him as "a person living out deep faith in action". She told us, "His day starts with a daily prayer meeting in his church at 6am, even though he had the added responsibility of long days planned and filled with the team schedule from Armagh Diocese. This did not alter his normal responsibilities and I know when we had down times, Rev Arsène was back in his office to plan and catch up with work." As the group's leader, the team from Armagh were able to see firsthand his "integrity and kind-hearted patience, sharing the faith with an upright leadership". Davina wanted to share this message with Rev Arsène – "I learnt so much from you both in knowledge and spirituality and wish you God's richest blessings in all you do".





Despite the many challenges people face in Burundi, Davina declared: "I see a church meeting people at their point of need, transforming lives by walking along side and among them, helping practically and bringing the gospel to so many through good works." Through their life and witness they are serving Christ in very tangible ways.

"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

Matthew 25: 40

These face-to-face encounters enable times of rich global fellowship. When different parts of the body of Christ are able to dwell in the same space, something special really does happen.

Kilmore, Elphine &

Ardagh

Compass Points





Compass Points

Multi-directional ministry

Being an All-Ireland charity, we seek out opportunities to meet with people in every province. Encountering God as we share in mission together is deeply enriching. These times together refuel us as much as they inform and enthuse you.

Do get in touch if you would like a CMSI speaker to visit your church community, youth group or school. Email **info@cmsireland.org**



Meath &











Page 14





An Unexpected Arrival

Encountering the God of the global church in the forests of South Sudan

Linda recently received a moving photograph from Bishop Isaac of Ezo Diocese. It was taken by a team from the diocese who had gone into the forest to bring relief to people displaced by local fighting. The scene is raw and intimate and is described here, rather than shared, as we seek to encounter God through the eyes of the global church and honour the dignity of those involved.

Will we allow the reality of faith, in places of conflict, to touch our sanitised expectations of God?

The older women who attended the birth have trampled the grass and gathered clean leaves to make a safe place for Ludia. A few feet away the forest floor is stained with the effort of childbirth. A few miles away, the village home of this small cradle of women is stained with the blood of conflict.

Two days ago these women ran from their village in Tambura, South Sudan. They were heading for safety – first within the random thickets of the forest, but eventually, they hoped, in the town of Ezo. Ludia not only carried her young children and the essentials gathered in chaos and fear, inside she carried a baby, still with some weeks to mature before her expected delivery.

But now, Ludia sits in the forest, legs stretched out in front of her, straight backed, overwhelmed, but accomplished. Her baby girl's face, shone clean by the corner of her midwife's skirt, beams fresh and new from the improvised, yet pristine, swaddling. She is warm and safe, for now, on her mother's lap. Three women stand close by. Another three, the older women who have escaped through this forest before, sit close. Their faces are heavy, broken with the responsibility of the past hours; the urgent fear of keeping a mother's pain, and a baby's awakening, silent in this place of insecurity.

How might an encounter with such a scene awaken new understanding of the God of the global church? Might it take us to Exodus 1 to reread the dark truth around our Sunday School memories of the birth of Moses (Exodus 1 v 15-20)? Can we recognise the faith of Shiphrah and Puah, in the face of Ludia's midwives? Will we allow the reality of faith,



in places of conflict, to touch our sanitised expectations of God? Could we aspire to courageous faithfulness akin to that shown by the church in Ezo?

Or perhaps this encounter could force us to re-examine Mary's reality, as she heard that she was to be favoured with a child in a system hostile to unmarried mothers: in a time when she too would be required to travel hard distances carrying an expected child, to give birth in an unexpected place. Could we be moved afresh by her faith, that did not scoff at Gabriel's "Do not be afraid" (Luke 1 v 26-38)? Could this encounter resurrect in us an awe like hers, that trusts in God's sovereignty with no need to fear? Will the picture of Ludia's daughter, born safe in impossible circumstances, inspire us to tackle the truth that our God is real every moment, not only in the little remembrances we observe before him?

