

Living Faith in Lainya: *Revd Matthew Grayshon gives a moving account of the mission to Lainya in November 2006:*

Prayer is wonderful! The eight members of the team who were in southern Sudan in mid November knew with confidence they were Inspired and Safe because of the many intercessors who gave their support, both locally and worldwide.

The first startling thing to notice is that the Cathedral in Lainya is still standing, Yes the roof is peppered with shrapnel holes, so rain or shine there is a constant reminder that the worshipper has lived through decades of danger and insecurity; but over the last decade every other building, large or small, has been bombed, shelled or blown up. It is also a miracle of grace and faith that the living church is the only cohesive element of society which still functions. As Bishop Peter observed many times, "we are called to show the way from vengeance to forgiveness, from fragmented families to united families, from chaos to hope".

Peace breaks out in Nord-Kivu

Revd Simon Brignall of St Mary's Thame, shares in the Diocesan Synod

"Security, roads and electricity". These were Joseph Kabila's promises to the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). After 10 years of civil war, we pray that these promises will be fulfilled.

I was privileged to visit the diocese of North Kivu, stretching along the eastern border, and almost the same size as neighbouring Uganda. It is along this border that the marauding armies of Uganda and Rwanda have raped and pillaged the people in the quest to control the mineral wealth of this vast land. Indigenous populations have been driven into the jungle where it is reported four million have died of starvation and disease. One in three pregnancies are said to be the result of rape, many children are born carrying the AIDs virus. In a vast country without proper roads, medical facilities or electrical supplies the only functioning institution seems to be the Church.

Strength of Anglican Church

The Anglican church has a surprisingly strong presence as a result of the pioneering missions of Ugandan apostle Apollo Kivebulaya who crossed over from Uganda in 1896. For many years the Anglican church was restricted by the Belgian colonial authorities to its base in Goma, but since 1960 it has been able to establish work across Eastern Congo. The diocese of Nord-Kivu under the care of Rt Revd Methusela Munzenda is in Butembo, 20 years ago just a village but now a city of 600,000. The diocesan buildings, a school, a medical clinic and a cathedral have been looted and left without equipment, but the work has gone on. Wards without beds now make do with home made mats, and schools without equipment build new class rooms with bricks made by parents who cannot pay the fees.

church work goes on

The church has remained and continued to care for and provide the basics of medical, educational and social needs and because of this are one authority who are respected and trusted in this war torn land. However they struggle to keep their work going. Vital funding for projects has disappeared with the withdrawal of NGOs, and Mission agencies. Diocesan staff and clergy have received no salaries in the past 5 years. School teachers and medical staff survive on the tiny fees they charge the hard pressed people. I was overwhelmed with requests for help and overwhelmed by the courage and commitment of the church workers.

The simple village church (on front page) is nearly completed. It is also the school and village meeting place. It has a compelling simplicity and it is to churches like this that men folk are returning from their flight into hiding, exile or conscription. It is in the churches that women and children are reunited with each other and with their men folk.

The team from St Mary's was blessed with two Ugandans who spoke of the terror they had endured under Idi Amin's regime, "I lost my clothes, my livestock and my cooking pot. I spent a week in the bush wondering what to do but God is faithful, We are building a new country", and Revd Peter Makewa from Kenya who spoke of the many cults sweeping through East Africa; "You are the only church in Sudan. There are no cults. Teach your people well".

It was joy absolute to watch these men and women find forgiveness, and reconciliation and hope. We saw them change physically as the grace and power of the Holy Spirit brought new life and a vision for transformation.



The pastors of the diocese of Nord-Kivu with their new bicycles presented by the parish of St Mary's

singing, dancing and commitment

During my week in the diocese, I found the Anglican church in good heart. 150 clergy, evangelists, and intercessors from across the diocese gathered for 4 days of teaching and worship around the themes of **Reconciliation, Restoration and Transformation**. There was forgiveness and healing of wrongs that had been done; there was repentance and confession of failure; there was joy and lament; there was dancing and singing; there was a new commitment to the work of building the kingdom of God in a land that has been torn apart by the kingdoms of this world.

