

inmission



the magazine of **cmsireland**

A Flood of Justice

Amos speaks today

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DR Congo

Dioceses of Bukavu, Kindu & N. Kivu

Egypt (with Ethiopia & 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 Sudan

Dioceses of Ezo, Ibba, Kajokeji, Maridi, Olo & Yei

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Cover Image: Sonia Nelson, 'Beautiful Dreamer', acrylic on canvas, 91.4cm x 91.4cm. Life Thru Art Northern Ireland.



a two-edged liberty

The Loneliness of Living Only for Ourselves

Recently, I heard the Irish poet Micheal O'Siadhail interviewed about his latest collection, *Desire*. In this quartet of poems, O'Siadhail addresses many of the pressing global concerns of our time. Unsurprisingly, the dominance of the virtual realm on our lives occupies one full section of this work. During the conversation, people's need for approval, for "likes", for connection was juxtaposed with a desire for freedom and individuality. The tension between the two is marvellously expressed in these haunting lines:

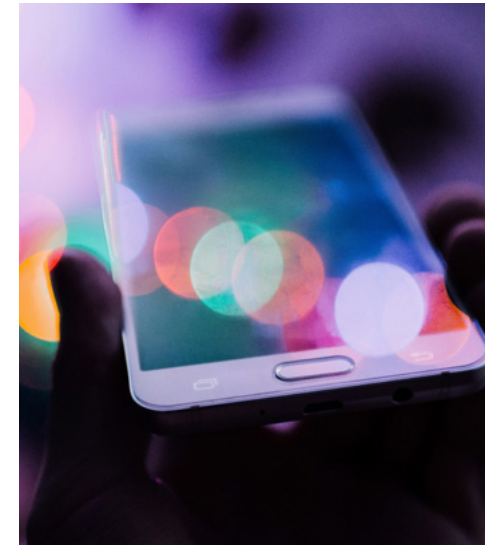
*"What is named connectedness,
feeds relentless hunger to express.
Now our two-edged, newfound liberty;
how in freedom we know loneliness".*

Empty connection, the pursuit of hollow recognition, will leave us lost and alone.

Even if we don't spend hours online, we can still fall foul to self-serving avarice. All too often our gaze is turned inward rather than out. All too often we privilege ourselves over other people. Whatever the cause, the result is the same – a deep loneliness that comes from living only for ourselves.

And what is the remedy? Surely it is real connection with real people. This, Jesus tells us, is the way to meet with our maker. "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there", Matthew 18:20. Coming together with Christ as the focus brings purpose, community and fellowship.

The interdependence within the body of Christ, each part working together, is necessary. We all benefit when we care for one



another. This is where true freedom is found; freedom to rest in the loving embrace, comfort and care of God's family.

This aspiration to be knitted together, however, calls us to take up one another's challenges. Just as a pluck in the weave disrupts the rest of a garment, pain experienced in one part of the body should be felt elsewhere. These analogies help us understand the nature of interconnectedness in the church. Whether in our local congregations or across the global church, we do not stand alone. A healthy 'body' requires us to pull together.

It is this need to shoulder one another's struggles, to actively work to diminish the plight of each other, that is the central focus of this issue. From people washed up on our shores to those that can help us see ourselves more clearly, God calls us to work together for justice. We are required to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly after God. We hope the articles in these pages help in our shared pursuit of praise that is pleasing to God.



Emma Lutton
Communications Coordinator



This year, the annual theme hit us between the eyes. In listening to the voices of the majority world and observing the disconnect between theologising *about* God and living *for* God, we felt compelled to challenge ourselves and our supporters to see with fresh eyes many of the injustices that most folk prefer to gloss over, both on our shores and around the globe. That uncomfortable tension between how we are called to live and the outworking of our faith.

These words from Amos are immensely uncomfortable:

"I hate, I despise your religious festivals; your assemblies are a stench to me...Away with the noise of your songs! I will not listen to the music of your harps".

Ouch! Worship as a repugnant smell that induces disgust from our heavenly Father? Surely these words don't refer to us. Surely they are time bound from the prophet to the people of Judah many centuries ago. But before we too quickly dismiss this condemnation as irrelevant for devoted followers of Christ, we must read on to see what repulses God so vehemently.

