

Amen, we have seen His hand!

YOUNG people in Boga have been the sole focus for a SOMA team for the first time and were powerfully blessed as a result.

Teams have worked with different groups in the diocese in DR Congo in recent years to strengthen them in their faith, and in their witness to the wider community, in the context of a nation that has experienced conflict within its borders and from outside over many decades. However, during the mission last March, Bishop William observed that the young people had not yet been included in these conferences.

He invited SOMA to dedicate last August's mission to working with this group on a series of topics, with subjects including: identity in Christ as a young person; the Holy Spirit and discipleship; managing relationships; Christian stewardship; worship and how to lead it effectively; the role of young people in the church; identifying the right kind of leadership; and building unity of the Spirit. A teaching manual was written for the mission, *We are God's Workmanship*, from Ephesians 2:10.

Many of the young people in DRC are unemployed and are targets for recruitment by militias and tribal groups, creating insecurity and violence. The 252 young people from eight archdeaconries were powerfully and positively blessed during the conference; all were challenged regarding the depth of their faith and how it needs to be applied in the community.

Well planned

Each day was planned with worship and teaching in the morning, and activities such as games, street cleaning, drama and open-air witness in the afternoon. Later each day there was a time of celebration with worship, testimony, teaching and prayer ministry.

Those familiar with SOMA missions will know that whenever a mission is planned in SOMA "territory", there is always interference, spiritual and practical attack. This time, a last-minute problem with visas meant a change in the team but, praise God, two additional team members were willing to join at very short notice.

Team leader Joshua Opondo responded: "Peace of the Lord be with you! The devil is fighting, but all I know is there's victory after all because it's the Lord's mission."

Travelling in and out of DRC is always "exciting" and Michael Asaba arranged transport via Ugandan roads from Kampala to Ntoroko, ferry across Lake Albert, and muddy Congolese roads from Kasenyi to Bunia.

"The devil is fighting, but all I know is there's victory after all because it's the Lord's mission"

Leaving Kampala around 4am theoretically enables the whole journey to be completed before nightfall, but lengthy questions at the borders, misunderstandings with vehicle owners, mud and so forth all led to hold-ups. The team eventually arrived in Bunia after dark – some in a car, others on the back of boda-boda motorcycles – tired, but excited and ready for the start of the conference the next day.

Some of the topics and activities greatly challenged the young people, and on Day Four Joshua wrote: "Today was even more lively, over 25 youths gave their lives to Christ and several rededicated their lives.

"Yesterday, when I was explaining to the youths the importance of doing community work after teaching on role of youths in church, community and on stewardship, some refused, saying that's not a work they can do but, believe me, today they all did it joyfully.

"All the youths, led by the bishop, the SOMA team and some clergy, walked to some part of the town, made lines forming a cross, symbolic of cleansing the city, and literally started cleaning.

"There were great testimonies from both the youths and pastors; this has never been seen."

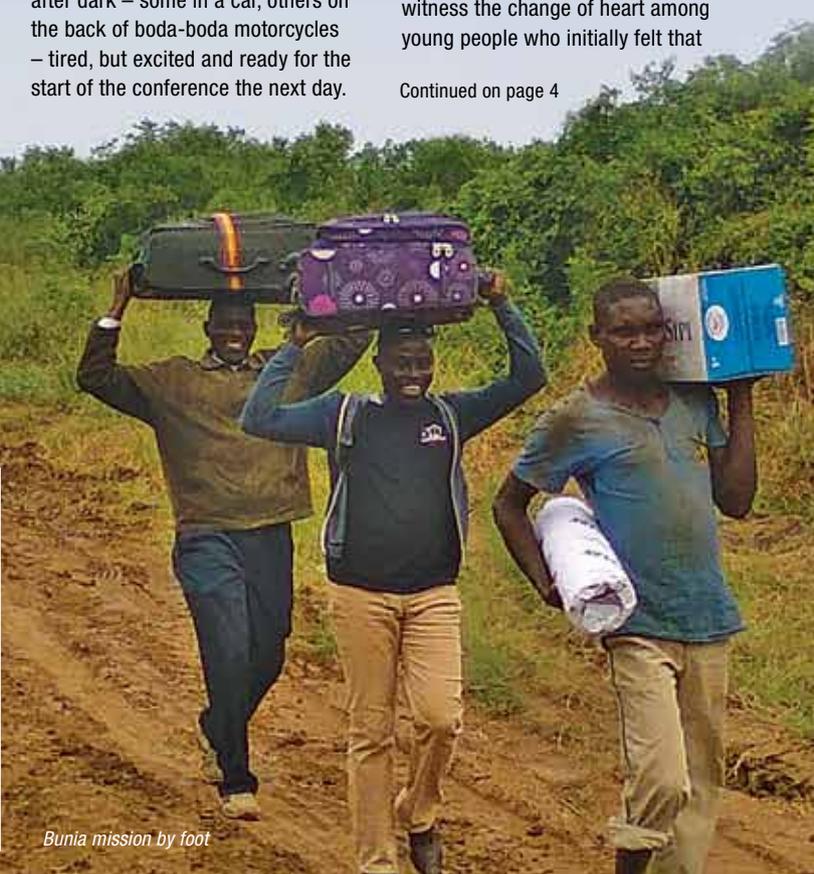
It must have been wonderful to witness the change of heart among young people who initially felt that