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Renewal for Mission



Stephen Dinsmore writes as he prepares to take over as National Director SOMA UK ...

I am delighted to be taking up my new role at SOMA at this time and am very much looking forward to leading the work in the UK.

SOMA - Serving the church in the UK.

Like most of the global North and certainly the West the UK is in the midst of a time of considerable cultural change. As a result much of the church in the UK finds itself engaging in what is rapidly becoming a *cross-cultural* mission. Our new SOMA Patron Bishop Graham Crays report Mission-shaped Church sets the Church of England's agenda in this. One of the ways that SOMA serves the church here is through the sending of teams abroad. Each team's experience of sharing in ministry gives the members first hand experience of cross-cultural mission, and raises in them a heightened awareness and sensitivity to the issues involved in such mission and renewal - not to mention new vision, faith, hope and expectation! As a result, on returning, team members 'see things with new eyes and so are better equipped and inspired to embrace the challenges at home of a mission that is now cross-cultural

SOMA - Serving the church abroad.

Since 1978 SOMA has been serving the church abroad through our short term teams. It remains at the very centre of God's call to us and what we do. At the invitation of the local Bishop and with God's grace and blessing, individuals, churches, dioceses and teams share in ministry for renewal and mission: releasing gifts invigorating for mission, nurturing the church, transforming communities, praying for healing, discerning the Spirit in chaos, renewing worship, leadership and marriage.

SOMA - Serving the Anglican Communion.

At a time when it is all too evident that there are real tensions in the Communion, a trusted and relational network like SOMA, which has worked alongside dioceses in nearly fifty countries, is uniquely placed to minister within the Communion to enable dialogue, foster understanding and, when it is needed, facilitate reconciliation.

SOMA - Serving the Kingdom.

SOMA exists, not as an end in itself but to serve the call of God to further the Kingdom, in much the same way that renewal is to further God's mission: renewal for mission. Our intercessors play a vital part in SOMA's ministry, supporting teams, the staff and interceding for the continued discerning of God's specific will for us, that we may *keep in step with the Spirit* as we face and embrace the challenges of all that is to come..

During December, Revd Canon David Munby from Barnsley, undertook a return visit to the diocese of Bungoma, Kenya to lead a "Rooted in Jesus" course for the evangelists of the diocese. The team was a small one, with David leading and taking Revd Ed Mitchell from Sheffield and Mrs Angela Barnes from Barnsley.



Youth rally Lwandanye

"Passion for youth..."

Revd Dave Parr reports...

(Team: Revd Susannah Reide. Mr Andrew Henderson. Mr Frank Nankunde, Mr Joseph Urinthho and Mr Brian Odoch)

"We arrived in Kenya, the team having changed under God's sovereign plan several times during the month before! We were three Brits, three Ugandans and two formidable Kenyans: Bishop Timothy Ranju exuding humility and Revd Canon Rosemary Mbogo, Mission Co-ordinator for the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) displaying forthright and passionate prayer on many occasions. The theme of the conference was "Passion for Youth" a title aptly chosen by Canon Rosemary and Frank Nankunda - one of the Ugandan team members.

Frank gave us an evocative, even enlightening, talk on boy/girl relationships. He also taught us with great alacrity, a song which has since been ringing around churches in the UK and even in the chapel in Dartmoor prison!

"running the race"

Our main aim was to inspire the delegates (of whom around 30 of the expected 60 turned-up), to write a strategy for working with youth in their particular diocese. This seemed an impossible task at the start of the week with the conference beginning a day later than anticipated. This additional pre-conference time did however yield much fruit, since God reminded us of Hebrews 12: running the race with perseverance and fixing our eyes on Jesus. This was a key passage for the conference in addition to the transfiguration, and Jesus washing the disciples' feet. Bishop Timothy washed everyone's feet and it was a very special spiritual time of prayer and thanksgiving, and we heard some remarkable and very revealing testimonies. The following night when we shared table fellowship together at communion, God was working very powerfully in the lives of the delegates and it felt as though this conference would have a lasting impact well into their old-age, fulfilling one of many prophetic words from the UK.

