

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

Summer 2009

the newsletter of
soma

SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

In at the Deep End



Ready to worship, Karimnagar, India.

Esther McCafferty was a member of the SOMA Team to the Diocese of Karimnagar, Church of South India, in May. She is also a SOMA Intercessor. Here Esther relates her experience and highlights the absolutely vital and foundational role that Intercession holds in the ministry and values of SOMA...

The team received a wonderful welcome of food and hospitality, received with garlands and shawls and real kindness wherever we went.

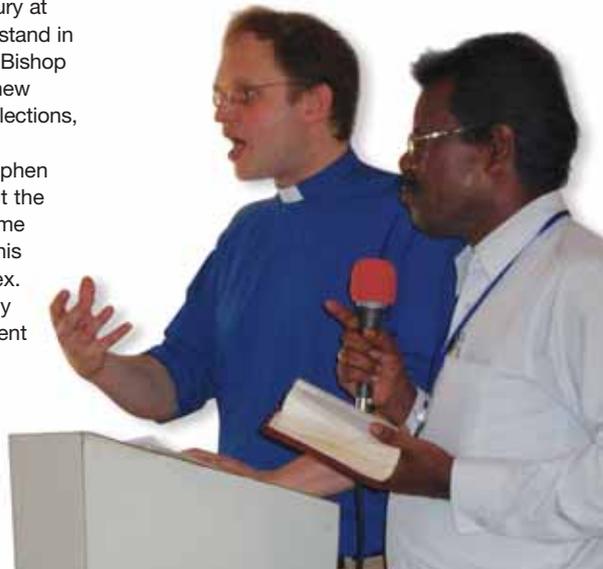
I soon discovered the huge respect in which SOMA is held, built up over 30 years, and the open doors of opportunity – helped by the SOMA presence at The Lambeth Conference last summer. I was an intercessor in the SOMA Prayer Room in Canterbury at that time and went over to the SOMA stand in the marketplace a couple of times, as Bishop after Bishop came up to make and renew contact with the SOMA staff, share reflections, or to find out about short term Teams.

It was then that I approached Stephen Dinsmore, the National Director, about the possibility of going on a team sometime during my sabbatical March to May this year from my parish in Basildon, Essex. I had such a wonderful time during my previous sabbatical in 1997 when I went to Iringa in Tanzania with SOMA that I wanted to go on a team again. SOMA provides unique opportunities for mission and ministry.

SOMA intercessors had been praying for some time for open doors into South India. So when we were

invited by Bishop Surya Prakash two years into the renewal programme of his Diocese, we knew that this was indeed a divine appointment. SOMA's Intercessors truly came to the fore! There was the need for the right team to come together. Just five weeks before leaving three Team members had to withdraw for medical and personal reasons.

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CATCH THE VISION!



In this edition of Sharing we catch a vision of the joys, blessings and faithfulness of our awe-inspiring God. As we are faithful and respond to His

call to 'Renewal for Mission', He blesses us, both the sent and the receiving, beyond all we can ask, imagine or think, building His Kingdom in ways that encourage, strengthen and astound us.

With so many good things to share in this edition of Sharing, I'm keeping it short this time, to make space for you to hear our Team Member and Intercessors' voices.

My prayer is that you will 'catch the vision', hear God's call and respond willingly and generously – by being part of a Team, becoming an Intercessor, receiving a Team and supporting SOMA's ministry!

Stephen Dinsmore, National Director, SOMA UK.

Intercession – 'vital, invaluable and deeply appreciated'

Richard Hay is a past treasurer of SOMA UK, recently he coordinated the UK Intercession cover for a couple of SOMA Teams...

How good are you at texting? I recently made a dramatic improvement, the reason – I filled in for a few of weeks for Hilary Steynor, who for SOMA coordinates our Intercessors.

We know from long experience that when SOMA Teams travel, God releases his Spirit through them to transform lives and ministries. We read and hear about such trips, and are grateful to those who set out for distant places. However, each time a Team goes, much prayer is also mobilised in this country. Around 150 Intercessors will pray for the Team before, during and also after the trip. The Teams all say that they

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Left: James makes the point, Karimnagar, India.

In at the Deep End

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In the event, and after considerable prayer, James Nickols was able to be released from family responsibilities at very short notice to come. Only later did I realise it was needful that we were an all clergy team who enjoyed travel.

When we arrived we were in at the deep end; we had to be flexible and adaptable to a whole variety of situations. But I knew to put faith to work, and to trust in the Lord. He has promised to give us all we need when we go in His name, and He is utterly faithful. "Come with a few sermons ready", team leader Stephen recommended, "but always speak what is on your heart". I was asked to preach at three Holy Communion services with very little notice, only one of which I could choose the Bible passage. We had some excellent translators into Telugu, and it was very affirming when the Bishop underlined to his clergy what I had said. The Retreats were on Christian Leadership, and I taught on the Holy Spirit and Leadership and led workshops on Meeting with God (Bible reading, prayer and listening to God) and on Intercession.

