

'You've come!'



Above: *You've come! We are not forgotten in Nyunzu*
 Inset: *Youth leader at Nyunzu*
 Below: *Delegates at Nyunzu*



KNOWING that SOMA is called to 'the places less visited' strengthened the faith, perseverance and determination of team and intercessors as they battled innumerable challenges for the mission in May to DR Congo.

The team was told there had been no white people in Nyunzu for ten years, that the people there felt abandoned, isolated and ignored, and they believed that, like others, the team would not come. Their arrival in Nyunzu, in the Area Diocese of Kalemie in the north of the Diocese of Katanga, therefore proved a huge testimony and encouragement for the church in such a remote, 'forgotten' place.

Diocesan Bishop Bertin and the diocesan centre are in DR Congo's second city Lubumbashi; the Missionary Bishop to Kalemie, Tanzanian Elisha Tendwa, is 850km away in Kalemie, on the shores of Lake Tanganyika. SOMA's destination was the town and archdeaconry of Nyunzu, a further eight-hour drive on 200km of rough road from Kalemie.

Arriving late at night, the team were greeted by an ecstatic welcome: "You've come!"

During the next four days the team ministered with 82 leaders, then with hundreds of people in five congregations on the Sunday. In addition, with travel arrangements altered, the team were delighted to minister with 62 leaders at an impromptu conference in the new

cathedral in Kalemie on the final Thursday. Bishop Elisha succinctly summarised the mission: "Thank you... for living water."

Bishop Bertin added: "Your conference in Nyunzu was more helpful spiritually to Christians in Nyunzu and will change many things in their life as you saw how the population are suffering spiritually, physically and morally. They need more prayers as their situation stays critical."

Profound experience

It was not only the delegates who were blessed. For team member Modupe, a youthful octogenarian, it was a profound experience. "The month I spent on the mission has been one of the most joyful periods of my life," he said.

"It was simply joyful to minister to the church workers in Nyunzu and Kalemie, to minister to the Batwa and the Lubwas, to tell them of the love of God, and to use my personal experiences in Sierra Leone to minister. Joining the SOMA Kalemie team has been one of the richest experiences of my life, and I feel abundantly blessed by the Almighty."

Team member Eliezer reflected: "I have become stronger in faith and trusting in the Lord for protection and provisions than ever before. I learnt to trust in the Lord for protection and provisions. I knew that SOMA emphasised the power of the Holy Spirit.

"My view of SOMA remains the same as before. This is a vitally needed arm of the Church, and a great blessing to the

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UK Residential Conference

Tuesday to Thursday 22–24 May 2018,
 High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts

Join us for a great time of fellowship, teaching, prayer, worship, ministry and relaxation. Be inspired, be encouraged and ignite your passion for mission. Hear about SOMA missions. Spend time aside with God. Enjoy good company.

Our conference starts with lunch at 1pm on Tuesday and ends at 2pm, after lunch on Thursday. All rooms are en suite, and the all-inclusive cost is £175 per person. For more information or to book your place, please email steve.finch@somauk.org or call 01460 279737

"It was part of my healing"

"I was spiritually nourished and encouraged"

"Bible study was invaluable; refreshing to be led into this sort of depth"

'You've come!'

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dioceses visited. SOMA, come to home diocese of Kibondo, Tanzania, next year."

Bishop Elisha has a vast missionary heart and has yearned for his more distant archdeaconries to share in the blessings of fellowship, teaching and renewal. Previous seminars in Kalemie were only attended by a handful of delegates from the interior archdeaconries with great effort and sacrifice; the heart of this mission was to minister to the archdeaconry of Nyunzu.

The distance, difficulty, and cost of travel to, or from, his archdeaconries at Nyunzu, Kongolo, Kabalo, Manono, and Moba mean that opportunities to support clergy and church leaders in these places are rare or high impossible. A mission with SOMA brought by him from Kalemie to Nyunzu would do much to build up, encourage, and strengthen the church there. And the fact that Nyunzu would be taking precedence over Kalemie for once would send a strong signal to all his archdeaconries that he cares strongly for the entire missionary diocese.

Prayer and intercession

Prayer and intercession played a key role. Preparations were complex and trying. As the time for the team's departure drew near there was no sign of the necessary visas. Team leader Ken said: "The lady at the consulate suggested I ask our sponsor in DRC, Bishop Bertin, to contact the Visa Commission office in Kinshasa. That could possibly speed up the process. We asked our intercessors to pray.

"On the day given to collect the visas in London, they had still not arrived. More prayer. We had to get our flights changed, because we would now not be able to travel on the planned date. Then, we were told that one team member's application was incomplete. Our intercessors were called upon again.

