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And a coup, too



Delegates and team, Harare.

SOMA's mission to Harare, Zimbabwe, in November last year coincided exactly with a military coup, and the subsequent resignation of 93-year-old President Mugabe. The team had been invited back to Zimbabwe by Bishop Chad after a previous mission in 2015, this time to minister to two very deprived areas of Harare; Epworth and Southlea Park.

Team member Jenny lends a hand, Harare.



A team of 12: from the UK, Uganda, and Sierra Leone, under the leadership of Rev David McDougall, led the mission based on the theme of 'Thy Kingdom Come'.

The team gathered together for the first time at Harare Airport on Saturday 11th November, then attended St Martin's Church at 9am on Sunday for Communion, followed by a service at St Lawrence Church

where three team members shared.

On Monday the team ministered at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Epworth, to 70 delegates under an open metal tent. The teaching on the theme of 'Thy Kingdom Come to marriage', and 'Thy Kingdom Come to children', followed by a "very deep and wonderful" ministry time, was very well received with applause and much interaction and discussion from the delegates. The session concluded with a response time with everyone calling out to God for children:

"an amazing outpouring



Sunday service, Harare.

of intercession" concludes David McDougall. That evening during the team meeting there was a time of worship and powerful intercession for Zimbabwe, during which the Holy Spirit guided and enabled intercession and prayer in very specific ways.

Most of the delegates gave their lives to Christ

On Tuesday the team continued to minister at Epworth on the theme of "Thy Kingdom Come" to individuals, to families and to young people. This was followed by a powerful ministry time, and then team members Francis and Steve gave their testimonies and most of the delegates gave their lives to Christ.

Situation escalates

During the early hours of Wednesday 15th, while they were in their accommodation at 'Foundation for Farming', a phone call to Team leader David from SOMA Director Stephen in the UK informed him that international media was reporting a coup: the national military of Zimbabwe had

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UK Residential Conference

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Previous conference delegates write:

"It was part of my healing"

"I was spiritually nourished and encouraged"

"Bible study was invaluable; refreshing to be led into this sort of depth"



We welcome as our guest The Ven Kevin Roberts Director of *ReSource*, the UK focused

sister organisation of SOMA. Kevin has led a SOMA team to Madi and West Nile, Uganda. It's an exciting time for *ReSource*, with a major review and renewal now completed, their call and values refreshed and clarified, SOMA and *ReSource* look forward to closely working together in the future.

'The mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha'



After the prayer tunnel, Thika.

SOMA's 'expect the unexpected' was key to the success of the mission to Thika, Kenya, in September last year. Bishop Julius had invited a team to give the Thika diocese a 'taste of SOMA' back in October 2016 and the resulting mission, from 27th September to 10th October 2017, was the result of that invitation together with much faith, prayer and raising funds by the team members. The theme of the mission was leadership; four one-day teaching retreats, a two-day teaching retreat as well as Sunday preaching at church services were planned for clergy, lay readers and their spouses, and evangelists.

The team resulted from a three-way diocesan link between Thika, Exeter and Cyprus & the Gulf, with members hailing from Cyprus, England and Uganda, but despite this team leader Rev. Derek Smith reports that "the team bonded better and more quickly than we dared hope".

Constitutional crisis

The constant political background to the mission was the constitutional crisis in Kenya brought about by the contested national elections, and this was the main preoccupation of everyone with whom the team met, resulting in much prayer and discussion.

A more immediate additional challenge was also posed right at the start by the news of the unexpected death of the mother of Ugandan team member James. The SOMA team are

very thankful for the assistance of Provost Joseph in helping James to return to Uganda, despite the logistical challenges faced by arranging this urgent return journey. Derek reports that "James was our most experienced SOMA team member; Alex our least experienced. The mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha, as it were.

"The dependence on the Holy Spirit's guidance was palpable"

Alex rose to the occasion through the mission despite challenges" and additional speakers were arranged for three of the retreat days. Team member Sue adds "the dependence on the Holy Spirit's guidance was palpable". A further challenge came when Alex developed a fever, as he was a vital translator to the team. Intercessor Tim reports that he prayed for Alex, and was given a word "Show your power O Lord" and Alex started to recover the following day and was soon back to speaking and "exercised his gifts superbly".

Tim concludes that this mission "was a spiritual battle and the prayers of the teams made such a difference".

The conferences took place in the beautiful environment of St Andrew's

Cathedral, Thika (40km north of Nairobi) and Derek reflects that every group came with a "positive mindset" and were open to prayer, praise and worship. Those who had previously experienced fewer opportunities to meet together and receive were especially responsive.

Although the team had limited time to build relationships with each group they were, nevertheless, pleased with the progress achieved. In the key area of prayer ministry the team modelled the use of prayer tunnels which the groups engaged with positively, as well as showing a ready understanding of prayer as a two-way communication with God and the need for prayer to bring about a change in us.

