

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. This is through intercession and sending and receiving short-term mission teams across the Anglican Communion.

# sharing

the newsletter of  
**soma**

2014 No. 1

SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

## Shining the Light on very darkest of forces

**I**T is the stuff of tabloid headlines – “witchcraft at work” and “priest confesses”. The SOMA Team which headed to DR Congo in late November was the latest in a series of visits. Despite thorough briefing and past experience nothing prepared them for what they discovered when they arrived.



From left, Victoire Barozi, Revd Canon Diana Nkesiga of All Saints' Cathedral, SOMA Team members John Awodi and Rose Asaba.

SOMA was originally invited to take a Team to Boga Diocese early last year, but heightened insecurity in the area meant that the mission had to be postponed. Instead, Team Leader Don Brewin and Revd John Awodi of Uganda went to listen and to discern a way forward. This led to the invitation for the return shortly before Christmas.

The spiritual battle continued, though, with every single Team member struggling to obtain the necessary documentation. Don said: “The Lord certainly wanted the Team to go to DR Congo, but the difficulties the Team experienced in getting visas to enter the country made it clear that there was some serious opposition in the heavenlies!”

The SOMA conference for clergy, lay readers and the wives of those who lived locally was built round a specially written course, *Making God's Kingdom Visible*, designed to equip and encourage them to set an example of Christian living to the wider community. It was translated into Congolese Kiswahili to enable the fullest participation by delegates.

Two Team members prayed with one particular couple in church, then in their home, where the husband, a church leader, admitted his involvement in witchcraft. One of those Team members experienced demonic attack afterwards. As a result of this ministry, the couple committed to end their occult and other un-Christian activities and agreed their symbolic witchcraft robe be burned publicly

*continued on page 2*

## Expect the unexpected

*continued on page 2*

**I**T is impossible for anyone to go on a SOMA mission and not gain insights into how people live and worship in another country.

Team members are prepared ahead of a mission to ensure they set off with their eyes and ears open to new experiences and to what the Lord has to say to them about all aspects of the community they are

visiting. The biggest surprises, though, are often what Team members learn about themselves and their own culture...

It was an invitation from Revd Capt Joshua Opondo CA which set in train the major youth conference shortly before Christmas. He is the diocesan youth coordinator for Maseno South, Kenya, one of

the four Lake Region dioceses bordering Lake Victoria which are facing challenges ranging from poverty and tribalism through to high crime and rapidly escalating HIV/AIDS.

“We realise that the only way to live amidst these challenging issues is to live in Christ,” he said. “Christ is with us but we do not still recognise that He is among us.



## Shining the Light on very darkest of forces continued from page 1

after the main service in Bunia's Cité Church on Advent Sunday.

At the end of the four-hour service the robe was burned outside.



The choirs and congregation processed round the church singing, then returned inside for re-consecration of the altar and personal recommitment to serve the city of Bunia.

In addition, another pastor's homosexual activities with young local men were becoming widely known, and the apparent failure of the church to address this problem was in danger of making the church a laughing-stock. During that Sunday service, he made a public confession and was subsequently suspended for a year, along with another priest who had made a parishioner pregnant.

Both have independently sought forgiveness from Bishop William, who contacted SOMA after the team had left to say that, two weeks later, the Archbishop met him and the two clergymen and they together sought forgiveness "for whatever we did wrong to God that led to the crisis in the Diocese".

Two days later, there was another, larger meeting and Bishop William told SOMA: "The Archbishop was the first to kneel and request all the archdeacons, pastors and laity present to rise him up if they want peace in the diocese of Boga. Finally everyone knelt alongside him. With tears asked forgiveness for every thing they did that brought a crisis in Boga Diocese."

SOMA National Director Stephen Dinsmore said: "This established and trusted relationship between SOMA and a diocese allowed SOMA to undertake a major reconciliatory and renewal ministry, having there, through previous missions, an established reputation for integrity and equity."

There is still more to be done – plans are being made for a follow-up mission after Easter.

*Team: Leader Revd Don Brewin, Helen Doery, UK; Michael Asaba, Rose Kanyunyuzi Asaba, both Congolese living in Uganda; Revd Canon John Awodi, Ven Capt Canon Fanuel Onzima, Uganda; Nancy Ndungu, Kenya; Kate Brankin, intercessors' coordinator in UK; Bishop William Bahemuka.*

## Expect the unexpected

continued from page 1

We need God to prepare young people, provide for them, and then speak to them when that time comes."

This was a two-part mission, first to equip and enable youth counsellors then support and minister with them at the following youth conference. Delegates ranged from 13-year-olds to those with young families, with the conference planned for 600 participants at Chianda High School, Rageng'ni, a 90-minute drive from Kisumu, the third largest Kenyan city. The SOMA Team comprised three UK members, three Ugandans and an Egyptian, and the theme of the conference was "Be still", from Mark 4:39.

Team Leader Stephen Dinsmore said: "The Team of three nationalities gelled nicely and both parts of the mission went well. The youth-counsellor training was most encouraging: 35 young people keen to be equipped for being the ministry team during the following conference who told us they'd not received training, mentoring and equipping before, and especially not like this!"