"On the day we should have departed, we had to cancel our tickets and buy new ones. Amazingly, the new tickets, now without change or cancellation allowances, were lower enough in price to completely offset what had had to be paid previously for one change and then the cancellation.

"On the last day for which receipt of our visas would allow the mission to go ahead without the loss of one or another of our UK team members, we were told at collection time that permission had not yet been received to issue them. Helen and I went away, and I felt strongly that I should not leave the vicinity of the DRC embassy until 3pm.

"Precisely at 3pm I got a call from our contact at the embassy, asking if we were still around. We were asked at that point to provide to them the documentation I had previously sent to their Kinshasa office via Bishop Bertin. We were still told there would be no chance for Helen's visa. Nevertheless, I was

determined to wait outside the embassy – at which collections were officially over at 1pm – until the lights went out and the shutters were pulled down. Again, we asked our intercessors to pray.

"At 5.30, a consular official came out and asked if we were still there. She said wait 40 minutes. At 6.09pm the five of our passports were brought out, complete with the necessary visas. Hallelujah!"

"Daily prayer requests often had a sense of real urgency"

Ken reflected: "Throughout all the stages of preparation, Stephen and I felt keenly that this was a mission that must go ahead, despite the

obstacles. Throughout this mission I felt far more keenly that my (and our) best efforts were entirely at the mercy of circumstances beyond our control: visas, internal flights that were

occasional, subject to cancellation, issues related to road safety and the general instability of the region.

"Daily prayer requests sent out to the intercessors often had a sense of real urgency, and Stephen's intercessory requests were sometimes going out on a moment-by-moment basis.



Greeted by Batwa on the road

"It is normal to feel a deep appreciation for the entire intercessory network for their general prayer coverage of the mission, but on this occasion the perceived need for intercession was far more immediate, specific and crucial to the success of the entire mission, rather than to 'merely' the 'spiritual' challenges being encountered."

So, how was it for the heavily called-upon Intercessors? One, Gracie, wrote: "It has deepened my commitment to praying for others and it has widened my vision of ministry. It has strengthened my faith in the power of God to protect those He has called and His power to defend and uphold work done in His name and in His service."

Team: Leader Rev Ken Wiebe, Yvonne Wiebe UK-Canada; Rev Stephen Dinsmore, UK; Helen Doery UK-Australia; Rev Canon Eliezer Kimuga, Rev Meshack Manyaga, Tanzania; Canon Dr Modupe Taylor-Pearce; Sierra Leone; Bishop Bertin Subi, Bishop Elisha Tendwa; intercession coordinator Kate Brankin.

Bottom: En route – ferry across the Lukuga. Inset: One of the innumerable challenges in Kalemie



Get involved

FUTURE MISSIONS include:

Tanzania	Kibondo
DR Congo	Goma
South Sudan	Maridi
Malawi	Upper Shire
DR Congo	Katanga
Uganda	Bunyoro-Kitara
South Sudan	Athooch
Kenya	Nairobi
DR Congo	Kamango
Zimbabwe	Harare
South Sudan	Northern Bahr El Ghazal
Uganda	Kiryandongo

 **PRAY:** Intercession and prayer are the foundation of SOMA's ministry and mission. Find each day's live prayer nugget on twitter, facebook and our website home page. Receive our *Daily Prayer Diary* with your copy of *Sharing*. SOMA Intercessors are informed by regular, extensive Prayer Briefings and two-way daily emails when teams are on mission. For more on intercession: on our website click 'Prayer and Intercession'; or contact Kate Brankin at intercession@somauk.org

 **TEAM:** Come on a mission! We welcome new team members. To be considered for a SOMA team, simply email SOMA at info@somauk.org or phone us on 01469 279737. Alternatively, click on 'Join a team' on our website www.somauk.org

 **GIVE:** We rely totally on financial gifts! We are constantly in need of sponsorship for missions and overseas members of teams, as well as running the SOMA office. Your gift furthers this strategic work of the Holy Spirit. To resource SOMA's ministry, go to our website, click the 'Donate' button on the homepage or click on 'Get Involved' then 'Support Us'; alternatively, email steve.finch@somauk.org or post direct to SOMA, PO Box 69, Merriott TA18 9AP

 **INVITE:** To invite a SOMA team, email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org

 **PARTNER PARISH:** A SOMA Parish Mission Partnership builds a live, active and mutually beneficial relationship between your congregations and SOMA, making an effective resource for you, envisioning your church for Renewal & Mission at home and abroad, and fulfilling SOMA's worldwide call and ministry. Click 'Get Involved' on our website, then 'Parish Mission Partners'. Alternatively, email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org or call 01460 279737



The delighted delegates in Kampala

The Lord said 'boda-boda drivers'

A SOMA MISSION with a difference hit the ground running in Uganda within three hours of the team leader landing at Entebbe airport.