There were, additionally, sessions on gifts, spiritual growth, inner life and spiritual growth, leadership, and living in harmony in the family which were all well received. Derek reports that, "Clergy spouses were quick to appreciate our drama sketch showing how not to talk to the preacher at home after a Sunday service, and to learn how this could be done more positively!"

Encouragement

The team were very encouraged by the vitality of the Christian faith and church in Thika diocese: there is rapid growth in church communities and the diocese is undertaking excellent work in smaller churches in less accessible rural areas. The Church and Community Mobilisation Process (a Tearfund Initiative) has, "transformed some of these communities" and the diocese is "poised" to apply similar principles to other areas.

Despite the spiritual challenges posed by the active preaching of 'prosperity Gospel' theology in this region, the team were really



Bishop Julius and team member Alex.

encouraged by the soaking of everyday life in prayer, and precious moments like the men of a parish gathering publicly once a month to sing at the front of church. The people of the diocese are very hard-working and creative; every piece of land is used; every spare minute is used. A possible theme of any future mission to Thika therefore may be learning to rest; what does it mean to keep the Sabbath, and how can family life be guarded?

"The church is alive and active in Thika, we have hope for the future"

Team member Sue summarises the mission succinctly. "The church is alive and active in Thika and we can have hope for the future" and Intercessor Daphne adds, "It is a real joy to be included in the support on this mission".

Team: Rev Derek Smith, UK (team leader); Sue Smith, UK; Nora Ananiades, Cyprus; Alex Arinaitwe, Uganda; Joanna Bound, UK; James Tumwesigye, Uganda.
Bishop Julius Wanyoike of Thika.
Intercession co-ordinator Kate Brankin.



Team members Sue and Nora, Thika.

Come Holy Spirit, Thika.



Thank you

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‘We have felt the warmth and love of Christ. We have been equipped to serve’

This was the response of one delegate after attending a SOMA conference on the theme of ‘Thy Kingdom Come’, in Nairobi, Kenya last October.

Rev Patrick Whitworth led a team of five on a well-planned and intensive ten-day mission which included two mid-week conferences for lay leaders and clergy as well as all five members of the team each preaching in a separate parish on each of the two Sundays. The invitation came in 2016, from the Archbishop of Kenya via his Chaplain Francis Awando, to minister to the All Saints Cathedral Diocese, which centres around Nairobi Cathedral but includes 14 parishes covering both wealthy and poor areas of Nairobi.

and incredible resilience”.

Patrick also witnessed the depth of the love of the church when he preached at the newly rebuilt St Francis, Karen, church where the news of the sudden death of a young mother and Sunday school teacher was announced. “Archdeacon Joyce stood with the children, holding their hands and leading the congregation in prayer for them. ‘The church would now be their parent’ she said”. The strength and size of this congregation was in great contrast to the second Sunday ministry undertaken by Patrick, which was at the newly built church plant St James, Jamhuri, made of corrugated iron with about 40 adults and 20 children attending. This congregation

was further teaching on the individual, community and social implications of the Kingdom and additionally how Jesus manifested the Kingdom and how we might follow in his steps, by Clarissa and David.

Further teaching on the themes of freedom, unity, maturity and humility were developed on Wednesday, with time for group discussion, followed by a time for ministry on the Thursday, which was like “water to parched ground” reports Patrick, who concludes that, “the Lord was powerfully at work”. Hellen, a lay leader, was healed of back pain during this ministry time, and then received a phone call offering her employment. She was overjoyed as this would

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The Holy Spirit came in power: heaven touched the earth

This was a mission of great contrast between material poverty and spiritual wealth. Team member Paul reports, after his attendance at Emmanuel Church, Silanga, situated in Kibera (reputedly the largest slum in Africa), amid great poverty, that, “the service ended by processing onto the street in song complete with robed choir to the beat of drums, a happy scene of witness in the sunshine”. He reflects that, “the Christians here are rich, yes rich, and dearly loved sons and daughters of the King of Kings”.

Extreme poverty

Clarissa reflects, after preaching at St Thomas, Dagoreti, that, “St Thomas is in the centre of a slum area. There is extreme poverty, pain and sickness. However, in my encounter with the people on the margins, the hungry and homeless, I also experienced the most honest caring, pure joy, inspiring hope

had experienced local opposition and the Priest had recently been robbed at gunpoint of her laptop and money. This was a very vulnerable community with very slender resources much in need of prayer and support.

Team member Joanna reports that when she ministered at Holy Trinity Church, Kibera, she met a young family whom the church had sent out as missionaries to Madagascar and was very inspired that this church, also based in a slum, had been able to do this.

