

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. This is through intercession and sending and receiving short-term mission teams across the Anglican Communion.

# sharing

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**soma**

SHARING OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

## The presence of God's love was overwhelming



**SOMA has been ministering with the Episcopal Church of Sudan, facilitating seven Youth missions over six years in partnership with the Diocese of Salisbury's Sudan Link, to train Youth Leaders to better equip them for preparing the youth for post-conflict life.**

South Sudanese Team members Evans and Lobalang were joined by five from the UK for the mission in Awerial diocese. The six-day conference was attended by 200 young people from 24 archdeaconries and resulted in thanksgiving for the Team from Bishop David, (above, with delegates) particularly for their love and for their teaching.

Physical challenges ranged from the heat and the mosquitoes, through to procuring food. The SOMA intercessors additionally flagged up spiritual attacks, one notable battle revealed in images of snakes. The prayerful support, scriptures, words and pictures via email and text proved invaluable in supporting the mission though the more challenging moments.

Team leader Ron said he had particularly relished the welcome and kindness of the diocese, and being back again in South Sudan. "Awerial was possibly the poorest and most left-behind area I have been to, even by Sudan standards," he said. "The welcome was wonderful (picture, right), and the sense of the presence of God's love was at times

overwhelming. This was the first time they had had visitors, and their first conference, and they said they had felt loved too, by us and God, and led 'like Moses into freedom'."

The Team came away having learned something about themselves. For Kate, it was "sharing more of me and recognising that it's when we make ourselves vulnerable that we have the most impact. The Lord let me see and hear so much more than I've recognised before... It will be interesting to see how that translates into 'normal' life with all the distractions back home."



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## Encouraged, rededicated and enormously grateful

**The mission to Mundri in RS Sudan in November went through two metamorphoses. By the time the mission started, it was a five-day Youth Leaders' Conference in the shade of the mango trees next to the cathedral.**

The welcome, led by Bishop Bismark, was enthusiastic and warm for this third SOMA Mission to Mundri, where Christianity dates back almost 100 years.

The community is being steadily rebuilt as peace returns but considerable challenges await resolution. There is a decline in marriage, not least due to the high bride price; there are considerable pressures on family life; returnees from the north have suffered a high level of trauma and disruption in family life, as well as being vulnerable to disease in the different climate; social ills are increasing, especially those arising from unemployment and a widening generation gap; an undertone of violence is the legacy of years of war.

For the Conference the basic logistics ran seamlessly. Team leader Tom reported: "Travel arrangements worked without a hitch; accommodation was ideal; and we suffered no illness or accident. It all went well, praise God. The Team connected with where the delegates were, there will be lasting fruit, principally from strengthened faith and renewed vision. Conversations revealed a very positive response."

Peter proved invaluable, especially with prayer ministry, which often required a translator, and he said he relished sharing and learning. "Tom and Kay have taught me a lot, I am real happy," he said. "Kay has a lot of true stories of gospel, time never being enough for me to learn from her."

It was the eighth SOMA mission for David: "I felt well supported by my church. There was a lot of interest and there was a prayer rota so that at least one person was formally allocated to pray for us each day as well my personal intercessors.

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## Encouraged, rededicated and enormously grateful

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I always find that being stretched and taken, even a bit, out of one's comfort zone and being reminded of a very different world gives a greater depth to my ministry."

Ian particularly appreciated the welcome and hospitality extended by Bishop Bismark, but found language barriers a challenge during the Conference. "There were always people who could act as interpreters, though this obviously restricted the possibilities for conversations," he said. "From my previous visits to Africa I was aware of the positive approach to life of so many African Christians – the way they treat each new day as a gift from the Lord, in contrast to the negativity of some of our attitudes in Britain."

Kay was astonished by the "deep faith of the local people", and she added: "We can live thousands of miles away from each other with totally different lifestyles, but in God we have an instant connection. Learning to rely on God and let Him right into the beginning of the process, whatever it might be, and trust him to see it through, is life-changing."