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Inset: Evelyn and Joshua travelling to Mission



Bunia mission by foot



Carried by a cloud of witnesses



Ken with Bukavu Delegates, a session about prayer

The diocese of Bukavu has seen a considerable movement of people in the last two decades. This is due to continuing unrest in the countryside, and the activity of marauding militias. The city of Bukavu has grown by over a million people and many new Anglican congregations have been planted all over the city.

The Rt Rev Bahati Bali-Busane Sylvestre, Bishop of Bukavu, had requested a mission programme which reflected the experiences of the bishop's people and clergy. This covered 'The call from God', 'The Mission and Endurance in Suffering', 'Christian Leadership', 'Stewardship' and 'Trauma Healing'.

The experienced international team of six from the UK, Uganda and Tanzania felt able to speak into these devotional areas, in part because all have witnessed and experienced something of Christian suffering in East Africa.

Intercession is undoubtedly the foundation of every SOMA mission, with a Coordinator in the UK who disseminates emails and texts from the team to intercessors across the UK and beyond, and sends 'words, pictures and scriptures from the Lord' and spiritual encouragement to the team. In addition, each team member is required to have a personal intercessory team with a lead member who keys in with the SOMA Prayer Coordinator.

Prayer cover significant

There is no doubt that this covering of prayer is extraordinarily significant: Matthew, Team Leader, commented, '...as always there was an acute awareness of being carried by "so great a cloud of witnesses" ie the intercessors: there was a sharpness in concentration and perception, an assuredness in speaking which are beyond ministry when at home. There is also the flow of verses, pictures and prophetic insights which sustain and guide the team'.

Indeed, there were many encouraging and timely scriptures, with thanksgiving for being together as a rich and wise team strong in the

Lord. At the end of day one, a picture of a butterfly was received by an Intercessor, which spoke deeply to all: there was beauty from the Kingdom in the words of each who spoke and an attentiveness and quiet in the listeners which showed the lightness of touch was releasing grace into deep wounds and experiences.

Team Members felt so grateful to have honoured the cross and resurrection in real ways. Joy entered hearts as the Holy Spirit guided the ministry of different voices with such varied backgrounds. Prayer ministry was offered and many came forward, mentioning grim traumas such as murder, theft, rape, loss of farm, unfaithful spouses, the flight to Bukavu and also the one million people seeking work, home, schools. The Bishop informed the team that every Deanery Synod and Diocesan Synod contains 'trauma ministry'.

Friday came quickly and in the closing Eucharist Bishop Bahati noted it was wonderful how his teaching at the Clergy and Wives 8am services

Below: Worship in Kalemie Cathedral



connected with the teachings through the day. Matthew commented 'This is the glorious sign of the Lord's hand on the week: teaching from four cultures into a fifth has seen a beautiful coordinated flow of the guiding Spirit. Uniquely so, in my experience'.