"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Now I am no biblical scholar. I am utterly out of my depth when it comes to translations from the original languages. But I have been told that the Hebrew word for "justice" is often translated as "righteousness", a remedying of wrongdoing, a putting to right things that have gone awry. Frequently presented as water in the biblical texts, justice is synonymous with life-giving nourishment, abundantly pouring out over all the people. It seems that without actively seeking to put things right, praise is putrid. Without engaging in the work of shalom, that state of peace and harmony that enables flourishing as it was meant to be, our lives are shallow.

Justice is synonymous with life-giving nourishment"

In some situations, it can be difficult to discern what "justice" should look like. It can be hard for us to see clearly. But this is the joy of being part of that global body of Christ. We are helped to see the breadth and depth of God's care for creation. We are helped to understand how things ought to be when we listen and learn together with our brothers and sisters from around the world. Because we all need help as we tumble and stumble after God, don't we? We need one another as we discern how to live lives that are authentic expressions of faith, hope and love.

And so, this year we hope to navigate the choppy waters of life together. We hope to have the courage and wisdom to wade into justice, immersing ourselves in the challenge Amos presents. Through the stories of our friends both near and far, learning from each other and sharing life together, our prayer is that God's justice would spring up and be like the river of life in Revelation, "bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God". And that from this water, life-giving nourishment would grow.



Emma Lutton
Communications Coordinator

wading into justice

"let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"

Amos 5:24

Each year our annual theme prompts much discussion and thought amongst the staff team. We consider the pertinent issues for our partners. We revisit the ways in which we have observed God at work through the global church. We look at ourselves and the things that we are feeling challenged by in our own lives.

a pouring out

Egypt's River of Justice Charts A New Course

Have you heard of the great flow of migrants coming into Europe? Perhaps you have heard that our nations are being flooded by asylum seekers, overwhelmed by a tide of migrant workers, a tsunami of people washing up on our shores in small boats. A fascinating article; "The flood of refugees in our heads"¹ demonstrates that 73% of all conceptualisations of migrants in German newspapers in 2015 were to do with water. A similarly themed piece, "Swarms, floods and marauders: the toxic metaphors of the migration debate"², illustrates that exactly the same image has turned up in the UK conceptualisations of migrants. However, the author of this piece directly challenges these aquatic references: "We're not being 'overwhelmed' by a 'tidal wave' of migrants. How can anyone justify this callous, misleading language?"

Contrast this with the water metaphor in Amos and we have much to think about. As Christians, how do we think, speak about and respond to the movement of people into our regions and communities.

*"I hate, I despise your religious festivals;
your assemblies are a stench to me.
Even though you bring me burnt
offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them.
Though you bring choice
fellowship offerings,
I will have no regard for them.
Away with the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.
But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!"*

Amos 5: 21-24

We are warned that God is weary of our religious attempts to please him. The smelly, charred, clamouring sound of our trying, must be washed away; cleansed by a constant flow of justice and righteousness. Our governments respond to the rhetoric around

migration with merit-based visa schemes and deterrents to win votes. Alternatively, our churches kindly, and rightly, respond with food banks, clothes-shares and English conversation classes. However, in my recent visit to the Diocese of Egypt I was challenged by what appeared to me to be something more akin to a river of justice for refugees. I was inspired by the strong flow of strategic care and inclusion of refugees, intrinsic in the outworking to the faith of the church in Egypt.

Official UNHCR figures state that "Egypt hosts more than 670,000 registered refugees and asylum-seekers from 62 nationalities."³ According to other sources the actual figure in Egypt, including unregistered refugees, is up to nearly 9 million foreign residents from over 130 countries⁴. Amid this, one of the main registration centres of the UNHCR in Cairo is within All Saints' Anglican Cathedral compound in Zamalek⁵. From there, migrants can easily register for the Anglican Church's 'Refuge Egypt' skills building programme, medical care and have an opportunity to find affordable education for their children.



As well as being a receiving nation for refugees, Rev. Mina of Christ the King Parish in Alexandria tells us that he sees young Egyptian men constantly facing a 'push' to cross the Mediterranean on small boats, away from the hopelessness they feel for their future in Egypt. Mr. Helmy, the Principal of St. Raphael School for Sudanese children, told me that this year, one of his primary school children went missing. The last his parents heard of him was that he had made it to Libya. Mr Helmy suspects that the gang culture and sense of hopelessness was what pushed this boy to seek an alternative life.

