



inmission

the magazine of cmsireland



Tenacious Joy

acts of resistance in adversity and strife

Issue 76 Spring 2024

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Cover Image: Primary 1 children, St Raphael school for Sudanese refugees, Cairo, Egypt.

This year our children and teens' resource, Hands Out, is raising funds to support the rebuilding and running of St Raphael school. See page 18 of this issue for more information on this free resource for use in churches, schools and youth events.



joy as resistance

'Golden Repair' in the Kingdom of God

The phrase 'surprised by joy' has garnered iconic significance since the publication of Lewis' autobiography almost 70 years ago. To be caught off guard by the beauty and love of God in unexpected places and at unexpected times brings real joy, life giving joy.

Paradoxically this joy is often best seen in adversity and struggle. Indeed, joy, according to Willie James Jennings, is not an emotional state of elation but rather an act of resistance against despair and its forces: a resistance to death and all its signatures that strangle life. Signatures like violence, war, debt and destruction. It is in these spaces, when life is presented to us as not worth living, that joy can become a work, a state, a way of life. Jennings sees that joy in its fullest sense connects and yet simultaneously transcends grief and sorrow, a kind of tenacious joy.

The opposition between joy and sorrow can seem irreconcilable. But it is into and out of this contradiction that Jesus' joy comes to the world. The brokenness of Christ's body, God quite literally on the ground, fundamentally

altered everything. From this brokenness, wholeness was made possible. Such contradictions will be explored throughout this edition of *inMission*. You will read of prayer as the source of people's strength in Ibba; of refugees instigating love in action because of their experiences; of hope and renewal in the service of God.

Just as the ancient artform of 'golden repair', *kintsukuroi* in Japanese, turns brokenness into beauty, we hope that in listening to and learning from God's global church, you will be helped more fully to see richness, beauty and God's good grace.



Emma Lutton
Communications Coordinator



trading in ashes and crowns

Imitating Christ on the Ground Today

One of the things that I cherish about growing up in and still worshipping in the Church of Ireland is how our worshipping year is shaped around the life of the Lord Jesus. It's certainly not the only way to shape an annual church programme. Yet our liturgical year, beginning in Advent and running through Christmas and Epiphany to Lent, Easter and eventually Pentecost, gives church life a sense of light and shade that reflects our day-to-day lives. From the light and joy of new birth to the darkness and pain of Good Friday, we have a God who understands the breadth of our human experience because he has lived the breadth of our human experience.

Everyone will have their own favourite part of the Church year. Still, without doubt the culmination of that year and the culmination of our faith, happened over three days in Jerusalem a couple of thousand years ago – the weekend that started on Good Friday and climaxed on Easter Day.

The moment the Son of God went to the cross and took on our sin as his own changed the course of history. From that point forward, God's people could live in the knowledge that they were not condemned by their imperfection but restored by the power of his redeeming blood. It took his broken body to heal a broken

world. Through the Church, the broken body of Christ still goes about the work of healing and restoration today and we at CMSI are so privileged that we get to be part of that work. In the partnerships we share around the world - which are filled with prayer, characterised by sacrificial giving of time, treasure and talent, all sanctified by God's love which is manifest through the fellowship shared by brothers and sisters across his church – we see God on the ground. We see the broken body of Jesus changing lives, building up the broken and proclaiming the time of the Lord's favour.

You see, the miracle of the cross (to which our focus is drawn ever more intently through Lent and into Holy Week) is not only that the shed blood of Christ affects the forgiveness of our sins. The miracle of the cross is that the broken body of Jesus would inexorably be restored. His broken body, the Church, will also be restored. The broken lives of his followers will be restored. And in the fullness of time, his world will be restored, and we will take our place in the new heaven and the new earth promised in Revelation 21. We can trade

“Through the Church, the broken body of Christ still goes about the work of healing and restoration today”

the ashes of our brokenness for the crown of beauty which (Isaiah 61:3) is ours by God's grace and God's goodness.

Our CMSI theme this year is *God on the ground*. Jesus who came into our world as God on the ground, called us to take up our own crosses to follow him (Luke 14:27). It's not for us, his disciples, to go to the cross the same way Jesus did – only he could do that. But we can imitate him (1 Corinthians 11:1). As part of his body on earth, the Church, we can do our bit to bear witness to the one who is God on the ground.