"This is the glorious sign of the Lord's hand on the week"

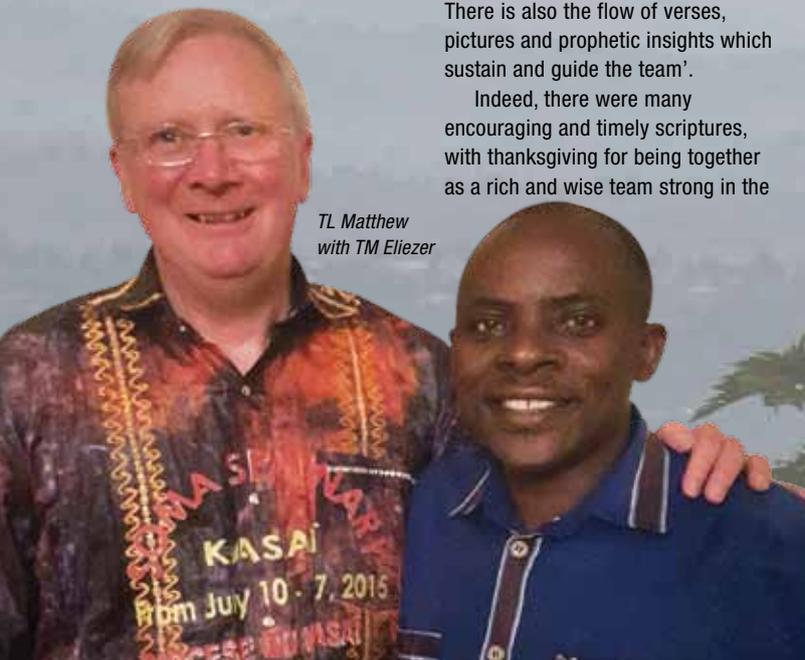
The African team members also said they had learnt much about going deeper into scripture.

After a week in Bukavu, two team members, Matthew and Ken, flew to Kalemie. They planned a programme sustainable by two, expecting to be challenged, as many attendees would be new Christians, some from cults which looked down on Christianity.

God spoke and joy came in abundance as Sunday brought wonderful worship: Bishop Elisha leading both team and delegates in the new but modest cathedral with a tin roof and the percussion of rain above! Drums and voices expressed glorious praise to the Lord, with musicians leading through rhythm and local devotional songs.

The invitation to Kalemie had come from Rt Rev Elisha Tendwa, Missionary Bishop to Kalemie in the Diocese of Katanga. Ken Wiebe and Matthew Grayshon were making a third visit to Kalemie to encourage and support Bishop Elisha; to lead the two-day seminar for his clergy and key leaders; and to visit Nyunzu with

Team: Revd Matthew Grayshon, UK, Team Leader; Revd Ken Wiebe, Canada, resident in UK; Rev Canon Benon Semmambo, Uganda; Rev Canon Edith Semmambo, Uganda; Rev Canon Meshack Memaanyaga, Tanzania; Rev Canon Eliezer Kimuga, Tanzania.



TL Matthew with TM Eliezer

The armies of heaven

regard to the SOMA mission in May 2017.

Kalemie is to become a new diocese in late 2017. It has been a frontier town for over a decade, a faded port left behind by mining developments in Katanga province. The last decade has seen an influx of refugees from the north east of the DRC. Recently there has been conflict between the Lungu people and the pygmies, provoked by outsiders.

The town is beginning to prosper, the more so because it is to be the capital of the new province of East Katanga. Bishop Elisha has exercised a sacrificial ministry for over three years, bringing faith and hope to a part of the diocese which has a very low income. He is Tanzanian and left the large civic church of Dar in obedience to the call of being a missionary bishop in Katanga Diocese.

Bishop Elisha wrote an encouraging letter to Matthew and Ken after the mission, excerpts from which are as follows:

‘Sincerely we submit our thanks to seeing you again here in Kalemie, we say *karibuni sana bo...* You are Christ’s representative for to bring the Great Commission, “Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples” ... you teach us the word of God to show us how Jesus is, through His love, for to fulfil God’s Mission... you are partners with God in the building of His Kingdom... But for [due to] Jesus’ Spirit in you, you accept to come and share happiness and sorrow in Jesus’ name. God bless you all.’

Praise be to God and may Bishop Elisha and his people be blessed abundantly.