The pull for these young people towards Europe, is the hope of opportunity in another country. They are not seeking excessive riches, but equity of opportunity – decent schooling and the kind of high-quality training that we take for granted for our children. And so, one of the main strategies adopted by the church in Egypt to impact these young people, is to provide high quality education at an affordable cost. Interestingly, one of the young girls at Rev. Mina's training programme in Alexandria told me that because of the affordable cost of the training, she had very low expectations when she signed up for the course. However, she was impressed by the teacher and, after gaining her

"God has drawn us together to the heavenly table where God alone is host and we are all guests."

certificate, she received a small loan which she has used to start a successful nail salon. This has set her free from the harsh working conditions which she had faced in her previous job at a clothes factory. Presently Rev. Mina's training programme has a waiting list for the next session, a superb indication of how valuable these opportunities are. This empowering programme flows through many lives like a river of justice.

At St. Raphael School, Mr. Helmy and his team make possible a Sudanese education for Sudanese children. This made me take a step back and wonder if there was no agenda to make these children a bit more Egyptian, if there was no push to equalise their differences instead of their opportunities. It genuinely feels like the church in Egypt is seeking justice for these children, equipping them for life back home, as well as for university or vocational opportunities in Cairo. This is no show of religion by a relatively well-off church, in a low-income community in

Cairo - rather a refreshing, constant flow of thoughtful work, striving for equity and justice.

At another centre for refugee education, the Nuba Mountain Institute of Theology (NBIC), I met a gentleman I will never forget. A Sudanese Christian, imprisoned for his faith twice in his home country, blinded in one eye by the mistreatment he received there, wiped away tears as he said simply: "those were tough times for Christians in Sudan". His missional career is unlikely to be published in book form. His name will never be used on a Sunday School worksheet to encourage young people to step out in mission. Yet he was part of God's move to plant churches in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains, and today he is part of the work of mission of the Anglican Church in Egypt. He told me that his time at NBIC has taught him that he cannot reach everyone for Christ – he may never set foot in Sudan again – but he knows he can still reach the ones that God has put around him in Egypt. And what is more, the church in Egypt is not just allowing him to do this. They are equipping him, praying for him, resourcing him in the ministry that Egyptian, Sudanese, Somalian and Irish believers must do together. For if we are to show witness to the saving grace of Christ, and welcome newcomers to Christ into the church, we must work with each other in equitable relationships. "God has drawn us together to the heavenly table where God alone is host and we are all guests."⁶. At this missional table there is equity and equality, and the world may just glimpse true justice, deeper and more forceful than a mere humanitarian kindness.

The church in Egypt, like many churches on our island, has compassion on the stranger. But what I also saw on my recent visit was a rolling river of justice for migrants in Cairo and Alexandria. What started with aid provision, has grown into a striving for equity and opportunity, resulting in hope for a better future and assurance of a secure eternity. There is no ideation that the church should



provide a 'good enough' programme for refugees. Rather, excellence and inclusion in the body is the hallmark of something that goes deeper than charity or religious good works. For the church, this river of justice has rolled all the way to enrichment of its witness, widening of its boundaries, becoming an integral part of the community where refugees give and live into the mission of the church, as well as receiving from it.

The church in Egypt does not stop short, nor does it hesitate to grow and flow with ideas and friendships which transform lives and grow the local church. This is not a trickle of empty religion but a river of justice carving out new spaces for faith to grow.



Linda Abwa
Partnership Coordinator

1. Carolyn Fischer <https://journalistik.online/en/paper-en/the-flood-of-refugees-in-our-heads-metaphorical-framing-of-refugees-in-german-newspaper-discourse/>
2. David Shariatmadari <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/10/migration-debate-metaphors-swarms-floods-marauders-migrants>
3. <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/about-us/refugee-context-in-egypt>
4. <https://english.news.cn/africa/20240620/8dffb20baca4d-5fb47f66cf3119ab74/c.html>
5. <https://www.unhcr.org/eg/about-us/contact-us>
6. Harvey Kwiyani, 2023, 'Multicultural church'

floods of injustice

And The Never-Failing Stream Of Resilience

Since I first visited Kayole, Nairobi, in 2013 I have been impressed by the Tujisaidie Self-Help Group (or UDP as it was then known). The name – which means “Let’s help each other” – sums up their Christ-centred philosophy of mutual care and closely parallels the “koinonia” community spirit spoken of in the book of Acts. The group’s origins go back to 1991 when 350 families found themselves outcast from their informal housing by a government edict and were brought together in their adversity as they were eventually re-located to a barren landscape in the Eastlands.