What a joy. What a privilege. What a challenge. Let's get on with it!



Rev Adrian Dorrian
CMSI Chaplain

praying for peace

Bishop Moses' Plea to the Global Church

The ground in South Sudan is, in places, still scattered with viable landmines, stained with blood, scarred with the carcasses of burned-out deserted homes. In parts, the crops planted in a moment of peace, are dried up and dying, untended by a people displaced. In other area gardens rot, overwhelmed by climate-change induced floods. Where is God on this ground?

Last year, around the anniversary of the independence of South Sudan, Bishop Moses Sette Zungo of Maridi Diocese, South Sudan, shared his reflections on war and peace. It is a sobering account of the implications of war on the people of a nation. More sobering still is his challenge to the church as a people and an institution. We are very grateful to Bishop Moses for sharing so openly.

"I am passionate for peace. I was born in war, I grew up in war. I was ordained a priest when I was refugee, and I am serving now as bishop in war. War cannot build peaceful people. You can't plan solid plans for your people in a war. War stops growth and development for our people. It is a very sad reality. You can't plan for anything. Everything stops.

With war we forget our sense of humanity. In war we see others as less than ourselves. War brings fear and confusion, moments where people are desperately in need. It seems logical and appropriate for someone to make some sort of effort towards peace. And yet, there is no one.

With war generations are lost. You walk on the road to one village and to another but you don't see people. Where were they? They are already in the bush because of fear or have sought refuge in the big towns for security purposes. What do we do?

With war time stops. We are like stagnant water rotating in one place. The world is moving with new innovations of electricity, machines for making roads, for cooking, good hospitals. Why are we stuck? Are we not just like other human beings, with the same needs and hopes?

With war futures disappear. When you move around in our communities, you see so many beautiful children, and you know these children are not able to do anything. You see ruined childhoods, ruined futures. And they can't have a mindset for a future. People can live only for today. So many young people here have no path forward."

In his passionate lament Bishop Moses puts into sharp focus questions that we might



Image: Bishop Moses and clergy outside Maridi Cathedral, South Sudan



like to put to God. But he made clear in his message that his questions are not to God – his questions are to us, the global church.

In wondering about the warped humanity in war Bishop Moses states the faith that he is sure of:

“There is no way we should see another human beings as less than us. We are created for each other.”

He knows that in the church community God is on the ground. He knows that the God of peace is ever faithful if we but choose his path:

“We have got to turn this story around and to do this we have to work for peace. It’s my passion. It’s my life. We are aware of many nations in the world that have been ravaged by war, by violence but they never, ever gave up. The best way to bring development into this country, to bring progress in this country is to give up the fighting, to give up on their unnecessary struggle, senseless confrontation and choose the path of peace.”

“his questions are not to God – his questions are to us, the global church

When Bishop Moses wonders why there is no one to help build peace, asking what can we do, why we are stuck, he is not lamenting an absence of God but provoking our solidarity:

“It is only you who can pray for us. Pray for hundreds of orphans who are unable to get an education in Maridi. Pray for young women in Maridi who are trying to build relationships in order to build a family, though in many cases there is no one to give love and compassion.

Pray for the guns to be silent. Pray for the opportunity to have vocational schools in Maridi to provide skill support to the young people who are now lost. We still have faith in a better tomorrow for the people of Maridi and South Sudan through your prayers.”

Image: Young boys on the way to farm in Maridi



“There is no way we should see another human beings as less than us. We are created for each other.”

God is not absent in the ashes of war in South Sudan. Let our prayers rise with the same passion as Bishop Moses’ call to follow the way of community and peace.

In July 2023 Archbishop Justin Badi and the internal Archbishops of the Episcopal Church of South Sudan appealed to the government and international representatives to ensure that elections are conducted fair and free in December 2024. An eager representative of the God of peace, Archbishop Justin read this as part of the ECSS statement:

“As a church we are ready to support the process through prayers, preaching, peace messages, advocacy, civic voter education election monitoring and mediation...We need the security arrangement to be fully implemented and we have one army in the country.”

