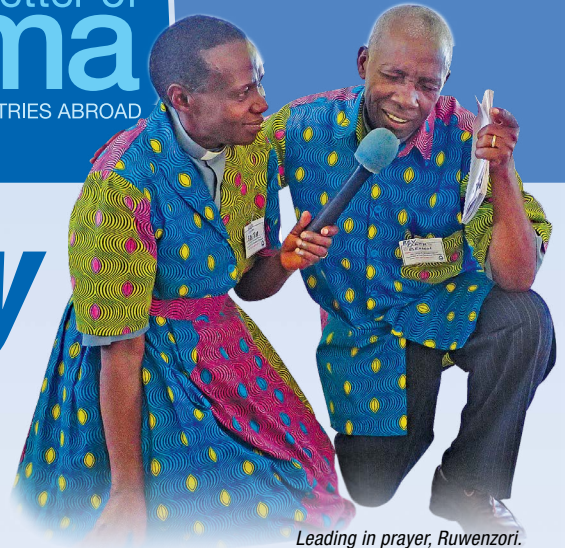


'Prepare the way for the Lord...'



Leading in prayer, Ruwenzori.

'...make straight paths for him' was an apt word for the SOMA team as they travelled the newly built road from Fort Portal, Uganda, in January this year.

Their destination was Kamwenge Secondary and Vocational School where they were to facilitate a conference for about 300 local clergy and their spouses, from the Ruwenzori and the East Ruwenzori Dioceses. The school itself, the only secondary school in this rural district, is a symbol of hope for this community of largely re-settled refugees. Founded in 2007 by Canon Mulindabigwi (a delegate and speaker at the conference) the education it provides is the first available route out of a hard life of subsistence farming for young people in this area.

The seven strong multi-cultural team, with members from the UK, Uganda and DR Congo, had been invited by the Bishops of both Dioceses to encourage, teach, facilitate reflection, and pray. Their theme was 'Ministry: a Noble Task'. In an intense two-day schedule, they shared about the qualifications of an overseer, Jesus' call to be fishers of men, the calling to ministry, the Church worker's livelihood and sustainable development, the Church and politics, the Holy Spirit and His work in the church, how to strengthen marriages and children's ministry.

At the end of each day there was a call for a response from the delegates, with many coming forward for prayer or rededication and each receiving individual prayer from the team. In addition there was an exposition on Ephesians, with a call to 'Be Strong in the Lord'. All these themes were well received.

Many came forward for prayer or rededication and each received individual prayer from the team.

Ugandan team members Benon and Edith were particularly pleased to be able to share with their fellow countrymen and women, at one point using an illustration that involved using

kerosene to light some sticks on fire, and then getting dozens of delegates to remove the sticks. Once removed from the fire, the flames quickly went out on the individual sticks, a powerful reminder of the vital importance of close fellowship. Team member Samson's talk on the church worker's livelihood was really appreciated, and the delegates were also inspired by Yvonne's testimony of years of experience with children in her ministry in Sierra Leone. The team had a central thought for the second day on the importance of the unity of the Holy Spirit, with the Church as a community of believers, and indeed there was a strong theme of unity, as two Dioceses came together in the one conference, as well as from the cross-cultural team, and additionally from Benon and Edith, as they demonstrated the unity and equality within their marriage.

Continued on page two

Delegates and team, Ruwenzori.



“For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one”



Time to talk, Ruwenzori.

‘Prepare the way for the Lord...’

