

# SHARING

The Newsletter of SOMA UK



SUMMER 2005

"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."

## To Care, Or Not To Care – That Is The Question

I am writing these brief reflections shortly before two international gatherings, one in a university in England; and the other in a hotel near a golf course in Scotland. One is concerned for the future of the Anglican Communion; the other for the future welfare of the people of Africa.

Both are confused, and confusing! The first is confusing, because two groups of people, formerly members of the group, have withdrawn from membership, but they will still be at the meeting – not (officially, anyway) as participants, but "present". If they have withdrawn, surely they can no longer be present??? Is this what "inclusivity" and "integrity" are all about?

### Self-centredness

The second is confusing, because the words and gestures that precede the meeting – "Make Poverty History" ... "Write off Third World Debt" ... "Live 8 Concert ..." and so on – are a million miles away from the reality of the daily struggle of the people supposedly being talked about. They take little account of the fact that one of the reasons so many are trapped in poverty is the mind-numbing self-centredness of national leaders, here and there.

One group of leaders – the Anglican Consultative Council – are Christians. The other – the leaders of the most powerful economic nations – the "G8" – are not necessarily so, although some of them clearly are. What is common to the two groups, however, is that the politics of these complicated situations is in danger of diverting these leaders from their primary task. Their own preservation, or the pushing forward of their point of view, can so easily blind them to the truth that is being spoken by others.



Photo: Martin Kuhrt

Caring in Sudan : a celebration of communion in the Nuba Mountains , during the recent SOMA mission led by Rev Don Brewin, SOMA UK National Director (report: back page)

The "primary task" of a group is the task that group must perform if it is to survive. The primary task of the Church is to give glory to God by bringing in His kingdom here on earth, as it already is in heaven. The primary task of the G8 must be to preserve the future of the planet and the people who live on it – not their own national self-interest.

### "Little People"

*These two intersect where the "little people" are – those who have never heard of the Anglican Communion, or the G8, but need love and hope, food and water, and a fair return for their produce, day by day by day.*

*They intersect for me at a Primary School in the Nuba Mountains of Sudan, where 500 pupils between the ages of 4 and 28 - wearing T-shirts made with subsidised US cotton - are being taught by just 4 teachers, with virtually no equipment at all.*

*They intersect for me when I remember the faces of refugees from the "Lord's Resistance Army" sitting under a tree in Kitgum, listening to an open-air preacher, but with empty stomachs and deadened eyes.*

It is easy to be negative – but what can we say or do that will help? Hear some words from a mythical refugee from Kitgum / Burundi / Congo / ...

*"We just want to say four things to you, because we know that you leaders are often unaware of how ordinary people think.*

*"First, have the humility to believe that you might possibly be wrong.*

*"Secondly, try loving those you disagree with – not condemning them.*

*"Thirdly, to our religious leaders: our nation needs radical redemption. Large congregations on Sundays are not enough – how does Sunday affect Monday?*

*"Lastly, remember that you can't solve our problems in your way. You have never lived in our part of the world – so how can you understand what our culture is like? Please listen to us – not our leaders – and help us to work for our own solutions ..."*

In a month's time, when the ACC and the G8 meetings will have taken place, when the lobbying and the concerts are over, I will be visiting Kenya, Uganda and DR Congo. What message of hope will I be able to bring them from these meetings?

Don Brewin 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005

# What a Faithful God!

A few thoughts from William Mather, Associate Director of SOMA UK as he prepares to move on to fresh challenges in parish ministry.

During the worship we were singing:

"What a faithful God have I,  
What a faithful God.  
What a faithful God have I,  
Faithful in every way."

The song was full of joy and confidence: "In worship and wonder I behold your face"....and of trusting in difficult times: "...through the storm You're the beacon, my song in the night..." and a desire to reach out to the hurting with the final refrain: "Lord of all sovereign, granting peace from heaven,

Let me comfort those who suffer

With the comfort You have given

I will tell of Your great love for as long as I live,

Singing what a faithful God have I."

As Libby and I worshipped at our church, St Marys, Bletchley,



Making new friends...William and Libby in big game mode after attending Utugi Elizabeth Kamau's International conference on Intercession, Prayer and Spiritual Warfare in Nairobi recently. The friend is made of wood.

Milton Keynes, I found myself thrilled to the core at the joy of serving Jesus, and of all that we have been so privileged to share, during our three years with SOMA.

We have been blessed meeting so many wonderful, amazing and extraordinary people both in the UK and overseas. We have seen

again and again the Lord's faithfulness as we have stepped out in faith trusting in the leading and empowering of His Holy Spirit.

There have been wonderful times on missions. The book "Cry for Sudan" is in many ways a personal testimony of some of the

emotions, pains, passions and joys of such times.

