

(Re)lighting the Beacons



Team praying at Down Cathedral

God has done wonderful things in Rwanda and in Ireland for SOMA International. Across two missions he has brought together all six SOMA bases, teams from 5 continents and 15 nations and brought lasting change in two dioceses while launching a whole new way of being together as an interdependent international collective. Working together we have already added so much value and we praise God for how our gifts around the world compliment each other. We look forward to God birthing new SOMAs in all the nations we have ministered in so that our mission really can be 'From Everywhere to Anywhere' as we join the Holy Spirit tending to the nervous system of the body of Christ through evangelism, and equipping, envisioning and empowering leaders and leading people into a deep encounter with God.

We caught up with Andrew Allan-Johns to talk through what his role will be in this new collective of SOMAs.

Meet Andrew, the new Chair of the National Directors responsible for SOMA Missions:

I am a proud New Zealander and a convinced Anglican. I am married to the Rev. Christine whom I met at theological college. Together we have two adult sons and almost two grandchildren. I was ordained in 1990, and in 2019 planted Anchor Charismatic Church in Christchurch. I have been leading mission trips since 2002 and was appointed National Director of SOMA New Zealand in 2017. I enjoy cross-cultural experiences, especially seeing the Holy Spirit move among a congregation. Over the last 10 years, I have enjoyed developing ways to equip whole congregations with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, not just the leaders.

God has raised up SOMA to provide shock troops for Kingdom breakthroughs, predominantly in the Anglican 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. But we have to be honest that the SOMA movement has been in decline over the last two decades and Covid 19 might have been the death knell to some SOMAs, but God is doing a new thing among us. The original vision to join the Holy Spirit caring for the nervous system of the Anglican church is as relevant as ever, and there is no other organisation better suited to respond at relatively short notice to the needs of dioceses. SOMA missions have been instrumental at the spiritual turning point of a number of nations. At a time of great upheaval in the Anglican world, we still have plenty of work to do. God wants his church to be fully empowered and spiritually equipped and wants to deploy us to do so.

Over the Covid years the National Directors met monthly using Zoom so by the time we were with each other in person in Kigali we knew each other better and could be pretty honest about the state of our national SOMAs. We soon found that there were more invitations for teams than the capacity to fulfil them on our own. It became crystal clear as we prayed that we should be working together rather than in national silos. We are currently working with our National Boards to trial a three-year period where anyone from anywhere can be invited to join any team. We will provide standardised team training and teaching resources to release new team members and leaders, and provide pre-training and follow up courses for delegates so they can graduate to be team members too. The SOMA MISSIONS website and app will support this, and we look forward to seeing new SOMAs birthed (or rebirthed) around the world. The success of our joint mission to the Shyogwe diocese in Rwanda has provided initial proof of concept, and it was inspiring to join the Ireland team on zoom and see that the model works in Western nations as well.

I had not expected to be nominated as Chair when I left New Zealand for Rwanda, but once we were working together and discovering each other's gifts and strengths I felt a peace about being nominated. After the election, our International Chair/Patron, Archbishop Justin Badi from South Sudan prayed for me and imparted a great anointing. I am not sure how it will work being so far away from much of the action and what it might mean for my parish, but so far it has been productive and enjoyable working with a great team. Please pray for me!



Andrew at the site where the gospel was first preached to Maori in 1814

Turning the Tide for SOMA International

Mission in Northern Ireland - diocese of Down and Dromore

St Paul told us that we are the body of Christ and we need each part. SOMA International working together has led to an incredible balance and anointing as people from all around the world have ministered in Global South and Western contexts. Both Rwanda and Ireland have clearly benefited from SOMA missions as the global church has sought to learn from and bless the local dioceses, and their humble, willing and anointed Bishops. We look forward to doing more together as we work as one body with different bases (and nationally rooted charities) around the world. More details in the autumn but here are the reports:

God breathes life on SOMA in Kigali



Rwanda has played an enormous part in SOMA International's history. It was the location for a unique mission where SOMA teams came from all over the world in 1996 to minister in every diocese not long after the national tragedy of the genocide. One such team led by Fred Carson came from Canada and ministered in Shyogwe Diocese. These faith-filled ministers sowed great seeds of renewal to all there including to many now in Diocesan leadership. So when Greg Moss of St Philip's Dorridge asked if a SOMA team could come with him to visit a diocese he had developed great links with we were eager to send the whole International Team, and it became the combined National Directors mission, with New Zealand, Ireland, Australia, UK and USA all sending delegates with their ND, and South Africa and South Sudan meeting us in Kigali to bless and send us on our way.

