

# SHARING

The Newsletter of SOMA UK



June 2003

We work for the transformation of individuals, churches and communities worldwide through renewal by the Holy Spirit, sending teams on short-term mission within the Anglican Communion

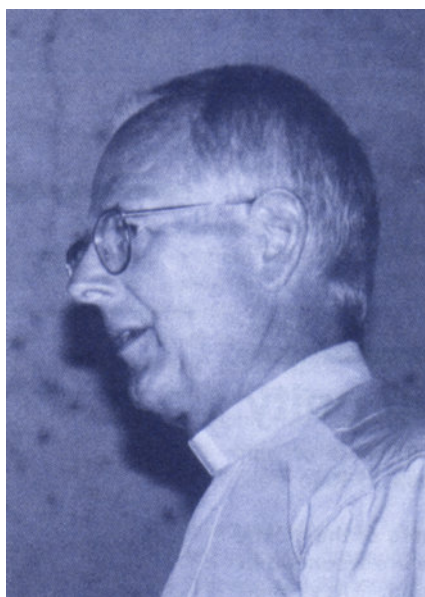
## Living As A Prophetic Community

**Rev Don Brewin, SOMA UK National Director reflects on Southern Sudan and what has been learnt**

It is not often that a church has the opportunity to help build a new nation. Usually the Christian community appears on the defensive, trying in a confused way to preserve outmoded values. This is not the case in Southern Sudan which must be one of the few positive by-products coming out of 40 years of destructive civil war.

SOMA has been taking teams into Southern Sudan for 5 years, and they have worked with 11 dioceses along the Sudan/Uganda border. I have myself this year led three separate teams to different dioceses, in two cases helping develop companion links with parishes in the UK and dioceses in Uganda.

I believe SOMA – working together with other partners, such as CMS and the Diocese of Salisbury – has been called to give support to the Episcopal Church of Sudan during this key period of history as the country prepares for lasting peace. The church is the only body that has real contact with the grass-roots,



*Don Brewin speaking at the recent conference in Kajo-Keji on "Living as a Prophetic Community"*

through its extensive network of people such as pastors, lay readers and Mothers' Union workers.

It was in Sudan that SOMA first pioneered the course "Discerning the Spirit in the Midst of Chaos". Similarly, in Maridi Diocese, where our teams were bombed, we first tested material on the three-fold work of the Holy Spirit in "Renewal for Life". In this we explore the work of the Holy Spirit in individuals, congregations and communities. This has become one of our standard teaching manuals, with the workbook translated into 5 African languages. Now in Kajo-Keji Diocese we have piloted a course on how the church can impact a community and nation in the process of reconstruction and re-formation.

Bishop Manasseh Dawidi of Kajo-Keji had asked us to give teaching on four major areas: leading worship; stewardship of time, talents and money; marriage and family life; and HIV/AIDS. A fortnight before leaving I saw how these topics could be linked, under the title "Living as a Prophetic Community". The material was drawn from teaching on Foundations, Discipleship, and Building for the Future and became an ex-

perimental manual and workbook.

The SOMA team from Uganda and the UK, containing three members of the Stoke-on-Trent parish of Trentham & Hanford, which is forming a partnership with the diocese, linked up with members of the "SOMA Kajo-Keji Team" to give presentations and workshops. In each case there have been significant outcomes:

**Worship** Many of the lay readers do not have much training, and some do not even have their own Prayer Book. SOMA has agreed to put together orders of service for Morning Prayer in Bari with some simple instructions on planning and leading worship.

**Stewardship** Basic guidelines are being produced which – after discussion and translation – we hope will assist in providing some uniformity across the Diocese. We are also working with the Diocesan Secretary and Treasurer.

**Family Life** The Kajo-Keji team were enthusiastic to share this vital topic in their local areas. There are huge areas of unspoken ignorance and a real desire to share about family problems and to be a Christian example in family life.

