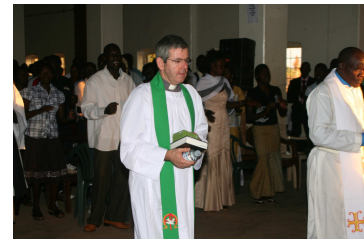


# Sunday worship an all singing, all dancing affair

It's an all singing, all dancing affair and when more than 1,000 worshippers pack into Yei Cathedral for the first English language service at 7.30am on a Sunday, they quite literally raise the roof.

As the Cathedral fills up, a choir leader sings to a deep African beat, the rapidly growing congregation repeating his words of praise.



Pastor Richard Ali led this service. First there is a hymn, a reading, prayers, a musical item from the youth choir, then a welcome is extended to all visitors who are asked to stand and one is urged to come forward and bring the greetings of all newcomers to the congregation. (Left: CMSI's John Spens and a local pastor)

The announcements are lengthy, meetings here, conferences there, youth group here, even a diocesan football match at 4pm in Freedom Square. This is a busy diocese.

Then other guests are welcomed, namely the Connor team. With accountant David Cromie absent due to sickness, it falls to Archdeacon Stephen Forde and Communications Officer Karen Bushby (right) stand at the front to the Cathedral, microphone in hand, and bring the greetings of their families, churches and the people of Connor to their friends in Yei.



Archdeacon Forde (left) is introduced as the preacher, and he bases his sermon on Luke 4:14, preaching on the subject 'the best things in life are worth waiting for.' He raises a laugh by revealing for the Connor trio waited for their delayed luggage for six days, and now had more clothes and toiletries than they needed! He urged the congregation to listen and to wait expectantly. "Today will you proclaim that the waiting is over, Christ is in our midst, God's kingdom has come?" he asks.

CMSI associate Poppy Spens warns that Holy Communion (right) will be something of a scrum, which initially it is. Dozens crowd forward to kneel at the altar to receive the bread and wine. But soon there is order amidst this apparent mayhem and 1,050 people receive communion without any hitches. There are more prayers, a collection for the Bishop's Appeal, the final hymn, appropriately 'God be with you till we meet again,' and two hours after the service began it is all over.





As the people from that first service file out, those arriving for the second English language service make their way into the Cathedral. Archdeacon Forde gets a break for tea, but returns to preach at the Bari service later in the morning, his sermon translated into the local language.

Just 300 metres from the cathedral is the more traditional Zamba Church. Straw roof, open sides, a simple cross shaped window behind the altar. Nearby are the metal bones of the new Zamba church, a long way from completion. Sad really, for the existing church is far from dilapidated and comes complete with PA system and seating for the 400 or so who come to services. And it is considerably cooler inside than the cathedral.



Although set amidst a community of tukuls, Zamba Church, left, is not named for the village, it takes its name from the five tribes who worship here together – a unique situation. Pastor Alfred is warm and welcoming. Before the service children, some in their Sunday best (above), take their seats on the dust floor at the front of the church, clapping their hands and swaying to the African rhythms.

The Sunday School performs, the youth choir performs, the people clap, dance, sing. The sun shines and dozens more people lean in through the open window, participating in this mass of energy praising the Lord.

