

SOMA works for the transformation of individuals and churches, and the healing of communities and their lands through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit by sending and receiving teams worldwide on short-term mission within the Anglican Communion.

sharing

Autumn 2008

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soma

SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

God at Work!



National Director Stephen Dinsmore writes:

In *Sharing* we often focus on the blessings that God by His grace gives to those abroad who receive SOMA Teams. Yet in the great redeeming purposes of the Kingdom of God those who go as part of a SOMA Team also receive the blessing, and face the challenge, of some major work of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. In the pages of this *Sharing* we make space to hear some of those blessings and challenges.

There are spiritual principles at work here. The first is that of 'pressed down and flowing over' – the measure that we use to give is the measure that is used to give to us, but pressed down and flowing over. It's not the reason we give, of ourselves, our resources, our time. But it is an encouragement to give generously, faithfully and receive thankfully.

Which brings us to a second principle – taking steps of faith. For most it is a real step of faith to be part of a SOMA team. The challenge of working with those you do not (or sometimes only too well) know – and in taxing conditions. The challenge of facing the utterly unknown. Recognising that one will return 'never the same again'. The challenge of being taken by the Holy Spirit outside your comfort zone – and there finding new depths of trust in Him.

The experience of Team members over and over again is that by taking this step of faith, of facing the challenges, no matter how haltingly, there is real blessing, a renewed hope, an enlivened vision for mission, a strengthened faith, anxieties overcome and the reward of seeing God the Holy Spirit powerfully at work.

How great is our God and wonderful His purpose that he gives us this opportunity to be so graciously blessed in these ways.

With many invitations for SOMA teams in the coming eighteen months, my question to you is 'What are you waiting for?'

I was a SOMA novice

In September Jenny Brown joined one of three teams from the UK, at the invitation of the Primate, the Most Revd Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Bishop of Cape Town and Metropolitan of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa. Jenny was a member of one of the SOMA teams who had gathered for a province-wide mission and church growth initiative "Growing the Church". After a conference, SOMA teams fanned out across the region to Diocesan launch meetings and to minister alongside local clergy.

Jenny told us:

The conference: Was a great privilege to hear amazing speakers from all over the world. I learned a lot and was challenged a lot.

The diocese: Surprises involved last minute preparations for a clergy training day. My own approach to time is very Western, governed by the clock, so it didn't fit well with the more relaxed African approach. I had to adapt my expectations of myself, as well as of others!

Delights: We were made very welcome at the Diocesan office, and all our hosts showed great generosity. The visit to pray with a family in their home township was a highlight. I enjoyed enormously the training days. I loved the worship, spontaneity and joy of the gatherings.

The diocesan launch: was a fantastic, inspiring event – and deeply encouraging to see so many people that hundreds had to stand outside. It was an exhilarating prayer ministry time – a wonderful new experience for me!

On reflection this trip for me feels more preparatory than an end in itself. I've learned a huge amount and been taken beyond my previous experience in a number of ways.

Something significant has happened to me in terms of my spiritual journey and its practical outworking. It has whetted my appetite for more of the Spirit, more of Africa and more of SOMA.



Jenny, front left, and friends

sharing



God at Work!

An experienced Church Army Evangelist, Debbie Orriss lectures at their College in Sheffield. She went to Southern Africa in September.

Which three aspects of the trip did you enjoy?

The privilege of being part of such a significant move of God's Spirit in the Province of Southern Africa, most especially the Youth Event in Seshegu and preaching in Marishane. Nine young people gave their lives to Christ at the Youth Event and it was so encouraging to witness their enthusiasm and energy!

The challenges?

I was challenged by the immensity of the HIV – AIDS pandemic in South Africa, (a group of us visited an orphanage). Another challenge for me was that opportunities for ministry and mission had an unpredictable element to them.

In summary

My vision of God and his mission has been enlarged again and it has felt a huge privilege to be part of that mission. My prayers for South Africa will be more focused as a result of my visit. I feel that this is one of the benefits of being part of a SOMA team and we were able to work alongside local Christians and gain a deeper understanding of the joys and sorrows of the country.