This was unlike any recent mission SOMA has been involved with, inspired by a project 10,000 kilometres away in the Philippines. There, in Manila, a Roman Catholic priest had observed how thousands of people were sifting through rubbish to survive, yet many of the poor young scavengers possessed laptops – the key to hope for their future...

The priest, Fr Benigno Beltran, thought that devising digital games for the young men to play could help them with their education, and explained his vision at the 2016 Greenbelt Christian festival in England. Attending was SOMA team leader Don Brewin, who asked God whether this idea could work in DR Congo.

Easy prey for militias

"The Lord said, 'Boda-boda drivers' – young men who seem to have no purpose for the future and, in DRC, are easy prey for the recruiters in the militias – so the idea was born," Don recalled.

Boda-bodas are motorcycle taxis widely used in East Africa, and Don said:

Time for a selfie!



"The original idea was to recruit about three people from Kampala, where I have observed, and used, boda-bodas over many years, and a similar number from Bunia, DR Congo. But the Lord had other ideas, so we ended up with six from Bunia, and 14 from in and around Kampala. Boda-boda boys, as they are known, despite their tough talk and swaggering appearance are vulnerable, vulnerable to be drawn into gangs, drugs, crime and, in DR Congo, into the militias that are the source of so much violence and suffering in that country. Churches are only too aware of the challenges of mission and ministry to such a group, yet, while in Bunia there has been some success in drawing them in through choirs, there is still a desperate need for the church to develop ways of connecting with this vulnerable and needy group." It was to better equip and encourage the churches to connect with them that was the aim of this mission.

"I know nothing about digital games, so I wrote to some of my friends. We were put in touch with the key person, Steven Huckle, who lectures in this subject at Essex University and was excited to have an opportunity to share ideas with people in East Africa.

"The second key person was good SOMA friend Michael Asaba, from DRC but living in Kampala, who has helped on many missions before.

Michael was instrumental in inviting the participants, in arranging the location for the workshop, and in organising accommodation and meals."

Two years after that address by Fr Benigno, Don and Steven travelled to Kampala and that same afternoon met the delegates. Most had laptops but the venue had few electrical sockets.

"Fortunately, one of the delegates not only was able to supply the extra ones, but also a projector which enabled what was on Steven's laptop to be projected onto the wall," said Don.

A further challenge was no internet connection, "but the Lord provided the necessary equipment to overcome this".

Bishop William from the Diocese of Boga, centred on Bunia, in adjacent DR Congo, was excited by the mission and travelled to Kampala to hear Steven tell the delegates how digital games are a valuable industry in the UK. "I tried to cover as broad a range as possible: different roles and careers, platforms, business, stores, designing, art, code, audio, engines, software and much more," said Steven.

Each day began and ended with worship, led by one of the delegates, before four daily teaching sessions. "One thing that became apparent over the week was that the inexperienced were more limited than I first imagined. This wasn't only in terms of their technical understanding and use of computers, but also how much English those from DRC understood," said Steven.

He expected to use two of the five days teaching the basics of developing games and apps, "but by the end of day one we'd done about 80 per cent. By the end of the second day everyone had done the whole tutorial and the extras. This was hugely impressive, especially by those with extremely limited experience with computers, let alone the language barrier.

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Unlocking jam is key to fruitfulness

COUPLES tackling an imaginary traffic jam in Nairobi proved a most illuminating exercise at a SOMA-led conference in Kenya.

The challenge was part of an outstanding session on marriage, facilitated by team member Wiola. *Discovering our Love Languages in Marriage*, enabled delegates to look at how they most naturally communicate with their spouse – and with people in general. The five ‘languages’ were: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service, and Physical Touch.

The results were as surprising as they were thought-provoking. The languages most frequently used for communicating appreciation and love by delegates at the conference hosted by Nakuru Diocese were Words of Affirmation and Quality Time. The session was skilfully complemented by tasks devised by team member Francis, including two teams challenged to solve the imagined “traffic jam”.

“It was hilarious, if time-consuming,” recalled team leader Patrick.

The team of seven was both inter-generational and cross-cultural. Several of the team previously visited Nakuru in 2014, and the pattern of this mission was informed by the many previously led by SOMA.

Starting with two days in Nakuru, the team moved to St Andrew’s International School at Turi for the residential conference from Sunday afternoon until Friday afternoon with diocesan clergy and their spouses.

Wraparound prayer

This conference was the centrepiece of the mission, which welcomed 130 delegates from across the diocese, including two bishops and all the senior diocesan staff, for a full programme from 7am to 9pm each day, starting and closing with prayer.

Three main streams of teaching and interaction were embraced under the overall heading of *Partners in Mission*. Led by Patrick, the themes focused on the role of the Trinity in mission, Word and Spirit, Leaders and

Led, and developing new leaders.

