

Fanning into flame the gift that is SOMA



Former SOMA UK National Director Don Brewin reunited with many friends at Lambeth including Archbishop Samuel Peni from South Sudan.

SOMA was birthed at the 1978 Lambeth Conference when 300 bishops and key lay people gathered for a pre-conference renewal meeting and found themselves dancing in the aisles as the Spirit fell upon them. Since then the prophetic charge to 'join the Holy Spirit tending to the nervous system of the body of Christ' has been the heartbeat of SOMA and seen the various member nations of SOMA International ministering in Anglican Dioceses right around the globe.

It was therefore a joy to see God at work at the 2022 Lambeth Conference fanning into flame the gift that is SOMA. We were blessed to see invitations flooding in to minister around the world with an array of invitations from Africa, among 80 dioceses scattered from the Arctic to Ireland, Pakistan to Polynesia. Old acquaintances were renewed, and it was a particular joy to welcome Don Brewin to the team at the end of the fortnight and see the delight with

which new Bishops remembered him visiting them when they were young clergy.

The disparity in the dioceses of the Anglican Communion was evident at Lambeth. Some were in a springtime season, expecting to multiply and grow rapidly, full of young life and hope; others

were deep in wintertime, aging and managing decline. Some historic dioceses had fallen below 5000 attenders and other 'micro-dioceses' had shrunk below 1000. Conversely, some Bishops had neither a car nor a functioning Cathedral whilst others had great wealth and influence. Some vestments on sale were worth more than a priest's annual salary in other parts of the Communion. And finally there was a persecution gap. While many of the dioceses had some support/protection from their State, others were facing opposition, oppression and all out war. The nervous system of the body of Christ was shouting at Lambeth.

In all this the benefits of cultural exchanges and short-term missions were apparent. These missions need to make learning a priority to make sure the nervous system keeps functioning and communicating to each part of the body our need for each other. The Communion has wealth, vibrancy, signs of growth and freedom of worship. It also has destitution and decline. The key is making sure it is the life of the Holy Spirit that spreads and not decay. SOMA exists to help spread that life around the body of Christ.



Learning from endurance



SOMA Uganda team member Benon urges clergy to support the Bishop and his wife.

Monique Reichberger reflects on her recent visit and how there is now new hope in West Uganda and The Democratic Republic of the Congo in the midst of extreme difficulties.

A SOMA team visited four Dioceses in West Uganda, including an inspirational conference in Kasese, Diocese of South Rwenzori, for clergy and their spouses. This was a Diocese that the rest of the Communion has much to learn from, and UK teams will be blessed in the future to visit Kasese en route to 'places less visited' alongside our inspirational SOMA Uganda friends and teammates.

Bishop Nasan Baluku was able to impart a tremendous vision of evangelism and mission to a Diocese emerging from the poverty inducing trials of COVID. This vision builds on a diocese dedicated to prayer,

with an early morning prayer service each morning in the Cathedral set on the edges of the Queen Elizabeth II National Park. Behind the Cathedral is a prayer mountain which has been planted with trees for cover from the sun (as well as timber and fruit) and set apart to receive crowds of intercessors. The Friday before the conference 10,000 people had dedicated a day to prayer and fasting on the mountain. This is Mount Tabor (the mountain of transfiguration). A place where heaven and earth seem to kiss together.

It was a precious time for the male and female clergy and spouses, many of whom had made complex child-care and



The SOMA team who recently visited Uganda

travel arrangements to be there. SOMA National Director Richard Moy was invited to join in the ecumenical radio outreach broadcast across Western Uganda and DRC Congo, speaking on the prodigal son to an estimated 1-2 million people on Radio Messiah, and telling stories of Muslims back home impacted by the love of Father God. The leaders in Kasese shared many stories of people coming to faith via their radio channel.

Merciless attacks

But even more moving than the displays of faith in Kasese was a follow up visit to the displaced diocese of Kamango, which had evacuated from the DRC into the

borderland area of Western Uganda by the Rwenzori Mountains. The Diocese, led by Bishop Sabiti, had fled its rural community three times in six years due to Islamist terror groups attacking mercilessly. Bishop Sabiti wrote to SOMA during Richard's mission trip to Ukraine to thank us for connecting to those suffering there, but asking us (and the world) to not forget the DRC. This was an invitation that felt like it had come from God, and team leader Ken Wiebe already had a relationship with the diocese, so we were keen to go.

Regular readers of SHARING may know more than most about DRC. 'What you have

heard is true' one priest told us, but the reality is we hear precious little about the conflicts of the DRC in the West. On our return a leader sent us a compilation video of atrocities so graphic we could not share it. But what does seeing senseless mutilations of women, children, beheadings and random acts of violence by raiding marauders do to you over time? This entire diocese had to flee their homes and farms (livelihoods) three times in six years. Now most head back over the border day by day into the danger zone of the Islamist extremist terror group the Allied Democratic Forces to tend their

smallholdings and then return over the border into the relative safety of Uganda before the 6pm bridge curfew. Crowds of young children making the journey unaccompanied, curious, playful, smiling, but living through acute trauma.