Joy in prayer with bubbles

North-west Pakistan is one of the toughest places in the world to be a Christian; hope is kept alive, in part, through lively monthly prayer meetings in family homes.

Bishop of Peshawar the Rt Revd Humphrey Peters invited SOMA to return to the diocese last autumn and facilitate retreats for heads of institutions and clergy, catechists and lay pastors, youth leaders, lead a women’s convention and support the young people of Peshawar in developing their faith and leadership skills.

The previous SOMA youth ministry in 2013 had a major impact on those who attended, and many delegates remain in contact with SOMA and the team today. The youth of Peshawar face considerable challenges: huge hurdles of religious and educational discrimination, unequal rights and unemployment. Ways must be found to connect the young and old without inflaming the gaping generation gap.

On day two of the mission, an intercessor was given this scripture, Isaiah 58:6, ‘Isn’t this the fast that I have chosen: to release the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke?’

Home-making Pakistani Christian women also face daunting tests of their faith and hope as they seek to raise their children in godly ways while supporting their families economically. Additionally, they want to learn about their roles and rights, and how to nurture marital harmony alongside this work.

Heartbreaking

What is happening in Peshawar with the Body of Christ is heart-breaking. Hope is being kept alive in part through

very lively prayer meetings of families in private homes once a month. These home-making Pakistani Christian women also face daunting tests of their faith and hope, as they seek to lead and train their children in godly ways whilst supporting their families economically. Additionally they seek to become more aware about their roles and rights and alongside this work to keep harmony in their marital lives.

These were challenging thoughts for the team as they prepared in November for action. Team Leader Stephen was to start several weeks of being away on mission, not by design but as a result of timings requested by hosts. For the three subcontinent missions there was a fair amount of travel: “Eleven flights in 28 days sounds horrendous – but actually was considerably less unpleasant than the prospect suggests, though I did sleep well on my return home!”

What did strike him was that the three missions had both a similar shape and a similar faith dynamic: one or two-day meetings with specific groups, with the content of the ministry required being revealed moment by moment. For the teams, the result was an extraordinary faith-building experience, reinforcing

the unswerving faithfulness of God and requiring utter reliance on being led by the Spirit. However unsure they may have felt at times, the assurance came that He truly equips those He calls.

At the foundation of the mission, the Intercessors again received scriptures: Revelation 3:8 ‘These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. I know your deeds. See, I have

“See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut”

placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name’.

Early in the mission the darkness of the place became increasingly apparent with Creddy particularly feeling the oppression. An Intercessor shared the following: “I’ve been getting a picture of Ron giving out brightly wrapped boxes. This morning when I woke up I had a picture of the team all dressed in white and then read this verse in my daily reading from Revelation 19:14, ‘The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses dressed in fine linen, WHITE and CLEAN’.”

Reassurance indeed, and as the conferences progressed very positive feedback came from both male and female delegates, with an overwhelming presence of God in the place, and inspiration from the Holy Spirit in the talks. As each day passed the delegates became increasingly receptive and responsive to the Spirit; engagement with God going deeper and deeper leading to tears of release and joy.

To be expected when involved in God’s Kingdom, spiritual and practical attacks came. The team were physically conscious of the battle. Two days later came the text from the team:

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Christmas Worship in Peshawar

Get involved

FUTURE MISSIONS include:

DR Congo	Boga
DR Congo	Kalemie
DR Congo	Kinshasa
Kenya	Nakuru
South India	Nandyal
Kenya	Nairobi
Kenya	Thika
DR Congo	Katanga
Uganda	Bunyoro-Kitara

TEAM: Would you like to come on a mission? We are constantly looking for new team members to bring fresh impetus to our teams. For an application to be considered for a SOMA Team, simply contact SOMA via email @ info@somauk.org or phone us on 01469 279737. Alternatively click on 'Join a Team' on our website at <http://www.somauk.org/>.

INVITE: To invite a SOMA team to a diocese abroad, email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org.

PARTNER: A SOMA Parish Mission Partnership builds and maintains a live, active and mutually beneficial relationship between your congregations and SOMA and so makes an effective resource for you, envisioning your church for Renewal & Mission both

at home and abroad as well as fulfilling SOMA's worldwide call and ministry. Click on 'Get Involved' on our website, then 'Parish Mission Partners'. Alternatively email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org or call 01460 279737.