A second series, entitled *Lessons from Acts for a Mission-Shaped Church*, was led by Tom, Francis, Georgia, Isabel and Natalie; and a third strand on marriage was facilitated by Tom, Wiola and Francis. The underlying theme of valuing partnership in mission was present in all the teaching.

Exceptional times of intercession

The evenings saw three exceptional times of intercession: for the country of Kenya facing elections (and now by order of the Supreme Court to be re-run in November); for the Diocese of Nakuru; and for millennials and the challenges they face, ably introduced by millennial team members Isabel and Natalie.

In addition to the teaching, the conference was relished for the opportunity it gave colleagues to be together for an extended time, for a hugely enjoyable games afternoon, for group discussions, and for the excellent food provided by the school.

Travel from the UK to Kenya was good, although there was a muddle over the accommodation in Nairobi, with the weary travellers eventually arriving four hours after touchdown at ACK Guest House in the centre of town.

The following day, the UK contingent met up with Francis and Georgia; had a tour around and introduction to the dynamic All Saints’ Cathedral campus and met the senior staff members there; and held a planning meeting for the SOMA mission



Enjoying the conference

to All Saints’ Cathedral Diocese in October.

Nakuru is a four-hour drive north-west across the Rift Valley and the team first gathered in its entirety on the Saturday for preparation and getting to know each other. On Sunday, they preached in three churches, including the cathedral, and then travelled to Turi that afternoon.

The following weekend they travelled back to Nakuru, sharing their experiences during a visit to Lake Nakuru Game Park and an evening meal out together.

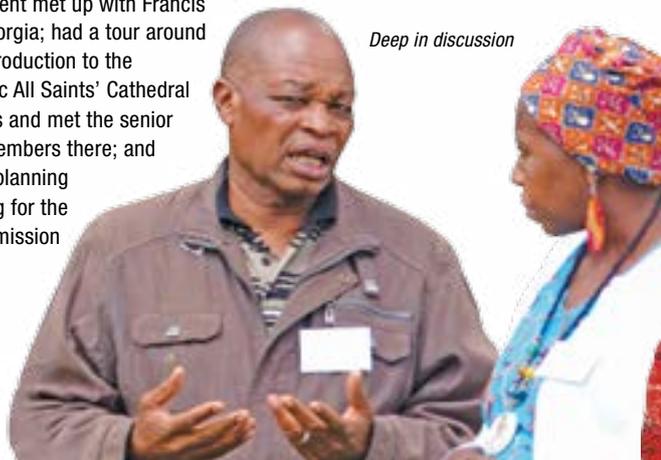
On the final Sunday, the team preached in four churches again, travelling back to Nairobi in the afternoon to meet Archbishop Jackson that evening, when he prayed for SOMA’s work and its fruitfulness.

As the UK team members boarded their flight that night, it was with much thankfulness to God and plenty of heart-warming memories.

Team: Leader Rev Canon Patrick Whitworth, Isabel Crawley, Natalie Nash, Tom Peryer, Wiola Peryer, all UK; Rev Francis Awando, Capt Georgia Omwa CA, Kenya; Bishop Joseph Muchai; intercession coordinator Rev Stephen Dinsmore.



Deep in discussion



‘Boda-boda drivers’

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“Over the course of the week, we started working on ideas that the participants had come up with and, towards the end of the week, we managed to get some very limited 4G internet. It gave me a chance to show them the bigger world of games. The huge leap in knowledge and skills they had all achieved was honestly remarkable, made even more impressive by the ones who had started the week with their limited hardware, experience and language.”

Steven provided everyone with an offline install and documentation which he had brought with him, but he observed: “The rushing ahead of modern countries for ‘always online’ is making places like Uganda fall further and further behind. There’s a reliance on mobile tech rather than landlines, but the speeds outside larger towns and cities means ‘online’ can be a luxury.”

Excited by the delegates’ response, he expects to return to Uganda this year to further encourage and equip the delegates for this ministry. “How precious they hold what education they can get through all the adversity is incredible. Much of their support comes only from the churches.”

Such a positive outcome was achieved despite needles of attack – an increase in violence not far from Bunia, forcing the DRC participants to adjust their travel to and from Kampala; several delegates experienced minor illness; two suffered family bereavements, one through serious violence; and uncertainty about finances.

Don said: “We were very grateful for the prayer of intercessors, and on several occasions during the week we received helpful and encouraging messages or scriptures from intercessors, which we passed on to the delegates.”

Team: Leader Rev Don Brewin, Steven Huckle, UK; Michael Asaba (Uganda); Bishop William Bahemuka of Boga, DR Congo; intercession coordinator Kate Brankin.

Delegate Mirlene with team member Steven