Floods of Injustice



I heard Antony Njoroge talk about this experience at a home group in Ballyclare. He told us that he was only 11 years old at the time and had to run to fetch his mother Lucy, who was away working, when the bulldozers arrived unannounced at 6am and began demolishing his neighbours’ homes. Although his family and whole community were left homeless for many months, they were not overcome by this calamity nor embittered by the unfairness of it. Rather, they sought to make the best of it and, when they were given land in Kayole, Lucy set about constructing a new shelter from the salvaged remains of her old home.

After 33 years of prayerful, positive, community action the group established an infrastructure of hope – a nursery school, which became the Tujisaidie Community Centre School; access to latrines and water, improving their housing; and all kinds of locally led self-help initiatives. This was all achieved with support from All Saints’ Cathedral, CMS Ireland and Mission Associate Isabelle Prondzynski but always according to the priorities set by local residents.

The source of their hope was a never-failing stream of resilience – a river of living water



“a river of living water which wells up from within the heart of the believer”

which wells up from within the heart of the believer (John 7:38). Lucy has this resilience in buckets, and when she was interviewed last year by CMSI team members she described it beautifully:

“Everything is possible to God because we have seen what he can do. What a man cannot do, God can do it! Now we have toilets, we have houses, we have a school, we have water, our children are educated, we’ve got homes and we can feed ourselves in a small way...Here you can manage your life. Also this community is a community of faith. If I have, it’s not for myself alone... If a child is hungry, you call them over and give them food. So here in Tujisaidie, we are privileged to be in a community, and also we are brothers and sisters.”

From April to June 2024, however, the community was hit with another tidal wave of unjust suffering – this time in the shape of a



“No giving of any kind should take away the dignity of the receiver”

literal flood, caused by unprecedented El Niño rains. Rivers and sewers overflowed, roads became waterways and thousands of homes were inundated in the Kayole/Soweto area, as well as in other informal settlements in Nairobi such as Mathare and Makuru. Schools were temporarily closed, and throughout Kenya more than 150 people lost their lives and over 400,000 were made homeless.

To compound this climate emergency, the government decided to demolish houses along the riverbank in an attempt to pre-empt further flooding. With little notice before homes were collapses, and with nowhere to go, injustice rained down on hundreds of people – both literally and metaphorically.

Despite Lucy’s own home being flooded, she set to and organised as much relief for others as possible, together with Antony who mobilised a 20-strong Emergency Floods Response Team. Reaching out to hundreds of local residents in desperate need, they provided temporary shelter, fresh bedding, medical assistance, food parcels and financial help to travel up-country to find refuge with friends or relatives. At the same time Antony and his team continued their other ministries such as “More than just a meal”, where upwards of 350 children receive a free

lunch at the Tumaini African Foundation Centre every Saturday.

Antony posted about this work on Facebook commenting,

“Everyone who comes for more than just a meal or to our “Response Of Love” foodbank... we have a duty to make them feel loved and important. No giving of any kind should take away the dignity of the receiver. That’s why the concept of sharing is the driving spirit and philosophy in our community work. We, as TAF, receive from people who make us feel important. Our duty is to be stewards of this aspect of importance to everyone. With Love. Dad Anto”

It was humbling to read this testimony of resilience, offering support with love and respect in the context of the most extreme trials a person can imagine. It was also so encouraging to see that for Antony, the prayers and back-up offered by supporters and link parishes in Ireland, adds to the resilience he experiences, enabling him to pass it on to others. At the same time, we in Ireland are encouraged to face up to whatever pressures and challenges we are undergoing with renewed hope and optimism. We can see our brothers and sisters turning the tide of injustice through simple acts of enduring love, and that puts everything in perspective.



Roger Thompson
Partnership Coordinator



eyes that see

Helpful reflections that reshape our vision

Recently, I came across this Celtic proverb for the first time: “A friend’s eye is a good mirror”. Both as a means of aiding honest self-reflection and as a way to disrupt any tenancy towards narcissistic naval-gazing, it feels like there is a lot of truth in this saying. To see ourselves as we truly are – more flawed and yet more lovely than we realise – well, that seems like a very good thing to me.

It's fitting that this ancient wisdom should be encountered shortly after two important episodes of learning, both of which prompted reflection and introspection for me and for all of us at CMSI.

