

SHARING

The Newsletter of SOMA UK

(SOMA logo)

Autumn 2006

We work for the transformation of individuals and churches and the healing of communities and their lands through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. We send and receive teams worldwide on short-term mission within the Anglican Communion."

WORKING TOGETHER FOR

Don Brewin peels off his gloves

THE SOUL OF NAIROBI

Fifty six people from Uganda and UK (with links to Sudan, DR Congo, South Africa, Nigeria and elsewhere) supported by intercessors from all over the world spent two weeks in Nairobi, Kenya in August, sharing in a powerful experience of working with young people from churches of different denominations there in a unique example of holistic mission.

The powerful combination of Christian teaching, community action and outreach had been used effectively by "Soul Survivor" in Manchester and London but never so far in Africa. Church Army Africa worked extremely hard to make this experiment come to fruition.

Nairobi was divided into five zones. The mornings were taken up with music and teaching in the 'zone' churches. In the afternoons the teams got stuck in (sometimes literally!) to projects such as rubbish-clearing (Nairobi City council was glad that some of their work was being done for them!), painting of schools and hospitals, and cleaning the grounds of police stations thereby improving relations with the police and young people. The uniform T-shirts created much interest amongst local communities which resulted in some meaningful conversations and interest in the Christian message.

The name Nairobi comes from a Masai word meaning "springs of cool water". Round the edge of Kamukunji Ground (where the vision for Soul Nairobi was conceived) flows - sluggishly - the Nairobi River, which at the moment is far from clean. On the final Saturday of the mission, the whole team returned to Kamukunji to pray for that symbolic place. One of the prophetic prayers was that within five years, fish would be swimming in the Nairobi River through Kamukunji! Nairobi churches are now being invited to adopt a section of the river to get it cleaned up and keep it so ..



F the basic task

As SOMA UK enters this crucial period of transition, and I prepare to hand over the responsibility of National Director, what are the key things we need to hold on to? Here are two - one a general thought, and the other for SOMA.

First, a challenge for us all in these uncertain times:

"There are times when we can never meet the future with sufficient elasticity of mind ... We can do worse than remember a principle which both gives us a firm Rock and leaves us the maximum elasticity for our minds: the principle: Hold to Christ, and for the rest remain totally uncommitted" (the conclusion of Herbert Butterfield's *Christianity and History*)

Then, for SOMA. The last few weeks have been a busy time in many ways. But one healthy way in which these weeks have been occupied has been in preparing teams to go out and "do the business of SOMA". By the end of the year 16 teams will have gone out from SOMA UK, to 5 different countries; and we are already planning teams for the first months of 2007. They will be sharing in different ways with different groups of people - but through it all shines the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, transforming individuals, churches and communities. This is the basic task, to which SOMA is called. Let us never lose sight of it.



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"The beginning not the end"

At a thanksgiving party, quoting someone much more famous, someone said, *"This is not the beginning of the end but the end of the beginning"*. Nairobi is hard ground. The community transformation we long for is nowhere near complete but we pray that Soul Nairobi will be seen to have helped the process move slightly further down the long path to fulfilment. The churches that took part were excited about the vision - please pray that others may join with them in the years to come.



Praying for the
Nairobi River
August 2006

The Role of the Pastor in Ruaha, Tanzania

Archbishop Donald Mtetemela welcomes team from diocese of Lichfield

Nine years after a SOMA team visited I ringa in the diocese of Ruaha, it was such exciting news when Archbishop Donald found time in his punishingly busy schedule to invite SOMA to lead a clergy conference on "The Role of the Pastor". Rev Kevin Roberts from Meole Brace led the team: Mr & Mrs Chris and Kathleen Parker, Revds Barry Wilson and Margaret Smallman and Kenyan, Mrs Margaret Waruiru who shared ministry with churches in South Wales as part of the SOMA Silver Jubilee in 2004. Margaret was a great asset to the team being a KiSwahili speaker, the language spoken by the clergy in the diocese.

The ice was broken at the start of the conference by getting the pastors to come and sit in front of the tables that had been set out and members of the team then sitting amongst them. During one of the early sessions Kevin used Isaiah 61:1-3 as his text. He then invited the pastors to stand and there was a time of silence and waiting upon the Holy Spirit. For a while there was complete silence and Kevin was about to end the meeting when the Holy Spirit came in power. Many of the pastors were in tears and one man was crying out for his church. This set the scene for the rest of the week. We believe it was the quiet way that Holy Spirit was asked to come that helped the pastors receive so openly.