The mission was wonderful. Rwanda is known as the "Land of a thousand smiles and a thousand hills". We must have seen several thousand smiles and an abundance of those beautiful hills. The diocesan strategy was to have a three day conference for us, plus Sunday worship in five locations, and a late addition of a women's conference as Soma Australia were able to offer that as

well with an excellent mini-team who stayed on. The churches were full of faith, hope and love and well, full, as well! Crowds of school aged children piled into churches, many of them in choirs. The cathedral in fact had six choirs, and produced a whole morning service with missionaries testifying, preaching and encouraging them to pray for the West as the team there from New Zealand, England and the USA were deeply aware of the contrast with the churches and cathedrals back home.

That was a feature of the mission. African Christians with great faith crying out to God to tend to the nervous system of the body of Christ and awaken the Western church. It was a joy to be so upheld.

Another great feature was deliverance ministry. This happened both in and through the SOMA team! Many things in the SOMA world expand and fill out your Biblical worldview, bringing the pages of Scripture alive. We saw God move in power in response to us gently taking the authority that is ours in Christ Jesus and many people testified to being set free from oppression and other malignant acts of the evil one. The three day model enabled us to talk to priests from across the diocese on day one (including many wonderful women),



ABOVE: Richard ND praying for and blessing clergy in Shyogwe
LEFT: Shyogwe mission team hailing from 7 nations!
BELOW: SOMA ND's receiving impartation from Archbishop Justin Badi International chair/patron of SOMA. L-R: Henry Blair (Ireland), Eben Grobbelaar (outgoing S. Africa), Liz Rankin (outgoing Australia), R-L: Andrew Allan-Johns (New Zealand), Kyle Spradley (USA), Bulelwa Sihlahi (incoming S. Africa).



catechists from across the diocese who are congregation leaders for church plants around the parish churches on day two, and then to local congregation members in one archdeaconry on the final day. This meant Andrew could do all the teaching and ministry on day one, and then gradually release it to other members over the next two days so we all learnt a common language and template for ministry. In fact the Lord took over at several points, in particular on the final day when the simple prayer 'Come Holy Spirit' meant we were activated into deliverance ministry for several hours more than was planned in the programme. The Holy Spirit orchestrated it all, and the breakthroughs came each day when the Rwandans in the congregations joined in praising God or interceding for the team.

This will be a great potential base for SOMA Rwanda missions in the future and especially for young adults looking for an introduction to world mission as part of church or discipleship year groups. Our youngest team member was 13, but the age range of 72 years in this mission was exceeded even more in Ireland, where the team ranged from 3 years old to 82!



TOP TO BOTTOM: Lurgan team led by New Wine Discipleship Year Hub leaders Alice Young and Justin Lau
Team leader Simon Holloway with parishioners prayer walking in Magherally
Richard arriving at Belfast airport and joining Joshua Opondo flying in from Kenya, met by Joshua Diocesan youth worker
SOMA Team Members sharing stories at diocesan synod after the mission



Walking in the footsteps of St Patrick, and invited by a wonderful Bishop we met at the Lambeth Conference, SOMA descended on Ireland from five continents of the world. Boosted by team members from three New Wine Discipleship Year Hubs (Southampton, Woodford Wells and Manchester), they joined other young adults and not so young adults in a fortnight of encountering God, evangelism and equipping and encouraging the saints. It was particularly moving to see team members from Africa, Asia and South America reaching out to the West in humble service, but utter confidence that God was on the move. One reverend from Africa had a church in Kampala of 5000 people, another ran a theology college. Each humbly served their mini-team and churches and each team member saw spiritual breakthroughs.

We say at SOMA that we are a learning organisation as much as a mission agency, and the teams are there to serve and to learn. We certainly did. We got more out of it than we put in, with many receiving fresh vision, calling and spiritual gifts and even breakthroughs for their home contexts and situations while they were away.

Among the activities were spiritual clearings of churches where strongholds of enemy activity had imposed themselves on a place, minister or congregation. These were particularly effective where teams of prophetic people and those with the authority in that place worked together to clear out darkness. One vicar said it was like the spiritual SAS had visited and she couldn't believe the change when at the weekend 12 people took gospels to say that they had prayed to follow Jesus.

Others served in tough estates, rural areas, large New Wine churches, cathedrals (there are two), and coastal areas. Our Chair of SOMA UK saw several miracles in his team including a lame lady walking and someone suffering with an eating disorder enabled to eat again. We give God all the glory for all that he has done, and grateful that there is more to come for SOMA Missions around the world.

