

Ministering on the Mountains of the Moon

SOMA Trustee and Team Leader Patrick Whitworth travelled with Team Members from All Saints, Weston and Marlborough.

In July a SOMA Team of six went to the Western edge of Uganda to the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains or 'Mountains of the Moon' as they are also known. Ruwenzori Diocese is based at Fort Portal which has faint echoes of its colonial past but now nestles under the palace of the local king, who succeeded aged 6 but is now 18. He was away in America at the time of our visit.

The visit at its inception was clothed in sadness. In 2004 a group from Uganda and Zambia had visited Bath and Wells Diocese. It included Bishop Benezere his wife Lovey the SOMA national director for Uganda, the Dean – Patrick Kyaligonza, a lay worker Bridget Muguma and two from Zambia. Five years later we were invited to bring a SOMA team to Ruwenzori by the new bishop Patrick Kyaligonza. But in February of this year he died in a road accident. We passed the place where it happened on the way from Kampala to Fort Portal. Bishop Benezere, now retired, stepped backed into the role of Bishop and graciously renewed the invitation to SOMA. On arrival we were immediately told about the accident and its effect upon the Diocese and met the Chaplain still recovering from his injuries.

But the Lord was good. We came bearing hope and encouragement. We spoke about the Kingdom of God: what it is, its activity, its values, its power. We noticed that the very words from Isaiah that followed Jesus' statement in the synagogue of Nazareth that "he was sent to preach good news to the poor and to heal the broken hearted" were that he had "come to comfort all who mourn and provide for

those who grieve in Zion to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes the oil of gladness instead of mourning" (Isaiah 61: 2, 3).

We led two conferences back to back for the Mission Co-ordinators and the clergy. There was warm reception, each day we prayed for many. There was healing, encouragement and equipping and (as ever) much joy in the worship. The team worked wonderfully well together, preaching at the weekends in parishes around the diocese and in the cathedral. One of our team who experienced great loss himself was able to minister encouragement out of the loss he himself had experienced (see 2 Cor 1:1-7). Another member of the team a great-grandson of the founder of Mothers Union spoke at a joyous meeting of the Diocesan Mothers Union, regaling them with stories of the founder! And on two occasions by the light of a single light bulb at the end of a straggly cable that snaked through the window and around the roof beams we spoke of receiving the Spirit as water (refreshment), fire (power) or wind (change) and prayed for each member of the conferences. A truly SOMA moment!

And lastly, during a day off at the end of the ministry we went to Queen Elizabeth Game Park, two hours drive away, and an obliging and heaven-sent leopard sat right in front of our vehicle! And some spend hours and great quantities of money to see one but often don't. Here was a reminder that everything does His bidding and the animals are a picture of His majesty, wisdom and power! See Job 40:15ff!!



Leading praise, Luwero

SOMA – Renewal for Mission in the UK

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In time congregation members came on our SOMA teams. They were amazing times, like nothing they had experienced of God's presence before. In a new environment, they learnt to trust the living God; to pray on the move; to meet every new situation in faith that the living God was with them. It was like they were stepping into the book of Acts. And when they returned home they applied those lessons learnt overseas into our church and to mission in our local community.

Some 13 years on local mission is now our biggest focus, while we retain our links with our African partners. All of this has its roots in a God who called us to be a blessing to others and in turn mightily blessed us.

Seriously look at joining a SOMA team in the near future. Your church may never be the same again!

intercession@somauk.org

Called to intercession?

If you are, think you are or are exploring if you are then do contact us! Intercession is the 'hidden' half of SOMA's ministry. We are always keen to hear from people who feel called to pray regularly. SOMA Intercessors take on a vital commitment, are an absolutely indispensable part of SOMA's ministry, and play an invaluable and deeply appreciated role at home whenever SOMA Teams are abroad. SOMA Intercessors are supported both by regular Prayer Briefings and support Teams with live, two-way information by E mail when SOMA Teams are abroad.

Please contact Intercession Coordinator Hilary Steynor at intercession@somauk.org or on 01483 301 013 for more details.



Jo and Rachel, mountains of the moon and Ruwenzori Team

SOMA UK

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SOMA works for the transformation of individuals and churches, and the healing of communities and their lands through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit by sending and receiving teams worldwide on short-term mission within the Anglican Communion.