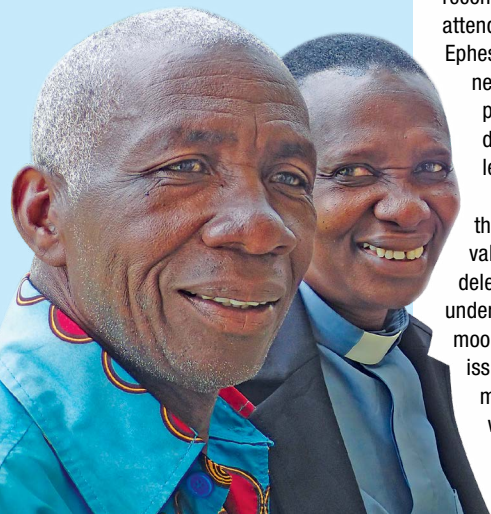
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The conference ended with Team Leader Ken being invited to speak at the Cathedral on the Sunday, he shared from Ephesians chapter 5, ‘How to walk as believers’. During two services around 600 heard the message and about 50 responded to a final altar call. It is indeed good that the road had been made straight, as the good news was proclaimed and many were renewed in their faith and ministry during this conference. Bishop Turyasingura, of East Ruwenzori Diocese, wrote afterwards that: “we were so blessed with your excellent presentation during the conference” and both Bishops gave the team a very warm send off, with an invite to return next year for an additional conference.

Team members:

- Team Leader Rev Kenneth Wiebe (UK)**
- Rev Titus Baraka (Uganda)**
- Rev Samson Masereka (DRC)**
- Mr Ian McColl (UK)**
- Rev Benon Semmambo (Uganda)**
- Rev Edith Semmambo (Uganda)**
- Mrs Yvonne Wiebe (UK).**
- Bishop Reuben Kisebwo**
- Bishop George Turyasingura**
- Intercession Co-Ordinator: Helen Foster.**

Team members Benon and Edith, Ruwenzori.



SOMA's mission held in Wau, South Sudan, last November was a powerful reminder of the Church's calling to the ministry of reconciliation. Archbishop Moses, when inviting the team, described ‘deep tribal divisions’ which remained after September's peace agreement was signed in an attempt to bring to an end 5 years of civil conflict in South Sudan. His concern was for food insecurity, the disruption to education among young people, the fear of resumed fighting, and the 4 million displaced citizens, but concluded that this ‘gives a huge opportunity for witnessing to Christ’. The Archbishop's desire was that the SOMA team would equip the senior clergy from the Internal Province of Northern Bahr el Ghazal (which consists of 7 separate Dioceses covering an enormous geographical area) in leadership, management, and peace building, and that these leaders would go back to their home Diocese and pass this on to their own clergy and lay leaders.

A very experienced SOMA team was assembled, led by Graham Cray, SOMA's patron, and a five-day conference for about 60 delegates was held in the old Cathedral at Wau, with teaching based on Paul's letter to the Ephesians. During the first two days the team spoke on Ephesians 1: God's grace and purposes for the church. The third day concerned Ephesians 2:11-22: “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” and was described by team member Jackie as a ‘day of breakthrough’ which involved significant prayer ministry around forgiveness and reconciliation including praying for the attending Bishops. Teaching from Ephesians 4 and 6 continued over the next two days, as well as further prayer ministry and daily devotional reflections concerning leadership from Acts.

As well as these sessions, there was much informal and very valuable fellowship between the delegates and team, often sitting under the “hot sun and bright evening moon” discussing faith and the issues facing South Sudan. Team members Jackie and Anne met with the women delegates and



Devoted followers of Christ with team member Jackie, Wau.

were struck by their “genuine care and prayer for one another” and that “the women were desperate for us to hear their stories and pray for them. They believe in the power of prayer despite facing continual stresses in their personal lives”. Their biggest concern was for safety and secure employment for their children as many had lost family members in recent conflicts. Jackie concludes: “The women were hardworking, creative and devoted followers of Christ... we were both humbled and challenged by their simple deep faith.”