Surely this must be the renown of God's global church; that our hope remains in the God of Shiphrah, Puah, Moses and Mary, and that he still shows himself strong in the lives of his people around the world. It is the story of the church, to be both weary and victorious, to hold onto the peace of our faith while the battle of good and evil rages still. The God of Ludia, Ludia's midwives and her baby daughter holds our fragility gently and sends us help as needed, yet still asks us to step into hard things with faith. Let us, the global church, serve him with courage as we wait for his return.



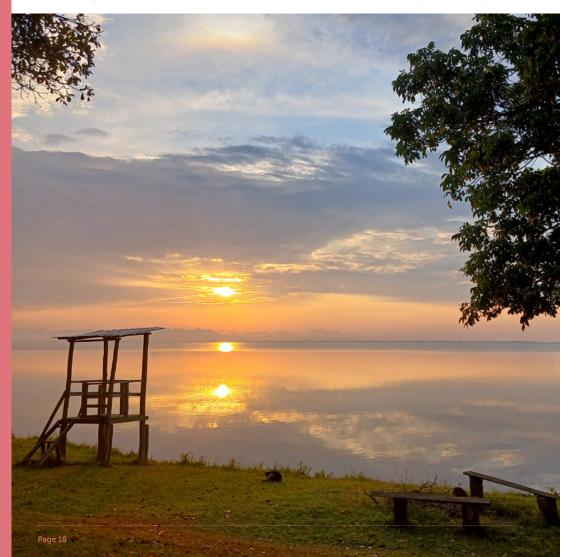
A Place to Pause



in**mission**Winter 2025

A Place to Pause

Restoration and remembering in Nabugabo, Uganda



As Jenny approaches the end of her time as CMS Ireland's Director, she pauses to reflect in a place redolent with personal significance and memories – Nabugabo, Uganda.

Nabugabo: a beautiful lake, graceful trees with playful monkeys and fishermen in dugout canoes hoping for a catch. This place belongs to the Church of Uganda and has been a space for retreats, celebrations and holidays for over 70 years. I first came as a child on family half term holidays while my parents were teaching at Kings College, Budo, a CMS founded mission school where many of Uganda's leaders gained their secondary education and were nurtured in faith.

I have visited Nabugabo down through the years for refreshment and fun, to reflect and seek restoration. Working with special needs children at Mengo hospital in the late 80's, I would gather my colleagues and some of the CMS folk and head down for a weekend with tents, cooking pots, swimming gear and a frisbee. Gathering round a campfire in the evenings I learnt so much as we chatted about our cultures, shared our life

experiences and formed deep bonds of friendship. Several of these friendships have lasted through the years as our paths have meandered, diverging and then, gifting joyful surprise, crossing at new meeting points.

My father was quick to respond when invited by the rural community of Gguluddene in the late 1980s to coordinate a team of volunteers to work with them in constructing a new centre for special needs education. He invited folk from his parish, set about raising funds and carefully prepared the team so that the basic conditions and hard work would come as no surprise. Uganda was still in the very initial stages of recovery from the years of brutality that left the country on its knees, the economy in tatters and people traumatised by grief and loss. As the team sweated alongside their hosts, carrying bricks up the hill, mixing mortar, ferrying jerrycans of water and sitting together over beans and posho, the global







"I have visited Nabugabo down through the years for refreshment and fun, to reflect and seek restoration."

nature of church was evidenced in solidarity. After each day of work, Gguluddene church members arranged evangelistic outreaches for the team in the nearby markets – the meeting places for all rural communities – and these became places where lives were transformed as God's word was shared. A weekend at Nabugabo provided well earned rest and refreshment for the team, with plenty of swimming to wash away the dirt and grime.