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SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

God opened the floodgates of Heaven



Luwero Delegates and Team

Having just returned from Luwero Diocese in central Uganda, we heard that already the fruit of the SOMA ministry was appearing. One delegate, Paul Mutyaba a young ordinand, sent us an email writing of what has happened upon his return from the conference:

"I thank God for the wonderful workshop you took us through. God opened our spiritual eyes to see and know our calling. As a young minister I did not remain the same... The good experience I got in the workshops, I have been able to put into practice. Many people have come to Christ, received healing & deliverance. I anoint them with oil and encourage them to go into fasting. Prayer teams have been formed in three local churches where I go to minister"

The Soma Team spent eight days in Luwero in late August. We had been asked to teach a clergy and ordinand conference on gifts of the Spirit, prayer ministry, and sermon preparation.

Our first meeting with the 40 or so delegates did not seem promising. It was almost like the Ephesians response to Paul "We have not heard of this Holy Spirit." But as the SOMA Team warmed to the task, underpinned by great prayer support from the SOMA intercessors and our church

prayer teams, breakthroughs were made teaching on the Holy Spirit and His Gifts, and in the workshops on prayer ministry and sermon preparation.

It was as if God had opened the flood gates of Heaven and poured out upon us all a great deluge of the Holy Spirit! We saw people surprised and then excited to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Hearts were filled with sorrow and repentance for past things in their lives; a new hunger to go out to teach the gospel in their church and to go out beyond and bring in the lost was very visible; and there was both physical and spiritual healings along the way.

The Team of Tom and Rosie Hewson and Henriette Watkins from St. Mary's Burnham and Moses Bushendich from the Church of Uganda Provincial Office returned home so grateful to the Lord, not only for what we had experienced God doing in Luwero but also for how the trip had energized our own ministries.

"It's Amazing!"



Intercession is the hidden half of SOMA's ministry. From the prophetic word in 1978 that called SOMA into being, to 'care for the nervous system of the Body of Christ', prayer and intercession has been the foundational essential of SOMA's values and ministry.

SOMA UK has a dedicated network of intercessors. Coordinated by Hilary Steynor and interconnected by email, the Intercessors minister diligently in prayer. When a Team is away on Mission prayer requests are sent by mobile text to Hilary who passes them straight to the Intercessors. But because Intercession is a two way ministry the Intercessors are able, again via Hilary, to quickly pass back to the Team words of wisdom and knowledge, prophecy, scripture, pictures, discernment and encouragement. As one Intercessor put it "It's amazing to feel and be at one with those geographically so far away, thank you Father for your faithfulness, for your answers to prayers even before they've been requested." It is a partnership in ministry deeply appreciated by our Teams and those to whom they go.

It may be that you know you are an Intercessor, are exploring a call or find yourself wanting to pray – whichever your reason SOMA has an opportunity for you in this vital ministry, contact us to explore it further – and prepare to be amazed!

Stephen Dinsmore,
SOMA UK National Director.

SOMA Teams 2011

| | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| Tanzania | West Tanganyika |
| D R Congo | Nord Kivu |
| Sudan | Abyei Youth Leaders |
| Uganda | Kinkiizi |
| D R Congo | Bukavu |
| New Zealand | Waikanae |
| Australia | Canberra Goulburn |
| West Malaysia | |
| India | Srinagar Kashmir |
| D R Congo | Boga |
| Kenya | Mombassa |
| Sudan | Youth Leaders 2 |
| Madagascar | |
| Cyprus & the Gulf | |
| Ghana | Kumasi |

Contact the SOMA office for further information or to register your interest in any of these or other emerging Teams.

YES I'd like to support SOMA

Come on a Team

We are constantly looking for new team members to bring fresh impetus to our teams. Team members finance their own travel and costs, trips last between 10 and 20 days. Teams are always exciting, challenging, faith building and life changing!

Give Financially

We are always in need of financial support for SOMA's missions and ministry abroad. Your financial gifts further this strategic work of the Holy Spirit and make a real and lasting difference to people and communities abroad.

Pray

Prayer and Intercession are the solid foundation of SOMA's ministry. Partner with SOMA in prayer and intercession in this unique and invaluable ministry.

Invite

SOMA carefully and prayerfully considers all invitations for teams to minister and responds positively whenever we can.

**Please detach and return to
Stephen Dinsmore, SOMA UK, PO Box 69,
Merriott. TA18 9AP, UK. Thank you.**

My response

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____

EMAIL _____

PHONE _____

Please...

- tell me about becoming part of a SOMA Team
- tell me about becoming a SOMA Intercessor
- tell me how to financially support SOMA's ministry
- send me details of giving to SOMA by bank standing order
- send me SOMA's free regular SHARING newsletter and Prayer Diary
- contact me as I would like to invite a SOMA team to my Diocese
- tell me more about my church becoming a SOMA Parish Mission Partner

Encouragement, privilege, confidence, inspiration...