**HIV/AIDS** We experimented with a programme called "Journey of Hope" which has been produced by Peter Labouchere for use in an African context. This needed careful handling, as sex education is not widely given either at home or school. Because of the 40 years of war there has been little travel – so AIDS has not spread. But it is likely to come, and the Sudanese Church has the chance to give good teaching in advance. The Kajo-Keji team members are now working on a presentation of the material in Bari at a large Youth Conference at the end in June.

Southern Sudan dioceses face massive challenges which include finding money for housing for bishops and clergy, support from families returning from exile and schools for their children. There are massive needs in agriculture, training facilities and theological education. The list is endless and the priorities huge. So much depends on future stability and peace.

The challenge for Christians around the world is to continue to pray for Sudan, so the fragile indicators of hope will be turned into an unstoppable process of peace.

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# A Normal Sudan Sunday ....

After a light breakfast two of us leave by motorbike on twisting Sudanese red-dust paths for the 10.00am service in the grass-roofed parish church. The service in Kajo Keji old town lasts three hours with a message on "Forgiving Enemies" after which five people come forwards for healing prayer.

Lunch afterwards at about 1.00pm is under a corrugated-iron shelter near a bombed-out building.

At 2.00pm we go to the local hospital to pray for TB patients, a number of children, a land-mine casualty and several ladies. By 4.30 we join a lively praise march to the market led by a lady lay-reader with a megaphone – all are singing and dancing.

By the time it comes to preach – again on the theme of forgiveness – there is a very receptive crowd. The Holy Spirit comes in power bringing blessing and conviction. Four demons are cast out of a frenzied teenage girl. The crowd worship throughout with singing, leaping and dancing. Market traders watch with interest.

The sun goes down in a blaze of glorious primary colour as we return to the hospital to baptise two babies who are near death.

On leaving we discover the bishop sitting disconsolate on a bench as his vehicle has broken down. He has been returning with SOMA team members from church services further afield.

In near darkness at 8.00pm we return by motor-bike to the school compound and organise a rescue vehicle.

The day ends with a light supper of rice, kasava and tea as the team has a time of sharing and prayer under the Southern Cross.

We bed down for the night in the comfort of our round grass huts to the sound of cicadas and tree frogs in the cool of the night.

The end of a normal Sunday in Southern Sudan.

*William Mather*



*Heading off to church in Kajo-Keji : Interpreter Simon Peter driving and William riding pillion*

## Unforgettable Time

*Team members Mike and Evelyn Carter from Trentham Parish, Stoke-on-Trent on the recent S. Sudan trip to Kajo-Keji*

Thankyou so much for the love and fellowship we shared in Sudan, we will never forget our time together and we praise God for allowing us the privilege of being members of the team

**Psalm 100: 4-5, Give thanks to Him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures for ever: His faithfulness continues through all generations.**

While we were away our churches here met each evening to pray for us. They kept a journal of words, pictures, and scriptures given to them over the two weeks and it's been amazing to read through the journal. Although we were 4,000 miles apart we were united in the spirit - the themes, words and pictures given for prayer were very much in keeping with what God was doing through the team in Sudan!

The love and support we have received from our church family has been tremendous. We gave a brief talk in church this morning and we were bombarded with people asking when we were going to do a whole evening on our trip. They can't wait to hear more.

The Lord has done a marvellous thing in our churches, they have been 100% behind us in every way and they themselves have been truly blessed through the whole experience! So many thanks to SOMA! for making this possible!

## You are helping bring unity'

**In a country bitterly divided by almost 40 years of war, SOMA is helping bring unity said the Bishop of Kajo Keji, Southern Sudan.**

The Rt Rev Manasseh Dawidi told members of the SOMA team at the end of their recent visit: "People are wounded in hearts and spirits and are bitterly divided. They need reconciliation, love and unity.

"The most important thing is that you have helped us start to do this."

