

inmission

the magazine of **cmsireland**



the 'lightness' of Christ

caring for creation by
living lightly

Issue 73 **Spring 2023**

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cmsireland
equipping the church **in mission**

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our people

Global Partners (by country)

Burundi

Dioceses of Gitega & Matana

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 Ibba, Kajokeji, Maridi, Olo & Yei

Uganda

Dioceses of Luweero & Madi West Nile

Zambia

Diocese of Northern Zambia

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The 'lightness' of Christ seeing, loving, living differently

Every 60 seconds, approximately 1 million plastic bottles are bought by people around the globe.

While I recognise the immense benefit plastic brings to our day-to-day lives, a recent statistic shared by the World Economic Forum is weighing heavily upon me. If we keep living as we are, by 2050 the weight of plastic in the oceans will overtake the collective mass of fish.

Children today are aware of this sort of fact. They are more climate conscious than the vast majority of the adult population. But knowledge of an issue doesn't always galvanise action. For change to happen we must turn head knowledge into heart knowledge. This is something *Switched On*, CMSI's children's resource on climate justice, seeks to do. And it is something that this edition of *inMission* endeavours to do by shining a light on the global consequences of our lifestyles. But rather than leaving you laden down, tethered by a state of inertia when face with such a gargantuan problem, this magazine intends to help you lighten the load. You will read how living differently, caring for God's creation, can become an act of worship. We learn to view

things differently when we see through the eyes of our creator God.

This seeing and living differently comes out of our love for God – a love predicated upon the life of Christ. Not only do we care for the earth because it is God's created place, we care for this planet because we are followers of Jesus Christ who made this world his home. In striving to be Christ-like, we are changed from the inside out. We seek to proclaim the light of Christ to others and in so doing share in his life-giving light. This privilege to share in Christ's mission is another aspect of the 'lightness' of Christ explored in this issue of *inMission*.

And so, as you read these pages, our hope is that we would all be more able to live into the lightness of Christ in all its many shades of challenge and joy.



Emma Lutton
Editor



Living Lightly

a biblical reflection on climate justice



By John McCammon

After decades of supporting CMS Ireland, we are delighted to have John McCammon reflecting on our annual theme in this issue of inMission. Years of pastoring the congregation in Lisburn Cathedral concluded with John and his wife Margaret becoming CMSI mission partners for six years in the twilight of his formal ministry. John started the Theological Education by Extension programme in Kajiado, Kenya, and so it is fitting that he should be the one to ruminate on the connection between Christians as light of the world and our collective responsibility to live lightly in God's creation.

Here's what John has to say:

In both Psalm 115:16 and Genesis 1:26 God is said to have given the earth to humans for us to carry out our role as His "vice-regents" or

stewards. Creation belongs ultimately to God and our love for Him should include caring for what is His.

As Christopher Wright puts it, "I need to acknowledge Christ as Lord of my physical environment as well as my spiritual salvation and behave as his disciple in relation to both" (Missional Creation Care, May 2014).

In Genesis 2:15 we read, "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it". This responsibility has been made so much more difficult because of human sin but has never been removed. John Calvin affirms this in the institutes when he writes: "We possess the things which God has committed to our hands on the condition that, being content with the frugal and moderate use of them, we should take care of what shall remain" (Institutes 1: The Conditions of Man's Stewardship of the Earth, 1536)

The term "affluenza" has been coined to describe the modern Western materialism and consumerism associated with the pursuit of wealth and success. We all live in this kind of society and it's hard for us to avoid catching this "disease". Jesus, however, instructed us be counter-cultural by storing up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:33) – seeking to give rather than to get.

There is a link here with justice – justice, which seeks that everyone receives what is fair and equitable, is absolutely fundamental to God's Kingdom because it is an integral part of the character of God. The developing nations contribute only marginally to greenhouse gas emissions and yet they suffer in a hugely disproportionate way from the consequences of climate change. This is manifestly unjust.