4SOMA Intercessors and Team Members share their experience

"It was a fantastic experience and a privilege. I loved being there – a real joy and inspiration. God was so gracious and generous in all that He did and to Him goes all the glory!"

"Thank you, Father for your faithfulness, for your answers to prayers even before they have been requested. To be praying individually in my own prayer corner yet feel at one with the Team. To have one single word given by You, and then from it so many words of knowledge, revealing a golden thread running through all that takes place with the Team."

"It was a bit like stepping into the unknown. But with loads of prayer, it's actually exciting (positive) rather than challenging (negative).

My own walk with God has been renewed, and I will have new confidence in sharing His word in a confident and outgoing way.

We saw so much more than I had ever imagined. God was healing people and refreshing them in a wonderful way. The highlight was our daily time of individual prayer with all the delegates – and seeing the results! We formed so many close friendships so quickly, united by God across all the differences in culture and background."

"The Mission was very successful. God's people prayed for it without ceasing. One of the intercessors told me that she never slept all the time we were on Team. She was praying for us all the time. So our success was an answer to prayers. Every one in the mission field was touched in one way or another by the Spirit of God. Praise and praise the Lord."

"If I ever had doubts of being part of an Intercessor team I have none at all now!"

"The Team Mission has given me more confidence in God's provision and faithfulness. It was a privilege to pray with individuals and to see God ministering to their needs and sending them out with renewed confidence and great joy."

"It was a time of personal encouragement and I have been given more confidence to lead. I learnt to rely on the Holy Spirit to provide and equip us for the tasks He has called us to do."

"This SOMA mission was the best that I have been involved with. The team worked very well together, we all had something to contribute and learnt from the experience and from each other. I felt that God had led us there at the right time to encourage the diocese in these difficult days. I felt privileged to be used by God to help minister to those who were grieving. There was a real sense of 'mourning turning to dancing'! I felt very blessed to be involved in prayer ministry in the conference and I feel this may be something I could be more involved in at home."

SOMA – Renewal for Mission in the UK

Experienced SOMA Team Leader Tom Hewson tells how his and his home church's involvement with SOMA propelled them into mission in their local community.

My first Team was in January 1997, when I joined a SOMA Team taking the first Alpha course to Tanzania. The trip was in two parts – taking the participants through an Alpha Course, and working with them on developing small groups and Holy Spirit ministry.

I was familiar with the ministry in the Holy Spirit, but had never experienced Alpha. It was an incredible trip, and the Lord blessed so many of those Tanzanian clergy, evangelists and wives who took part in that Conference.

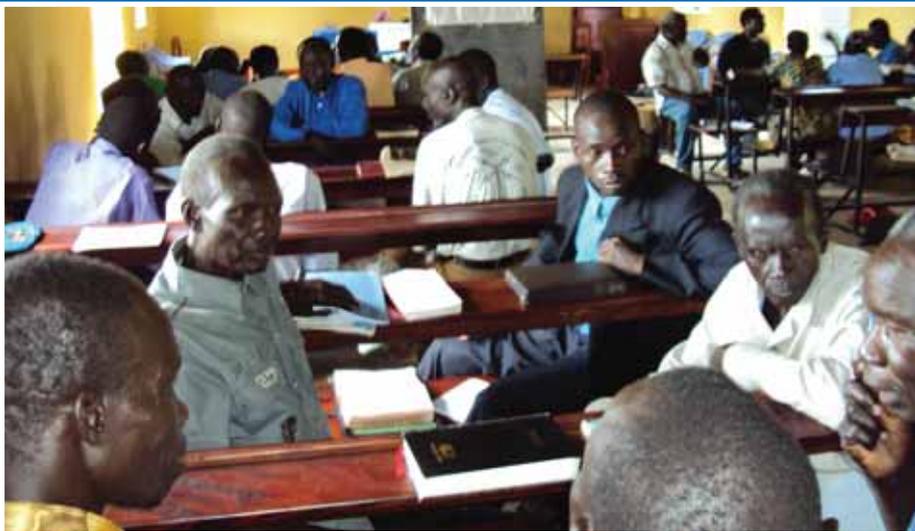
But much more amazing than that was the fire that the Holy Spirit lit in me to start new mission in our church at home. Over the next years we did Alpha after Alpha. They were key transforming events in the life of our church and the lives of those who came on those courses.