A warm reception

The team were struck by their warm reception and the delegates' hunger for biblical teaching, and their eager openness to the Holy Spirit and ministry. Team member Kevin reflected that: “I was once again inspired, encouraged and challenged for my own discipleship and leadership from the example of African sisters and brothers”, and Chris says that: “In material terms the people of South Sudan do have little and the challenges ahead are enormous, but we felt deeply inspired by their rich spirituality and their strengths relationally and in community”. Team member Anne says: “I return with images and words imprinted on my

From the five dioceses, Wau.



mind, some beautiful, some pretty awful. At times there were no words to express what I felt, just tears for this new nation. But where Christ is, there is hope. We sang, we danced, we prayed, we studied God's word and asked for His Spirit to fill the Church and fill the land. We asked God to bless, heal and protect the brave men and women leaders of his Church in South Sudan, as they speak truth and justice into a fragile peace. It was an honour to walk alongside them for a brief time”.

Archbishop Moses reports that, as a result of the conference, most of the Bishops who attended have already conducted clergy training in their home Dioceses and concluded that, “...the knowledge the team shared has empowered the church to transform the society in South Sudan and to extend the gospel to those who have not heard it” and noted that their strategic focus is to empower the youth, Mothers' Union and Sunday School groups.

SOMA will return to Wau this December to facilitate a youth leaders' conference, so please do continue to pray for this group of Diocese and Archbishop Moses as he leads.

Team members:

- Team Leader Rt Revd Graham Cray (UK)**
- Revd Jackie Cray (UK) Jeffery Neagle (UK)**
- Revd Anne Roberts (UK) Ven Kevin Roberts (UK)**
- Revd Chris Strain (UK).**
- Intercession Co-ordinator: Sue Smith.**
- Archbishop Moses Deng.**

Growing Leaders for South Sudan



Providing for the delegates, Athooch.

SOMA's recent mission to the Diocese of Athooch, South Sudan, in January this year, aimed to build on the foundations laid in December 2017 when the Holy Spirit moved delegates to reconciliation and repentance over tribal divisions. This time, the request was to build up the leadership abilities of the clergy to enable them to meet the enormous challenges they face in being 'repairers of broken walls and restorers of streets with dwellings' (Isaiah 58), in this young nation still reeling from decades of conflict. In Athooch the majority of people are Christians, after a revival swept through the area in the 1990s. However, 40% of clergy are still in exile in Kenya and Uganda, the Bible hasn't yet been fully translated into the local language and many clergy lack theological training. The local clinic lacks medicines, there are insufficient schools, and poverty is endemic. Bishop Moses Anur has a seven-year vision for the future of his Diocese which involves founding a school, a clinic, procuring medicines, and increasing the use of micro-finance to start and aid small

A pastoralist people, Athooch.

businesses. To facilitate this he invited SOMA to send a team to train his senior archdeacons and other clergy in leadership and management skills.

A team of four was assembled with a plan to use the team members' considerable experience together with elements of the CPAS "Growing Leaders" course – carefully adapted to the South Sudanese culture, with a longer-term plan to translate it into the local Dinka language after the conference so it could be more widely distributed. Topics included: why leadership matters, establishing identity, developing character, discerning direction, working and leading together, embracing cost and staying fresh, and financial management.

Surrounded!

After an eventful internal flight from the capital Juba to Bor, before which their small Cessna plane was surrounded by 40 soldiers and police (other passengers included a provincial Governor and a recaptured prisoner!) the team eventually arrived at Makol-Chuel, where they soon settled into their tukuls and got to

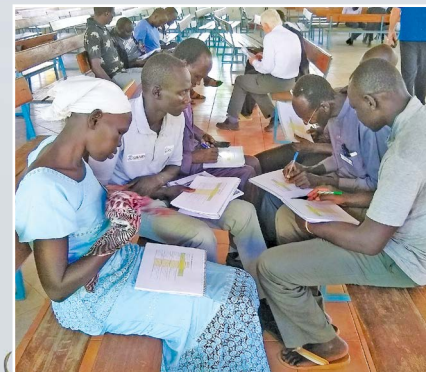
know the 30 delegates and Bishop Moses. The conference took place in the Cathedral at Makol-Chuel. As the conference began an intercessor had a picture of a series of geysers erupting one after the other and thought that this may be a picture of what the Holy Spirit would do for the delegates, causing them to erupt again with a fresh experience of the Holy Spirit. After preaching in the Cathedral on Sunday, which was well received, the conference began on the Monday with very good participation from the delegates and excellent translation. The team were particularly moved by the delegates bursting into singing *Amazing Grace* in Dinka in response to receiving teaching on the Cycle of Grace. The delegates continued to engage enthusiastically with the teaching, and the team were able to have a time of prayer with them on the second day. The conference progressed really well, with a final session on financial management on the last day and an intercessor having a strong sense that 'the seeds planted during the week will bring lasting fruit'.