The initial ministry at Sunday services bore much fruit during the mid-week conferences with a resulting high turnout of 70 clergy for the four-day conference, and 60 for the single day conference for lay leaders.

“The theme of ‘the teaching on the Kingdom: its nature and significance’ was important and revelatory for many of the delegates” writes Patrick. There

enable her to fund the education of her granddaughter, and there was much rejoicing when this news was shared with the team.

One delegate who attended reported that, “The Lord has moved in a mighty way...the servants of God have displayed the spirit of servanthood leadership. We have felt the warmth and love of Christ. We have been equipped to go and serve in a mighty way. We are transformed and personally I have experienced a paradigm shift!”

Another concluded that, “you have revealed hidden things to us and we give all the glory to God” and another that, “this was a fabulous conference. It has taught us to activate the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us to change situations around us and for God to be glorified. The sessions... have reignited my relationship with God”.

Many delegates would like SOMA to return to Nairobi, and also suggested that it would be good if more Kenyans were involved in SOMA teams in the future.

Gratitude

SOMA is grateful to Patrick and the team as well as the intercessors, for their faithful service which bore much fruit for the Kingdom during this mission.

As ever the prayer cover provided by the intercessors was essential to the success of the mission. Maggie, an intercessor, reports that, “I felt a strong sense that the Lord was leading in this. He reminded me frequently throughout the day to hold...even if just for a minute...the team in prayer”.

Team: Rev Patrick Whitworth (Team leader); Paul Bright; Rev David Maurice; Rev Clarissa Shaw-Notip; Joanna Skinner. Intercession co-ordinator Kate Brankin.



Delegates, guests and team, Nairobi.

And a coup, too continued from page one

taken over state media and put President Mugabe under house arrest. The situation escalated very quickly and the planned programme for Wednesday was cancelled, with the team remaining at their accommodation and enjoying a surprise visit from Bishop Chad as well as a tour of the 'Foundation for Farming' project.

David McDougall reflects that, "everyone held together, prayed together and more deeply trusted God. It was a privilege to be in Zimbabwe on such a day of liberation. This team will never forget being there at this sea change moment in that nation's history. I truly believe that the prayers of the saints around the world brought this... coup into being". Team member Gill writes, "Just to be in Zimbabwe, a country I love so much, having lived there for some time... at this unique time of change for the country was an extraordinary honour and privilege!"

On Thursday and Friday, the team continued the mission and ministered



Children's corner, Harare.

at the Church of the Holy Name, Southlea Park, where 60 delegates attended, and the team spoke on empowering women, personal purity and marriage. Team member Jenny reflects, "the talks on marriage were astonishingly well received, given how culturally and personally challenging they were". David McDougall reflects that there was an, "incredible outpouring and breakthrough moment. [The] Holy Spirit came in power: Heaven touched the Earth", after the session on personal purity.

"hope has been restored to Zimbabwe"

Thursday also saw the team minister to 70 clergy with a seminar entitled, "how to reach young people with the gospel", which was received with applause.

David McDougall concludes that, "This visit has been truly blessed. We have seen people come to faith, be filled with the Holy Spirit, [receive prayer] for healing and encouragement. The teachings have been eagerly received and the atmosphere amongst those at the conferences has been very warm. The tangible difference in the national atmosphere between before and after the coup was incredible. Hope has been restored to Zimbabwe."

With the unstable political background to this mission, SOMA is hugely thankful for the faithful commitment of the intercessors, and the team as a whole has reflected that



Lunch time, Harare.

the intercessory foundation was immensely helpful and vital in enabling what happened. Intercessor Rosemary concludes, "It was a privilege to be involved in this mission, especially at such a strategic time for Zimbabwe – what an experience to feel part of it! It challenged me to... believe that events in that country were perhaps part of a huge answer to many years of prayer!" Please continue to hold Zimbabwe in your prayers during this time of transition and new national leadership.

Team Members: Rev David McDougall (Team Leader); Rev Alex Arinaitwe (Uganda); Hannah Akibo Betts (UK/Sierra Leone); Rev Matt Beer, Gill Bradley, Jenny Brown, Charlotte Cashman, Francis Fuller, Rev Stephen Holmes, David Young, Diane Young, Louise Young (UK). Bishop Chad. Intercession Co-ordinator Helen Foster.

Welcome Judy!



SOMA welcomes a new Administrator

Judy Deegan started work for SOMA UK on 10th January, assisting with all aspects of SOMA's administration, including the production of SHARING. She will be working on Mondays and Tuesdays during school term time and can be contacted via email on either judy.deegan@somauk.org or info@somauk.org. She is very pleased to be able to contribute to the work of SOMA and is looking forward to getting to know many SOMA supporters, team members and intercessors over the next few months. Judy is married to Tim and is the mother of two lovely, lively sons.





The latest news, Harare

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