I was struck during a recent job interview by one of the questions: "Can you share with us something that you have been able to do recently that you feel really pleased about?"

In a flash and unexpectedly came "Cry for Sudan". I found myself saying that writing it was a cathartic experience: sharing the pains and joys of the southern Sudanese - and giving them a voice as people who are voiceless. As the emotions rose and my eyes swam, it hit me afresh how powerful are the experiences of SOMA and how acute the need for crying out in prayer.

## Structures

There has also been the mission field of the SOMA office, sharing with Don, Mary and Tony and helping create good publicity and viable organisation structures. These managerial needs must continue and develop if SOMA is to sustain an effective base and supply-lines for the more obvious front-line missions.

At the recent SOMA Prayer Conference at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, we were all blessed by Canon George Kovoov's oratory and spiritual awareness. As he starts his new job as Principal of Trinity College, Bristol he reminded us that SOMA did not really start 26 years ago, but at Pentecost 2,000 years ago. His challenge for SOMA is to be an organisation that goes on in that same power of the Holy Spirit.

And now Libby and I are beginning to look towards new challenges at Hull in the Autumn, where I will be Team Rector of the Parish of Drypool. As we go, our prayer is to know the leading and blessing of the Holy Spirit as we seek to serve the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## Listening ears

Like the apostle John in Revelation 1:10 I long to be more "in the Spirit," so that together with others we can have listening ears to "hear what the Spirit says to the churches," (2:7a). This seems a good plan for Drypool and maybe a good one too for SOMA.

We serve a God who is faithful whatever our circumstance. The inference of this passage is that as we allow the Holy Spirit to bring fresh revelation to our hearts and minds, so we will overcome all Satan's powers of evil in Jesus name. The verse ends with:

"To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God."

What a faithful God!

## It Cried Out To Be Written

I didn't plan to write a book. It started off as a deep desire to somehow record the powerful and extraordinary impressions of mission in the Sudan. I like to paint and I like to write, so the obvious thing was to try and express what I was feeling through colour and words.

There were moments late at night by candlelight in a round grass-roofed "tukel", fighting back tiredness and trying to express in words the amazing cacophony of images, ideas and feelings that had assailed the heart and mind. There were moments during the days when the only response possible was with pen, ink and washes of watercolour. The shapes and colours were so powerful, evocative, different and special that they cried out for the artist.

But it wasn't just the impact of the visual. There were the stories of desperate hurts, pains, cruelties, rapes and shootings. There were the calm faces with burning eyes staring into the distance. There were the aching accounts of fleeing into the bush; of bombers circling over defenceless villages; of trying to feed and care for a family in the

"Share it from the heart" said Steve Barnet, Manager of St Andrew's Bookshops when William Mather saw him recently in a book and card promotion visit. "Put it down in an email just like you've said it to me and I'll send it out to my network of bookshops." It is also reproduced here.

wilderness when the mother has died.

It was the sheer privilege of going on mission with SOMA UK to these utterly alien and rejected parts of the world, pillaged by 40 years of civil war, and bringing teaching on forgiveness and reconciliation, healing and love. It was realising afresh that God was already powerfully at work. It was meeting people who had forgiven soldiers who had murdered family members. It was being part of an exuberantly powerful praise march for an open-air service of worship in the local market. It was preaching there in the market and seeing a desperately troubled young woman delivered of demons that had taken up residence years before after she had been orphaned in the war. It was hearing later that she is continuing to follow Jesus and is now of a sound mind and happily married.

There were so many needs, so much pain, such stoic

determination despite grinding poverty – so many calls to prayer for those of us living comfortable life-styles in the economic north and west.

So all these impressions came together as a selection of poems, paintings, impressions, stories and background accounts. There could only be one title: "Cry for Sudan."

*The book "Cry for Sudan" is published by Terra Nova Publications, price £5.99 and written by Rev William Mather. Copies can be obtained from local bookshops, Amazon or direct from the SOMA office.*

## "Cry For Sudan" Gift.

As a thank you to donors Sovereign World Trust are giving away copies of Cry for Sudan. SWT is dedicated to sending new Christian books to pastors, leaders, colleges and libraries in developing nations.

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As SOMA seeks to follow God's leading, Chairman of the Trustees, Rev Richard Hay, Shares some of the struggles, pressures and challenges.

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# Go Forwards For A Changing World

In 1978, the vision for SOMA was given at a conference in Canterbury, during which Bishops and others danced round the altar in the Cathedral. This was just before the 'Lambeth' conference of that year. Now we are looking to the next 'Lambeth' conference in 2008, just three years away, also to be in Canterbury. It will be a key event. The Anglican Communion has changed deeply over these nearly thirty years. SOMA is bound up with the Communion it seeks to serve. What does the future hold for us?