The Old Testament prophets draw a link between justice and light. In Isaiah 51:4 we are told that "My justice will become a light to the nations". Since Matthew and Luke affirm that we Christians are the "light of the world", part of our responsibility to promote



*"Jesus instructed us
be counter-cultural
– seek to give rather
than get."*

justice for the poorer nations is clearly linked to how we treat the environment. Our good stewardship of the earth will consequently benefit the poorer nations in our world by, among other ways, our caring for the environment and for its ecosystems.

Wright challenges us in this bold statement: "It seems quite inexplicable to me that there are some Christians [who] have no concern for the earth that bears God's stamp of ownership. They do not care about the abuse of the earth and indeed, by their wasteful and over-consumptive lifestyles, they collude in it. God intends... our care of the creation to reflect our love of the Creator" (The Mission of God's People) And so, for the sake of our love for God we find ourselves compelled to protect the environment by adapting our lifestyles.

**May John's scrutiny of scripture
prompt each of us to pause in the
coming days and ask ourselves how
we can live more lightly on this earth
as an expression of our love for God.**



Climate Justice

lighting up the dark corners of our worldview

“Make sure that the light you think you have is not actually darkness. If you are filled with light, with no dark corners, then your whole life will be radiant, as though a floodlight were filling you with light.”

Luke 11:35-36

When it comes to the global climate emergency, many of us are still living in the dark. The COP26 conferences in Glasgow, and more recently COP27 in Sharm el-Sheikh, have highlighted the alarming reports of melting ice-sheets, rising temperatures, current disasters and impending catastrophe – but what am I actually doing to make a difference? And what are we all doing in our parishes, in our society? To be honest, it feels like we are making a few token gestures, while for the most part carrying on exactly as before – it’s all we can manage just to pick ourselves up after the covid pandemic and deal with the cost-of-living crisis.

Through our global partners in Nepal, however, Jesus is shining a light on this inertia and indifference, challenging us to wake up. Last August during the Kingdom Voices conference Kapil Sharma, Executive Director of HDCS, spoke passionately about the devastating impact global warming is having on his country. Melting glaciers in the Himalayas combined with increasing monsoon rainfall are resulting in ever more flood disasters, while frequent and severe heat waves are causing droughts and food shortages.

During his “Treasure” seminar at the Leaders’ Conference in St Donard’s, Kapil showed footage of the unseasonal monsoon cataracts in June 2021 that ripped through the Melamchi Valley 30 km northeast of Kathmandu.



The wall of water killed 20 people and swept away more than 100 homes, along with 6 highway bridges and 12 suspension footbridges. Moreover, it caused a massive landslide that knocked out headworks infrastructure at a vital Water Supply Project which provided drinking water to over 1 million citizens in the city below. The construction of the project’s giant 26-km tunnel had taken 22 years, had cost \$700 million and had only been open for 2 months!

These kinds of disasters are so frequent in Nepal that HDCS has employed Sahara Misra to be their Technical Coordinator for Disasters and Climate Change. Sahara’s role involves

overseeing a range of practical projects responding to those who are affected on the ground. At CMSI we support many of these projects through prayer and financial resources. One recent example was a medical camp which was set up in a remote rural area of Lamjung District which made medical care and post-traumatic counselling available to over 500 people caught up in flooding and landslides.

Staff travelled many hours by jeep and on foot into the mountainous terrain. They carried medicines and equipment so that a local clinic could be set up to treat patients who otherwise would not have been able to access care. As well as receiving disaster relief packages, these patients were given a free health check-up. Anyone requiring further medical attention was referred to the hospital in Lamjung and given free medical care through a charity fund.

While it's amazing that HDCS provide these services in the name of Christ – and that undoubtedly shines out His light in a powerful way – there is another aspect of this situation that demands a light to be shone here in Ireland and the UK. As Desmond Tutu once said,



"There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in."

When we look at the evidence, we find that the increased rainfall, melting glaciers and floods in Nepal are all caused by global warming, which is in turn the result of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane.

As Sahara commented in a recent video message recorded for our Children's Resource,

"Nepal's contribution to Climate Change is negligible – just 0.08% of total global greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Analysis Indicators Tool 2016) – and yet it is the world's 4th most vulnerable country to climate change (Global Climate Risk Index 2017). Nepal's contribution is so small, yet it is amongst the most vulnerable to the effects of climate change – ranked 8th least resilient out of 192 countries."