God is on the ground through the leadership and local community of the church in South Sudan, ready to serve the cause of peace. The challenge for us, the global church, then is not be absent.



Linda Abwa
Partnership Coordinator

Image: Youth Convention Maridi Diocese 2023



God on the ground grace

Walking with Newcomers in Northern Ireland

There is something about being human that loves to label and categorise. It gives us a sense of control, knowledge, surety. But we need to be careful not to fall foul to the dangers of labelling people. In our ever-changing world, it is so easy to dehumanise those who are categorised as “refugees” or “asylum seekers”. With the recent focus of the UK government on halting illegal immigrants from entering the country, and riots taking place in Ireland’s capital at the end of 2023, it’s easy to allow the current cultural climate to invade our thinking and language.

Madhavi Vadera, the chairperson of Migrant Help, pointedly reminds us that, **“Refugees are not mere statistics, but people with dreams, talents, and the resilience to build their stolen lives”**. Realising these dreams and potential, however, is difficult.

The challenges and uncertainties for those seeking refuge in Ireland, are real. Families and individuals are struggling to adapt to a new environment. They are feeling the pain of separation from parents and loved ones, and they are fighting a constant battle to secure their

basic needs. Like all of us, newcomers want to feel settled and provide a better future for their children. They just happen to have been born in countries where war, political insecurity, or restrictions on their freedom of thought and expression have forced them to flee.

All Nations Ministries (ANM), the Christian charity set up to support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Northern Ireland, has taken the decision to treat every person who turns to them for support as an individual who is loved by God, regardless of the labels put on them

by the world. This aspiration is not without its challenges. Patience is required in working with people from different cultural backgrounds. Rules and social customs that we want to apply aren’t always easy to enforce. ANM shared how they have had “individuals who want to circumvent our structures, or take things from our Centre which don’t belong to them”. In order to deal with such difficulties, ANM volunteers try to invoke a ‘God’s-eye-view’: “We have to constantly remind ourselves of where people have come from, and what they’ve been through, and demonstrate love and grace”. Mind you, this ‘God on the ground grace’ has involved a bit of tough-love from time to time.

In spite of the challenges, ANM has seen God at work – bringing hope into people’s lives and witnessing answers to prayer:

E from East Africa, was living a life of many challenges and trauma in her homeland. She was in an abusive relationship trying to raise her young daughters in a hopeless situation. Eventually she took her children and left her family and friends behind. Making her way to Ireland was difficult. However, through her faith in God and with the help and support from God’s people here, she has started to rebuild a new life for her family. ANM introduced E to a Church and they have become her new family and support system – she in turn wants to be an inspiration to other single mothers who are in similar situations, by encouraging them to walk away from domestic abuse so their kids can have a better future. E now volunteers one day a week at our centre helping other asylum seekers.

Instead of turning inward, E is using her experience to reach out to others. This is a challenge to all of us. Can we turn our pain and struggle into service? How might we adopt a posture of hospitality, opening ourselves up to love and truly see those around us? The resilience and determination required to rebuild



“The resilience and determination required to rebuild one’s life in a new land has to be admired.

one’s life in a new land has to be admired. Instead of closing ourselves off and hardening our hearts, let’s be inspired by E to cultivate compassion for those who have undergone such experiences.