Bishop Bismark, reflecting after the mission, wrote that his expectation was for SOMA "to train and disciple the youth to know the truth about Jesus Christ more and to equip them to make Jesus Christ known. The mission helped us to realise this expectation in a variety of ways of which we are enormously grateful. Some people received Christ for the first time; others had their faith encouraged and challenged to rededicate themselves to the service of the Lord."



*Team: Revd Tom Gillum (Leader), Peter Malish, RS Sudan; Georgia Omwa CA, Kenya; Revd Mavis Crispin, Kay Hunter Johnston, Revd David Maurice, Ian McColl, UK.*

## The presence of God's love was overwhelming *continued from page 1*

Team member Lindy discovered she had gained enhanced trust, patience and an increased love for the people of South Sudan. "Changed again, yes, definitely, enhanced me, I'm closer to God," she recalled. "It was like walking in Bible times and made the Old Testament come alive just being there."

Ian found his first SOMA Mission confounded all his expectations. "I'd never been to this part of the world before, never experienced South Sudanese or Dinka people before, and even not done much teaching or preaching before, and never with an interpreter or at a conference," he said.

"Even though I'd done much research and preparation beforehand, I went into this with a great many fears and expectations. However, these fears were unfounded, my expectations wrong. In the event, the mission was a lot more straightforward than I expected. I was surprised to find that all the years of Church teaching and experience had paid off in sharing God's word with the people of another culture who clearly valued this."



Bishop David has the last word: "I want SOMA to come back, because this area needs training for many years, no one has given workshop like SOMA had done to Awerial people."

*Team: Ron Hart (Leader), Evans Gogonya and Lado Lobalang, RS Sudan; Kate Brankin, Lindy Cameron, Creddy Hart, Ian Sharp, UK.*



# “Come and breathe the air in Peshawar”



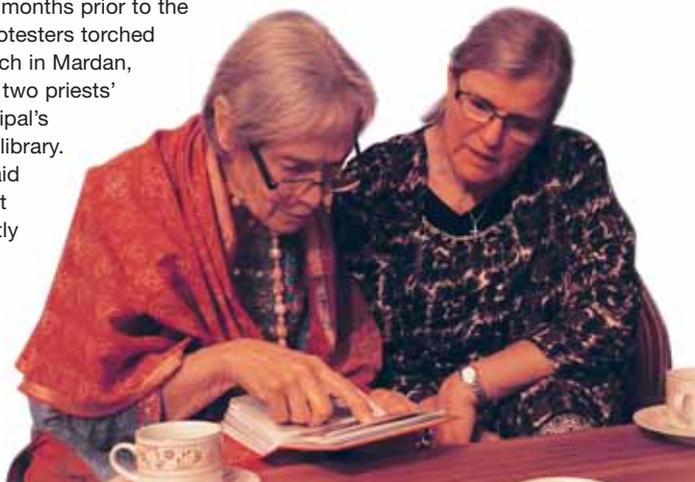
*Church and Team members, Haripur.*

## The final SOMA mission of 2012 explored future ministry opportunities in the ‘North-West Frontier’ of this troubled territory.

As with all SOMA missions, our call is to encourage, empower and equip leaders who tend to the spiritual needs of their own people.

Six weeks before the mission, the Diocesan News reported: “The Church in Pakistan, particularly in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, is struggling to maintain its identity amongst the militancy and extremism. Much poverty, indifferent attitude in the job market, biased legislation, prejudice in the Schools’ Curriculum, unfair representation in the parliament and marked social difference has made the Christians as poorest of the poor in Pakistan. Thus there is a continuous struggle for survival of the Church in Pakistan.”

In September, two months prior to the SOMA visit, Muslim protesters torched St Paul’s Sarhadi Church in Mardan, St Paul’s High School, two priests’ houses, a school principal’s home, and a Christian library. The Diocesan News said the protest was against “an insolent film recently made on the Holy Prophet of Islam”. The residents of the compound ran for their lives through the back gate. All escaped, none was hurt, and there was no human loss.



