

GENERAL SYNOD 2014

MOTION 13 – CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY IRELAND

Proposed by Bishop Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Motion of support for CMSI.

Next week in Armagh CMSI are gathering together mission partners from across the globe to celebrate 200 years of service in mission and ministry. At this gathering will be partners from different countries what are called global partners. They will celebrate 200 years of CMSI but more important in consultation they will help decide the priorities for CMSI for the next decade and beyond. Celebrating the past is good but it is not enough, there is the prayer and hope it will stimulate and encourage us as we look to the future together.

My own experience of CMSI began when I was in a youth group in Willowfield Parish and we spent some days over the New Year working on the foundations for the centre in Rostrevor. It was years later in parish ministry when I discovered one of the most important principles of mission and that is partnership. It was exciting, stimulating and challenging to partner with people in different cultures and contexts to see how we could support one another in the mission of God we are all called to. To visit Kenya, Uganda and Sudan as rector and bishop has been humbling and enriching.

I share two moments that have been so important to me. When I was preaching in the cathedral in Yei diocese in South Sudan I was invited to preach after the Mother's Union had led us in singing but they didn't just sing they danced and there was such joy in a brutal context of decades of suffering. I foolishly began my sermon by telling them that I wanted to learn to dance and bring some of their joy back home. Twenty minutes later they stopped and then I returned to my sermon with little energy.

The other occasion was when I was invited to a project run by Nairobi Cathedral in the slums of Nairobi. People had been evicted from the slums to build houses for the emerging middle class. The local faith community had met with some of this people and assisted them to build slighter better slums and they through help from Bishop's Appeal and CMSI purchased water tanks for them to have at their new corrugated iron dwellings.

I was asked to dedicate the water tanks and I have to say it is still the most useful item I have been asked to dedicate.

I ask you to support this motion as we give thanks for how CMSI have served the Church of Ireland to partner with the worldwide church and how they has been such a blessing to us and to so many others. Mission is our calling as it is the mission of God but when we can discover the joy of partnership it such a gift to everyone.