Team leader John describes a, "wonderful, welcoming, hospitable and generous people; we were humbled and privileged to be amongst them", and team member Mike concludes, "it was incredible to meet people from the Dinka who have suffered so much and live in very adverse circumstances but are constantly thankful and rejoicing."

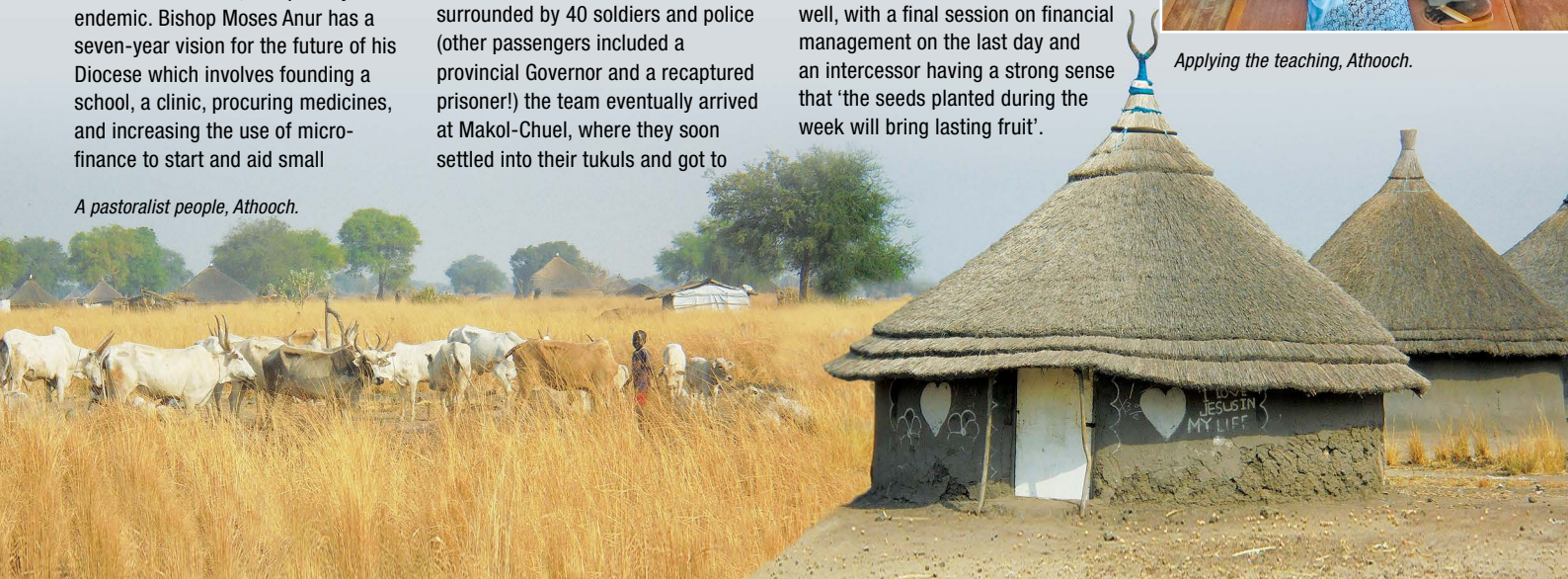
It was incredible to meet people from the Dinka who have suffered so much and live in very adverse circumstances but are constantly thankful and rejoicing.