And the point of my story? The discovery that so often being on a SOMA team reaps huge blessings for the team and their home churches. Time after time, upon our return from SOMA ministry the Lord poured out blessing

upon blessing into our church. Over the years since 1997, we have moved from a sleepy traditional church, with only the clergy into renewal, to a Church throbbing with life, with eagerly led lay ministries across church life, and bursting in mission into our local community.

Over the years as I have led and been on SOMA teams in Africa, our congregation and Church Council have picked up a sense of excitement and support: support from the congregation for the trips really got our people praying; the Church Council began sponsoring SOMA Team Members. Soon overseas mission was visibly a part of what we did as church. New overseas friendships – active links with a diocese in Kenya, a parish in Uganda and exchange visits – broadened our perspective of mission to the point that we began to be confident and active in mission within in our local community.

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Led by the Holy Spirit

Team Leader Don Brewin went with a SOMA team to Kajo-Keji, Sudan.

A great team was gathered for this mission. Mike & Evelyn Carter had been to Kajo-Keji on a previous SOMA mission in 2003, when the whole area was very different. Revd Mavis Crispin had not been to Sudan before, but is an experienced traveller, having served with SAMS in Peru. David Sharland is a CMS mission partner who has worked in Sudan for many years, although this was his first visit to Kajo-Keji. He is now based in Arua, northern Uganda, where the other team members from UK met up with him to travel together to Kajo-Keji by road. I knew that I had some able colleagues on the team!

We thank God for the work done by Bishop Anthony Poggo and his team to prepare for this visit, including translating some of the teaching material. The Bishop attended the Conference every day, and we enjoyed staying in his house – it is not often that a SOMA team is able to watch TV on a visit to Sudan! It is always difficult to predict how many participants there will be at a SOMA Conference! On this occasion, heavy rain on the day they were due to travel meant that some were put off, and others travelled the next day. So the programme had to be adjusted right from the start.

These “adjustments” continued right through the time we were there. We had arranged to take as a theme “Living as a Prophetic Community”, based on the SOMA teaching manual – but it became clear that the programme was too full, and needed to be

freed up. With a mature team it was much easier to put into practice what we always say “we need to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit” – so on the second day we felt able to change things, to give more time for interaction, prayer ministry, etc. This was warmly welcomed by the participants, who were very positive about the whole conference.

The original plan for this SOMA team to Kajo-Keji was to join the celebrations for the consecration of the new Cathedral. However, the building of this focus for worship in the Diocese is taking longer than expected – but it was decided that the visit should go ahead as planned. A key underlying concern which was influencing everyone’s thinking was and is the Referendum to be held in January 2011, to decide whether Southern Sudan should become an independent nation or remain part of one Sudan governed from Khartoum. With this in mind our intention was to encourage Christians to come together before the Lord to seek His will.

It was clear that even with the current Comprehensive Peace Agreement, there was still a real sense that unless the Referendum passed off peacefully, there was a danger that the south would be caught up in conflict again. This was one aspect of the challenge of Islam that was being faced by the Christians of the South – the other was the economic power that was being exerted by Islamic traders in the region. The other themes that came out

Kajo-Keji SOMA Team member Mavis Crispin was asked to speak at a radio station one evening...

This was one of the highlights for me. I had done radio before in UK and also heard a bit of Don in the morning and so got the style. Our first attempt, about 10 minutes long, was not transmitting – so we started again: a good practice run. Whilst waiting I observed safari ants finding a new leader and so was able to incorporate this as a natural metaphor for my talk on Pentecost. I spent time sending encouraging greetings from the church at home and also put things into a SOMA context. After 30 minutes – the allotted time – I said goodbye. However the producer wanted me to do 6 more minutes, the message sent to me via a note. This I did in the form of prayers for the world as well as praying for the listeners. What a privilege!



The Kajo-Keji Team

during the week were the evident need for encouragement in the continuing struggles that all Christians are facing, financially and in their family life; and the need to discover a common purpose so that people work together. Another pressing need was for teaching and resources to assist pastors and lay leaders to lead others in worship. To this end some orders of service have been prepared, including some modern forms from Kenya and Uganda – and these will soon be available.

Taking teams to these areas is never easy. We are grateful to SOMA supporters and all who assisted with finance and to those who prayed for us throughout the mission – we were able to send and receive text messages most days. This prayer support was tangible and vital.

The Diocese of Kajo-Keji, like many others in Sudan, is changing, to reflect the needs of a rapidly developing region. SOMA has had a relationship with this Diocese for many years, and this will continue as they face the very considerable challenges and opportunities of the future.



Praise and worship Kajo-Keji