"When you have only one single vision you are ignorant of your own reality as well as the reality abroad. But through relationships, visits both ways, you get to widen your vision and your understanding of ministry within your own context and worldwide as well." This is at the core of what we are trying to do as CMS Ireland – facilitate relationships that allow mutual flourishing. But these are the words of Rev Arsène Mafurebe, a Burundian cleric sponsored by the Council for Mission to visit us here, in Ireland. During his 5 week stay, Rev Arsène lent us his eye and, mirror-like, helped us to see ourselves afresh.

Instead of dwelling on dwindling numbers, he saw our aging congregations as a rich resource of deep faith. Those who have walked that long obedience in the same direction have, as he saw it, much wisdom to offer. Coming out of a context of burgeoning growth in Burundi, Rev Arsène encouraged us to value the depth of discipleship he saw in us. I found this reflection rather beautiful and encouraging.

"Rev Arsène lent us his eye and, mirror-like, helped us to see ourselves afresh"

As I mulled over these and many other insights from Rev Arsène, another opportunity to gaze into that mirror presented itself, this time in the shape of the Global Connections conference *Rethinking Power, Reimagining Mission*. At the event Professor Michael Stroope, author of *Transcending Mission*, spent considerable time helping those gathered to see 'the modern self' as the problem at the heart of our western psyche and consequently the problem at the heart of mission. Permeating our thinking



more than we even realise, the cultural context in which we operate conditions us to our very core. We are so predisposed to see the world through western eyes that, even when we think we are existing outside of this framework, we are still scaffolded by it.

Realising this was disconcerting, yes, but immensely helpful at the same time. It prompted many questions: questions about how we reckon with the legacy of the church's colonial history; questions around the power dynamics of many organisational operations today; questions surrounding what is really going on behind vocabulary choices that can mask mindsets that haven't really changed all that much in the last 200 years.

As Prof Stroope shared the evolution of his thinking over the past few years, every person in the room was called to attention:

"Whether or not we use this word [mission], the real problem is mission partisans who treat desperate and traumatised men, women and children at the border and immigrants within [our] cities with disdain and contempt".

Images: Rev Arsene and Trudy, Kildare Cathedral Visit May 2024



Suddenly we were geographically relocated, back to our home turf. The narrative was changed and we were forced to look at ourselves afresh.

These words from Prof Stroope prompted a return to those conversations with Rev Arsène. In his context, the lived experience of the church's witness in Burundi is tending to the needs of the people in a holistic way – spiritual, physical and material needs. "The gospel hardly has limit... we can't speak of God and be heard when people are starving. The two go together". Rev Arsène reminded us that:

"Jesus, most of the time he spoke for hours talking about the beauty of the kingdom of God. But at the same time he fed people".

Christ's love and justice are fundamentally joined – to proclaim God's love without action reduces words of witness to hollow rhetoric. "Shepherds don't give birth to sheep", he told me. "Sheep give birth to sheep". Apparently,

Images: Sheep give birth to sheep. Rev Arsène and Billy Smyth.

"we can't speak of God and be heard when people are starving"

this is something that Bishop Aimé Joseph Kimararungu often says to the ministry team. And when I stopped to think about it, this analogy is not only true but vital for all of us to hear. We all share in the great commission, wherever we are. Unless each of us live lives that embody God's loving mercy, enacting justice for the oppressed as an essential aspect of our mission at home as well as around the world, the church's witness will stagnate.

In the Scriptures, Stroope reminded us, an alternative vision of power is spelt out. A way of seeing that turns on its head so much of our western, self-centred thinking. A way of operating that redirects our gaze up and out in the shape of that old rugged cross.



Emma Lutton
Communications Coordinator

G global

stepping out

Serving God with Joy!

Trusting God and stepping out in faith is not always easy. It can seem like there are obstacles stopping us from fulfilling God's purpose. Or maybe we simply desire comfort and convenience. Our culture tells us we are enough, encouraging us to think that we don't need to change or put much effort into our walk with God. But the Great Commission prompts each of us to step out in faith. To serve God with joy. To go.

Stepping Out

Many of our global partners, along with parishes and ministries here in Ireland, are wonderful examples of God's people who are doing just that – stepping out and serving God with their whole lives. And you can join them! You can be part of God's kingdom work here and around the world.



The Province of Alexandria

The Province of Alexandria are long-standing partners with CMSI, and they too have a multitude of ministry opportunities throughout Egypt.