My own calling as an evangelist has been re-affirmed and I wait to see where my ministry takes me next!



Debbie with colleague Paul

Join a TEAM in 2009

Following the Lambeth Conference we have an encouraging number of invitations throughout next year. Among those being arranged are teams to:

- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Kenya
- Sudan
- Congo
- Zambia
- India both North and South.

Contact the SOMA office to register your interest if you would like to be considered for these or other potential teams in 2009/10.

Clapping, cheering, smiling, dancing!

Jane Grayshon recently visited Tanzania with a SOMA team. Here she shares with us her personal experience.

I shall treasure all my whole life what I received as I gave, as a member of our team of eight (four UK, four Ugandan).

Let me tell you first about Tabora. See the hunger in the hearts of a people who love Jesus and want to love Him more, and better. Taste the sweetness of praying with pastors individually; be amazed at tears flowing even though you know you're not praying in their own tongue. So that must be the Holy Spirit praying – through even me! Watch a strong Bishop who discerns the hand of God and who gives every encouragement to every person who exercises his or her gift. Hear the murmurs of voices in the early morning as they rise, and sing, and pray.

An extraordinarily bumpy six hours' drive away was Mwanza: mission two. I found this very hard work spiritually. In a place that has experienced huge difficulties for the last 15 years, we sensed great loss... of trust, of hope, maybe even of faith. Two (Ugandan) members of our team identified that the work that the bishop and pastors need to do here, is like the work of Nehemiah... rebuilding walls, because they had fallen down. So we gave teaching about the work of rebuilding, and the need to pray, and pray, and pray more, while also knuckling down to do the hard labour. No easy answers, then – and perhaps some felt disappointed. However, on our last day, all the pastors re-committed themselves to the diocese and they promised to serve the Lord under the Bishop's authority.

Of course, the promise needs to be walked, not merely talked...

And the best moment for me? It was when the speaker, Benon, gave each person in the chapel a small stick; we trooped outside and placed our sticks carefully to form a pyramid, in preparation for a fire. To our amazement, Benon lit our sticks and the flames began. As the fire took hold, Benon asked each person to remove their stick. Of course, as soon as we did so, the fire of each stick went out. "If you do not stay together in this diocese, the fire of Jesus will go out!" Solemn warning, solemnly heeded. But then Benon invited us to put our sticks back on the fire – together – and of course the fire returned. What clapping, cheering, smiling and even dancing! This is the vivid picture of what God's Spirit can do if His people remain together as one body. Praise God!



This summer Helen Cosstick ventured with a Team to Tabora and Mwanza in western Tanzania:

Tanzania assaulted my senses and perceptions. The equatorial sun at midday, directly overhead yet daylight only lasting 12 hours; the warm drying wind; the sense of immense space; the black night sky with different constellations; the long dust roads full of colourful people walking, cycling, carrying loads, driving cattle; red brick villages growing out of red land; well behaved and docile children and peaceful babies slung on backs in brightly coloured cloth; the juxtaposition of simple life-styles and mobile phones; the dawning reality of water as precious; covering up in the evening against those mosquitoes; the open smiles and warmth of our Christian brothers and sisters; the sweet and solid food of hospitality; the closeness and warmth within the team; the excitement of listening for the Holy Spirit's guidance; the powerful harmonious rhythm of African worship; every greeting in the name of the Lord, "Buana Asifiwe!"



SOMA INTERCESSORS

We are always keen to hear from people who feel called to pray regularly for the work of SOMA. SOMA Intercessors take on an important commitment, are an indispensable part of SOMA's ministry and play an invaluable role at home whenever SOMA teams are abroad. Please contact Hilary Steynor on 01483 301013 for more details of becoming part of this.



SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

'It will emerge...'

SOMA mission to the Indian Ocean – April – May 2008

SOMA UK is just one of eleven SOMA regional and national bodies that together constitute SOMA International. Earlier this year, and as we previewed in the previous edition of *Sharing*, former SOMA UK Director Don Brewin led a multinational SOMA team to the Province of the Indian Ocean.