## It's not only the Anglican Communion that has changed.

Churches in our country have also been forced to change - never an easy process. Now, many churches take their own teams abroad. In some cases, SOMA has been able to help them, with its depth



## Healed in a Mighty Way!

Following last year's Kenya Province mission, Rev Alison Morgan, from Leicester has received some encouraging letters. In one of them Lucy Mugwanja of Sagona Parish, writes: "Praise God. Hope you are fine. I am fine with my family. God bless you in a mighty way because you prayed for my son last year and God healed him. He never underwent the operation. So give thanks to God. He healed him in a mighty way. God bless you for standing with me during that difficult time. God bless you!"

Alison says: "I'm afraid I can't remember what was wrong with the boy, although I do remember Lucy's extreme distress and that it looked pretty bleak."

In the second Lucy writes: "Praise God, I salute you in the name of the Lord. God bless you for what you did last year. You planted a seed which is still growing today. SOMA is on in Kenya."

Sadly Lucy does not tell us her son's name.

of contact and experience. Is there more to do?

Renewal, too - the Holy Spirit's endless working in His world - seems to have evolved, as we seek to sense where His wind blows. Brokenness, vulnerability, transformation seem better words to describe His work, and it is communities even more than individuals who are on His heart. SOMA has sensed this change - our teaching materials are much in demand here and overseas. But are we keeping pace?

Young people sense the moving of God in ways that are different from those which have inspired SOMA in the past. They are not much linked to "denomination" - but many are excited by the challenge that going abroad offers. We are planning new projects for young people in 2006, especially a "Soul-in-the-City"-type project in Nairobi, Kenya in August. But we need to draw younger people into SOMA's leadership and support.

**The SOMA family internationally, and in the UK, constantly tries to follow God's leading. We sense deeply that the vision given in 1978 remains valid. But we are aware of being under great pressure at the present time.**

SOMA is called to be an agent of the Holy Spirit to serve the Anglican Communion, especially now in its brokenness and vulnerability. But that poses fresh questions about what we do and how we work.

In SOMA UK (as well as elsewhere) we also face the challenge of finance simply to keep going.

We also look to a time of change in people, for Don Brewin will retire between now and the next 'Lambeth' Conference. We need to plan this path, so SOMA UK is ready for 2008 and beyond.

**These three pressures have led the Trustees to hard decisions.**

One is that, sadly, we have had to withdraw the post of Associate Director. We have all appreciated William Mather, with the many gifts he has brought to SOMA. But we cannot afford the post. Given this we see also that we need the flexibility that his leaving creates to shape the future structure.

We need to strengthen the financial management of SOMA's activities. We

are looking for a fully qualified person to join the team as Financial Administrator, to take over from Tony Price who also has given with commitment for many years.

We have created a small group to take a radical look at our procedures, to explore the way ahead, and to come up with a plan for the next few years.

We are also gradually bringing in younger Trustees.

Change is not comfortable - it challenges our hearts as well as our heads. But SOMA's commitment to its servant role before God and the Anglican Communion remains strong. Let us go forward together in prayer, united as we are in faith, hope and love. Your support - in prayer, encouragement and finance - remains vital in the uncertain waters ahead of God's future.

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## Rejoicing in Paris

Last year Don went to a charismatic conference in Malta, where he met a very interesting Parisian called Jean-Baptiste Bourguignon. Jean is a Roman Catholic, and heads up a group in Paris for others in his denomination who believe that the Holy Spirit can change and renew lives and communities.

Jean invited Don to give a weekend of teaching to this group on "The Healing Power of the Holy Spirit".

I was privileged to go with Don; and Jean and his wife Odile made us most welcome to their home in the suburbs of Paris.

In spite of a slight language barrier (Don speaks some French and J-B has very good English; but Odile and I were less bi-lingual) we shared deeply and felt we quickly got to know each other.

There were two extremely full days of teaching in a school building near where Jean & Odile live. About 30 people attended and all were spiritually thirsty and eager, taking copious notes. Don spoke mainly on the power of Jesus to heal personal deficiencies and relationships. +

Towards the end, during a coffee break, a man asked for prayer. He nobly volunteered to be a model for the way in which healing prayer can be exercised. After the prayer time, in which everyone was encouraged to take part, he was visibly relieved and radiant - and all were rejoicing!

We hope that contact with this very special and courageous group of people can be maintained. This was SOMA in action!

Diocese of Kadugli /  
Nuba Mountains, Sudan  
(2<sup>nd</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> March 2005).  
Report by Don Brewin.

# A Provision of Angels

The invitation to take a team to this strategic but remote diocese came two years ago, but angels stood in the way until now!

There was no precedent for a SOMA-size team coming to stay in the Diocese – so they built tukels (grass huts) for us: Colin Fox, Tom Gillum, Martin Kuhrt, David Maurice and Don, as well as a grass-roofed conference centre and dining area.