- *Medical Electives and placements* at their two hospitals in Menouf and Sadat City;
- Opportunities to work alongside *refugees and asylum seekers* in Cairo; as well as
- *Interfaith Dialogue* - administration work and building friendships.

All Nations Ministries

All Nations Ministries is one of CMSI's partners, ministering to newcomer communities in Ireland. Drawing alongside people from war torn and conflict zones around the world, ANM are seeking to demonstrate the love of God in practical ways, so that people will find Christ for themselves. They are looking for volunteers to help with:

- *teaching English, IT skills, or crafts;*
- *driving their delivery van* (urgently needed 25+ with clean license);
- *getting alongside newcomers* and befriending them, as they spend time in their Building Bridges Centre and access services;
- *sorting and organising donations* in the clothing store; and
- *Social Media and videography.*

Other Global Partners

CMSI's other Global Partners throughout Africa and Nepal have opportunities in:

- *teaching business skills, social media, videography, IT skills;*
- *evangelism and discipleship;*
- *advocacy, justice, peace and reconciliation facilitation.*

And specific requests have been made for:

- *medical placements* in Kiwoko Hospital, Uganda;
- *Theological and Biblical Training* in Burundi, South Sudan and DR Congo; and
- *English Teaching* in Shyogwe Diocese, Rwanda, as well as other teaching opportunities in Uganda and Kenya.

Philippians 2:13 says "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." The time that we have on this earth is short, we are just passing through. Serving God at home or further afield will enrich you as well as others. Whether short-term, long-term, in Ireland or elsewhere, people of all ages and stages of life are invited to contact Gillian or our Partnership Coordinators in the Belfast office to explore how we can help you play your part in making Jesus known. <https://www.cmsireland.org/go>



partnering in justice

Putting Practice Before Theory

Partnership is a word that has been trending well in the third sector in recent years. Instead of directing agendas when engaging in charitable giving, people find the idea of “partnering together” more palatable. But sometimes, it can seem a little bit like playing semantic games rather than embarking on a truly different mode of operating.



“the church is the worldwide body of Christ”

I sometimes think that, as western Christians, we approach church partnerships rather as I was taught to approach my patients when I trained as an Occupational Therapist. I was taught to set out treatment objectives for the patient based upon the presenting problems and the likely functional issues that could arise, given the diagnosis. From this I would plan the course of therapeutic intervention. The treatment goal would typically be achieving independence in some task. This was all very well in theory; however, when faced with actual patients it soon became abundantly clear that my assessment of their needs and priorities differed considerably from their own aspirations. For all the training, no one could inform me about what was actually important to the individuals in my care. Their desires, their personal contexts could never be pre-scripted in a classroom. To

glean this key information, I had to engage with them, listen openly to them. Only then could we embark upon planning the therapeutic path together. Listening, learning and loving, as well as skills training – these elements were all needed if a person was to improve.

As I gained clinical experience, something else raised big questions in my mind. Often goals of therapy are expressed as “achieving skills for an independent life”. However, this is based on the false supposition that humans can live independently. As John Donne famously said, “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main”. As this geographical metaphor reminds us, we are all dependent upon the social and physical environments around us and so should fruitful interdependence not be the therapeutic goal?

"How we cooperate together is just as important as what we are setting out to do"

These two revelations – firstly that a therapeutic plan must be forged mutually and secondly that the goals must also recognise the interdependent nature of existence – have illuminated my understanding of how church-to-church partnerships can best flourish. This is core to CMS Ireland's work – the forging, facilitating and fostering of church-to-church partnerships.

We believe that the church is at the centre of God's strategy to change the world. Local churches are his means and method for sharing the good news of Jesus: transforming lives, healing communities and restoring creation. We believe that local churches are best placed to understand and serve their communities, responding to needs in the most effective ways. So, when we think about entering into a church partnership, we need to be mindful of the nature of the partnership, and especially of the power dynamics at work. Working together is what God calls us to do as his worldwide body of believers. As Johnson Ambrose Afrane-Twum says:

"For any meaningful cross-cultural ministry initiative, both sides have to deal with their cultural biases. They have to realise that the need for working together as Christ's people is a call of God."

In our enthusiasm to help, we can easily overlook the fact that the church is the worldwide body of Christ. For the body to function healthily, every part must be active, engaged and responsive. Every part must work in full co-operation for no part is more important, or has more to offer, than any other.