Rally cry

On the first day of our conference we found a group of about 200 leaders who were tired, discouraged and hungry. We returned to the conference the next day a little more informed as to what these leaders and their people had been through. After a prophetic revelation Ken was inspired to

issue a rally cry, sensing in his spirit that the collected clergy, lay leaders, and their spouses were in fact 'special forces' for the Kingdom, an army for God not armed with machetes, but equipped with spiritual power to change lives. By the time we departed there was a clear sense that that calling had been heard and there was new hope. It was good for the leaders to eat together, worship, and encourage each other in God's word. Like every SOMA trip I'm sure it changed us more than it changed them. It was a privilege to stand with them for a while and learn from their endurance.

A warm welcome to Grace McSharry



Grace was presented with one of our Lambeth Conference 'SOMA International' t-shirts

We welcome to the SOMA UK team Grace McSharry as Executive Assistant to the National Director. Grace has been Interim Communications Officer for Salisbury Diocese, and has previously been Communications Officer for Leicester Diocese and Communications Administrator for Fusion (the Student Outreach charity).

Grace enjoys "being able to keep things in order" and describes herself as "confident in the prophetic and intercession". SOMA appeals as she "loves that SOMA UK's vision is driven both by scripture and by listening to the Holy Spirit." Her most recent role involved writing content for the Diocesan weekly email to over 6,000 readers, press releases, and putting communications plans in place. She will continue to work from her base in Leicester where she is part of a church plant and helps lead worship alongside her husband.

Her role at SOMA will include handling communications, event planning and developing our intercession network. She comes highly recommended and we look forward to adding her to our team.

National Director back in the Middle East

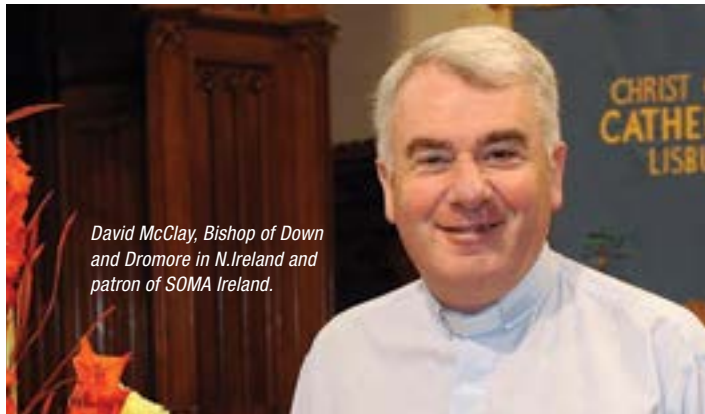


Revd Emil and Reem Bourisz, Lebanon pray for Richard the SOMA ministry

From 18-23 September Richard Moy joined Alistair Bateman, CEO of CMS UK on a tour of Lebanon focusing on mission work with the Syrian refugees. Following previous visits to Ukrainian and DRC Congo displaced people this visit shows our continuing commitment to some of the most hurting parts of the body of Christ. It was Richard's second visit to see

Nabil and Sarahl Shehadi, who are working with CMS on the ground in Lebanon and the Levant nations. The group met Pastor Said Deeb, who felt a prompting of the Holy Spirit to close his humanitarian centre in Beirut just before the August 2020 explosion and so saved many staff and guests. They visited Syrian refugee camps, churches, historic sites and the

Arocha centre in the Aammiq marches. Richard hopes that this can lead to future collaborations for SOMA Extended missions in the Middle-East as continue to minister to the nervous system of the body of Christ. Lebanon is a beautiful country with a strong Christian heritage in a strategic location in the Middle-East. Let's pray for God to continue to build his church in the Bible lands.



David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore in N.Ireland and patron of SOMA Ireland.

SOMA Entry in Ireland

David McClay, Bishop of Down and Dromore in N.Ireland and patron of SOMA Ireland has invited SOMA to take part in a Diocesan wide mission in June next year. After a meeting with the SOMA team at Lambeth conference he hopes that 150 SOMA missionaries from all over the world can come together over a fortnight to inspire each of these parishes and deaneries in a SOMA Entry mission. A particular invitation goes out to theology college students, but all of the SOMA family are welcome to apply to be on the team. Already there is

considerable interest. This is a great opportunity to train first-timers in SOMA mission and to outreach in the power of the Spirit to the communities of Down and Dromore. We expect that many people who get a taste of being on a SOMA mission here will go on to take part in SOMA missions further afield and look forward to training and developing leaders here as part of our strategy to connect the church around the world.

The invitation to do a SOMA Entry mission in Down and Dromore

SOMA International: Coming up:

SOMA International will be gathering in November 2022 in Singapore with a follow on mission in the Deanery of Nepal. Monique Reichberger will be representing SOMA UK alongside Liz Rankin, Eben Grobbelaar and teams from SOMA Australia, South Africa and UK. They will be seeing what mission opportunities will arise from this across SE Asia. Then in April 2023 SOMA International will be in Kigali, Rwanda doing a mission at the invitation of the Archbishop and putting together a collective strategy for the coming years. It is very encouraging seeing SOMA International members.



Bishop David McClay talking with Monique at the SOMA stall

Future Missions

We are expecting to begin the series of missions in South Sudan around January. We will be sending teams to each of the eight Internal Provinces finishing with a celebration conference in Juba in January 2024, these missions will all be geared towards young adult leaders. We have a number of leaders signed up to take these teams from different churches across the UK and we're excited to see the fruit this will have also in the UK church when teams return. We are also hoping to send a team to Uganda in the new year led by Ken Wiebe. In April next year the SOMA International Directors will gather together in Africa for a joint mission. And we have many other plans in the works for parts of the UK and Ireland, Lebanon and the Arctic!



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