"I enjoyed forming and ministering with such a diverse cross-cultural Team; the opportunity to be immersed in a culture; seeing the youth counsellors equipped, encouraged and empowered further into

Youth delegates get into the spirit of worship at the Lake dioceses' conference, Kenya.



ministry; the very wide range of Team members' gifting, skills and ministries that proved to be absolutely appropriate for the mission and ministry into which the Spirit led us."

Team member Emad Basilius noted: "We were an amazing team, mixed well with each other and with the counsellors. Our variable experience, a teacher, youth worker, evangelist, pastor, Mothers' Union leader. Respecting, encouragement and supporting each other were the general atmosphere. With a team leader caring not only for the mission programme, but also with the team members personally."

On arrival at Kisumu airport, experienced Team member Fran Huff fell into conversation with a young cleaner who asked Fran to pray for her. "Which I did there and then. It seemed to confirm that the Lord is beginning to use me more often to pray with or speak into people's lives without warning, anytime, anywhere."

Come on a Team and expect the unexpected!

*Team: Leader Revd Stephen Dinsmore, Lindy Cameron, Fran Huff, UK; Margaret Auma, Revd Alex Bwambale, Revd Alfred Okello, Uganda; Revd Emad Basilos, Egypt; Kate Brankin, intercessors' coordinator in UK.*

## YES, I'D LIKE TO BE MORE INVOLVED WITH SOMA

- To invite a SOMA Team, email [stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org](mailto:stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org)
- For prayer, find our Daily Prayer Diary on the home page of our website at [www.somauk.org](http://www.somauk.org). Just click the button. Alternatively, receive a new prayer request from SOMA each morning via Twitter or Facebook
- To financially resource SOMA's ministry, visit our website, click on 'Donate' on the homepage or go to 'Get Involved' then 'Support Us'. Another option is to email [steve.finch@somauk.org](mailto:steve.finch@somauk.org)

## Mission mines spiritual gold

A BRIEF window of opportunity allowed a SOMA team the chance to hold a conference in an area of RS Sudan with a long history of strife.

Wonduruba, 85 miles west of Juba, was badly affected when the local Pojulu tribe was divided under colonial rule, and there have been two major civil wars, further conflicts, and attack by the Lord's Resistance Army. In recent years, gold has been mined from the area to buy weapons.

An invitation to hold a SOMA conference in 2011 was postponed because of local insecurity, but Bishop Matthew Taban Peter views reconciliation as his primary objective, and October's youth conference took this theme.

Team Leader Ron Hart said: "Wonduruba has suffered at the hands of various inter-group rivalries that escalated into community violence, spilled into the church and particularly affected the youth. We were the first visitors for very many years, and our presence itself generated excitement, curiosity and faith.

*Certificate joy for the delegates, Wonduruba.*

"Bishop Matthew and the delegates all spoke with warmth and enthusiasm for the conference. It had come at just the right time for them, and they said it had greatly helped the reconciliation process."

Of the 370 participants, most were in their teens and the oldest adult was 90. Delegates came from many walks of life, so there was the feel of the whole community being involved, and the Team included two South Sudanese alongside the five UK members.

Some people received healing, including one elder who arrived with a walking stick and ended up dancing. A young girl, who became

*continued on page 4*



## Parish Mission Partners

A SOMA Parish Mission Partnership builds a live, active and mutually beneficial relationship between your parish and SOMA, envisioning and inspiring your congregations for Holy Spirit ministry and mission at home as well as abroad.

SOMA Parish Mission Partners receive: SHARING for each member of the congregation; a SOMA speaker about once a year; encouragement for leaders and members of the congregation to participate in SOMA mission teams abroad and for Intercessors to join the SOMA Intercessors' network. In return, our partners: encourage prayer for SOMA; regularly communicate our news to their congregations; encourage individuals to get involved by joining Teams, becoming Intercessors, hosting visitors, attending SOMA activities; and seek to support SOMA financially, when they can.

For further detail: visit our website – click on 'Get Involved' then 'Parish Mission Partners', email [stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org](mailto:stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org) or call 01460 279737.

## SOMA'S UK CONFERENCES 2014 - 15

This year sees a new development for our UK Conferences. Our annual midweek residential conference is greatly enjoyed and appreciated by participants, yet we recognise that it can be inconvenient for those who are working. So, there will be two Saturday day conferences in 2014 and our UK residential conference in May 2015.

Day conference on **Saturday 14 June** 10am-4pm, hosted by All Saints, Church Street, Weston, **Bath** BA1 4ER. Refreshments are provided, bring your own lunch. There is no charge but a collection will be taken. Parking is at the rear of the church.

Day conference on **Saturday 4 October** 10am-4pm, hosted by St Stephens, Richmond Road, **Twickenham** TW1 2PD. Refreshments are provided, bring your own lunch. There is no charge but a collection will be taken. Parking is at Marble Hill Park; buses 33, 490, H22, R68 and R70 stop outside the church.