By the end of the week the various regions had drawn-up a strategy of how and when things could happen and who would be involved. Each plan had a particular focus on community transformation, i.e. how the youth would play their part in reaching-out to their communities with the love of Jesus in both spiritual and practical ways.

If there were 10 copies of "Sharing", that would not be enough to record all that God was doing. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gifts. Praise the Lord".

Bungoma diocese trains evangelists

The course was well received with about 30 participants gaining the certificate to enable them to future courses.

Whilst there at very short notice, the team was asked to lead the diocesan Youth conference which was held in a very rural area on the side of Mt Elgon. Severe rains had washed away most of the bridges and roads leading to the village of Lwandanye but in the event several hundred young people managed to get there and enjoyed some enthusiastic worship, and teaching on courtship and marriage.



Anchored in Faith

Deaconess Evelyn Dunbar Nasmith:
1925 - 2007



At about 9.30 in the morning my phone would regularly ring: "Hello, Dear, this is Evelyn. This morning in my prayer time I felt that the Lord was saying....." then would follow a Word of encouragement for Don or the team who were currently on mission, or a word of alert or wisdom. Evelyn was a faithful Watchman intercessor, rooted in spiritual discipline and a love for the Lord which flowed out to all she encountered. This love took her through the last few years of disability and ill-health, and she longed at the end to go Home. I regret that I only knew her for the last seven years, so never heard her fine preaching.

The main years of her ministry were spent in the parish of Normanton, near Wakefield. She was born into a distinguished naval family, was a fine sailor and became one of the longest serving members of the Royal Ocean Racing Club. Her skills as an engineer were legendary, her handbag contained the finest toolkit in Yorkshire, and those who have ever helped Evelyn unpack her car at the start of a Conference will be familiar with all the gadgets she invented so that every problem could be overcome.

One sailing anecdote tells of a race in Findhorn Bay with an anchor start. She pulled up the anchor, at which point she was knocked overboard by the boom. After a brief but disconcerting interval she broke surface, still clutching the anchor, clambered aboard and won the race. Praise for a life anchored in the Lord, of whom at all times she never let go.

Hilary Steynor

PRAYER CONFERENCE AND TEAM LEADERS' CONSULTATION

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Hertfordshire

15th - 17th May 2007

Three
different
events!

This year's conference will be different!

- * Tuesday 15th May at 7.45pm: Service for the Commissioning of Revd Stephen Dinsmore as National Director SOMA UK at St Cuthbert's Church, Whitley Rd, Rye Park, Hoddesdon, EN11 0PU
- * SOMA will be appointing a new Patron: Rt Revd Graham Cray and saying thank you to Rt Revd Simon Barrington-Ward for his support of SOMA UK over many years.
- * Wednesday 16th May: Team Leaders Consultation with Stephen
- * Celebration for Revd Don Brewin on the evening of Wednesday 16th May - musical instruments/singers welcome
Bookings must be received by 30th March 2007.
Contact the office if you need further information



Rt Revd Graham Cray
Bishop of Maidstone

Teams for the Future

March: 17 - 27th: Revd Don Brewin leading a team to the diocese of Dornakal, India
 April: 19th - 25th: Team to Mozambique led by Revd Dr Alison Morgan
 April: 20th - 30th: Revd Don Brewin with Mrs Edwina Thomas to lead Kenya Bishops' Retreat

May
 27th April - 3rd May: Revd Dr Alison Morgan leading a "Rooted in Jesus" conference in Southern Malawi
 June: 11th - 17th
 Revd Annie Wintour leading a team to the diocese of Kajiado, Kenya
 August: 1-14th
 Soul Kampala, Bugolobi, Uganda

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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Please contact Danielle Howard at the SOMA UK office if you require further information.

SHARING: If you think your church would like to have some copies of Sharing available for people to take away, please let us know. Also, if we are sending too many copies please advise the office and we can adjust accordingly

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

SOMA UK,
PO Box 6002,

Heath and Reach,
Leighton Buzzard,
Beds. UK. LU7 0ZA

Tel (+44) (0) 1525 237953
Fax (+44) (0) 1525 237954
E-mail: info@SOMAUK.org
Website: www.somauk.org
UK Registered Charity No 279759