It is a flagrant injustice that people in Nepal are suffering the consequences of climate change when they have done virtually nothing to cause the problem. The vast majority of GHG emissions come from the combustion of fossil fuels like coal, petroleum, oil and natural gas, as well as food production. Undoubtedly, we in the industrialised west contribute far, far more GHGs than Nepal.

Cumulatively to date, Our World in Data estimates that the **UK has emitted 78.16 BILLION tonnes of CO2**, whereas **Nepal has emitted only 160 MILLION tonnes**. When it comes to such large numbers it can be difficult for us to fully grasp the difference in scale. To put these figures another way – imagine they were measuring time rather than mass. **If there**



are just over 31.5 million seconds in a year, the UK's emissions would equate to 2,476 years, whereas Nepal's contribution would be only 5 years! This is not just a difference, it is an astronomical difference!

Eating habits have a significant role to play in increasing the carbon footprint. Nepal is a predominantly vegetarian country, relying mostly on rice, lentils and other legumes for their daily meals. This sort of diet causes relatively low levels of GHG emissions. For most people in the west, however, food consumption is heavily dependent on meat and dairy, causing far higher levels of emissions. The International Panel on Climate Change 2022 report points out that one vital step towards net zero is to reduce our consumption of meat. Professor Annette Cowie, Principal Research Scientist on Climate at NSW University, comments:

"One of the biggest individual contributions we can make to reducing Greenhouse Gas emissions is adopting a sustainable diet, rich in plant-based food, with moderate intake of meat and dairy."

Indeed, when buying meat and dairy, shopping locally will further reduce carbon emissions whilst helping sustain the local economy.

The light of Christ shines out brightly through acts of compassion, but it also shines down upon our worldview, convincing us that our behaviours as individuals and as a society have profound consequences for our brothers and sisters in Nepal and many other countries. As this happens, may we become changemakers not only through our prayers and giving, but through our lifestyle too.



Roger Thompson
Partnership Coordinator



CMSI Children's Resource 2023

Switch on to climate justice.

CMSI's new Children's Resource explores God's love for the earth and humanity, looking at ways that we can learn to love the world and each other better.

With Nepal as our case study and Galatians 6:2 as our anchor, the resource will draw out four key questions to help young people understand some of the ways to "Bear one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ".

Sign up online via CMSI's website to receive a free copy of our children's resource (with videos) – available NOW.



Yielding Fruit in Season

switching on to climate justice

If I'm honest, climate change makes me switch off. I get why it is important for our world, I get why it is incumbent upon Christ followers to care for creation, I get that climate change is about helping people, not just swapping plastic for reusables. But it still feels like a drag.

Maybe I feel overwhelmed by the size of the problem, maybe I resent leaving behind a plastic bottle of shampoo for a sensible bar that cleans but doesn't foam, maybe it all just feels too heavy and I'm not willing to face the extra load.

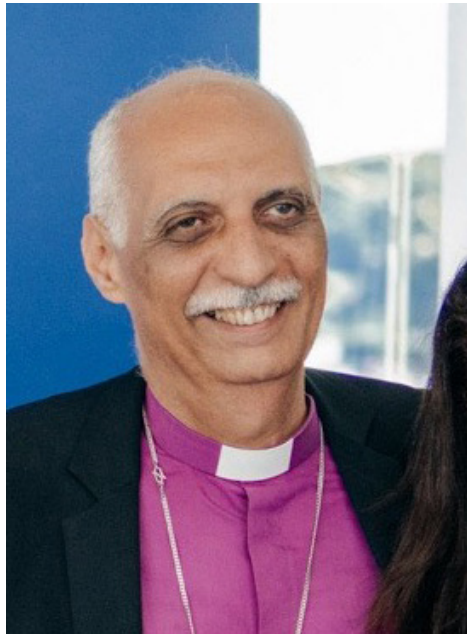
There is a verse in Psalm 1 that has always helped me when responsibilities feel overwhelming:

"That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither-- whatever they do prospers."