Bishop Moses reported that the delegates enjoyed the training, which was "very good and very rich". Work is already underway both to further adapt and develop the Growing Leaders course for the South Sudanese cultures, and to facilitate further leadership conferences for this new and needy country.

Team: Team Leader John Watson (UK) Mike Quinlan (UK) Alastair Rubie (UK) Les Taylor (UK). Bishop Moses Anur. **Intercession Co-Ordinator:** Kate Brankin.



Applying the teaching, Athooch.



“The Church is so excited”



Not-yet-quite-finished Cathedral, crammed with 1500 for the Sunday service, Rutana.

This was Bishop Pontien's response after SOMA's mission to his Diocese of Rutana, Burundi, in January this year. Burundi is a tiny landlocked yet verdant country, of rural pastureland and rolling hills in East Africa, which is now experiencing some peace after decades of intermittent tribal conflict and tragic loss of life.

The Diocese of Rutana is just a year old and thriving under the servant-hearted leadership of Bishop Pontien and his pastors, with 1,000 people having been confirmed in the past year. The SOMA mission took

place in the brand new not-yet-quite-finished Cathedral, built by the parishioners to seat 1000, but crammed with 1500 for the Sunday service which began this mission. The church here is addressing the needs of its poor rural community, by promoting education (60% of the population is illiterate), expanding the Bible school for training new pastors, planting new churches and building a conference centre out of the old church building that the Cathedral has replaced, as well as running the Mothers' Union and youth work. With all this rapid growth Bishop Pontien was aware that his new young Diocese needed encouraging and equipping with biblical teaching on moving in the power of the Holy Spirit, so he invited SOMA to facilitate a conference for church leaders,

Pausing for prayer, Rutana.



including pastors, local Mothers' Union representatives, and youth leaders and young people. A programme was planned to include sessions on inner healing through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, servant leadership, strengthening family and society through marriage, and healthy relationships and respect for the body, as well as receiving power for ministry and service through the Holy Spirit. He said: "In a new Diocese like ours, we vividly need visitors to regularly come and nurture us in any way."

As the conference got underway, SOMA's intercessors were invaluable – no SOMA mission could be successful without fervent intercessory prayer. The first day's teaching on the healing of brokenness, with opportunity to share any hurts and pray for each other, received a mixed reaction, as that kind of vulnerability is not culturally normal in Burundi. However, as the intercessors prayed one had, "a strong impression of gentle rain beginning to pitter patter on dry ground and a feeling of joy that the rain is coming... to bring the promise of refreshing and great fruitfulness." The following day, during the session on inner healing, the pastors did open up and reveal inner hurts and gratefully received prayer. Team member Edward reflected that, "it was humbling to see God heal the wounds of pastors and their wives. This becomes a blessing to the entire Diocese and beyond as these ministers would become more effective and also be able to minister healing to the rest of the community around them".

Then two intercessors had, independently, a similar picture of many people's feet trying to move about but the ground was muddy and

they struggled to move in the mud, and then the same ground having been dried up by the sun and now being solid and grassy, so that the people could move joyfully and freely and dance with great exuberance. The following morning the team had an 'amazing' session with the young people, listening to their issues and struggles and looking at God's plan for their lives, after which many came forward for prayer for release from things holding them back.

I can't begin to describe the amazing experiences of this time adequately.

The conference ended well with further biblical teaching on the Holy Spirit and the dangers of false teaching, and there was a real sense of the moving of the Spirit as the delegates prayed for each other in pairs. Team member Edward was, "deeply moved by God's move in Rutana and how He especially touched the young people to turn to Him in surrender and repentance ... seeing a vibrant crop of young people given to serving God and yearning more for Him really encouraged me." Team member Margaret concluded that, "I can't begin to describe the amazing experiences of this time adequately, and the blessings received. It was a deeply humbling and moving time, for which I am very grateful" and Bishop Pontien concluded, "... you have sent us the right people with the right teachings and the church is still holding the message strongly and the seeds will definitely give good results." There are already plans underway for SOMA to return to Rutana Diocese in the next year, so please do continue to pray.

