

“Without forgiveness we cannot succeed”



Benon has been sent by God to relight fire in marriages

Tabora Diocese, central Tanzania. 96,000sq km (slightly larger than Scotland), 39 parishes and 200 congregations served by just 50 clergy. Since Bishop Elias Chakupewa was enthroned in 2011, the Diocese has founded a secondary school for 300 pupils and built a health centre as well as serving the spiritual needs of this vast, rural and very poor area. By 2018, Bishop Elias realised that the workload on his clergy was taking its toll, not just on them but on their families. As one Pastor said, “Sometimes I have hurt my wife due to too many responsibilities. Sometimes when she puts food on the table, I just find myself leaving the

food and leaving for ministry. That has been a hurting thing for my wife.” Elias invited SOMA to send a team to stand alongside them, to encourage and facilitate renewal in their spiritual lives and marriages. His invitation touched the heart of SOMA’s National Director, Stephen, who set about putting together a SOMA team for June 2019, led by Ken.

When Ken and the cross-cultural team of five arrived at St Stephen’s Cathedral, Tabora, they were met by 116 receptive and expectant clergy and their wives, with men sat on one side of the aisle and women on the other. The SOMA team invited them to move around so that couples sat together,

which caused a good deal of laughter and smiles and really set the scene for what the Holy Spirit was going to do over the coming days. Delegates responded to sessions on marriage, forgiveness and being filled with the Holy Spirit by receiving prayer, asking

SOMA has helped us to know we are worthy, very important in ministry.

for and receiving forgiveness from each other and God and praying for each other, with many tears of repentance and acts of forgiveness. Individuals who had not talked with each other for a long time were reconciled. A pastor’s wife brought her

Sitting together!

sister-in-law a gift, asked for forgiveness, and they were reconciled. Married couples asked for forgiveness from each other and found themselves in tears, and one leader’s wife reported that “SOMA has helped us to know we are worthy, very important in ministry”, and that “people were encouraged to go to those they had offended. This was very, very, important”. Another concluded that, “without forgiveness we cannot succeed”. The clergy were greatly encouraged and comforted by their fellowship with each other, as they have so little opportunity to do so in their ministry. One said, “Benon has been sent by God to relight fire in marriages”.

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“It was like going to meet Jesus”

This was the response of one delegate after SOMA’s mission to Kinshasa, DR Congo, last December. SOMA had been invited three years previously by Bishop Achille, so this was a long-awaited conference, to a church grappling with the challenges of a geographically large Diocese with few congregations and a paucity of resources. This is very much a ‘place less visited’ and so exactly the sort of place to which SOMA is called. Kinshasa is an African mega-city of 11 million and the capital of DR Congo,

however with the centre of Anglicanism in DR Congo being in the east, nearly 3,000 miles away, the Anglicans in Kinshasa can feel isolated and very much a minority. The SOMA team therefore prepared themselves to ‘keep in step with the Spirit’, to be flexible, courageous and bold as they stood alongside their brothers and sisters in Kinshasa to encourage and envision them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Together during the four days of the conference, they reflected on pastoral ministry, youth and the church, and

depending on God alone. There was time for prayer, repentance and worship together, and space for testimony and healing ministry. The SOMA team also celebrated Communion at the Anglican Cathedral with the Nigerian congregation which meets there, as well as the Congolese worshippers, and were greatly encouraged by the news that Archdeacon of Boma has planted five churches in this distant part of this large Diocese.

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‘I realise a call from God’ Kinshasa

“It was like going to meet Jesus”

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One senior and much respected Canon concluded at the end of the Conference that, “The Holy Spirit is making a new way, new things to go ahead... so let us stand firm and have courage”. Another Archdeacon reflected, “I am happy with time for prayer, time for praying, this... conference... is different, we are standing for prayer and practically applying by prayer. You gave us direction in our lives.” A Pastor said,

Stand firm, have courage

“These four days have been recalling me to the Lord, I was weak, I am strengthened” and another, “Let us go back to Jesus, we must disturb Jesus to help us, I must wake up Jesus in my life, my problems.” The Bishop’s wife said, “I realise a call from God – I am so grateful I am called from my mother’s womb” and the youth leader said, “the youth are encouraged”.