The next **residential conference** is at High Leigh, Hertfordshire, as usual, this time in the Spring. Note **Tuesday - Thursday 12-14 May 2015** in your diary, there will be more information in *Sharing* nearer the time.

**You are invited and most welcome!**

Please reserve me \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) at the Sat 14th June / Sat 4th October SOMA day conference. (delete one date)

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ LAST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and return to SOMA UK at PO Box 69, Merriott TA18 9AP or email the requested information to [zena.durrant@somauk.org](mailto:zena.durrant@somauk.org)

## ‘It’s up to you to make changes’

THE gulf between God’s ideals and reality led a Bishop in South Sudan to invite SOMA to hold a conference for clergy and their wives on Christian marriage and family life.

To start: Bishop Moses of Wau Diocese said: “The teaching went beyond our expectations. The Team taught the clergy how the Bible challenges the traditional or cultural beliefs about marriage and family. It also brought the clergy together so that they can share their experiences and encourage one another.”

Wau is about the size of England and has a young population of around two million – more than half the South Sudanese are under 18 – of whom around 30 per cent are Christian. Tribal loyalties, culture and identity are a fundamental part of life.

Team Leader Chris Strain said: “We were very conscious of the need for sensitivity and appropriateness. We were keen to share Biblical principles and to listen hard. We spoke of God’s big picture and ideals, acknowledging the gap between experience and God’s best.

“We emphasised the need to establish principles and stressed the concepts of relationships, equality and diversity, love, respect, mutual submission, support and comfort, understanding, serving one another, forgiveness and relational skills.”

A highlight was when Chris ‘married’ Team members Kennedy and Martha, who are already husband and wife.



Martha and Kennedy ‘marry’ in Wau.

Kennedy told the delegates they are the new generation: “It’s up to you to make the changes.”

After the close of the conference, Bishop Moses invited a future SOMA Team to run a youth conference on the same topics.

Team: Leader Revd Chris Strain, Kate Brankin, Mark Cosstick, UK; Kennedy Wando, Martha Osamba Wando, Kenya; Stephen Dinsmore, intercessors’ coordinator in UK; Bishop Moses Deng Bol.

## Mission mines spiritual gold continued from page 3

sick with fear after feeling she had seen an omen foretelling her imminent death, left well and smiling. Many others spoke of being healed or of having received the Holy Spirit afresh.

In addition to the teaching and workshops, there were two joyous sessions of games. “To the delight of all ages, we played balloon volleyball and balloon relay races – quite a feat given the large numbers involved,” said Ron, who gained fresh insight into the importance of games in bringing freedom and happiness.

The final session each evening included times of ministry, sometimes with symbolic acts. Ron recalled: “We wrote our sins on small pieces of paper, placed them in a bowl at the foot of a wooden cross as an act of confession, and then processed outside with the cross for absolution followed by burning the papers in the bowl, a ceremony which was very moving.



Delegates find deeper meaning in Wonduruba.

“This was a wonderful mission. We were able to be alongside the local church in their work on reconciliation and facilitate the next step. We felt valued and well supported by the Bishop, who attended every session, and by the secular leaders who came to be part of it and grew in their own faith. We saw the Lord heal, encourage, deliver and forgive. We had a wonderful time playing games, a piece of heaven in the face of so much past pain. The delegates left with joy in their hearts, empowered by the Spirit, and with a fresh desire to continue with the work of reconciliation and forgiveness.”

### intercession@somauk.org

It is upon Intercession that SOMA’s ministry and mission is founded. SOMA Intercessors are supported by regular, extensive Prayer Briefings and with live two-way emails when Teams are on mission. Read more on our website, click on ‘Prayer and Intercession’; or email Kate Brankin at intercession@somauk.org



The symbolic burning of sins outside the church in Wonduruba.

Team member Malcolm Pritchard observed: “Too often a precious resource, like gold, becomes a curse to a nation not a blessing. As I contemplated the gold in Wonduruba becoming that kind of problem, I could put faces and characters to a potential dispossessed population. They were not mere statistics, the anonymous poor, dispensable human resources.”

Team: Leader Revd Ron Hart, Credly Hart, Janet Darg-Forsyth, Revd Ann Fielden and Revd Malcolm Pritchard, UK; Evans Gogonya Israel and Charles Alfred William Lasu, aka Lobalang, meaning “Salt”, RS Sudan; Helen Foster, intercessors’ coordinator in UK; Bishop Matthew Taban Peter.

### Future SOMA Teams

Uganda	Kinkiizi
RS Sudan	Youth Leaders
Kenya	Nakuru
DR Congo	du Kasai
RS Sudan	Twic East
DR Congo	Nord Kivu
RS Sudan	Ibba and Ezo
DR Congo	Eastern Dioceses Youth
RS Sudan	Wau

**Come on a Team!** For an ‘application to be considered for a SOMA Team’, simply contact SOMA via email, Facebook, phone or post. Read more on our website: click on ‘Join a Team’. We look forward to hearing from you!