

# Reconnecting with the worldwide church



**When the lockdown lifted in Autumn 2021, Richard Moy, our National Director, made his first SOMA trip to South Sudan. He visited the inspirational International Chair of SOMA, Archbishop Justin Badi Arama, Primate of the Province of South Sudan, attended the General Synod, and was able to speak in Juba Cathedral and in the prison. One of the purposes of the trip was to begin conversations about setting up nine missions in the coming years running renewal conferences for youth (16-30s) in the Internal Provinces and Capital city. Richard met a church full of vitality and a Primate keen to continue to partner with SOMA UK, he says:**

Juba was a great first trip for me as a new National Director. As well as being the home of our International Chair it was also a time when over 70 Bishops and key lay people came together for a once in every five years Provincial Synod. I was able to be immersed in the South Sudanese church quickly with many members of Synod willing to act as a guide. It was also an occasion to reconnect with a wonderful man of God who had inspired me in the UK when I was an ordinand. Joseph Bilal was a Sudanese Christian studying in the UK whose life and character spoke volumes to me when I was a young Christian at theological college in Bristol. Joseph is now principal of the

Anglican University in Juba inspiring many compatriots in the still relatively young nation of South Sudan.

It was an honour to hear about the desire for Internal Province youth missions and strategise for them with the Archbishop Samuel Peni Enosa, other members of the missions committee and with the Primate himself. Archbishop Samuel spoke movingly of his time in the UK in 2005, where he visited New Wine and Soul Survivor, and of his hope that we could connect some of that ministry with each of those Internal Provinces. Conversations in the UK are very encouraging, with several significant leaders from those movements already signing up to

support SOMA Missions in South Sudan.

It was also a mission that taught me about praying for Visas (2 days delayed!), miraculous provision (thank you Kate Brankin and Bishop Anthony Poggo), the value of local knowledge in preparing teams, how to be ready to preach at a second's notice (literally in prison!), and how good it is to connect with the worldwide church again. As Archbishop Justin Badi Arama encouraged the SOMA International Directors recently, *"SOMA ministers in the power of the Spirit, [it] is for Scripture and for mission. This is a powerful mandate and one that can truly change the world."*



Archbishop Justin

# VISION 2025:

## Help us to discern what the Lord is saying



*'For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.'* (Romans 12: 4-5)

2022 is a new season for SOMA International, the umbrella body of which SOMA UK is part. Despite all the challenges, God's call on us still seems to be to encourage and network with the church worldwide, sharing ministry, renewal and evangelistic passion. As the different HUBS of SOMA International begin to work more closely together we in SOMA UK are asking what our 'Vision 2025' should be. What could the next 4 years in SOMA UK look like?

We would love your help in thinking this through. Over the last few months, the SOMA UK team and trustees have been thinking deeply and prayerfully about this. The restrictions on travel have meant that many missions have been postponed,

though the prophetic and intercessory role of SOMA has continued in an impactful way. The extra space in schedules due to lack of travel has given us time to reflect, take stock and seek the Lord. One of the things we hear most often from people who have gone on short-term missions is 'The experience helped me more than I helped them', or 'I learnt far more than I was able to give.' We want to acknowledge how big and valuable an impact the global church can have on the Church in the UK when we are able to visit and share ministry around the world, as indeed it was already having pre-pandemic. We are also starting to wonder how missions involving sisters and brothers from overseas may help fan the flames of renewal in

the UK and what our role might be in supporting them.

We have been talking about 'reciprocity in mission.' Reciprocity is exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. It means that by sharing in global mission there are abundant blessings to receive whether you are the one visiting or being visited. Where there is unity among God's people the Spirit moves. We firmly believe that we can learn so much from one another as a global Church family, and there are many SOMA stories that support that belief. One example is that there are 685 million Christians in Africa today, and this is expected to rise to 700 million by 2025. This rapid growth of God's Kingdom can inspire those on mission and church planting

in the UK to have increased faith and zeal for a move of God in our nation.