The area was remote, very dry, but beautiful. There was no boiled water (we used iodine as a steriliser); the afternoon temperature reached over 30 degrees C; and the only vehicles were a tractor and motorbike!

Getting to Kuchi was complicated – two flights from Nairobi, followed by three hours on the “road”, with white stones warning us where the land mines still had not been cleared.

The day after we arrived we went off to local churches – then the Conference was opened

that Sunday evening in the presence of the local Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) Commander and the Civil Administrator.

Each day had its own theme with teaching being translated into Arabic:

**Monday:** a “Jesus Day” – reinforcing the foundation of the Gospel, and a call to deeper commitment.

**Tuesday:** Forgiveness and Healing – including the “Cross Exercise”.

**Wednesday:** “Holy Spirit Day” – with an opportunity for people to experience the Spirit’s fullness

**Thursday:** a day on how communities can be spiritually transformed.

**Friday:** teaching on continuing the ministry of Jesus when delegates returned to their parishes

In addition we held workshops and discussion groups. We had some “up front and personal” discussions on Family Life, including the need to ensure that AIDS did not get a foothold. The evening celebrations, held in the open air,

*Dilapidated  
Classrooms With  
Logs For Seats*

illuminated by generator-powered spotlights, attracted many people from the villages nearby. The Lord blessed many: dedicating their lives to Christ; receiving healing, release from guilt, and the freedom of the Holy Spirit.

The final Saturday was a rest day, when some of the team went to a local Primary School – housed in dilapidated classrooms with logs for seats and only a blackboard as a teaching aid. Yet, such is the determination to learn, that some of the 500 pupils were married people in their late 20’s. The team members who went are hoping to establish some ongoing links with schools in the UK. In this huge region there are hardly any schools or medical facilities – the needs are huge!

Why “A Provision of Angels”? You can read the detailed report on the SOMA web-site – but on many occasions, the Lord provided help for us at crucial moments, from people we had not met before, some of whom were not Christians. We felt the Lord’s provision was linked to the amount and quality of the intercession that so many were carrying out on our behalf – so THANK YOU!

## SOMA’s 2,000 year roots!

SOMA’s spiritual roots don’t just stem from its birth at the 1978 pre-Lambeth conference, but from Pentecost – 2,000 years ago!

This was one of many encouraging remarks by Canon George Kovoov at the SOMA Prayer Conference in May, at High Leigh, Hoddesdon, Herts. A further admonition was to keep on in the same Spirit of Pentecost - and not give up!

George was inimitable, controversial and impossible to suppress as he gave the three main guest-speaker talks on “mission in a multi-cultural world,” to the 60 or so people present.

At one point he appeared a little distracted, only to say he had been having a press interview. It was announced that day he was to be the next Principal of Trinity College Theological College, Bristol.

George shared how God had called him to be a missionary in the UK from his native India. Out of this context he shared from the heart his passion that we work hard at being multi-ethnic and multi-cultural. In global terms China and India comprise half the world population, which said George, means the “UK is ‘nano-ethnic’” – a very small ethnic group!

Tapes have been made of his talks and can be ordered (£10 a set of 4) through SOMA. Here are some of George’s memorable “sound-bites”

- The Key to Christian faith: am I a person with a heart for God, wholly consecrated to Him?
- Heaven is a wonderful place! Why? Because it is multi-ethnic!
- Read all of Lesli Newbiggin. It was he who said: “the local church is the hermeneutic (visible expression/explanation) of the gospel.”
- The story of heaven is “Salvation belongs to our God!” It is a global story: the story of someone I know who has set me free and can set you free as well!
- Unless the gospel is set in the context of ordinary people’s struggles and hopes it will not reach people.
- When you walk across cultures, focus on Jesus; keep it simple.
- Scrutinise the structures. Do they fit the vision? If the structures are wrong there will be no vision fulfilment.

## Key Questions For 2006...

Are you a **team leader**? Have you been on a team before and think you could have the skills to lead a team?

Do you know some one who would be a valuable asset to a SOMA team...

Would one or two of your congregation benefit from overseas mission?

Have you young people who would be up for going to Kenya during the summer of 2006?

If the answer is ‘Yes’ or ‘Maybe’ then do contact the SOMA office for a chat.

We are planning teams to:

**India** (Vellore) - Jan/Feb 2006

**Kenya** (Province and “Soul in the City” project in Kamukunji, Nairobi) - August 2006

**Malawi**—diocese of S Malawi: Between June and August 2006

**Kenya**—Youth Leadership Training in Nairobi for the Province—April 2006

Please detach along this line and send to: SOMA UK, PO Box 6002, Heath and Reach, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU70ZA, UK

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