‘Let us stand firm and have courage’ Kinshasa

Please continue to stand with our brothers and sisters in Kinshasa in prayer, as they serve God in challenging circumstances.

Team: Team Leader Rev Stephen Dinsmore (UK), Mr Raphael Mukendi (DR Congo), Rt Revd Elisha Tendwa (Tanzania), Mr Lawrence Tendwa (Tanzania), Bishop Achille. Intercession Co-Ordinator Kate Brankin.



‘Let us go back to Jesus’. Kinshasa

“Choose life”

The Primate of South Sudan, Most Revd Justin Badi Arama, has a heart for young Christians, and so has invited SOMA to lead a series of conferences for youth leaders across his Province. Therefore last November a SOMA team, after being invited by Archbishop Moses Deng to Northern Bahr el Ghazal Internal Province, headed to the town of Wau to facilitate the latest conference in this series. Northern Bahr el Ghazal is a large rural and impoverished Internal Province made up of seven separate Dioceses and five delegates were invited to attend from each Diocese in order to ensure that the renewal experienced by them would be carried back to as wide an area as possible as they returned to their home Dioceses.

The people of South Sudan have not known prolonged peace. Conflict fuels division and trauma not just at national level, but across regions, towns, villages and even among families and between married couples. Amongst so much loss, human life can lose its intrinsic value and violence can become the norm as a way to attempt to solve differences. The Archbishop’s vision is to focus on peace and reconciliation, as well as youth empowerment, marriage and children. The aim is that these

youth leaders encounter the Prince of Peace by the power of the Holy Spirit, and go back to their home Dioceses equipped, and envisioned to spread the message of peace.

As a result, a multi-cultural team of five, led by Ron was assembled to facilitate a five-day workshop for 40 delegates on the theme of reconciliation. Ron says, “the essential premise is that for reconciliation to happen, the past must be faced and the pain it represents needs to be handed to God. Then people face their deep-seated prejudices and repent of wrong attitudes or actions. The process begins with a foundation of understanding God’s love for each one of us.” Before starting the workshop they visited an internally displaced people’s camp at Wau, a grim place where people were surviving rather than living, and were reminded of the destructive consequences of war and of God’s word to his people, “see I set before you life or death... so choose life”. As the workshop began the intercessors prayed and the Holy Spirit started to move. The delegates responded well, and all came for prayer to receive the Holy Spirit. Two practical sessions involving taking sin and pain to the cross were also very fruitful. The ministry times were powerful, with delegates praying for each other in groups of three, and Bible studies on Ephesians were also well received. The timetable included several drama workshops, and games of balloon volleyball which were ‘hilarious’ and provided some lightness and joy. As a result of the



A smartphone and a water mule, Wau

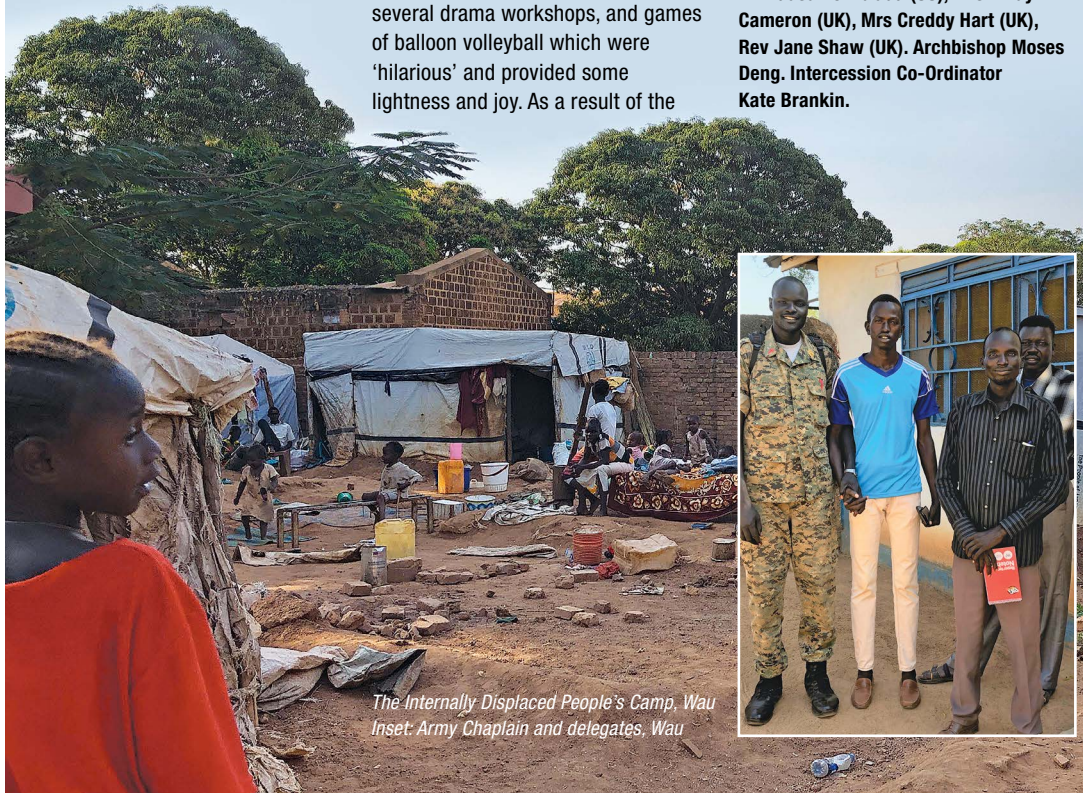
workshop, one delegate came to the understanding that, “God loves us and he sent Jesus to die. If you forgive others, God will forgive. Avoid revenge killing... confess and accept mistakes” and another when asked how God had spoken to her said, “to love, to be kind, to unite, to be prayerful, to read the Bible... seek the lost, bring many to Christ” and still another, “God wants us to... change our communities.”

