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*New friends, Harare*

## 'We implore SOMA, come back soon!'

A SOMA team comprising members of three churches – each All Saints – in England and Kenya has been described by its leader as “one of the most effective teams for teaching and ministry that I have had the privilege to lead”.

Team leader Patrick travelled to Uganda, with Andrew and Paul from the UK, to link up with Francis, Georgia and Janice from Nairobi for the mission in Bunyoro-Kitara diocese. The four-day conference in October was framed by Sundays participating in services at churches around the diocese, and there was also the opportunity to minister in a prison in Hoima, the principal town in the diocese.



*Exuberant praise and worship at All Saints Hoima*

The prison visit was arranged at the request of the team, who discovered that the 300 inmates included 13 women and a child in arms. The prison choir was in full swing in the centre of the yard to the beat of a drum as the team arrived, with all the prisoners standing round. Paul preached a short message and more than 20 responded and knelt to receive Jesus into their lives in the centre of the yard.

The team offered to wash the prisoners' feet as a sign of God's love and many came forward, with bowls of warm soapy water and towels provided by the staff. This had never been done there before and was an intimate moment, while the choir sang praises to God. On the back wall of the prison was written a verse from Hebrews:

“Remember those in prison as though you were their fellow prisoner.” At the

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# For such a time as this

THE team preparing to travel to Zimbabwe took bonding to a new level in the time before departure.

In addition to meeting for prayer together, and to arrange the practicalities and programme for the mission in Harare Diocese, the nine-strong team – five from Bletchley St Mary, near Milton Keynes – agreed to fast for three days beforehand, supported by the prayer of their personal intercessors.

Team member Hannah was delighted the idea found favour, and emphasised that fasting may be more than about not eating for set periods; it can also be expressed by giving up something enjoyable. Writing to her

team-mates, she suggested partnering for short phone prayers during the fast, and to share pictures and scriptures to encourage one other.

### Dividends

The strategy paid dividends for this very full mission in November, planned with six separate conferences in six days and preaching in churches around the diocese on the seventh day. With little chance to rest and reflect together at the end of each challenging day, experienced SOMA team member Stephen observed: “The team worked wonderfully together, with much joy and laughter along the way. This was a shared experience like very few others.”

Bishop Chad invited the team to address three priorities: unifying and rebuilding the diocese; giving clergy the confidence to become strong practical leaders; and strengthening the provision of theological training for the clergy.

He told the team: “Nehemiah rallied the remnant of the people of Israel at the end of their time in exile. We have come to the end of our exile, by God's grace. Like Nehemiah I am calling on you all to ‘come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem so that we may no longer suffer disgrace’. The amazing response of the people to Nehemiah's call was an enthusiastic resounding ‘let us start building’.

“Beloved in the Lord, that is the spirit we need, that is the resolve that we must have.”

Zimbabwe continues to experience severe difficulties, and four million people have fled the country to South Africa or Europe. There are chronic shortages of food, electricity and basic healthcare. The country is heavily in debt and, although rich in natural resources, its manufacturing, mining and agricultural sectors have all crumbled and jobs are scarce.

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*All age worship, Harare*

## For such a time as this continued from page 1



Laughter and fun, Harare

The diocese has experienced an exile when many clergy were ejected from their homes and churches for five years, returning only three years ago following court battles. The Anglican Church is still recovering, Islam is aggressively proactive and cults are on the rise.

The day conferences, in different archdeaconries of Harare diocese, covered topics ranging from empowerment of women and children by the Holy Spirit, to the dangers of spiritual abuse, an issue for which teaching was particularly needed.

### Gift of prophecy

Team leader David was pleased the ambitious programme reached so many clergy and said: "The conference days were very enthusiastically received, we had between 50-95 people each day. Never have we seen the gift of prophecy so easily taught and caught.

"Zimbabwe had a national campaign while we were there: 16 days of thinking and action against female violence and abuse. We were glad to be having a seminar on the

subject of honouring and raising up women in the local church.

"Many people throughout the week came forward for healing and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. This was an amazing visit which has opened the door to a further invitation which we are told is coming. God, as always, turned up in great power and in unexpected ways."

The team felt real unity and a sense of breaking new ground, with Stephen adding that the mission was a superb illustration of teamwork "seen as a microcosm of the Church", and that this was "a most astonishing mission by anyone's standards; hard work yet exciting, way beyond my expectations.

*'I have only once before, in Tanzania, witnessed God pour out His Spirit with such liberality and power on a SOMA mission'*

"I have become used to the Holy Spirit on every SOMA mission, but the ministry times during this mission were wonderful and exceptional. The whole church came forward for prayer and there was much healing of mind, body and spirit. Wholeness was on God's agenda.