Some quotes from our Ireland team:

"God's presence was tangible and people were touched by the Holy Spirit."

"I think God is saying to SOMA that we should allow him to lead us into a new understanding as to how he wants his Spirit to work through SOMA. The mission to Ireland I believe is a new and powerful journey God wants to take SOMA on"

"SOMA is what the world needs today. Sharing of Ministry Abroad and also local. This is such a needed ministry especially to western churches. More more more"

"Do it again! More Lord"

"He's given me a bolder sense of stepping out in faith and ministering in a different context. I will practice preaching more as I thoroughly enjoyed the experience of preaching for the first time"

"Every missioner played a key unique role in the ministry."

META Youth

Our SOMA UK META Youth project has been a rip roaring success this year and inspired our desire to develop as SOMA International with online resources, ongoing training and equipping and mission trips from anywhere to everywhere in the Anglican World. We're hugely looking forward to hearing the fruit of their endeavours in Lebanon this autumn, but here is what has already happened in the preparatory year.

Lydia (one of the team) shares:

META Youth is a wonderfully exciting project. With young people from seven different countries, they are united in their desire to deepen their faith and know Jesus. It has been so encouraging to watch them grow and learn together. We have some who are very new to faith, who have journeyed with us and come to understand Christianity as something so much more than a religion – they have learned it is a relationship with God, through Jesus, and we are strengthened and helped by the Holy Spirit. The buddy system has meant they are able to connect with another young person on the course and encourage one another, and each week they watch a video which we then process at the coaching clinics. Being able to celebrate

our learning, ask questions, delve into some of the more complex nuances of the Bible is a true gift and this is not lost on the young people, many of whom are from or in countries where Christianity is ignored, illegal or in the minority; they bring such strength of character and this is a wonderful example to the rest of the group. Working towards the mission project has been an excellent focus for them as they flex their leadership muscles; each person is responsible for raising the funds and they have been creative and entrepreneurial in how they have done this so far and they are excited to travel this summer and see how God is working in the lives of others. Ultimately, these young people are learning to develop and live out their faith in a world that is increasingly hostile towards Christianity. The impact will be huge!

Jack (one of the participants) shares:

Participating in META has been one of the most beneficial decisions I have made for my faith and leadership. By gathering four leaders and 15 young people from across the world to discuss topics such as the Holy Spirit, spiritual disciplines, and the resurrection, my understanding of God has developed, and my relationship with Jesus has grown deeper and deeper.

I have massively enjoyed hearing from the other young people about the contrasting ways in which we evangelise and give around the world, despite our consistent beliefs, and this has inspired me to focus on how I practice my faith to best portray Jesus to those around me, in the unique situations God places me in.

The leadership teaching from Stu, Lydia, Tim and Rohama has also been brilliant. Often, the weekly video focuses on a leadership model such as 'the spheres of influence' or 'the five gears' and in the Zoom meeting we have taken time to discuss how the model applies to our lives individually. This structure has allowed me to identify many of my own strengths and weaknesses in a safe and encouraging environment, so that we can then pray for God's guidance on how I can improve on my weaknesses, and discuss practical fixes to make us better leaders. A recent example was identifying how little I actively rest, showing me the importance of a weekly Sabbath, which I now protect and prioritise.

SOMA International: upcoming!

There are over 90 invitations for SOMA International:

Why not contact info@somauk.org and see where you can join in? We have opportunities in South Sudan, Burundi, Uganda, and Sierra Leone to name but a few!

We have many exciting projects in the works which we will share more about in the Autumn. Undertaking the Ireland mission as SOMA International has opened up many more

opportunities for mission but to do this we really need your help.

Would you please consider donating on a regular basis to the work of SOMA? Or giving a one off donation to our bursary funding for those who cannot afford to go on a mission? We would also love for more intercessors to join our prayer network. Please email us on intercession@somauk.org if this could be you!



Beirut, Lebanon where the team will be headed in July

COMING SOON:

www.somamissions.org - look out for news, updates and resources from around the world on our SOMA International website to be launched this autumn.



International teams sharing in ministry together in Ireland, Joshua from Kenya, Kevin from the UK, Promise from Nigeria and Delight from Uganda!

If you do not already receive SHARING by post, and would like to, simply complete the form below and post it to: SOMA UK, 295 Chiswick High Road, Suite 132, London, W4 4HH. or email info@somauk.org

Name: _____

Address: _____

County: _____ Postcode: _____

Country: _____

You can unsubscribe at any time by emailing info@somauk.org or writing to the above address. We will not pass on your details to any third parties except our publishers, unless required to do so by law.