In a previous SHARING we shared Richard's dream that people going on mission trips could bring back 'olive branches of hope' to the UK. We want to get really intentional about sending people to places where they can be inspired by hope whilst they serve the local church. We need to encourage our partners overseas by telling them how much they are helping to inspire the UK church through their welcome of SOMA teams to minister with them. We are talking to Anglican theological and education institutes about sending ordinands on missions alongside experienced team members, as part of their formation as the next generation of Anglican leaders.

To make this possible, alongside our usual 'SOMA Experienced' missions (which often go to places less visited, and can require a greater time, financial and risk investment than some potential team members can manage), we want to add in 'SOMA Extended' missions. These may have shorter flights, fewer transfers and could be a stepping stone to serving on 'SOMA Experienced' missions in the future. A good example of this was a SOMA mission in Nairobi inspired by Soul Survivor's 'Soul in the City' campaign, but there are destinations in Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia we would like to explore as well.





There is potential for ‘SOMA Extended’ missions to support existing parish or diocese connections with our well developed expertise in briefing and de-briefing teams, intercessory cover, and travel connections including the use of charity travel agents. We would like to trial one or two pilots of this in the coming year and see if we can increase the impact of the SOMA model by helping ‘connect the church globally’ in this way. If you know of a parish or diocesan link that could benefit from this support in setting up a trip please let us know.

‘SOMA Experienced’ missions will remain at the core of our calling. Visiting places less reached, supporting churches and leaders where situations are tough and connecting the most isolated people with the worldwide body of Christ is key to what we do. Our hope and prayer is that God will open up more opportunities and international teams to minister in the coming years.

But as well as these overseas opportunities we are more aware than ever of how much the UK needs the church worldwide. Many churches and dioceses find themselves in

need of a fresh injection of Gospel hope. At the same time many people have come from around the world to the UK in recent years, believing God has been sending them as missionaries to this land. Some come for study, others for gap years/ministry experience, others for work, and some out of necessity for asylum. So we are tentatively exploring piloting some teams working here in the UK, made up of sisters and brothers from the diaspora (or the international church) alongside UK team members, at the invitation of a local bishop, to encourage, revive, refresh and/or evangelise. There are already two Dioceses in England interested in piloting this approach and other agencies interested in supporting it. We’re calling these ‘SOMA Entry’ missions. Watch this space and pray that if God is in this he will bring it all together.

As always, intercession will be the key part of any SOMA mission as it is of every aspect of SOMA’s being. This has been the SOMA way ever since the pre-meetings for the 1978 Lambeth Conference started SOMA on its journey. God alone is the answer to our deepest needs and prayer and intercession is how he often chooses to let us access that answer.

So we’re aiming towards ‘SOMA Entry’, ‘SOMA Extended’ and ‘SOMA Experienced’ teams undergirded and made possible by prayer, to encourage and envision the church worldwide – including us!

**How could you get involved?**

And as you read through this and pray, what do you think God is saying? *Please get in touch at [info@somauk.org](mailto:info@somauk.org) to share your SOMA stories and ideas.*

**Coming up:**

Although Covid restrictions have meant a lack of overseas missions, we are excited to say that this is changing! There are a few upcoming missions, beginning with a mission to Bunia in the DRC with a SOMA team from Kenya. Please be praying for a fruitful trip and that the time be a real blessing for those being received and those going on the mission. Other opportunities are opening up in Africa and South Asia. If you are interested in a mission either as an intercessor or in being a team member then please get in contact with us on [info@somauk.org](mailto:info@somauk.org). Finally, we have the 2022 Lambeth Conference in August where we hope to gather as a wider SOMA International family. Please be praying for the organisation of the Conference and the opportunity for the wider SOMA family to meet together.

**Partner with SOMA UK**

Soma UK relies on your giving and on our parish mission partners. If you’d like to get involved please be in touch. You can book a speaker for bible teaching, renewal ministry and promoting world mission, request a personalised video greeting to play in services or on your social media, or just book a phone/zoom call to find out more.