"I have only once before, in Tanzania, witnessed God pour out His Spirit with such liberality and power on a SOMA mission. The timing of our visit to Harare diocese couldn't have been better; it was 'for such a time as this' that God guides SOMA in such a wonderful way. Praise God and give Him all the glory."

Stephen believes his own ministry will change. "I may be more willing to take risks and try to listen in a more



Harare Team members Kate and Teresa

focused way to what God may be wanting to do among us on any given day rather than keeping to a set programme. But I know that this needs care; others may need the security of boundaries and times as well as the teaching they have prepared."

Team member Annie, a priest, said: "I was very aware that the ordination of women remains a distant dream for many and that within Harare diocese it is a 'hot potato'. At the end of every session, I was approached by women wanting to discuss this and I know some were encouraged by the presence of an ordained woman on the team.

"The power of the Holy Spirit to touch, heal and restore shattered lives was amazing and this was especially so among the women. I spoke with many who had found fresh hope through Jenny's talks on the way that Jesus honoured and valued women.

"The experience of this mission especially brought a powerful reminder of the rich and lasting value of SOMA's work. How I long for our African brothers and sisters to now form their own SOMA teams with which to encourage us in the UK!"

**Team: Leader David McDougall, Hannah Akibo-Betts, Gill Bradley, Jenny Brown, Oliver Hermes, Revd Stephen Holmes, Teresa Parish, Katie Smith, Revd Annie Wintour; Bishop Chad Gandiya; intercessor coordinators Helen and Richard Salmon.**



Joyful worship, Harare

## Meanwhile, on the home front

**E**ACH SOMA team member recruits a group of personal intercessors specifically to cover them for the mission.

Praying for those on mission is not simply noting the dates a team member is out of the country; prayer frames the duration of a mission and a month either side.

Personal intercessors are always encouraged to relate their experience to SOMA; this helps SOMA to understand how it felt to be praying protection and how well the network is working. Below is feedback from people praying for the Harare team:

"What a great privilege it is to be part of a mission through intercession! I feel really called to this. It is a profound privilege to share in a SOMA mission through intercession. Reliance on promptings of the Spirit are critical, as is listening to God and others praying." *Sue, praying for Annie*

"Receiving a word from God with an accompanying picture was amazing for me and made even more so when, after sharing it with my wife and in turn the whole team, it was clear that these words were resonating with their own thoughts and prayers. It became exciting to get the daily updates, firstly from my wife and later via SOMA UK, all of which were showing clearly how well the Mission was going. Of course I missed my wife badly, but knowing how much worthwhile stuff she was doing for God out in the fertile mission fields of Zimbabwe helped me get through the time, as did ensuring that her personal intercessors were kept up to date with what was happening and what prayers were needed." *Colin, praying for Gill*



Harare proclamation 'the exile is over!'

## ‘What would Jesus do... if he were mayor?’

YOUNG church leaders in eastern DR Congo have been given real hope of reaching out to thousands in a new city.

This longed-for mission, patiently nurtured, finally came to fruition in November when SOMA and Church Army Africa leaders ran an Urban Training Programme for Nord Kivu diocese in Butembo, a once-small town that has grown massively in recent years and is now the second largest city in Nord Kivu; its population tops a million.

The SOMA leader for the mission was Don Brewin, who has gained great insight into the situation in DR Congo during the many missions he has led there.

He said that insecurity in the area had caused families to move from outlying villages into the city for safety, but the growth of Butembo had taken place haphazardly so that the city had developed without a clear centre.

“The majority of the population is from the same ethnic group, so there is not much evidence of inter-tribal rivalry but, because relatively few people from Butembo have travelled much outside the area, there is more of a sense of isolation,” he said. “This, however, is being challenged by the ‘soft culture’ that is being experienced by the younger generation through the internet, available on the ubiquitous mobile phones which consume a large proportion of their little income.

“It is also a matter of concern that young people who have the opportunity to go elsewhere for further studies or training are not encouraged to return to Butembo; this means the city is not getting a sufficient degree of stimulus through ideas from elsewhere.”

The training programme was to help church leaders develop expertise in working in an urban environment, using the experience that CAA has gained through the Urban Ministry Programme in Nairobi. SOMA has worked with CAA in both Kenya and Uganda, so there was a solid partnership to work from for this programme in DRC.

Bishop Isesomo invited delegates from other denominations, as well as selected young leaders from his diocese, creating a stimulating group, and the venue was large enough for a seminar-style space and a separate worship area. The topics covered in the intensive teaching sessions were city focused, looking at leadership in the urban world, the theology and spirituality of the city, church planting and growth, economic viability of the church, youth culture, emerging trends, and families.