joyful and faithful people

Team member Lindy reflected that these were, “joyful and faithful people, yet met with deep pain and anguish at all the suffering through the shock and trauma of living all their lives in a state of conflict” and Ron that, “it was a joy and a privilege to be with youth leaders in Wau, to sense their commitment to Christ and to see the church there at work, in spite of all the difficulties.”

Please do continue to join with our intercessors in prayer for this young nation which has suffered so much, for Holy Spirit empowered healing, peace and transformation of individuals, institutions and the country as a whole.

Team: Team Leader Rev Ron Hart (UK), Mr Bausumo Abiuda (SS), Mrs Lindy Cameron (UK), Mrs Creddy Hart (UK), Rev Jane Shaw (UK). Archbishop Moses Deng. Intercession Co-Ordinator Kate Brankin.



*The Internally Displaced People’s Camp, Wau
Inset: Army Chaplain and delegates, Wau*

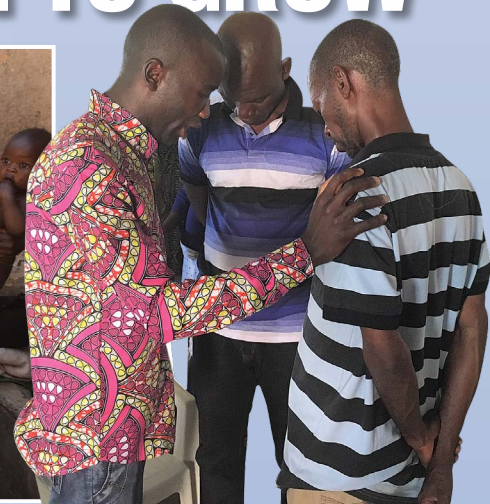
A CHURCH KEEN TO GROW



'I am again empowered', delegate at Kalemie



Lunch is prepared! Kalemie



Prayer ministry, Kalemie

Let me introduce you to one of SOMA's 'places less visited' – a place which the Lord nevertheless sees as a shining jewel. On the western shore of the vast Lake Tanganyika in eastern DR Congo is the port town of Kalemie. Founded in 1891 as a military outpost to oppose the slave trade in this region, it is now the centre for distribution of minerals on their way from interior DR Congo, across the lake to Kigoma in Tanzania, then by rail to the great coastal port of Dar-es-Salaam.