We received ten texts from UK Intercessors which were such a huge encouragement when leading Retreats for presbyters, deacons and evangelists, or speaking at Children's Bible Clubs, Women's Fellowship Harvest Festivals, a Youth Bible Camp and a Diocesan Higher Education Scholarship Retreat. They were "spot on" messages in their timing and application...

For example, Deut 11: 12-15 arrived just as we went into a shortened final session on the first retreat, and Stephen read it out as a real encouragement to the participants: this is Moses speaking of the Promised Land: "It is a land that the Lord your God cares for, the eyes of the Lord your God are continually on



it from the beginning of the year to its end. So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today – to love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul – then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. I will provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied." This came as a great encouragement especially at what was their harvest time which was a good one this year. At a Harvest Festival, Stephen was asked to speak with no notice at all; but as he prayed these verses came to mind upon which he preached a powerful sermon referring to their promise, invitation and fulfilment.

We praise God for safety in travel, for good health and refreshment in extreme heat, for spiritual protection for us and our families while away and on re-entry. And especially for the two invitations received to send further SOMA teams!

It has reminded me of the power of my own personal testimony: it is not sufficient to be born into a Christian family, to go to church regularly, nor to live a good life not doing anyone any harm – we need to believe that Jesus died for our sins and receive his gift of eternal life. As we place our lives in His hands, there opens up a personal relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ, His Son, as our Saviour and Lord. For me that commitment came when I was around 7 years old, and at the age of 14 I realised that it was no longer my parents' faith but my own faith.

That was when I heard for the first time about the Holy Spirit who would give me the words to say and the power to witness and live for Jesus day by day. I was able to demonstrate our need to be daily filled to overflowing with the Holy Spirit so as to have plenty to give away, by pouring water continually into an empty glass so that it kept spilling over. There was a real hunger and openness as the team ministered the renewing, refreshing Holy Spirit. And others came to ask for prayer from an HIV/AIDS conference taking place at the same time.

Being on this SOMA team has greatly strengthened my own ministry, calling forth some of God's gifts that have had to be laid aside in order to lay firm foundations in other areas. These His gifts are now to be used with courage and joy as I continue to lead my parish into renewal. I returned to the parish on Pentecost Sunday to the great encouragement of a large number coming for anointing and prayer to be filled with the Spirit.

I have already spoken on my experiences in India on behalf of SOMA to another parish in the Diocese who want to extend their mission support. The potential is great for parishes to use SOMA's attractive promotional material for information, prayer, and to support SOMA financially who may need to assist the host diocese towards the cost of a mission. A parish can share in the blessing of sending team members, laity as well as clergy, and hearing of the wonderful answers to their prayers and giving.

Before I went to India the Lord gave me this verse John 15:15: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

To God be the glory, great things he has done! Amen!



A 'garlanded' Esther and new friends.



Spirit-touched and Deep

Mike Cotterell reflects on his recent SOMA Team visit to South Rwenzori, Uganda.



Seminar, South Rwenzori, Uganda.

Their 'I don't know what this is going to be like' expression soon gave way to sparkling eyed interest and engagement. The smiling increased as people soon settled. The 'this is going to be good' was spreading quickly amongst those who had come for the conference. The joy of the songs and the drum beat drew me into worship and immediately to these people in love and appreciation. Not knowing the meaning of the songs didn't matter as our worshipped joined us together in mutual love of Jesus.

The level of listening seemed Spirit-touched and deep. Then the time for prayer following the talk – everyone broke up into groups or remained alone to pray, reflecting on the challenge to holiness. And then they needed more time, they were soaking up time with God. None seemed disengaged, distracted or wanting to be doing something else. Just listening and praying; aware of His presence.

For many, Rooted in Jesus had been found to be effective and energising and they knew the Holy Spirit had been at work in their group. And those who had not started a group yet, knew it would work because of the enthusiasm of those who had.

Good organisational skills, kindness and wisdom along with the burden to share Jesus were the hallmarks of the Diocesan leaders, like Revd Captain James, who enabled the mission locally. We found a serious desire to facilitate discipleship that would make others disciples as well – a simple New Testament plan was being implemented with the expectation that the Holy Spirit would work through them as they gave witness, prayed and loved the members of their small group.