### Hope, safety and openness

Crucially, the first afternoon saw the delegates heading into the city to get a sense of what it felt like there, returning with vital feedback from questions such as what Jesus would change if He were Mayor of Butembo. Some responses were more aspirational than practical – bring hope, ensure people feel safe – but it led to openness in worship and prayer for one another.

The topics that the team shared were new to most of the group, and challenged them to look at their ministry in a new way. This was supplemented by the city visit, during which they were encouraged to look at what people were not saying and how Jesus might have seen them.

“Although there was no hostility towards us, it was noticeable how suspicious and fearful many of them

were, which reflects the level of underlying trauma that many people in eastern DRC have experienced through the decades of different kinds of conflict,” said Don.

### ‘The Christian church in Butembo has a call from God to work together in unity’

“We give God thanks that, after some years of waiting, it was clear that the time was right for this initiative to take place, particularly with the unique experience available from the CAA from Nairobi. We thank God also that in addition to selected delegates from the Anglican Diocese, there were some young leaders from the Baptist and Pentecostal churches in Butembo. This helped to increase the sense that the Christian church in Butembo has a call from God to work together in unity.”

Team member Richard has now asked the Mayor of Butembo if he can allocate some land for a CAA Urban Ministry Training Centre for Eastern DRC, and Don said: “We were encouraged that the CAA team saw this training seminar as the beginning of a new chapter in their work, giving them a point of entry into DRC for the future. It is not clear at this time how this new mission will develop, but there are several possibilities.

Meanwhile, each delegate has been asked how they intend to put the teaching into practice in their own situations, and news of these initiatives is now awaited.

**Team: Leader Revd Don Brewin, UK; Michael Asaba, DR Congo; Revd Capt Barrack Aluoch, Capt Simon Peter Waiti, both Kenya Church Army Africa; Bishop Isesomo Muhindo; intercessor coordinator Helen Foster.**

## Prayer, pictures, words and scriptures

GR EAT encouragement for the mission in Butembo came from the knowledge that the team and the delegates were being concertedly prayed for on a daily basis.

Prayer and images, pictures, words and scriptures found their way erratically through the ether, with the usual challenges of finding mobile phone signal and internet reception, and SOMA team facilitator Don Brewin paid tribute to those who prayed and, particularly, to the intercessor coordinator who held it all together. “Our grateful thanks to Helen Foster for tirelessly passing these messages on,” he said.

### Insight when praying

Among the many insights sent and received were the following:

“While praying, an image came to mind and recurred afterwards, it was a very large padlock and a small key. My sense isn’t that the big padlock is a big problem, just that the key has to be the right one to fit the lock.”

“I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.” (Revelation 3:8) “He will not let your foot slip.” (Psalm 121) “When Moses’ hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up one on one side, one on the other, so that his hands remained steady till sunset.” (Exodus 17:12) which came with these words from an intercessor: “We will not provide stones for the team to sit on but we will hold them up in prayer.

Be assured of supplications on their behalf as they take up positions in the battlefield, praying, and at the end God will receive all glory and honour.”

And these words: “The Key to True peace – the peace that Jesus calls ‘my peace’ – is found by:

Placing our will deep in His  
Entrusting our lives to His guidance  
Abiding with deep awareness  
in His presence  
Consciously choosing His way  
Endeavouring, enduring, embracing  
all for His glory and praise



Nord Kivu

## 'We implore SOMA, come back soon!' *continued from page 1*

conclusion, gifts of juice drinks were distributed and then the team left.

The four-day conference was held at St Peter's Cathedral in Hoima, with plenty of space for the 60 delegates. It was opened and closed by Bishop Nathan, who enthusiastically endorsed the SOMA visit and was supportive throughout.

The conference focused on Paul's letter to the Philippians, using the morning sessions to examine a series of priorities including those of the Gospel, the Spirit, humility, generosity and contentment. The afternoons saw the delegates developing their skills in leadership and prayer. As with all SOMA missions, there was plenty of scope to look at the bigger picture as well as some of the fine detail.

Two further conferences were held on the Friday, one at Hoima All Saints and the other in Kagadi, and the team was able to preach in five packed churches on both Sundays where there were enthusiastic congregations, attentive listening and opportunities for ministry.



*Fascinated by the photos*

"The diocese also was particularly well organised and as soon as we arrived we felt very confident and safe that the ministry would be effectively arranged and delivered by our partnership with the leadership of the diocese. This proved to be absolutely true and we are very grateful for the excellent work done by Canon Samuel and his team.