The bishop spoke of the huge problems of "rehabilitation and liberation of traumatised men and women from areas of darkness of Satan's power."

He himself lives in exile in Kampala as the war has destroyed most of the infrastructure of the country.

A top priority for the diocese is to build a home for the bishop and senior staff so they can have somewhere to live and have a base of operations.

All agree that to have the bishop and his family back in the diocese would be a powerful symbolic statement of confidence and vi-

## An Orphanage of Amazing Grace

Most of Sudan's war orphans are cared for by extended families. Some are not, so the Diocese of the Episcopal Church of Sudan founded an orphanage near the refugee settlement of Adjumani, Uganda. There are currently about 30 children present, with plans to start another one in Kajo Keji when funds permit. It is called Amazing Grace Orphanage.

The SOMA team were greeted with songs of welcome from the children and a hauntingly beautiful song written by two of

the young girls, Sarah Night and Mary Kab-sang, which moved many of the team to tears:

**"Visiting people come to see  
And all you writers come to see  
Come together  
Let me tell you, once a story  
About the children who suffer  
Their mother died and  
Their father died of war,  
Because the parents died of war**

**Please God, may you bless us,  
We are so young to live alone.  
They started crying  
Some are dying  
Because their parents  
Are dead of war  
No food  
No shelter  
No clothing or anything"**

It is with a deep sense of gratitude to God that I recall this latest mission to Maridi, Sudan, writes Gwen Staveley. There was victory and battle in probably equal measures!

Questions of superstition and idolatry were tackled head on, with a Joshua-type challenge being issued: "choose whom you will serve because you cannot serve both Satan and God at the same time."

The bishop had seen a witchdoctor gloriously saved earlier in the month and some of her artefacts for use in magic and spells were brought for burning.

This was done one afternoon about 5pm. We brought them to the cross to which were pinned pieces of paper on which were written sins for which we were seeking God's forgiveness.

As the fire consumed the papers and the other items, we sang songs extolling the power of the cross and the blood of Jesus. These then became songs of victory sung by the people as they danced round the cathedral.

Not many minutes following the burning

## ***Bolt from the blue after burning magic***

and during the dancing and singing there was a tremendous clap of thunder and a brilliant bolt of lightning simultaneously right over the cathedral.

There was no rain and we felt it was a sign of the power of God. We recalled the Scripture 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven' and we redoubled our singing and dancing!

It was not the time for rain in Sudan, but following this we had several heavy rainstorms. Rain is a sign of God's blessing and we took comfort from this demonstration of God's presence and blessing among us.

During the mission the mixed team from the UK and Uganda experienced much blessing in the seminars on worship, stewardship, marriage and family matters.

There were many special answers to prayer, not least being the increasing numbers of marriages blessed in church. There have been 87 Christian marriages in the last 12 months, from an initial figure of six

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## **Special legacy**

The Rokon SOMA mission was especially important for me for personal reasons. Flying up to Arua and then driving into Sudan was a chance to retrace family history. My parents worked in Sudan until 1982 when the war broke out afresh. I was only a two-year-old at the time so this SOMA mission allowed me to acquire some memories of my first home.

While in Sudan I would introduce myself in Arabic: "Mimi Ana Sudani" which means, "As for me, I am Sudanese!"

Furthermore, on the way back out of Sudan I had the chance to visit the house of my grandparents, Seton and Peggy Maclure, who worked on Bible Translation in Northern Uganda for 44 years. We found their house, but it was derelict and empty.

Just as we were heading off the Mothers Union trotted up in their pearly dresses. Word had reached them that Peter's son had come back to bless them. One of the ladies kissed the picture of Grandma I had with me and I got lost in a cacophony of hand-shaking, hugs and laughter.

As we finally waved our good-byes from the truck window, it was with an awareness that my Grandparents' legacy was not to be found in the hulled out house they used to live in.