Image: Rev Arsène, Archbishop John McDowell and Jenny Smyth

This is not just a matter of finding effective ways to partner for helpful outcomes. This is fundamentally a question of justice. How we cooperate together is just as important as what we are setting out to do. Because it is in how we relate that we express the inestimable value of each person. It is through engagement that we are forged, and thus Christ is revealed.

I recently attended Mísean Cara's 20th anniversary lecture on "Synodality in Development". The panel discussion that followed considered the matter of cross-cultural working, power dynamics and efficacy, tackling such questions as "How can we ensure that development projects are appropriate and sustainable?"

At the event I was deeply struck by the contribution of Sister Franca Onyibor who beautifully showed us our part in God's work:

"When we enter into a global partnership what we need to ask is: 'What is God doing here already?' After all, God was here before you came, and God will be here after you have gone."

And, as regards any resources, 1 Chronicles 21:14 affirms that, "Everything comes from [God], and we have given [God] only what comes from [God's] hand."

Indeed, as Bishop Moses of Maridi reminded us: "We don't fellowship with things, we fellowship with people."

When our partnerships evolve and deepen into fellowships, we see justice in practice. This is what true partnership looks like.

So, let's follow the wisdom of Proverbs and together "walk in the way of righteousness along the paths of justice". Because it is through these real relationships of mutuality, where we travel alongside one another in gentle, committed conviviality and deep fellowship, that we are all strengthened in faith and witness. We are changed along this journey. We grow and deepen in our understanding of God our father. We gain a fuller, richer appreciation of his gifts and purposes for us and for the communities in which he has placed us.

'I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ'.

Philemon 6



Jenny Smyth
Mission Director

snippets

cmsi news in brief



Annual staff day out

The 'Threads of Empowerment: Conflict Textiles' International Journey' exhibit and the uniting of Caravaggio's 'The Supper at Emmaus' and 'The Taking of Christ' at the Ulster Museum in Belfast provided scope for contemplation and conversation amongst the staff team at this year's 'Staff Day Out'. With time spent in Botanic gardens making St Brigid's crosses from freshly picked reeds, we all thoroughly enjoyed spending time together outside of the usual work rhythms.



Ignite

This year one of our local mission partners (LMP) from Nepal will be joining us in person at our annual Ignite conference. The LMP focus at Ignite will highlight some of the work from this exciting initiative. Partnering with inspirational individuals who are ministering in their own communities adds another dimension to mission in the global body of Christ.

To book, please see the back cover of this issue of *inMission*.



Sustainable Development Goals

Our global partners and parishes around Ireland seek to live out the love of God in their communities. In doing this kingdom work, they have helped the UN move closer to fulfilling the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) this past year. Let's keep working together as we pursue justice for all of creation.



Prayer Room

For those of you who are familiar with the work of CMSI, you will know that prayer is central to everything we do. Our monthly prayer room online is a wonderful opportunity to meet regularly together and hear from our global partners. This vital virtual event will resume in October on the first Wednesday of the month – Wednesday 2nd October – at 1pm and will happen each subsequent month following the usual pattern. Whether you have joined us before or not, all will need to register for this year's set of prayer rooms. You can do so via our website or by scanning the QR code below.



Food for thought: Walk Together

"We also need to be ready to accept one another, forgive each other, see the other person with new eyes, go ahead together, etc. If we allow ourselves to be guided by these attitudes of Jesus, beginning in our family, at work, in our church community - it will not be long before we see around us those marvellous fruits of unity that Jesus wants so much from us. We will see the world change and many people will find God or return to him."

Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare movement



Mission Partner Update: The Quills in Ibba

Andrew and Joanne continue to settle into life in South Sudan by way of learning the language, culture and understanding how life works in Ibba. Pray for them as they are in the process of preparing staff and volunteers within the diocese in Community Health Empowerment ministry. Pray this programme will be an effective tool in helping the church family develop not only practically but also spiritually, as together they seek to see communities transformed for the kingdom.



ignite

cmsireland
equipping the church in mission
Annual Conference

Saturday 14th September / 10.30am - 5.15pm
(Registration from 9.45am)

with Friday Extra from 7.30pm on 13th September

Join us for our annual Ignite conference at Dromantine Retreat and Conference Centre from 10.30am - 5.15pm. Book your place by scanning the QR code above, going online www.cmsireland.org or phoning the office **02890775020 / 014970931**.

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