The incident traumatised the Christians of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province; many asked: “Where is our security as Pakistani Christians?” The Diocese of Peshawar is under enormous stress.

The invitation from Bishop Humphrey was to “come and breathe the air in Peshawar”. His letter read: “They will help and train our workers in small groups at Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan and Abbottabad.” As the security situation can change quickly, no advance programme was published.

It was, therefore, with open minds and a reliance on the Spirit that Team Leader Stephen Dinsmore, Janet Dinsmore and Dr Elizabeth Hills embarked on the mission, ministering with youth, women, clergy and men gathered into small groups across Peshawar, in Nowshera and Abbottabad.

Stephen said: “The security situation in Peshawar reminded me of my experience in Northern Ireland in the late 1970s and mid 1980s: strict security, checkpoints, army and police on the streets but thousands of ordinary people living their lives without incident, the insecurity caused by small groups using violence to induce fear and with the aim of gaining power.”

“We were particularly thankful for the care you took over our welfare,” he told Bishop Humphrey.

The Christian people are a threatened minority, under pressure through endemic discrimination, sometimes persecution, and the proselytising aims of the majority. However, the Team found a firm faithfulness among those they met, trusting that whatever the appearance of the future nonetheless the Lord God was their Lord and King with their future in His hands.

“This deeply encouraged us in our faith,” said Stephen.

The invitation for a return visit in 2013 to Peshawar in Pakistan had already been issued as the team boarded the plane home. SOMA will return.

*Team, all from the UK: Leader the Revd Stephen Dinsmore, Janet Dinsmore, Dr Elizabeth Hills.*



## 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 raise their own travel and accommodation costs, missions 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

# Releasing pain, shedding tears



## SPIRITUAL attack, language issues and two locations made the mission to India a challenge, yet SOMA was in the right places at the right time!

A mission to the Diocese of Durgapur, Church of North India, was preceded by four days in Raipur with church planters and missionaries. This first mission resulted from a meeting between SOMA UK Director Stephen Dinsmore and Pastor Pranab, who lives and ministers in Odisha State. The plan was for the team to visit his home area but, due to security considerations, the conference was held in Raipur, where 15 delegates joined those based locally.

Team leader Sue began this conference by exploring issues faced by the delegates in their ministries, and also led a session on managing change. Team members Di and Sinclair focused on the Holy Spirit, while Will explored facets of repentance and forgiveness, and leadership.

Pastor Pranab was delighted with this conference and has already expressed a desire for another. Team leader Sue began this conference by exploring issues faced by the delegates in their ministries, and also led a session on managing change. Team members Di and Sinclair focused on the Holy Spirit, while Will explored facets of repentance, forgiveness and leadership.

The second phase of the mission was at the invitation of the Bishop of Durgapur, the Rt Revd Probal Dutta, with Team input at the annual women's conference followed by opportunities with clergy and lay workers.

Durgapur is a steel city, an area of heavy industry, migrant labour, as well as tribal

peoples. The diocese has 136 churches and just 24 priests.

The women's conference already featured innovatively titled workshops and activities, including a 'Mrs Beautiful' contest and a dance 'Let's Celebrate Life'. There was also, of course, Bible study, together with teaching sessions led by the SOMA Team.

Language was a challenge, although the women expressed with smiles and hugs their obvious warmth and appreciation for what God had done – mainly through prayer ministry, when there was a significant move of the Spirit. "This conference was marked by a release of much bottled-up pain; many tears were shed. There was a lot of warmth expressed to us at the two church congregations," said Sue.

The Team were conscious of spiritual attacks prior to the mission, but Sinclair declared afterwards it had been "a joy to have the opportunity to pray for so many who were open to the work of the Holy Spirit".

Di found it wonderful to see the Lord working in power to meet needs. "A privilege to share with people spreading the Gospel in difficult circumstances," she said.

For Will, the outstanding aspect was "meeting Christian brothers and sisters from another part of the world".

*Team Leader the Revd Canon Sue Hope, Will Halse, Diana Payne, Sinclair Payne, all from the UK.*