"The diocese appeared to be working very well together, but they would appreciate more opportunities to discuss modelling the use of the gifts of the Spirit in the life of their communities. They were extremely hungry for biblical teaching, both in terms of topics and exposition, and really appreciated this input.

"We were very well looked after during our time there and are very grateful for the opportunity of ministry that we were given. I hope that SOMA may be able to return there again in the future and also include in its own teams members of this diocese who are very well equipped and ready to take part.

"We came back with real thanksgiving in our hearts for all that God had done among us and thankful for people's supporting prayer."

Patrick's appreciation of the gifted team was endorsed by the delegates in their feedback, with thanks including: "Well-organised team and package; of one spirit; ably delivered with good knowledge of the scriptures, relevant to our ministry; good combination of teaching then discussion; openness of the team; Bible exposition in the morning inspirational.

"We have been blessed through SOMA team and we implore SOMA team to come back at least once every year. Good to include Africans in team. Next time involve our spouses, for we share it all."

A second SOMA mission is planned for 2016.



*A full service under way in one of the parishes*

The diocese comprises one of the two Toro kingdoms in western Uganda and Bishop Nathan is one of the longest serving bishops in the province. The language is Rotoro and good translation was key to the success of the mission.

Patrick said: "There was very good contact with the diocesan secretary, Canon Samuel, as well as good contact with the Kenyan contingent through Georgia. We were able to construct the conference programme effectively before we had arrived in Uganda.

**Team: Leader Revd Canon Patrick Whitworth, Paul Bright, both from All Saints, Bath; Revd Andrew Corke, from All Saints, Swanage; Revd Francis Awando, Georgia Omwa Awando, Capt Janice Maina, all from Nairobi All Saints, Kenya; Bishop Nathan Kyamanywa; intercessor coordinator Helen Foster.**

## Get involved

 **INVITE** To invite a SOMA team, email [stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org](mailto:stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org)

 **PRAY** Find today's live prayer nugget on our website home page; find our full Daily Prayer Diary via the button there; or receive a "new each morning" prayer request from SOMA via Twitter or Facebook. It is upon Intercession that SOMA's ministry and mission is founded. SOMA Intercessors are supported by regular, extensive Prayer Briefings and with live, two-way emails when teams are on mission. Read more on our website: click on 'Prayer and Intercession'; or contact Kate Brankin at [intercession@somauk.org](mailto:intercession@somauk.org)

 **GIVE** We really value financial gifts. To resource SOMA's ministry go to our website: click on 'Get Involved' then 'Support Us'; click on the 'Donate' button on the top right of any web page; or email [steve.fischer@somauk.org](mailto:steve.fischer@somauk.org)

 **PARTNER** A SOMA Parish Mission Partnership builds a live, active relationship between your parish and SOMA, inspiring your congregations for Holy Spirit ministry and mission at home as well as abroad. Partners receive: *Sharing* newsletters; *Update* with news and information; a SOMA speaker about once a year; encouragement to participate in everything from SOMA missions to our Intercessors' network. For their part, our partners encourage prayer for SOMA; regularly communicate our news to their congregations; encourage individuals to get involved in teams, as intercessors and supporters; and seek to support SOMA financially, when they can. Visit our website – click on 'Get Involved' then 'Parish Mission Partners' – email [stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org](mailto:stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org) or call 01460 279737.

 **TEAM** For an 'application to be considered for a SOMA Team', simply contact SOMA via email, Facebook, Twitter, phone or post. Read more on our website: click on 'Join a Team'. We look forward to hearing from you!

 **FUTURE MISSIONS** include:

South India	Nandyal
South Sudan	Kajo-Keji
Sierra Leone	Freetown
DR Congo	Nord Kivu
South Sudan	Twic East
Internal Province of Sudan	
South Sudan	ECSSS Youth
Uganda	East Ruwenzori
DR Congo	Bukavu
North India	Orisha



*Harare*

## UK Residential Conference 11 – 13 October 2016

Join SOMA intercessors, team members, Parish Mission Partners, supporters and staff as we gather for fellowship, to pray, worship, share, learn, reflect, be refreshed by the Spirit and meet others involved with the vision, mission and ministry of SOMA. Our conference is open to all.

High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire EN11 8SG. We start with lunch at 1pm on Tuesday 11 October and conclude after lunch on Thursday 13 October. Accommodation is in en-suite rooms with full board, cost £165 per person. High Leigh is well connected by road to the M25 and by rail from London and the North.

To book your place, go to [www.somauk.org](http://www.somauk.org) and click 'UK Conferences', alternatively email or phone us for a booking form. You will be most welcome.