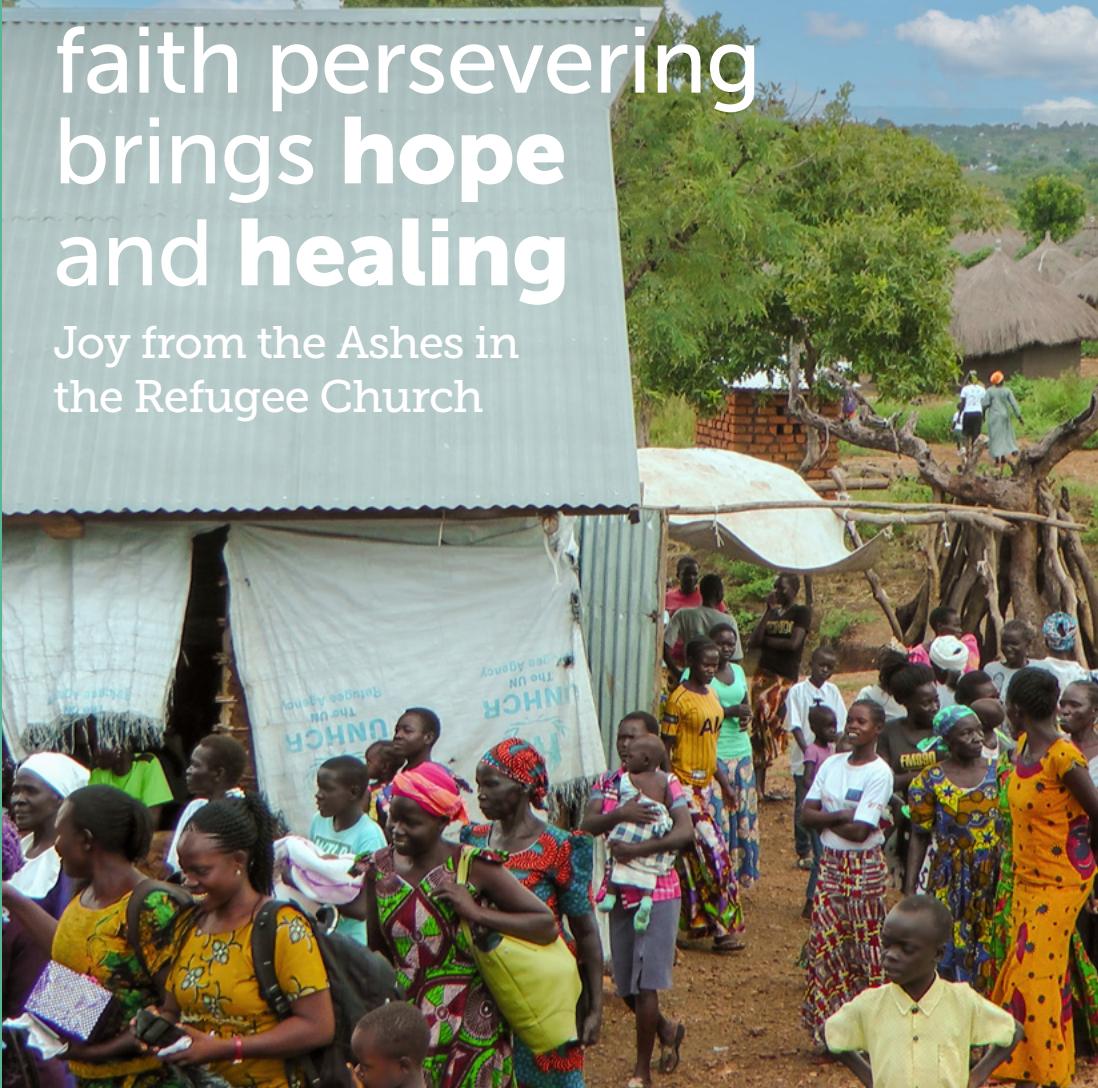
As God’s people we are called to be counter-cultural and fulfil our mandate to be a beacon of hope and resilience, and be a voice for the voiceless. We never know when the winds of change may turn on us, and we become those who are in need of refuge. That is why God’s word encourages us to **“...treat the foreigner residing among you as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God”**. Leviticus 19: 34.



Gillian Maganda
Personnel Manager

faith persevering brings hope and healing

Joy from the Ashes in the Refugee Church



Many of our partners are forced to flee due to conflict and war, climate emergencies, political unrest, persecution or food and water shortages. Leaving home in such traumatic circumstances only to face a gruelling journey in pursuit of freedom brings significant challenges for those seeking refuge. And then, when they finally arrive at their destination, it can sometimes seem as though their struggle is just beginning. These experiences leave permanent marks.

Arriving with nothing but that which has survived the journey, our instinct might be to gather materials to build a home. However, what we have seen time and time again might surprise you.

Although displaced people and refugees hope to return home, many Christians elect to use any resources available to build a place of worship first, before setting up individual shelters. This becomes the focal point for their communities and a spiritual home in a new land.

So what has this to do with us?

In listening and learning from God's global church, we are bolstered by incredible stories of resilience and hope in the face of extreme challenge. Faith persevering brings hope and healing to the church around the world.