Rather, the more permanent work was done in the lives of the people who remembered them so fondly. It was there that the church of Christ was being built.

Dave McClure

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## **Former 'Slave Tree' Site for Team**

The SOMA team going to Lui Diocese in Sudan in March this year stayed close to the "Slave Tree" site of the original missionary church in Lui. The first church met in the shade of this tree claiming it for Christ. It had earlier been used by slavers as a place for whipping slaves to see who was the fittest.

The team had been asked to teach on "Evangelism and Re-formation, including revival, renewal and reconciliation. So teaching was based on the SOMA manual Renewal For Life, with workbooks for the delegates in English and Moru – which was a first translation.

Over 70 delegates came, some of them walking 60 or more miles and there was a mixture of clergy, Mother's Union and youth.

Ministry and prayer were important. The delegates prayed in small groups and the team were also involved in prayer ministry. There was an opportunity to make a new or renewed commitment to Christ and for a new infilling of the Holy Spirit. Many delegates came forwards for prayer. Our teaching on the Holy Spirit was based on empowering for service, and building up the whole church in the context of God as Trinity.

Local issues identified included war and poverty, the lack of schools, transport problems, sickness, disease and the lack of clean water.

Ron Hart

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## **Healings in Body and Spirit**

The initial suggestion from the Bishop of Homa-Bay Diocese, Kenya was for a conference on "Evangelism and Church Planting".

When we arrived it was evident that church planting was not a need, but rather how could they use the many churches they already had!

So we geared the Kingdom and Holy Spirit teaching into both a deeper theological understanding with practical applications. We felt it worked really well.

The Spirit was powerfully present during our ministry times, and you could see His convicting work in people's lives. We saw several important healings in both

body and in spirit. We found a discouraged clergy, generally moved each year, and a new bishop who wanted to build new relationships after difficult elections.

Some of the clergy had never allowed the Gospel to sink deeply into their daily lives, nor had they been open to the power of the Spirit. Some were and remained sceptical of the Spirit. Others moving in the Spirit needed to be released to exercise their gifts.

Bishop James wrote afterwards: "Your mission was a blessed one and we can witness the impact it had on the leadership. We have internalised the teachings and are now imparting the same to the congregations."

Rev Tom Hewson

# Cosiness Exploded

Coming to the Wycliffe Centre for my second SOMA Prayer Conference and into the familiar meeting room gave me a sense of home.

We were early but already the familiar faces were there, Don Brewin and William Mather, John Simons with his wonderful Power Point equipment, Chris Faull erecting the sound and recording system and Barbara Butters helping organise it all.

As the 60 or so delegates arrive the sense of family continues; there are people we have talked and prayed with and some we have adventured on SOMA trips with.

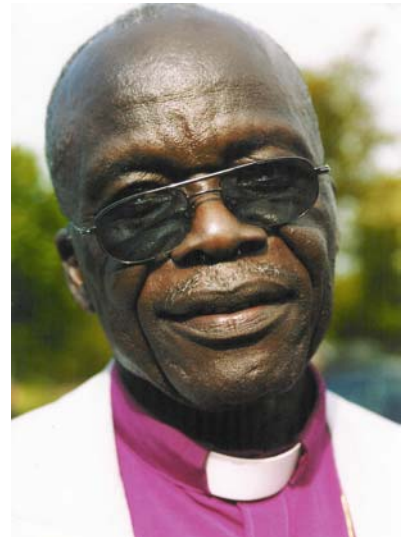
But then the conference begins and the sense of cosiness explodes as our focus widens on the world of God's working in the Anglican Communion - Japan, Korea, India, Israel and Africa.

We listen spellbound to Bishop Bullen

Dolli describing his consecration in Sudan with a bomb-filled aircraft circling the cathedral unable to see its target because of the rain clouds. He speaks powerfully about forgiveness and our horizons are enlarged to the amazing work God is doing in the world and to our Almighty God so immensely bigger than all of it.