Psalm 1:3 (NIV)

The little phrase 'yields its fruit in season' lightens everything for me. While my inclination to deal with the heavy issues in life is to put my 'foot to the floor' and 'guzzle more gas' to try to solve things quickly, unsurprisingly God's calming call is to be more like a tree! His promise comes with the reminder that a season of fruitfulness begins with a long quiet stretching of roots towards water and a patient watching of growing leaves.

A look to the global church lightens the issue of climate change for me too. In spite of the heavy burden of loss and destruction carried by our partners, many are engaged and active, lightening the issues into manageable, even enjoyable, points on a journey towards change.



for poorer nations, has been a red line for materially wealthy nations for thirty years. Archbishop Samy lightens this dark issue by showing us the hope that change may indeed be coming and by describing for us what our faith community can contribute:

"It is definite that the climate is changing and causing a lot of alarm to the whole world and we all should be united in supporting poor countries dealing with the damage as a result of the climate change. Our role in the faith communities is to sound the alarm for our communities to respond positively to the change in climate and take actions in relation to reducing pollution and assisting the needy."

May God give you all the wisdom as you reflect to such a crucial subject affecting our whole world."

Archbishop Samy Shehata of the Province of Alexandria reflected on his participation in COP27 in Cairo last year declaring the event "very positive because of the participation of many countries and the huge number of participations from the political parties."

Rather than focus on what has not yet been achieved (the fruit not yet seen) the Archbishop highlighted to us the pathways of progress that are taking root:

"I attended as a faith leader who is concerned with climate change issues. I was very pleased to know that Loss and Damage Fund is approved to be in agenda for the coming COP meetings. There were negotiations relating to Mitigation and Adaptation. The Loss and Damage Fund took a central place in the negotiation."

According to the Grantham Institute*, the Loss and Damage Fund, which would provide financial mitigation of climate change impact

In Madi West Nile Diocese, the Church of Uganda is fully invested in change. Aiming to lighten the load on subsistence farmers along with decreasing environmental damage, their diocesan funding proposal states:



"We have two areas of intervention to seek to address both the farming and environmental issues; a small Demonstration Farm to show new ways of ensuring high yields from small farms and an extension unit that reaches out to schools, youth groups and communities in environmental awareness raising and tree planting."

This win-win approach to climate change is seen quite literally in Anthony Njroge's youth football team in Nairobi. They plant a tree for every goal scored. In Cairo, too, children plant trees together to build relationships across divided communities. Our global partners in Ibba (South Sudan), North Kivu and Kindu (DRC) and Gitega (Burundi) have all been involved in tree planting programmes in the past few years.

I have never planted a tree. But I am learning from the global church that climate change doesn't have to bring out the worst in me – trying to fix everything at once and complaining that my shampoo doesn't foam enough! Maybe I will resolve to plant an actual tree this year. Or maybe I'll put out some roots



towards water by exploring how I can respond with the global church.

For certain, I will stand in the knowledge that the global church has not switched off even when I am tempted to; I will hope that CMSI's support of climate change mitigation projects and that the growth of every win-win tree planting idea will be another step towards change; and I will trust that our church leaders will influence global policy which will be fruitful at just the right time - 'yielding its fruit in season'.



Linda Abwa
Partnership Coordinator

If, like me, you struggle to know what changes to implement, why not have a look at some of these resources online? Laudato Si' Action Platform (laudatosi.actionplatform.org) or Lausanne Wea Creation Care Network's site Resources by language | LWCCN (lwccn.com/resources/resources-by-language/).

* Stuart-Watt, Adeline. "Why COP27 will be remembered as the Loss and Damage COP and what to expect next" <https://www.lse.ac.uk/granthaminstitute/news/why-cop27-will-be-remembered-as-the-loss-and-damage-cop-and-what-to-expect-next/>

Parish prompts for creation care

In this issue we've been exploring what it might mean to live lightly in God's creation, treading carefully on the ground as an expression of our love for God and a way in which we can live in Christ's likeness.

For some of us the challenge of climate justice weighs heavily. For others, this task inspires creativity as we explore mechanisms by which the problem can be tackled.