Last June a SOMA team arrived in Kalemie having travelled this route in reverse, to facilitate SOMA's fourth mission to this Diocese. Kalemie is currently part of Katanga Diocese, based in the southern city of Lubumbashi, but will soon become a brand-new Diocese. The team were invited by Bishop Bertin to encourage and facilitate unity as this church prepares for the birth of the new Diocese. Team Leader Ken found a church 'keen to grow', with 90 delegates attending. Then, shortly after they arrived, the team

themselves demonstrated unity, when two Ugandan team members, Edith and Benon, were informed that their daughter-in-law had died. The team rallied around to support them and to ensure that they were able to make the long journey home to Mityana, Uganda, in time for the funeral. A journey that normally takes several days was, by many answers to prayer, completed in just 24 hours. After they left, the Lord sustained the remaining three team members to be able to complete the three days of the conference without them, and enabled Ken to preach on the Sunday at the Cathedral with just 10 minutes preparation time, after having rushed back from delivering Edith and Benon to the airport.

Ken recalls that, "as we reworked our schedule, and throughout the seminar itself, we felt completely unified and at peace. The Lord had intervened in our plans in a way that could not be avoided, but he also empowered and sustained us throughout".

The conference itself took place at St Jean Baptiste Church in Kalemie,

with sessions concerning being one in Christ, Biblical leadership, and Christian marriage and family, and was met with a very positive response from the delegates. The Mothers' Union secretary said, "I am again empowered and I now know the good system for a good leader to lead very well". Pastor Kabange, the youth leader, said, "The church like one body consists of different parts and if we are united the future Diocese of Kalemie will bear fruit and be expanded". Another lady reflected that the teaching about marriage is something new for an African parent to teach their daughters but concluded, "now I know that these teachings are useful for us to prepare our own children."

An amazing story

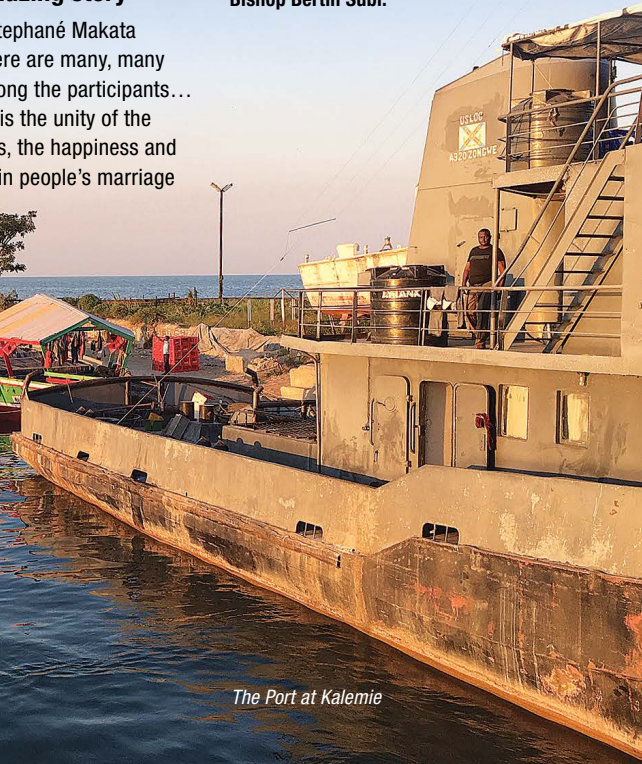
Vicar General Stephané Makata concluded, "There are many, many testimonies among the participants... but the big one is the unity of the church believers, the happiness and the big change in people's marriage

life including the courage and joy of all leaders to serve the Lord and build the Diocese of Kalemie." After the conference, Archbishop Bertin wrote to Stephen, SOMA's National Director, with the news that, "all our people in Kalemie came together and decided to be in unity and work for the ongoing of the Church in Kalemie. Last week they were together to pray, to plan and to work as a united Church. This is an amazing story". Ken says, "I believe that we left behind a happy church, confidently looking forward to the challenge and promise of becoming a new Diocese in the near future."

Team: Team Leader Revd Kenneth Wiebe (UK), Rev Eliezer Kimuga (Tanzania), Revds Benon and Edith Semmambo (Uganda), Mrs Yvonne Wiebe (UK), Intercession Co-Ordinator Sue Smith, Bishop Bertin Subi.