As we consider our responsibility as a church family,



discover

...ways of listening to and learning from our refugee brothers and sisters through our new Hands Out children and teens' resource; our Sanctuary Sunday All Age Service Liturgy; our refugee focus event on Thursday 20th June (times and location tbc). See pages 18 and 22 for more information.

pray

- ...that God will illuminate darkness, enabling joy to rise from the ashes.
- ...for displaced church leaders, that they will be able to continue to share their love of God to those they meet along the road.
- ...for refugees and displaced people here, in Ireland, that they would find welcome and support after fleeing from their homes.

connect

- ...by scanning the QR code to sign-up and receive regular updates from our partners and follow us on social media.
- ...via email (info@cmsireland.org) or phoning the office (028 9077 5020/01 497 0931) to find out more about partnership for you and your church.
- ...with Gillian on gillianmaganda@cmsireland.org if you'd like to find out about supporting refugees in Ireland.

support

...us financially as we connect, equip, transform churches and individuals engaging in God's global mission. Scan the QR code above for more info!



when our hands are God's hands

Turning the Tables on Trauma

In January Northern Ireland experienced the largest demonstration of public sector workers in 50 years. Frustration with the cost-of-living crisis and political deadlock have left health services in chaos and people struggling to meet their basic needs. In November violent riots erupted in Dublin city centre shocking the nation. Lack of affordable housing has stressed a country that has welcomed many refugees, but what other pains were behind this destructive outburst? We see such depth of human suffering around the world at present, it is easy to be overwhelmed and ask: 'Where is God?'

Image: Billy Abwa, 'Image of the protests in Belfast'

Reconciliation is at the heart of mission.

Throughout the Biblical narrative there are assurances that *El Roi* – 'the God who sees' – is also *Jehovah Shammah* – 'The Lord is there'. In the earthly life of Jesus, when God came to ground, we see God suffering human pain, God toiling and tired, hungering and thirsting, God thoroughly grounded. Many of CMSI's global partners are living in situations of great stress, pain and turmoil, and yet they seem to respond with a faith that is strong and shines brightly despite the circumstances. Is this because they understand the reality that this God really does know what we are going through and still walks alongside us? That when we recognise our need and weakness, his Holy Spirit really can fill us and empower us?

At CMSI's Peace and Reconciliation conference held in Stormont in 2017, one participant in the round table discussion said: *'Those who have experienced real trauma can, by listening, enable beautiful things to happen for others.'*

One of CMSI's Local Mission Partners, Seme Peter Christ's Own, is a powerful example embodying this very thing. Seme Peter is himself a refugee, having fled South Sudan to escape the civil war. He says: *'The way we want is not the way God designed. If I can learn to build a relationship with God ... I can be contented in any and every situation.'*

CMS Ireland supports Seme Peter through the Local Mission Partner programme run by CMS Africa. Seme Peter set up and leads Save Life Ministries. He recently arranged a 4-day mission to Rhino Refugee camp in NW Uganda. In his regular correspondence with us he explained a little more of the background to this mission.



Image top: SLM team walking through Rhino camp Image bottom: Seme Peter



“Those who have experienced real trauma can, by listening, enable beautiful things to happen for others.”

Rhino camp is home to people from 41 different ethnic groups from 7 nations, all uprooted and struggling for ways to survive. Recently a curfew was imposed as fighting amongst rival ethnic groups had resulted in killings and reprisals. It seems that the tensions fuelling the civil war in South Sudan have spilled over into the camp. Ancient rivalries are driving hatred, bitterness and revenge even here, far from home, in a seemingly God forsaken place. Seme Peter also shared something of his passion and the vision that drove him to build a team of evangelists and travel 75km to the camp. *‘A lot of evil things are happening and refugee youth are just messing their lives with drugs. I want to talk to them. It is so sad to see these young people.’*

Just a week before the mission began, Seme Peter messaged: *‘We are trusting God for provision, at the moment we don’t have any finance.’* However, the team ploughed ahead with arrangements and everything took place as planned. Seme Peter deliberately works through the United Church Council that is on the ground in the camp because he knows that reconciliation is at the heart of mission and that local church is God’s presence on the ground. All the different ethnic groups were invited to attend to worship and pray together, and the different choirs offered opportunities to take to the stage during the evening sessions.