Whether you are an eco-warrior or find yourself identifying more with Linda's honesty, I hope these next few pages will be an encouragement.



Donna Mackey from **Dromore Cathedral** shared with Linda about their Climate Committee. They have

made some changes at church to help reduce their carbon footprint. At coffee time you won't see disposables but you will be treated to a plastic-free tea bag. Clothes swaps are helping foster a different attitude to material things. Outside, there is now a wildflower area around the building and they are hoping to erect a bicycle shelter to encourage cycling to church. The committee has met with their organisations to demonstrate how swaps can be made to more eco-friendly products. So, as stores are being used up shopping lists are being altered.



The ECI Climate Justice Candle visited **Christ Church, Bray, Co Wicklow** as part of a Climate Justice Service

in January. Jenny Salmon, a parishioner of Christ Church, shared with them about her experience as Concern's Worldwide Youth Climate Ambassador at COP27 in Egypt, November 2022. When Jenny asked some of the other delegates what she should do about the climate crisis, she said to her "God put you on the plane to meet us. Now use your voice". This challenge is one levelled at all who are serious about climate justice and is certainly prompting change in Christ Church.



All Nations Ministries have embarked on a bike repair scheme. Carson and Andy from Belvoir Parish fix up old,

donated bicycles at the ANM Bicycle Up-Cycling workshop. These are then given out to members of the refugee/asylum seeker community around Belfast. They are praying for a permanent space to become available for the up-cycling workshop so that this enterprise can be run as a full-time operation – ANM is going green on multiple levels!



Rev David McComb, from the parishes of Lisnadill and Kildarton, visited the office in January to discuss fundraising and the new strategic plan. After a conversation about CMSI's 2023 children's resource on climate justice and Nepal, David shared with us an exciting new venture that he David Brown, the Diocesan Youth and Children's Development Officer, are leading in the diocese of Armagh. 9 parishes are participating in the pilot programme, 'The Flourish Initiative', which seeks to inspire and support congregations to play an active part in the restoration of God's creation. Their model operates through a working group which promotes Christian action and practical support for local activities, a ground force team in every parish that design and take action in their own setting, and external partners guiding and supporting participants. From allotments and tree planting to community gardens and better waste management systems, this scheme is set to inspire and equip congregations to tackle climate justice on the ground.



Image: Rev. David McComb and Emma

As David and I talked through the details of the programme, he said,

"We are required as Christians to play our part in caring for the planet. We are stewards which means we don't just maintain the soil but we should also seek to improve it. This allows us the chance to participate in God's work of restoration."

As our conversation continued, David became increasingly animated –

"For the church, issues around the environment and creation care provide rich opportunities to connect with our young people and adults. They are interested in and knowledgeable about ecology in a different way to previous generations. With this awareness and interest, let's help them see why environmental issues are close to God's heart too".

In the middle of writing the children's resource, this was music to my ears!

We finished our chat, recollecting the adage "We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children." If ever we need something to galvanise us into action, to encourage an end to apathy and a start to proactivity it is this, is it not?



Awake, Arise, Go forth

wide-reaching rallies in Uganda and DR Congo

*Go forth and tell!
O church of God, awake!
God's saving news
to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus,
saviour, Lord, and king,
that all the world his worthy
praise may sing.**

I have sung this wonderfully rousing hymn many times. When I think about the words, the calling God has for the church, my spirit is lifted: "Go forth and tell!" But I am also deeply challenged. Do I ever really do this? Do I ever really speak of Jesus, of his love and redeeming power to my friends and neighbours?

In October 2022 I visited some of the partners that CMSI has the privilege to work with,

thanks to a generous legacy that was left to the society a few years ago. Two of these partners featured in the recent *inMission* article "image bearers in Uganda": Bishop Ivan Lugoloobi who leads the Revival Centre in Matugga, central Uganda, and Seme Peter Christ's Own who leads Save Life Ministries (SLM) in Koboko. We keep in regular contact, sharing news and prayer requests. It is lovely when a photo pops up on my phone allowing me to share in their latest enterprise or adventure.