There is so much to share but two sessions that especially stick in my mind are the session on healing after which we prayed for people and there were testimonies to healings; and a talk on the pain of ministry and the need to forgive those who hurt us had many pastors being able to forgive those who had hurt them, and being able to say so in public. Initially team members were the only ones praying for the pastors but by the end of the week they were ministering to each other. Those who had resisted the Holy Spirit at the beginning by the end of the week were dancing in the final communion service. The pastors left the conference refreshed and encouraged to continue in their ministry and the team felt very privileged to be part of God's work. Margaret Waruiru's deep intercessory prayer for the team and the pastors was greatly appreciated.

Margaret Smallman

STOP PRESS.. STOP PRESS..

Just as we were going to press, this message arrived from Steve Maina, Director of Church Army East Africa:

"The impact of Soul Nairobi seems greater than we expected. Participants of Soul Nairobi have been invited by a UN based organization to attend a very significant Water and Climatic change conference in Nairobi in November 06 that will have about 10,000 international delegates. The organizers of the conference heard of us through Soul Nairobi. They would like us to share our passion for a cleaner city with the delegates."

SOMA team affirmed ...

Revd Martin Mlaka, Mission Co-ordinator for the Diocese of Southern Malawi sent this message, following the visit by a team from Bath and Nairobi in June:

"The team which you commissioned for mission to this Diocese was so wonderful, humble but powerful. They were people who added to the whole ministry here. They are also the kind of ministers we are going to use in a number of areas in the near future. May I report to you quite frankly that the team delivered beyond our expectation. Some, both members of the Clergy and the Lay Readers have even suggested to me that the team should come again to address issues based on another topic. To me this is so encouraging, for it was the first international team to be work with us since I took over this office. Thank you so much".

Longest serving Bishop in Anglican Church of Uganda hosts SOMA team:

Richard and Helen Salmon report on their recent visit to the Diocese of Bukedi, Uganda with son Mark, seasoned SOMA team members Lyn and Jean Kirk, and Amos and Jane Wandera from Kenya. Rt Revd Nicodemus Okille has been diocesan Bishop since 1984 and this was the first visit of a SOMA team.

"Imagine the scene for a Clergy Conference: a fully equipped Conference Centre, a car park full of cars, a welcome table with folders, name tags, room numbers. Now travel east 2000 miles ...

We arrived in Kampala, knowing that we were to help lead a conference for the clergy of the diocese but having no idea actually where the conference was taking place! We were met by the archdeacon Canon Zeblun, and after six hours on the road arrived at a Primary Boarding School where the Headmaster had kindly made his official residence available to us /p3

**SOUL
BUGOLOBI,
UGANDA
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Jean Kirk, Jane Wandera, Helen Salmon
Budaka Primary School, Uganda

"This is the Conference Centre..."

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So what was our Ugandan Conference Centre like?

Three large dormitories full of bunk beds with a pile of mattresses in the corner were allocated to the women and three similar rooms to the men. Our Conference Hall was the skeleton of a new building started some time ago and awaiting funds for completion. The concrete first floor was our roof, the ground floor our auditorium, school desks the seating and fresh air our air conditioning—No walls had yet been built. Electricity was in short supply but water was clean and plentiful.

Fresh touch needed

The 170 clergy and their wives arrived. We sensed a heaviness and unhappiness in them. Many had come from hard and discouraging situations (not so unlike England!) They really needed a fresh touch from God. We had asked those praying for us to believe and pray that by the end of the conference the delegates would be 'surprised by joy!' There were only two full days and two half days so not much time!

A New Creation in Christ

For three hours on the two full days, the ladies of the team ran a Women's Conference. We encouraged the ladies to change their situations through prayer. We shared our own stories and got them to pray in small groups and all together. They really caught the vision. Richard gave three sessions on the Conference theme –A New Creation in Christ and practical help was given in workshops. After the Celebration on the final evening, when Amos had given a powerful message, many asked for prayer.

God touches lives!

Then it was over! So little time! So much more we would have loved to do, but our great God had touched many lives and we saw great joy on their faces and hope in their voices. We have all returned burdened to pray that the Lord who has begun a good work in them will complete it.

PS We have just heard that Amos and Jane Wandera have been invited back to Bukedi soon to lead some more workshops. This is fantastic news. Thank you to all our supporters who have given to the Missions fund to enable our friends from East Africa to join SOMA teams

Kumi: "Rooted in Jesus"

Claire Greaves (one of the team) writes ...