Considering the blighted environment, lack of resources and desperation of Rhino camp,



the photos Seme Peter sent are surprising. An open-air stage with choirs and preachers. Faces lit by floodlights with a massive crowd stretching back into the pitch-dark night. Hands raised in worship and prayer. He reported: *‘Thank God for the successful mission to Rhino refugee camp. First day, glory to God Almighty, many accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour. On Sunday our team was able to lead programmes in 22 churches under the umbrella of the United Church Council. It was a very powerful moment on the ground – many people and children gave their lives to Christ and many sick were delivered.’*

Perhaps the secret of this amazing work of God lies in the daylight photos where we see a circle of people in prayer under a tree outside a mud-built church. In another a few young people walking along a path, Bibles in hand. Prepared to step out, in faith, determined to follow God’s call to mission, even when resources are scarce and the task looks overwhelming.

This determination challenges each follower of Christ. No easy excuses, no lazy avoidance, none of the rationalising that fills the gap between where we are and the leap of faith we want to avoid.

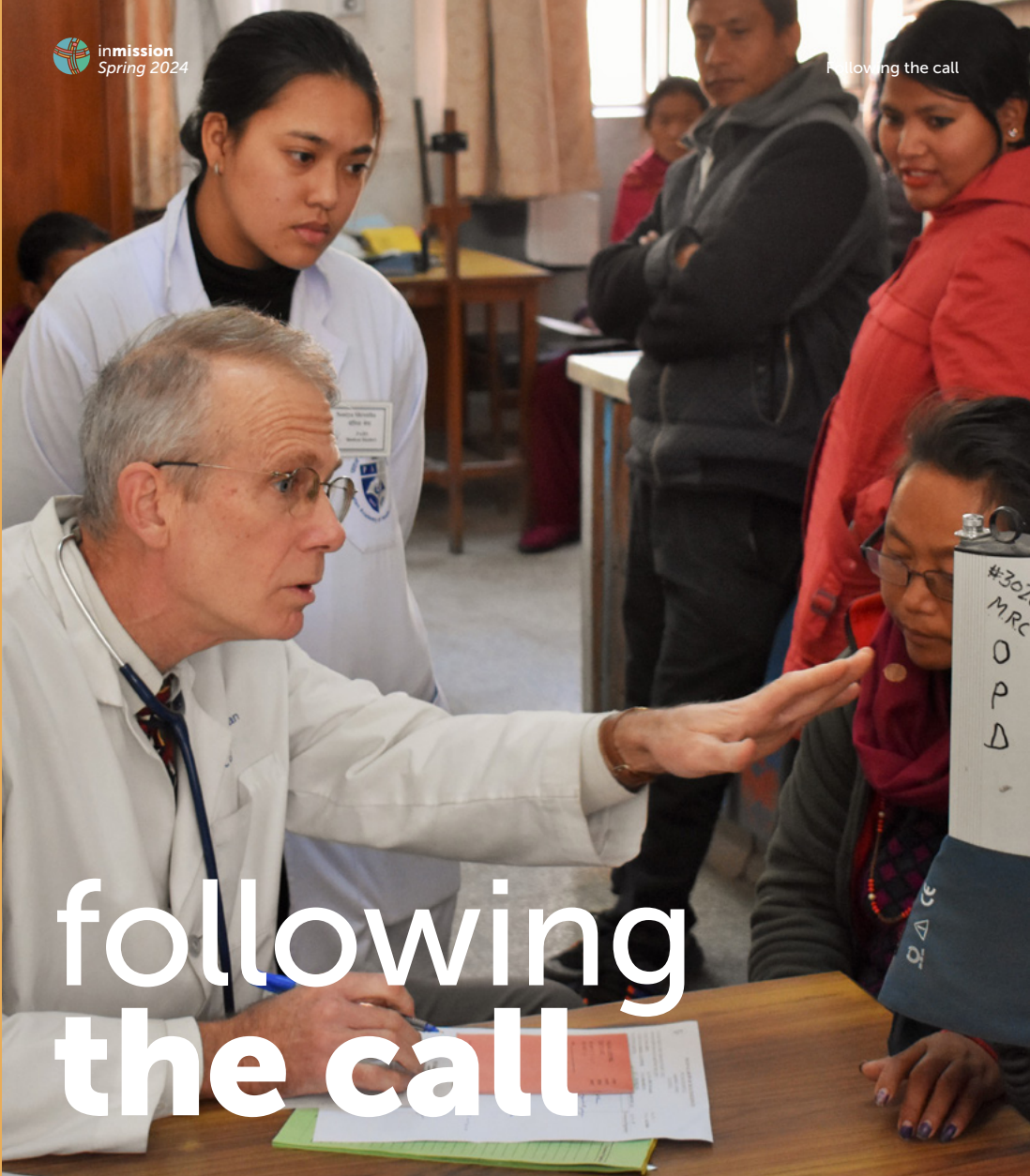
Richard Rohr has a helpful way of looking at what faith is: *‘Holding the tension, not necessarily finding a resolution or closure to paradox; ... agree[ing] to live without resolution, at least for a while. Opening to this holding pattern is the very name and description of faith.’*