In December Save Life Ministries asked for some funding support to run two Youth Rallies – one across the border in DR Congo and one in Koboko, NW Uganda. Seme Peter

keeps us updated with the arrangements and events as they unfold. Working together with the local authorities, local churches and the enthusiastic SLM team, the two rallies were widely advertised and very well attended.

DR Congo's rally was an amazing event. Despite huge challenges of communication, resources and transport, Seme Peter reported that "We reached our destination in DR Congo successfully although we were disturbed on the way with many check points. We were well received by the Archdeacon and the local church. Many people attended the rally, between 2,000 and 3,000." Choirs sang, there was preaching and there was prayer. "More than 250 people gave their lives to Christ. Our being there has opened up a light to the church. Spiritual growth in the area is affected by many witchcraft activities, we need to continue to pray for people there."

A few weeks later the youth choir were invited to visit Uganda to take part in the second rally planned for Koboko in January. So it was with great excitement that a minibus, packed to bursting, arrived in Koboko in the new year. Seme Peter invited CMS Ireland to send a representative and so we linked him up with Bishop Ivan from Matugga. Bishop Ivan and his colleague Eddie took the overnight bus to Koboko, a 10-hour journey, their first time to visit the northwest of Uganda. On arrival they were greeted in the SLM office by Seme Peter and his team and then taken straight to join in the rally.



Bishop Ivan reported that the rally took place in a large games field. A stage was erected with an amplification and speaker systems. Two tents were set up for prayer and ministry.

"We started with prayers for people to come and indeed prayers were answered. The turnout was very big. 23 youth from Congo made the day very colourful with their singing. Then the music started in full swing and numbers started building. Joy filled the crowd as they heard the various choirs sing. The gospel mission gave the youth opportunity to exercise their gifts and energy, all surrendered to the Lord in worship and witness."

Bishop Ivan was invited to take part in the preaching. Those listening came from Koboko town, the surrounding rural areas and from the refugee settlements and camps. Many young people responded to the message of good news, some coming to faith for the first time, other recommitting their lives as disciples of Jesus.

*Go forth and tell!
The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts
let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ
your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers
for his sole glory use.**



Joining in praise and worship, Koboko rally

The committed, visionary discipleship of Seme Peter, Bishop Ivan and the teams they have built up continues to inspire and challenge me. How can I better use the "ransomed powers" that God has blessed me with for "His sole glory?" Am I wholeheartedly committed to keeping God's light burning brightly within, having "no part dark" and being "wholly bright" bringing God's light to the darkness around? This is the direct challenge made by Jesus in Luke 11:33-39. Do I really understand my part in the Great Commission?

*Go forth and tell!
O church of God, arise!
go in the strength which
Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations
his great name adore
and serve him,
Lord and king for evermore.**

And so, as CMS Ireland embarks on the first year of our new five-year Strategic Plan, we need to focus on our vision and strapline: "to see the restoration of 'Right Relations' between God and humanity, so that our churches, communities and people are in harmony with God, with each other and with the environment" by helping to "equip the church in mission."

Inspired by the Great Commission, empowered through the Holy Spirit, we 'go forward in the strength our Lord supplies.'