Amid the many memories for me were the smiling welcoming face of people like William and Barnabas. The commitment of two young mothers who had brought their babies with them to the conferences. The singing and the drums enough to make you want to cry and dance. The Archdeacon's wife who worked so hard catering and who had a bad back, we prayed for her one night and she began to get better. Peeling potatoes with a carving knife – I had decided to help the cooks assistant and a child helper with their task and tell them a story – 'The Dog with no name, who had an itch'. (The Dog found Jesus, thanks to a cat who told him about Jesus, and then Jesus gave the Dog a name (Percy short for Perseverance) and his itch disappeared.) Then there was the Pastor who told me of his outreach work to people by the lakeshore, many of whom had HIV and were addicts, we talked about ideas to help them earn a living and not return to their old lifestyles. Mention was made of 400 converts from Islam. At one

IT'S AMAZING

Helen Foster is a recent addition to the SOMA Intercessors. Helen has had an Intercessory calling and ministry for several decades, particularly called to Intercede for Christian Leaders. Not much of a traveller, none-the-less Helen felt very much a part of the SOMA Team abroad she was supporting in prayer – and the Leader and Team felt her an integral and vital part of the Team too!

If I ever had doubts of being part of an Intercessor team I have none at all now!

"Thank you, Father for your faithfulness, for your answers to prayers even before they have been requested – thank you for your love – your encouragement to me – I give you all the Praise – I don't know how you do it, but it's amazing:

- to feel and to be at one with those geographically so far away;
- to be praying individually in my own prayer corner yet feel at one with others praying in a larger team, some of whom you have never met;
- to be told things people have prayed for are the exact needs of the team;
- to have words given by the Holy Spirit and then receive prayer requests from the team for the exact things I have already been given by You;
- to have one single word given by You, and then from it evolve so many words of knowledge, revealing a golden thread running through all that takes place with the Team;
- and more amazingly all this should happen at the same time and crossing supernaturally somewhere up there."

This is to be truly amazed and in awe of God, the reality of Him and just how big He is, is to be 'wowed' by Him and truly 'bowled over'.

longer seminar I thought everyone had had enough and I might be sharing things they already knew – but found out they wanted more and more and then had lots of questions.

What a joy it was to minister when everything seemed to count in some large way for those we had come to share with. Then came the text message of encouragement to the effect that what we were doing was like ripples going out on a pond, going further than we knew. We were just a small team, a small pebble dropped into a vast ocean – but God had already been at work and he was doing far more than we could every think or imagine.



Ezra translates for Team Leader Sonja, South Rwenzori, Uganda.

YES I'd like to support SOMA

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.

Invite

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

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.

Intercession – 'vital, invaluable and deeply appreciated'

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sense this prayer support. Without it, they say, they would not achieve what they do, they would find it much harder to keep within God's will. The Intercessors really are an essential, integral and valued part of every Team.

The Teams send back reports of how things are going. This may be of special challenges and needs. The texts are brief, cramming complex thoughts into a single text. These reports are relayed by e-mail to the Intercessors, usually within hours of the message being sent.

But communication is not all one way. The Intercessors pass on to the coordinator words, verses and pictures they receive for the Team as they pray. Some have particular gifts of openness which yield God's promptings. These are then passed on by the coordinator back to the Team abroad.

The splendid thing is that, in God's great purposes, words and pictures received 3,000, 4,000 or 5,000 miles away can 'hit the exact spot' for the team. 'Thanks for Scriptures and words – absolutely vital, invaluable and deeply appreciated', Stephen Dinsmore texted from Karimnagar in South India. When he came back, he explained that when one message arrived he had unexpectedly just been asked to preach again; the word and Bible reference were exactly right for the particular occasion. Sonja Arnold wrote, on her team's return from the South Rwenzori in Uganda: 'Please thank the Intercessors. During the first week we received a number of words; all on the same theme that God was doing something bigger and wider than we could see. We certainly took this as an encouragement. We had a small group from the Congo, who went back re-envisioned and

motivated. And we wait and see if the word has wider implications!'

It was a privilege for me to fill in briefly for just one small part of Hilary Steynor's coordinating role, and to see this Intercession network in action. You may be one who prays. If not, and you have the space in your life to take it on, please do get in touch with Hilary through the SOMA Office. She will be delighted to tell you more.

SOMA Intercessors

We are always keen to hear from people who feel called to pray regularly for the work of SOMA. Our 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.

SOMA Teams for 2009-10

Teams are committed to

Sudan	Kadugli – Nuba Mountains
Kenya	Lodwar Mission Diocese
Sudan	Regional Youth Leaders
Congo	North Kivu
Congo	Bukavu
Uganda	Tabora on Prayer Church of North India
Sierra Leone	
Angola	
Sudan	Kajo-Keji

Other invitations are still in the process of negotiation. Contact the SOMA office to register your interest if you would like to be considered for these or other potential teams.

Now see the Video

Go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tfch5dF8U98> for video introduction to the August SOMA International Teams visit to Sabah, Malaysia.



SOMA UK

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