SOMA Team:
Team Leader Rev Canon Donald Werner (UK)
Melanie Dowden (UK) Edward Kireti (Kenya)
Rev Margaret Simmons (UK)
Richard Syms (UK); Bishop Pontien.
Intercession Co-Ordinator: Sue Smith.

Thank you

We really appreciate your continued support for the ministry of SOMA. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, or no longer wish us to hold your personal details on our database, please email Judy at info@somauk.org and we will update our database and records accordingly. Please see our website www.somauk.org for a full privacy statement.

SOMA's UK Residential Conference

Tuesday 17th – Thursday 19th September 2019. High Leigh Hertfordshire

Book your place now!

"It re-affirmed my passion..."

Be encouraged, inspired and ignite your passion for mission and intercession – join us this September for a great time of encouragement, fellowship, teaching, prayer and worship in the relaxed surroundings at High Leigh conference centre, Hertfordshire.

"First and foremost, we come together to encounter the Spirit – to be enlivened for mission, envisioned for intercession, empowered in faith and renewed for ministry and mission."

Hear, from SOMA team members and intercessors, how the Holy Spirit has been transforming individuals and churches and healing communities and lands during recent missions to Tanzania, South Sudan, Sudan, and DR Congo. Be inspired to pray by hearing from our committed SOMA intercessors about their pivotal role during missions and the ways in which the Spirit has revealed through them, in scriptures, pictures and words, direction and discernment for the delegates.

To secure your place, download, complete and return to us a Booking Form, available from our website: www.somauk.org or phone Steve Fincher on 01460 279737

"It re-invigorates my motivation for intercession"

The conference will be hosted by our National Director, Stephen Dinsmore, a missiologist and pastor-teacher with a vision to see the Anglican Communion empowered and propelled by the Spirit into strategic Spirit-led mission and Spirit-empowered ministry. Stephen very much looks forward to welcoming you.

"A spiritually uplifting experience"

Sung worship will be led by Bex Holden from St Mary's Bletchley, assisted by Matt Beer, curate at St Mary's – recently appointed a SOMA Trustee.

Previous delegates say: *"A total refreshment in the Holy Spirit", "I was greatly encouraged, loved and learned so much", "Re-affirmed my passion for the places less visited".*

Cost: £182 per person.

Accommodation: en-suite rooms with full board at High Leigh Conference Centre, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire. High Leigh is well connected by road to the M25 and by rail (Broxbourne) from London and the North.

Dates and times: We start with lunch at 1pm on Tuesday 17th September, and finish after lunch on Thursday 19th September.



Introducing Matt Beer

In this and future editions of SHARING we are interviewing key SOMA people. Read on to find out all about our regular team member and dynamic new trustee, Matt Beer.



What's your day job when not on a SOMA mission? I'm a curate at St Mary's Bletchley, Milton Keynes, working alongside David McDougall [also a SOMA trustee].

How did you first get involved with SOMA? I went on a mission to Harare, Zimbabwe in 2017.

Tell us what you most enjoyed about your last mission? Meeting new people, ministering into a different culture, and learning from that culture ways of ministering back home in new and fresh ways.

How does going on a SOMA mission affect your UK ministry? Being involved in SOMA helps me keep a global perspective in daily and weekly ministry in the UK and draw on specific experiences to help shape our perspective of God and how he ministers to us.

What is most challenging about going on a SOMA mission? Both the challenge and the excitement are about not knowing what we will get when we arrive on the mission. Whether accommodation, people groups or programme. In my experience when we decide to go on an international mission, we are open to new and unexpected experiences.

Where might you be going next? My next trip is looking likely to be a trip to Northern Uganda, to work with those in Palorinya Refugee Settlement. In particular working with young people and young adults on a spiritual renewal conference.