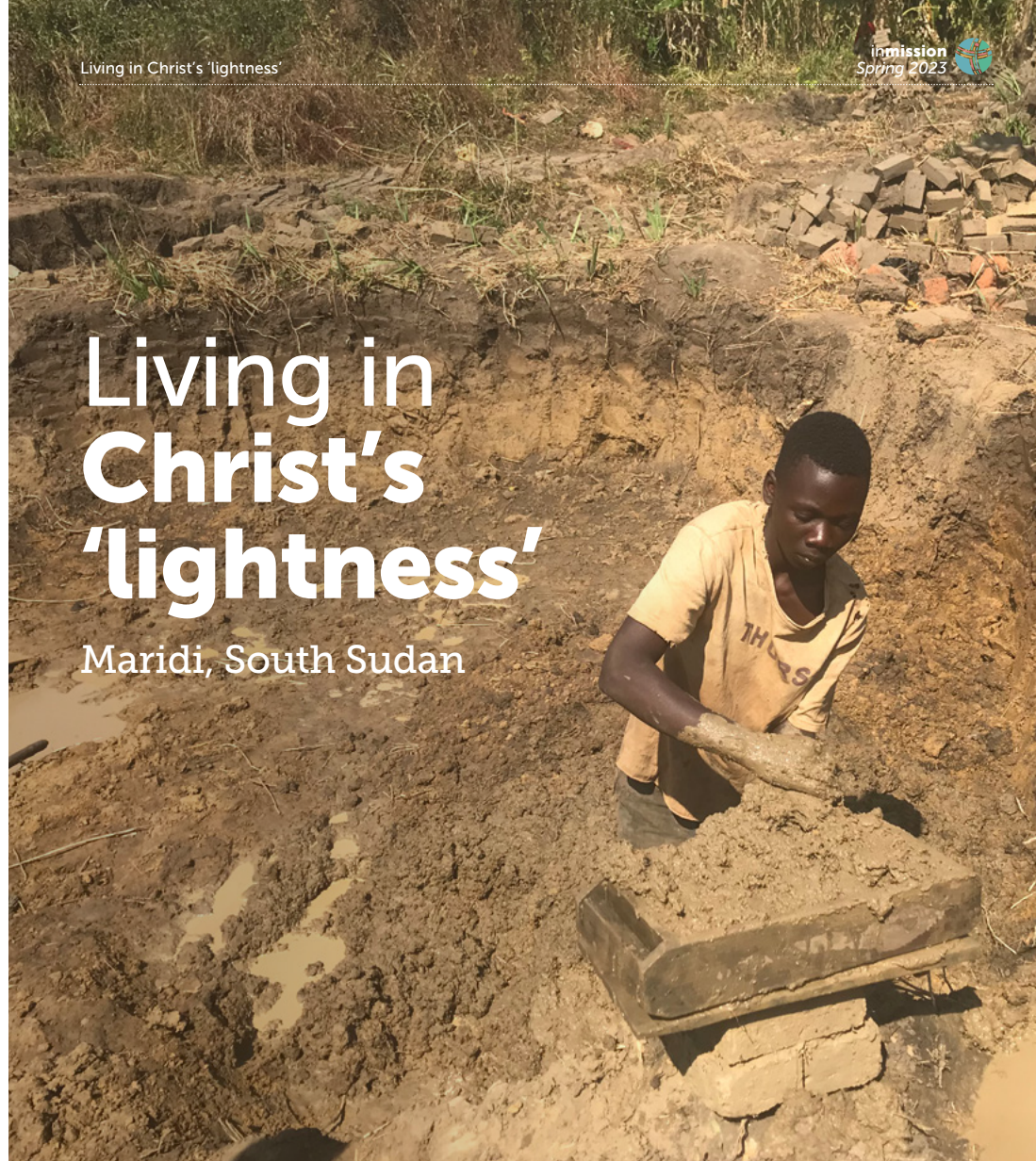


Jenny Smyth
Mission Director

*James Seddon (1915 – 1983). *Go Forth and Tell*.

Living in Christ's 'lightness'

Maridi, South Sudan



To live in the light of Christ, being moulded in his likeness and participating in the sharing of his light – this is a whole-life, all-consuming thing. When we follow where Christ leads, we can find ourselves in places we never expected to be, viewing the world through a wider lens than we even knew existed.

Image: Brick making project, Maridi, South Sudan





This has been the experience of Dean Geoff Wilson. As many of you will know, he spent four weeks of his sabbatical in Maridi, South Sudan. Geoff has been involved in the Down and Dromore Diocesan partnership link with Maridi for many years. He's on CMSI's Board of Trustees. He knows about our global partners – he's met many of them. But the experience of living at the local church guesthouse, not of visiting with a team as he did before in Uganda or Madi West Nile but of really being with Bishop Moses and Mama Rejoice in their payot*, has helped Geoff see with different eyes.

He wrote:

I see something of this same concern for others in the project I visited. I see the concern of the church for young people, the majority of whom are orphaned, and the future which lies in store for them. Through the project the young people are fed and nurtured, receiving a small salary which enables the youngest of them to pay fees to attend school. This project provides hope and security and enables participants to begin to re-build their lives.