Don writes...

This strategic mission, to the Anglican Province of the Indian Ocean, had come about through an invitation from the Archbishop of the Province to set up an Anglican Renewal Body in this scattered Province, which mainly centres on the widely different islands of Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles.

The SOMA programme had two phases – a Renewal Conference, which would involve training five delegates from each Diocese, who then returned home with SOMA teams to introduce renewal at a more local level. There was also a Diocesan Clergy Conference, during which SOMA team members would introduce a discussion on how an Anglican Renewal body might be set up in the Province.

Don Brewin gathered an experienced team of 18 for this complex mission. After complex travel arrangements the team gathered together, looking forward to two days of getting to know each other. However we discovered the Renewal Conference was already beginning. Delegates were already arriving. Gone were our two days of team building and preparation!

This was only the first unilateral change in the programme the team had to face! Never had the SOMA phrase 'it will emerge...' been so apt. The team were amazing in their willingness to adapt to constant changes.

Another truth that we regularly needed to affirm in prayer as a team was 'the Lord wins' – and He certainly did! The main teaching in the Renewal Conference was from 'Renewal for Life'. There were some challenging afternoon workshops on renewal topics, aspects of Christian discipleship, family life and working with young people. In the evenings time was given for worship, testimony and different styles of ministry to one another.

The SOMA team then divided into two. The first group led a Training Workshop for lay people from the Diocese of Antananarivo. The second group formed the intercession and ministry team at the Provincial Clergy Conference.

We discovered shortly before we left for Madagascar that Bishop Graham Cray (the Patron of SOMA UK!) was coming to speak at the Provincial Clergy Conference. The mixture of excellent input from the speakers, and powerful ministry by the team, gave rise to the idea of developing what may prove to be a 'SOMA first' – an integrated Provincial Theological Training programme.

The team to Toliara, an area in the South-West, shortly to separate into a new Diocese, travelled for 17 hours overnight by minibus. It was worth every minute to see the Holy Spirit at work amongst a core group of young people from a slum area adjacent to the church that hosted us. The Toamasina team – which went

to an area devastated by a cyclone earlier in the year – was also fully supported by the Bishop. But the other two Madagascar teams became acutely aware of the work that still needs to be done to build unity in parts of this mission field. In every case, however, the Holy Spirit redeemed the circumstances and used the teams to manifest the love of Jesus Christ.

When members of the Madagascar teams met together we were humbled to hear the stories of how the Holy Spirit overcame apathy and even in some cases unwillingness, to change the spiritual atmosphere in these impoverished dioceses.

The whole team was tangibly aware of the prayer and intercessory support we were receiving daily from different parts of the world. We thanked God for the technology of texting, which enabled us to easily send prayer requests, and to receive encouragement from intercessors all over the world.

The Archbishop is keen to encourage clergy and lay people from the Province to join SOMA teams. This he feels will give them significant experience outside their own environment.

The team: Revd John Wyndham, Revd John Davies, Mrs Rosemary Davies, Mr Tim Greentree, Mr Ken Hargreaves, Mrs Bev Hargreaves, Mr John Hopkins, and Mr Bruce Moon (all from Australia); Mrs Mary Waiguchu from Kenya; Mr Jacques Jeffthas, Mr Neil Adams, Mr André Katombe (all from South Africa); Revd John Musaasizi from Uganda; and Revd Don Brewin, Mrs Creddy Hart, Mrs Mary MacDonell, Revd Dr David Maurice, Revd Richard Salmon (all from UK).



YES I'd like to support SOMA

Invite

SOMA carefully and prayerfully considers all invitations for teams to minister and responds positively whenever we can.

Come on a Team

We are constantly looking for new team members to bring fresh impetus to our teams. Team members finance their own travel and costs, trips last between 10 and 20 days. Teams are always exciting, challenging, faith building and life changing!

Give Financially

We are always in need of financial support for SOMA's missions and ministry abroad. Your financial gifts further this strategic work of the Holy Spirit and make a real and lasting difference to people and communities abroad.