Crossing Lake Tanganyika, Kalemie



The Port at Kalemie

“Thank you for the love you have shown”

... was one response to SOMA's mission to the Diocese of Boga last October. The fifth mission in seven years to this Diocese, SOMA continues to stand alongside clergy and their spouses as they struggle to meet the challenges that continue to afflict this region of DR Congo: violence, insecurity, political upheaval and the Ebola virus. Just months before, rebels had attacked a neighbouring town, and one NGO had been forced to withdraw from some areas because of Ebola. Delegates reported being overworked, physically afraid, and as a result struggling with their marriages. The six-strong cross-cultural team, from the UK, Uganda and Kenya facilitated a five-day conference on the theme of 'Come and be refreshed', with opportunity for prayer worship, Holy Spirit ministry, and teaching sessions on marriage, money and post-traumatic stress as well as leadership and spiritual warfare.

Intercessors

The team were, as usual, heavily reliant on their intercessors, who prayed and fasted before and during this mission. The conference was well received, with one delegate reporting, "We felt we had 'lost the route' – now we have been directed back to the right way", and another that this was

the first time he had been able to sit with his wife at a conference. The Diocesan Secretary concluded: "You [SOMA] are not only linked to us through your prayers, your messages of encouragement and sympathy, but are also sensitive and ready to mobilise yourselves physically, financially, intellectually and spiritually to enable us to overcome the stress, the trauma due to abuse and crises of all kinds which cross the different regions of our country for years. The conference... was for all of us an excellent experience of recollection, sharing, prayer, spiritual and pastoral discernment, not forgetting matters of married life." He asked for continued prayer for the following issues: peace and reconciliation for communities which are victims of atrocities, young people who are being manipulated and encouraged to take part in abusive and destructive actions, restoration of displaced people and healing for victims of abuse and the Ebola virus. We urge you to continue to pray earnestly and faithfully for this Diocese, its clergy and their spouses.

Team: Revd Don Brewin (UK), Mr Michael Asaba (Uganda), Revd John Awodi (Uganda), Mrs Rosemary Bamutana (Uganda), Very Revd Obadiah Mushene (Kenya), Ms Maureen Nakiranda (Uganda), Revd Beatrice Oloo (Kenya). Bishop William. Intercession Co-Ordinator Helen Foster.



The team about to board the ferry at Kasenyi, Boga

“Without forgiveness we cannot succeed”

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'SOMA has helped us know we are worthy' Tabora

Late on the last evening, one couple came to the team's guest house together to share their story. The husband had been ignoring a growing problem in their marriage, as he had been so busy in his ministry and so tired when arriving home late, that his wife was really hurting and feeling neglected. Ken noticed that, "the healing that took place today was so evident!"

Valued as Women

To conclude the conference the pastor's wives chose and sang the team a song in Swahili, to thank them. They said the teaching made them feel important and valued as women, and had been 'good medicine' for their hearts, marriages, and ministries. Team member Eliezer concluded that this was a historical moment for the Tabora Diocese and that the Diocese

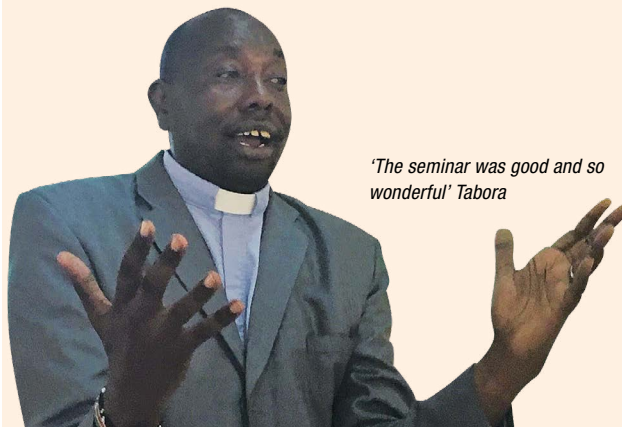


Tea time, Tabora

would never be the same. SOMA rejoices with an Intercessor's promise from Isaiah that, "He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; He offers strength to the weak".

The team completed the mission with visits to the medical centre and school and with preaching in several local churches during which many people gave their lives to Christ, before travelling on to Kalemie, DR Congo, for their next mission.

Team: Team Leader Rev Ken Wiebe (UK), Rev Eliezer Kimuga (Tanzania), Rev Obadiah Mushene (Kenya), Rev Benon Semmambo (Uganda), Rev Edith Semmambo (Uganda), Mrs Yvonne Wiebe (UK).



'The seminar was good and so wonderful' Tabora

Thank you

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