Over the years my father led many such teams to a whole variety of places in Uganda, many arranged through an outstanding christian working for Uganda Prisons. A highlight each time was the Nabugabo weekend with precious times of worship and prayer around a campfire under the starry skies. Several young folk came to faith and many grew in discipleship, some requesting baptism in Nabugabo lake. Heaven meeting earth.

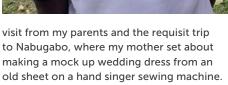
A second chapter of mission partner service opened in the early 90's when CMS responded to an invitation from Uganda's Ministry of Health and I was sent to start the country's first Occupational Therapy training scheme. Daunted, I sought advice from a wise friend. 'Go: work at it with all your heart and soul, but be prepared to let go if it is just not possible'. During the seven years that followed I was based at Mulago Hospital in Kampala. There were many frustrations, but through prayer and plodding the OT school opened in 1994. Occasional pilgrimages to Nabugabo lifted my spirit when things were tough. I was thankful for a place to seek restoration of heart and soul, and draw close to the creator.

Two particular weekends stand out during those years of mission partner service in Mulago.

The first, an opportunity to meet a fellow mission partner, Billy, who a year later in a dugout canoe among the Nabugabo waterlilies, asked me to marry him.

Transformational encounters. Wedding plans were somewhat complex, but involved a





Moving up to north west Uganda, then across the border to Sudan and returning to live in Ireland rendered visits to Nabugabo impossible for a few years.

Precious memories.

However, as I write this, I find myself at Nabugabo once again, the lure of this special meeting place is strong, redolent with memories. As retirement from CMS Ireland draws close, the opportunity to revisit arose when invited to attend the Global South Fellowship of Anglicans (GSFA) missions track conference as an observer. This is a very significant time for the Anglican Communion as the bonds of fellowship are stretched and tested. Nabugabo is a thin place. A place to





"Nabugabo is a thin place"

recentre, to rediscover the core of faith and to sense the guidance of Holy Spirit.

Reading Revelation 1:9 John identifies Patmos as the place he met with God in a vision. He sums up the earthly Christian life thus: 'I John, your brother, who share with you in Jesus the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance...'

May we all navigate the tribulations we face with patient endurance, accompanied by Jesus, and heartened when we find meeting places made holy by God's presence as his kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven.



Jenny SmythMission Director

snippets cmsi news in brief







Prayer Room

Prayer Room continues on the first Wednesday of each month at 1pm online. If you joined us since October 2025, you will receive a reminder link the week of the prayer room – you only need to register once for the October '25 to June '26 series.

However, if you didn't manage to sign up, scan this QR code or head to our website to register:

www.cmsireland.org/pray



Food for thought: Global Fellowship

"Picture a church where cultures don't just coexist – they connect. A church where strangers become family. Where cultural differences don't divide but enrich." Intercultural Ministry, OMF UK



Updates on some of our People in Mission

Andrew and Joanne Quill continue to seek out ways to support Bishop Wilson in ministry in Ibba. Through a version of "The Jesus Film" in Zande and work on a translation of the Alpha course, the people of Ibba and beyond are able to hear about the life of Christ and explore faith in their heart language. Thanks to all who continue to support the Quills through CMSI's mission partner programme.

Interfaith Learning Pilgrimage

The Church of Ireland Interfaith Working Group, in collaboration with the Church Mission Society Ireland and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Understanding Cairo, is inviting applications from people of diverse faith backgrounds to join a learning pilgrimage to Egypt. Expected dates **24th Oct—1st Nov, 2026.**

For more information go to our website **www.cmsireland.org/cmsi-teams** or scan the QR code.





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Bishop Wilson Kamani has a real vision for peace building and has worked hard over the past 10 years to bring community representatives and politicians together in Ibba, South Sudan, for one week each January. When he was here in Ireland, Bishop Wilson shared about ways to engage in peace and reconciliation, and how this process is being worked out in every sector of society.

Go to the podcast section of CMSI's resource area to hear his conversation with Jonny Sanlon www.cmsireland.org/podcasts

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