Why have you agreed to become a SOMA Trustee? I believe that my experience of international mission gives me some insight into places and situations where SOMA ministers. I also feel like I am able to bring a passionate youthful voice into SOMA particularly looking at how we encourage young leaders to explore missions in the future and help people to share their faith cross-culturally wherever SOMA ministers.

Why should SOMA supporters come to the SOMA UK Conference this September? The SOMA conference is an opportunity to share some of the amazing things we have seen and experienced on mission trips this year and to give thanks for those. As well as to be inspired for the next few years with what the Lord may be doing. There is also an opportunity to catch up with friends that we may have been on mission with before. Come along it will be great fun!

SOMA UK and ReSource



ReSource is SOMA's UK focussed sister organisation, whose aim is to work with people and churches who are eager to engage with the Holy Spirit for renewal, discipleship and mission. With a particular call to little, local and ordinary churches, ReSource offers custom designed renewal retreats and weekends, accompaniment for leaders, and sanctuary days that offer deep spiritual refreshment with the opportunity for refreshment, renewal, healing and wholeness for the task of ministry.

Kevin Roberts, Resource's National Director, and Stephen Dinsmore, National Director of SOMA UK, have, in the past year, been meeting together to forge a closer working relationship between our two organisations that honours our shared values and history, spiritual roots and theological convictions, so that we can strengthen our respective ministries and find new possibilities for joint working. Watch this space for exciting new opportunities be involved and informed about ReSource's ministry with UK churches, and be prepared to be inspired and encouraged to be involved with SOMA's ministry whenever you attend a ReSource event!

For more on ReSource please go to their website: resource-arm.net

Get involved

PRAY:

Intercession and prayer are the foundation of SOMA's ministry and mission. Find today's live prayer nugget on Twitter, Facebook and our website home page. Receive our 'Daily Prayer Diary' with your copy of 'Sharing'. SOMA Intercessors are informed by regular, extensive Prayer Briefings and two-way daily emails when teams are on mission. For more on intercession: on our website click 'Prayer and Intercession'; or contact Kate Brankin at intercession@somauk.org

INVITE:

To invite a SOMA team email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org

TEAM:

Come on a mission! We welcome new team members. To be considered for a SOMA Team, simply email SOMA at info@somauk.org or phone us on 01469 279737. Alternatively click on 'Join a Team' on our website www.somauk.org

GIVE:

Electronic transfer: for details please email steve.finch@somauk.org
Online: go to www.somauk.org and click 'donate' to give by card, Paypal or CAF.
Post: to SOMA, PO Box 69, Merriott, TA18 9AP, cheques payable to 'SOMA' please.

PARTNER:

A *SOMA Parish Mission Partnership* builds a live, active and mutually beneficial relationship between your congregations and SOMA, making an effective resource for you, envisioning your church for Renewal & Mission at home and abroad, and fulfilling SOMA's worldwide call and ministry.

Click 'Get Involved' on our website, then 'Parish Mission Partners'. Alternatively email stephen.dinsmore@somauk.org or call 01460 279737

FUTURE MISSIONS include:

October – November 2019

Melbourne, Australia
Ministry in Parishes across Dioceses of Melbourne and Bendigo

November 2019

Kinshasa, DR Congo
Clergy and leader's conference

November – December 2019

Palorinya Refugee Camp, Uganda, the displaced Diocese of Kajo-Keji, South Sudan
Youth Leaders' Conference

December 2019

Northern Bahr El Ghazal Internal Province, South Sudan
Youth Leaders' Workshop

February 2020

Rutana, Burundi

March 2020

Kindu, DR Congo
Leaders and clergy

Biharamulo, Tanzania
Preaching and leadership for pastors

Western Equatoria Internal Province, South Sudan

Kibondo, Tanzania

Soroti, Uganda

Maasai Land, Kenya

South Sudan
Youth Leaders' Workshop

Kajiado, Kenya

Kampala, Uganda and Boga, DRC
Youth: IT and drama for mission

Jonglei Internal Province, South Sudan