He testified to the grace of God as a parishioner was murdered by soldiers in church and then told how he and five others were marched to a cemetery to be shot. With an extraordinary awareness of God's presence he asked for permission to pray for the soldiers "that God would forgive them for what they were about to do." They allowed him to pray and were so convicted by the power of the Holy Spirit that they let them go free. The congregation rejoiced singing: "Onward Christian soldiers..."

We worshipped together and prayed together and ministered to each other conscious that God has chosen to do His work



*Bishop Bullen Dolli at the conference*

through hurt and failing people like us. The SOMA prayer conference may be small but it gives a big vision.

*Helen Salmon.*

## Administration Matters

We are sad to announce that Julia Papp, our Administrator, left us in February, shortly after the last edition of **SHARING** was sent out. Julia suffered a double bereavement over Christmas and New Year, and needed some time to recover. We miss her!

This has meant that over the last few months, especially with a hectic travel programme, we have been struggling with our office administration. We are so grateful to Barbara Butters, who came in at short notice to organise the Prayer Conference, and Tony Price has been taking on some additional responsibilities. But we apologise that we have not been able to deal with correspondence as quickly as usual.

We are delighted to announce that Mary Cloake, after concluding a short-term contract at a local school, has agreed to return to the SOMA Office as Administrator, with a slightly different job description! She will be working most weekday mornings. Some of her work will be helping to organise the international teams coming to the UK before the Silver Jubilee Conference in July 2004.

## Silver Jubilee Plans

Plans are now well in hand for the SOMA International Conference to be held in Canterbury from 5th-8th July 2004, with the provisional title "**2029 - Facing our Future Now**"

Invitations and brochures will shortly

be sent out. Registrations will be handled by Fran Armitage at "Silver Jubilee Conference, c/o the SOMA UK Address. You can contact Fran on 024 76 696340 or canterbury04@somauk.org

We will shortly be sending round a letter inviting you to host an International Team in your community during the last two weeks of June 2004, to help you prepare for what we hope will be a network of Prayer Events throughout the country, some time over the weekend on 9th-11th July. Further details of these can be obtained from Mary Cloake on mary.cloake@somauk.org

## Pray for the teams

We have never before experienced such difficulty in getting teams organised, as we have this year. No fewer than 8 teams have been postponed or cancelled. So it looks as if we will have fewer teams going out this year than usual.

However we have around 20 invitations for 2004, some of which have been postponed from this year. We hope to be able to send out details to prospective team leaders in the next few weeks.

Please pray urgently about this matter.

## Finance Matters

Many of you kindly pledged additional sums in July 2002, when William started work with SOMA. I do not know how we managed without him! - but let us not forget that we now have the equivalent of three full time staff members in the office. If you feel

God speaking to you about supporting our work financially, please contact the SOMA UK Office.

## Support Sudanese Youth

About 50 Sudanese young people will be coming to a large Youth Conference in northern Uganda in early September - joining with others from neighbouring countries. They need sponsorship, for their travel and conference fees, to the tune of £15 per head. If you would like to help please send your cheque to "SOMA UK" and mark it "Sudanese Youth"

## Check our Website!

[www.somauk.org](http://www.somauk.org)

Thanks to Jonathan Hawkins, our website contains a whole host of information - please bear with us as it occasionally get out of date.

Sadly it is impossible to include in SHARING all the reports we receive on SOMA missions - but you can read them on the website!

## E-mail addresses

Please include Mary Cloake on [mary.cloake@somauk.org](mailto:mary.cloake@somauk.org)

## *Ideas For Promoting SOMA*

*~~ Ask for a gift aid form ~ Go on a team ~ Fill in a legacy form*

*~~ Tell your friends about our work ~ Help with mailing of 'SHARING'*

*~~ Speak to Hilary Steynor about regular intercession*

*~~ Encourage your church or group to invite a SOMA speaker!*

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