At an early stage of his visit, Geoff reflected on Nehemiah's telling of the fall of Jerusalem's walls and the gates in flames. The proactive imperative implicit in the biblical account was unpacked. Rebuilding was the theme, an activity which brought about physical and spiritual restoration. These ruminations prompted Geoff to see the local brick making project with fresh eyes.

But the project also has a much broader impact. The bricks produced are the raw materials which are so necessary for the re-building of a land which has been blighted by civil war and bloodshed for many decades. The boys and girls involved in this project are participating in the crucial work of re-building a nation as the church helps them to re-build their own lives



Geoff continued to relate to us some stats supporting his confidence:

On my first Sunday in Maridi, I attended a service of confirmation for 33 candidates in the Parish of St Peter, 21 senior leaders in MU and 2 lay readers were also commissioned. 2886 people attended the service, which included post-service celebrations lasting 5½ hours in total. The atmosphere was electric and the worship was dynamic; there was a real sense of the Lord's presence in our midst. Both young and old sang, danced and worshipped the most extraordinary God in the most ordinary of contexts. And this attendance was considered to be very low in the Diocese of Maridi!

I count it a real privilege to be able to contribute in some small way to that work of re-building lives and land through our partnership.

Continuing the theme of building, Geoff considered Jesus' words in Matthew which proclaim: "I will build my church". A number of conversations with one of his translators around declining church attendance in Ireland caused Geoff's translator to ask if he was not concerned for the future of the church. This question prompted the following response:

I answered immediately that I was not. If the church were simply the people in Western Europe, then I would probably have said yes, I was. But the church is more than the Church of Ireland or Lutherans in Germany. The church is more than Roman Catholics in Spain or Pentecostals in England. The church is global, and the global church is growing

So I say no, the church is not dying, for the global church is very much alive. But perhaps the church in Western Europe is being humbled for a season.

Jesus said to Peter, "I will build my church", and that is most certainly what I have experienced in Maridi.

A powerful testament to the light of Christ shining brightly in the lives of others. May each of us redirect our eyes so that we can see this light streaming in from another direction.

* A payot is a space where visitors are welcomed, food is shared and fellowship is enjoyed.

snippets

cmsi news in brief



Prayer room

The first Wednesday of each month is a wonderful opportunity to meet together online for prayer and an update from one of our global partners. If you haven't managed to join us yet, please feel free to register at any stage. We are always glad to see folk at this monthly gathering.



Join us for our AGM,
Shine 2023

Where?
Church Of Ireland Theological Institute
(CITI), Dublin

When?
Saturday 25th March,
10:30am – 3pm

How much?
It's free, lunch is provided and we'll even help with transportation if necessary!

What's next?
Sign up to secure your place and catering for the event. Visit our website or register now with using this QR code.



Sharing life together

In the coming months there will be a number of exchanges with our global partners. These opportunities to be with one another are much anticipated events in the life of CMSI.

Throughout the month of March Rev Mina Helmy, from the Province of Alexandria, will be visiting with his partner parish of Hillsborough. He will be joining us for our monthly prayer room, zooming in from the office here, at Lady Dixon Park.

Dr Rev Keith Scott will be on a STEP placement visiting Bujumbura Christian



University in Burundi for 6 weeks, just after Easter in mid-April.

There are also 6 CMSI teams leaving from Ireland to visit with some of our global partners between March and August. In March, a small group are heading to Maridi, South Sudan, to stay with Bishop Moses Zungu and the church family. In May, CMSI people will be in Tujisaidie, Kenya. Also in May, Gitega and Matana in Burundi will receive Rev Johnny and Mrs Emily Lowden from Glendermott parish. Look out for info on our other teams online and in Summer Snippets.



CMSI Members' Day
Saturday 25th March 2023

Join us for our AGM,

Shine 2023

Saturday 25th March, 10:30am – 3pm
Church Of Ireland Theological Institute (CITI), Dublin

How much? It's free, lunch is provided
and we'll even help with transportation if necessary!

Sign up to secure your place and catering for the event.
Visit our website or register now with using the QR code below.

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