Pray

Prayer and Intercession are the solid foundation of SOMA's ministry. Partner SOMA in prayer and intercession in this unique and invaluable ministry.

My response

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

Please...

- tell me about becoming part of a SOMA Team
- tell me how to financially support SOMA's ministry
- send me SOMA's free regular SHARING newsletter
- send me SOMA's free regular Prayer Diary
- contact me as I would like to invite a SOMA team to my Diocese

**Please detach and return to
 Stephen Dinsmore, SOMA UK
 PO Box 69, Merriott. TA18 9AP, UK.
 Thank you.**

Pray Lambeth 2008

SOMA was founded as a result of a meeting of Bishops gathered for the 1978 Lambeth Conference. True to the initial prophetic vision SOMA seeks to 'care for the nervous system of the Body of Christ'. As a consequence part of our response to the gathering of Bishops for the 2008 Lambeth Conference was Pray Lambeth: a partnership with Crosswinds, Pray Lambeth aimed to mobilise and resource global prayer cover for Conference.

Archbishop Rowan Williams wrote:

'I am very pleased SOMA, along with Crosswinds, have organised this prayer initiative during the Lambeth Conference.

It is an important time for us in the Anglican Communion and this group of people who commit to pray for us during our meetings will play a significant role behind the scenes.

My thanks to all who have helped set up Pray Lambeth'.

Pray Lambeth was available through the internet to the whole church: individuals, churches and groups who signed up to the service received regular updates by text and email.

Canon John Simons of Crosswinds writes:

SOMA & Crosswinds Prayer Trust are much indebted to many people who made up the team-work over Lambeth's 21 days.

The Lambeth team at Canterbury provided daily information. There were also UK intercession teams for the whole three weeks, listening to God, and praying for the bishops, led by Hilary Steynor. We also have a dedicated technical team in Singapore, servicing the website's database engine.

More than 15,000 people, from all around the world visited Pray Lambeth during and immediately after the Conference. In addition, the daily E-mail Bulletins seem to have gone to every continent and many nations. Many recipients of the e-mails were prayer organisations, who in turn forwarded e-mails on to their intercessors. Others circulated printed copies of the Prayer Briefings within their churches. We have heard from overseas dioceses that forwarded the Bulletins to every parish. So we shall never know how far, and to how many, these Pray Lambeth missives reached.

The editing, publishing and response to reader feedback took place in the West of England, at the Crosswinds base in Weston. We thank you for your prayers for those involved in this important intercessory teamwork.

SOMA's thanks also goes to John and Jenny Simons, and Andy Page, the Operations Director of Crosswinds Prayer Trust. Andy travelled out to Singapore, spending many weeks away from his wife Helen and their



Andy Page at work

three young children, designing and building the technology (alongside our Singaporean partners) to harness the Internet for Pray Lambeth. During the Conference, he rarely got to bed before 2:00 or 3:00 am, ensuring that the news reached intercessors on time each day. Jenny stayed up till all hours summarising the bulletins into text messages.

Crosswinds Prayer was formed in 1994 to mobilise prayer for the Church and the Nations, by Canon John Simons. The trust is currently partnering with a Singaporean Christian businessman in the development of an online Prayer Portal, to be launched in the UK in the Spring of 2009. To find out more go to www.prayerhub.info

SOMA Conference: 12 – 14 May 2009



Following positive comments and the success of our 2007 SOMA Conference the National Director, along with SOMA's Trustees and Council, have set the date for the next conference:

Lunchtime on Tuesday 12th May 2009, until lunch on Thursday 14th at High Leigh conference centre, Hoddesdon, Herts.

The conference is for supporters, intercessors, team members and leaders – in fact everyone who is a part of or wants to be a part of SOMA. There will be plenty of time to meet friends old and new, pray, worship, reflect, and meet together as leaders, intercessors, etc. There will also be news updates and ministry, all set in the Hertfordshire countryside in 40 acres of lawns, parkland and woodland. High Leigh is easily reached by train, car and even plane (!) Put the date in your diary now – places will sell out. More details will be sent out later in the year.