Perhaps we just need to step out more often so that God can really use us in our places, here in Ireland, where people need compassion and hope. As *The Message* translation of Proverbs 3:27-28 puts it:

‘Never walk away from someone who deserves help; your hand is God’s hand for that person.’



Jenny Smyth
Mission Director



following the call

Hope and Renewal in the Service of God

“For I am about to do something new....
I will make a pathway through the wilderness.
I will create rivers in the dry wasteland.”

Isaiah 43:19



“God uses ordinary lives to do extraordinary things”

After over 60 years of collective service as mission partners in Nepal, Deirdre and Mark Zimmerman took the difficult decision to leave Nepal and move to the U.S. For Mark who grew up in Pennsylvania, this is a homecoming. For Deirdre, born and raised in Ireland, this is yet another country in which to make a new home.

During their recent farewell visits to CMSI link parishes in Dublin, Ballymena and Newry, they spoke about life as a Christian being like driving along a winding country road at night: God only illuminates small stages between bends. Following his call step by step, they have both been surprised where this led. But no matter what changes unfolded, they have always found God at work with them on the ground bringing hope and renewal, using their ordinary lives to do extraordinary things.

Deirdre first went out to Nepal with CMSI in 1997 to serve as a nutritionist under the

umbrella organisation the United Mission to Nepal (UMN). She grew up in Taney parish and was aware of CMS’s work as her grandfather, Rev. C. Lloyd, was the general secretary of the society in the 1960’s. At this stage she believed her time in Nepal would be temporary, having a desire for a longer-term role in Africa. Things changed, however, when she met Mark – a medical doctor in Patan Hospital – and they married a few years later. Today they have two sons, Zachary and Benjamin, who, though currently at college in the U.S., grew up in Nepal and consider it their home.

Years of working in Patan Hospital and NPCSS (Nutrition Promotion Consultancy Service - see www.npcs.org.np) as a nutritionist afforded Deirdre insight into Nepal’s health care system. Throughout the country malnutrition is a major scourge with 36% of children under 5 chronically malnourished or stunted, 10% suffering severe weight loss (wasting) and

“Of course you won’t be up to this job but God is and he’ll equip you”

53% anaemic (Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2016). The situation for mothers is little better, with 41% of women being anaemic and 17% underweight.

Responding to this massive need, Deirdre has been part of a team of Nepali health professionals under the leadership of Executive Director Roshani Shrestha. Focussing on the training in nutrition of health workers, organisations, and communities, they have set up and implemented many community nutrition programmes including two in the remote, rural municipalities of Jiri and Kanchan Rup.

With funding from Irish Mission and Development agency Misesan Cara (€170 000 over 7 years administered by CMSI), NPCS staff have worked tirelessly alongside local leaders and health workers to support mothers of young children who are struggling to provide nutritious food for their families. The results speak for themselves: literally thousands of families have benefitted from increased knowledge of healthy eating, food production and even small business management, bringing renewed hope and development where it is most needed.