PRAY: Receive our full 'Daily Prayer Diary' with your hard/soft copy of 'Sharing'. Find today's live prayer nugget on our website home page. It is upon Intercession that SOMA's ministry and mission is founded. SOMA Intercessors are supported by regular, extensive Prayer Briefings and two-way daily emails when teams are on mission. Read more on our website: click on 'Prayer and Intercession'; or contact Kate Brankin at intercession@somauk.org

GIVE: We really value financial gifts. We are constantly in need of financial support for missions and teams as well as the very real day-to-day demands of the SOMA office. Your gift helps further this strategic work of the Holy Spirit. To resource SOMA's ministry go to our website: click on 'Get Involved' then 'Support Us'; or click on the 'Donate' button on the top right of any web page; alternatively email steve.finch@somauk.org or post to SOMA, PO Box 69, Merriott, TA18 9AP.

Amen, we have seen His hand!

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tyding streets was beneath their dignity, but they then saw Bishop William doing just that.

Stephen, co-ordinating the intercessors, told them joyfully. "There is much to praise God for: those young people who have given their lives to Christ; those who have realised that singing in church alone does not make one a Christian; those who have realised for the first time that Christian witness involves practical action in the community; the powerful witness to the community made by the street cleaning; and the safe delivery of baby Peter to Joshua and his wife."



Delegates with their certificates

And Joshua declared: "We thank God! The closing was full of celebration, the Lord led us to do foot washing to all the youth leaders before issuing them with the certificate after teaching them on evangelism. The bishop read from John 13:1ff. We had sessions with the married, students and the singles.

"It was so refreshing. Amen! We have seen His hand all through."

Please pray now for the diocese as it continues to face many challenges, not least the insecurity which continues to affect communities in the south.

Team: Leader Revd Capt Joshua Opondo, Jared Minyaho, Tabitha Odanga, Kenya; Michael Asaba, Uganda/DRC; Evelyne Lumbuye, Vicky Nankya, Uganda; Bishop William Bahemuka; intercessor coordinator Stephen Dinsmore.



Bishop William street cleaning

soma Day Conference

Saturday May 13th 2017
10am – 4pm

St Stephen's Church
Twickenham TW1 3EE

Meet others involved with the mission and ministry of SOMA.

Hear intercessors and team members sharing their experiences.

Enjoy a day of fellowship, worship, prayer and reflection.

Hot and cold drinks are provided; please bring your own lunch. There is no charge, a collection will be taken.

Email judith.russell@somauk.org with your name, address, postcode and phone number to reserve a place.

The armies of heaven

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[conference has a] "delayed start due to small fire in the church we are going to (about 1 hour journey from here) we are fine! We are still at our flat. We recognise this as a direct attack. Please pray for all today. He and we are not defeated."

In the words of the worship song 'Cornerstone': "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus



Lindy TM on Peshawar Mission

Team: Revd Stephen Dinsmore, Team Leader, UK; Mrs Lindy Cameron, UK; Revd Ron Hart, UK; Mrs Creddy Hart, UK.

love and righteousness. Through the storm He is Lord, Lord of all."

Stephen said: "In Peshawar on the North West Frontier of Pakistan a personal highlight was to be able to worship, preach and share in the Sunday service at All Saints, Kohatigate, inside the walls of Peshawar Old City. All Saints is the church suicide-bombed by the Taliban in 2013 with 80 fatalities and 120 wounded. To be at their youth service, to meet again and pray with the youth that Team Member Lindy and I had ministered with in 2013 and see their growth in faith and discipleship and their taking on of youth leadership roles was a huge encouragement." ... "Indescribably delighted and thankful that The Lord opened the door so that



Creddy TM on Peshawar Mission

Lindy and I were able to revisit and be with All Saints ... to listen, speak, stand with, and pray. And to be there for Youth Sunday ... God is good, and His mercy endures..."

There is no doubt that SOMA's ministry is extraordinary, quite possibly unique, valued by those to whom we go and, from our point of view as team members and intercessors, a terrific privilege in which to be involved.