Four of us from the UK, led by Revd John Lee, led three "Rooted in Jesus" conferences in the North Eastern dioceses of Kumi, Uganda. We were joined by veteran mission partner, Revd Jenny Green who has been in South West Uganda for twelve years. Her local knowledge and her car were invaluable! During our two week mission, we worked with over 200 men and women from a huge variety of backgrounds, and we ministered and prayed with them. There were many occasions when we were so aware of God's spirit at work and Dr Mike Hutchinson led some wonderfully gentle times of prayer ministry. The misery, suffering and day-to-day hardship of many of the participants cannot be under-estimated but neither can their conviction that that God is there, that prayer can change things and that the power of the Holy Spirit can heal physical and emotional wounds. What a humbling experience to share fellowship with people whose faith is so focussed and uncluttered. Never before have I been among those who face the struggles of this world in the light of what awaits us in the next and hold on to the fact that the best is yet to come

Our experience in Kumi is that SOMA is so much more than the sharing of ministries. We shared discussions, struggles, worship, an over-crowded pick-up, a game of Frisbee, the fervour of Ugandan support for the English premiership (especially David Beckham), family planning decisions, the power of God's spirit to bring worth and value to women ... the list is endless. My prayer is that God will continue to bless the people of Kumi and continue to be Rooted in Jesus".

NB The Rooted in Jesus teaching material is available through ReSource on 01235 553722 or log on to their website info@resource-arm.net



l-r Jenny Green, John Lee, Geoff Stokes,
Mike Hutchinson, Claire Greaves

"Soaked and Strengthened,"

Hilary Steynor shares the moments from a memorable event at Swanwick in June ...

"Come away with Me" led us to put down agendas and experience being led into the heart of God through the worship of Ruth Fazal and her team. Nothing was demanded from us as a group or individuals other than to yield to the humility and grace which took each one on an individual journey closer to God. For some this led to challenge, for others, many of them weary leaders, it was a time to know nothing other than the deep breath of the Holy Spirit and receiving God in a new way.

In the final session, before the Eucharist, we were allowed to intercede on behalf of others, placing them too "within the rain of God's love". But the whole experience was a journey in intercession, as we rediscovered the heart of worship, and experienced huge joy and blessing in the Spirit's leading.

hosted by SOMA UK & ReSource

This issue of **SHARING** will be sent out via a mailing house, marking the end of 10 years of the thrice yearly 'stuffing party' at Don's house. Very very grateful thanks to all the loyal stuffers who have given freely of their time and fingers to get the mailing out. We hope that this new method will be just as efficient.

Teams for the Future November

4th - 14th Revd Simon Brignall and Revd John Awodi leading the Synod for the diocese of Nord-Kivu, Congo

8th-22nd: Revd Matthew Grayshon and team to the diocese of Lainya, Sudan

13th-16th: Kenya Bishops' Retreat has been postponed until next year

SOMA UK National Director

The Trustees, and the staff at SOMA UK, are delighted to announce the appointment of **Revd Stephen Dinsmore** to take over from Don Brewin as National Director on 1st May 2007. Stephen will join the team at SOMA UK on 1st March, and will work with Don in a two-month period of transition.

Stephen has been Advisor for Mission and Parish Development in the Diocese of Chelmsford since February 2005. Before that he was for 12 years Vicar of St Judes Plymouth. He has led SOMA teams to Tanzania and India. He is married to Janet, and they have three grown-up children.

One of the first priorities Stephen will be addressing is the future structure and location of the SOMA UK Office. Please pray for him and his family, and for Don, Mary & Danielle during this exciting period of transition.

John Watson
Chair of Trustees



December

30th Nov- 15th Dec: Revd Canon David Munby to the diocese of Bungoma, Kenya

January

15th-30th Revd Don Brewin and team leading two conferences for the diocese of Kigezi, Uganda

February

12th-17th Revd Don Brewin and team leading a conference for the Sudan Youth Leaders in Juba

April

To be confirmed: Team to Wau
19th-3rd May: Team to Mozambique led by Revd Dr Alison Morgan

SOMA Intercessors

We are always keen to hear from people who feel called to pray regularly for the work of SOMA. Please contact Hilary Steynor on 01483 301013 for more details.

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Monthly or one-off credit or debit card donations

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CAF CHARITY CARD

SOMA UK will shortly be introducing a CharityCard for donations. Donors will be able to donate by post, via the Internet, charity cheques, standing order and donations directly via CAF, using the CAF website or via a 24-hour donation line: 08456 000 909

These donations are automatically recorded and SOMA UK will be issued with a remittance advice detailing the amount donated and your name and address (unless you wish to remain anonymous).

If you would like any further details please do not hesitate to contact Danielle Howard at the SOMA UK office

SOMA'S SUDAN CARDS

are still available:

£3.50 including postage for a pack of four. Contact the office with your order

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