If you’d like to give regularly to support one of our staff team (Richard, Abraham, Anita or Monique), or sponsor a mission (including bursaries for those who can’t easily afford to go) please give via our CAF bank account and let Anita know for gift aid and allocation purposes. [anita.long@somauk.org](mailto:anita.long@somauk.org)



Rorya, Tanzania

# The Girls' Project in Bunia, DRC



*A Kenyan Team will visit the project between 23rd and 28th February*

This project which is an initiative of the Youth Department of the Diocese of Boga in Eastern DRC, has started a response to the sexual violence which has been a major element in the insecurity and violence of this part of DRC over the past few years.

Young women have been particularly affected. Many of them have been abused, and because children born as a result of rape are rejected by their communities, these young mothers have been displaced.

The Diocese started a programme in 2021 to rescue these young women, and re-train them in sewing and embroidery,

so that they can begin to re-establish their lives. This has meant supplying them with sewing machines. The first seminar in this project took place in May 2021. The Diocese was expecting 45 girls for this dressmaking project, but 121 wanted to come – so they had to enlarge the number for the initial teaching, which included sessions on forgiveness, trusting in God, and growing in self-confidence. They had to keep the numbers at 45 for the actual dress-making project, because of the limited number of sewing machines then available.

Later this month, as part of the second residential seminar for these young women, Rev'd Canon Beatrice Oloo (who has been on an earlier team to Bunia) has gathered an ecumenical team of encouraging women to spend some time with these girls, to encourage and support them. We thank God that nearly all the money for this mission has been raised, although some of the team members have struggled to raise the funds for their travel and visas; and so we would greatly appreciate your prayers for these team members and for the mission itself!

## INTERCESSORS:

We have a monthly Zoom meeting bringing encouragement and support.

Join these wonderful times of prayer, news and prophesy! It is a great opportunity to come together as a SOMA family, despite our geographical distance. It is held on the 2nd Friday of each month 12-12:30pm. The next Prayer meeting will be held on the 11th of March. Get in touch with us at info@somauk.org for details.

***We hope to see you there!***

## Can SOMA support your mission partners?

As part of our call to connect the Church worldwide, we would love to help support your own Church's mission partners. We can work directly with them by helping organise charity flights at a reduced cost. Or we can provide training to your Church's congregation in Spiritual Gifts and help equip your Church for engagement in mission. Finally, we can provide resources for an overseas mission team on important topics such as Spiritual Warfare or marriage. Please get in touch if there are other ways which we can help support your Church's mission partners.

### Meet other SOMA National Directors



God has raised up SOMA to provide shock troops for Kingdom breakthroughs, predominantly in the Anglican majority world. We are able to move quickly and cheaply to where the Holy Spirit needs us. In a time of enormous change in the world, SOMA is able to exploit cross-cultural opportunities for the Kingdom of God.

**Andrew Allan-Johns, National Coordinator SOMA New Zealand.**



On an International level, God has been forming new bonds and connections as the ND's meet online monthly to share,

encourage, discern and pray together. SOMA Australia has been led by the Spirit to establish the Anglican Renewal Network Australia (ARNA), engage with Dioceses who are raising young adults as a priority and begin mission ministry online with our partner countries (such as Nepal).

**Liz Rankin, National Director SOMA Australia**



Serving on SOMA missions forever changed my walk with Christ. Witnessing God actively encourage

and equip our church leaders convinced me of the vital importance of SOMA's ministry. After the past two years, spiritual encouragement and renewal is needed more than ever.

**Kyle, National Director SOMA USA**

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## NEW WEBSITE: [www.somauk.org](http://www.somauk.org) has a makeover

Thanks to our friends at Breathe designs [www.somauk.org](http://www.somauk.org) has had a makeover, including a set of pages designed to be a resource for the worldwide church. This will expand in coming months and years, but do check it out and get in touch with info@somauk.org if you can see any additions which would be helpful.