One volunteer from Jiri commented, *“The programme has benefitted the community in many ways. Mothers used to feed their babies solid food after 15 days of birth, now they have realised that complementary food should be given after 6 months. In addition, they now try to add varieties of food in their diet. Most of the women have built their kitchen garden to grow nutritious food which is a great success of this project.”*



Image: NPCS: face-to-face interview with mother

As they prepared to leave the place they knew and loved, Mark told us that he and Deirdre asked themselves, *“What in the world are we going to do back [in the U.S.]?”* After a lifetime of medical practice, it was the thought of leaving behind opportunities to preach in their Nepali church that most unsettled Mark. And so he wondered about becoming a pastor. Pastors are needed in many places in the U.S., particularly in New England. Much prayer and discernment resulted in Mark pursuing a call to become a licensed local pastor with the United Methodist Church in Lebanon, New Hampshire.

As Deirdre sat exams to transfer her dietician certification and transfer her credentials to the U.S., and Mark studied for ministry, he shared something of his fear and doubt about this new career path with a close friend at Patan Hospital. *“Of course you won’t be up to the job,”* stated Mark’s friend, *“but God is, and he’ll equip you.”*

Though, as Mark told us, *“The sense of uncertainty [around] this posting in Lebanon feels something like going to Nepal for the first time, wherever the call, it’s not about our capacity, but God’s.”*

As Deirdre and Mark endeavour to be God’s hands and feet on the ground in a new place, please continue to keep this family close to your heart in prayer so that they can follow God’s call, bringing hope and renewal wherever he leads.



Roger Thompson
Partnership Coordinator

With thanks to Christie R. House (Global Ministries). For more information, go to <https://umcmmission.org/story/missionaries-retire-after-decades-of-work-in-nepal/>

snippets

cmsi news in brief



Annual staff and trustees day

From north, south, east and west, trustees and staff met together for our annual gathering in January. There was much sharing and celebration of CMSI Ireland and the work of the society over the last year. Each person shared how they have benefitted from their involvement with CMSI. Praise God for learning and love!



Refugee Focus Event

Interested in exploring ways of being Christ's hands and feet with refugees and asylum seekers, opening the door of hospitality as part of the global church? Come along to our focus event on **Thursday 20th June**. Details have yet to be finalised but keep an eye on social media and our monthly email for more information.





Shine AGM

Join us for our annual Shine celebration event and AGM at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) in Dublin on **Saturday 23rd March** from 10.30 – 3.30pm.

Scan the QR code or go onto our website to register now and secure your free lunch!



Join us for our annual Shine celebration event and AGM at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) in Dublin on **Saturday 23rd March** from 10.30 – 3.30pm.

Scan the QR code or go onto our website to register now and secure your free lunch!



Prayer Room



Prayer is central to everything we do in CMSI. Join us on the first Wednesday of the month online at 1pm to connect with some of our global partners. If you have been to any of the prayer rooms this academic year, then there is no need to re-register. However, if you haven't already signed up, you can do so via our website or by scanning this QR code: Prayer Room QR code

On **6th March** we will be praying with Tujisaidie, Kenya; on **3rd April** Cairo, Egypt; on **1st May** Burundi will be our focus; and our last prayer room of this academic year on **5th June** will connect with the Quills in Ibba, South Sudan. Please pop these dates in your diary and plan to join us in prayer.



On the Ground in Ibba

Andrew and Joanne Quill have arrived in Ibba Diocese, South Sudan. To prayerfully connect with them, follow us on facebook and signup to our monthly email.



Teams Training

As our teams prepare to go to South Sudan, please pray for their training, fundraising and general preparations. Prayerful support is invaluable for them before, during and after their visit. Come along to Ignite's Friday evening 'Momentum' event in September 2024 to hear what they learnt from our global partners.



shine



CMSI Members' Day Saturday 23rd March 2024

Join us for our annual Shine celebration event and AGM at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI) in Dublin from **10.30 – 3.30pm**.

Register now to secure your free lunch!

Dublin

Church of Ireland House, Church Ave, Rathmines, Dublin D06 CF67

Tel +353 (0) 1497 0931 **Email** dublinoffice@cmsireland.org

Belfast

Sir Thomas & Lady Dixon Park, 245a Upper Malone Road,

Belfast BT17 9LA

Tel +44 (0) 28 9077 5020 **Email** belfastoffice@cmsireland.org

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