

Stepping out in faith and seeing what God can do



“Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds” Luke 24:38

The new and current trustees of SOMA UK

These words of Jesus were not spoken to worn out and weary leaders after a pandemic, or even to those facing war, famine or personal disaster. These were spoken to the privileged few who got to see him in person in his resurrected body on Ascension Day. The reason they were troubled was that they saw him. They were startled by his unexpected presence. They were undoubtedly still in shock from the events of Palm Sunday-Good Friday and Resurrection Day reports. But seeing him face to face meant that these first disciples were troubled and full of doubt.

Jesus' remedy was threefold: 1) speak to them with words of challenge and comfort, 2) offer proof that he was real (touch my hands, watch me eat) and 3) 'he opened their minds so that they could understand the scriptures'. When we are troubled and full of doubt, when we face hardship do we need to remember this too? I love the phrase 'he opened their minds'. How I love it when he gives me those sort of insights too!

Strategic direction for the future

This Ascension Day our trustees gathered in the lovely setting of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford and began a process of setting strategic direction for the future. Just as when SOMA was birthed in 1978 the time was framed in intercession and prayer. We heard from the Lord challenge and comfort, we remembered all that he has done to show himself real in the past few months and years and we let the Scriptures speak and remind us to lay hold of his promise and calling on SOMA.

We are blessed to have such a good body of trustees, and our warm appreciation goes to Lesley Cooper and Matt Beer who have completed their term of office. Thanks also to Sonia Home, Kevin Roberts and Wayne Massey who are starting now. The trustees are looking to set a strategy to 2025 by this autumn, but a key part of that is listening. Listening to Scripture, culture, words from intercessors and those whom we visit and those who visit us too.

Ascension Day shows us that sometimes we doubt God because he seems absent, but

we can still doubt him when he is tangible and there with us. We need minds open, comfort and challenge and reminders of his reality to get us looking up again. Our prayer for you, the SOMA family, is that God gives you that ability to look up again too, and to receive fresh the powerful anointing of the Spirit which Jesus promised he would give on the day he was lifted up. This 2022 let us step out in faith again and see what He can do.

Coming up in the next issue:

National Director and SOMA team visits DRC Congo refugees in Uganda.



‘Tending to the Nervous System of



Dan Williams handing out provisions to the Ukrainian refugees arriving in Poland

SOMA was birthed out of a prophecy that God was calling us to ‘join the Holy Spirit tending to the nervous system of the body of Christ.’ The nervous system connects us all, showing us where there is pain and making the body of Christ act. As SOMA UK helps connect the church worldwide we get to learn so much and see God at work in that communication.

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on the 24th of February shook the world. This act of merciless expansionism has shown the world that Putin’s nationalist totalitarianism is not a far distant memory of the 20th Century but a present reality of the broken world we live in. One of the most tragic aspects of this conflict (as with all conflicts) is those who suffer the most- namely the innocent (women, old men and children). At the time of writing there are an estimated 8 million internally displaced people from Ukraine, with many of these refugees fleeing into neighboring countries such as Poland.

In March this year SOMA UK National Director, Richard Moy was able to visit the Ukraine border alongside his friend from University Dan Williams (who had just fled Kiev a few weeks before with Ukrainian wife and child), and with their translator Viki, both of whom were keen to help.

In many respects it shared common themes with other SOMA missions. SOMA responds at short notice to the areas of the body of Christ which are hurting. If SOMA was a military organisation it would be the Parachute Regiment (Paras) flying in on the winged horse back of the Holy Spirit but tending to the nervous system of the body of Christ with spiritual weapons rather than live ammunition. A primary value for SOMA is, ‘keeping in step with the Spirit’. This means remaining flexible and fleet of foot, having no set product or programme, actively responding to the nuance of the

Spirit’s intended work, this flexibility enabled SOMA to respond quickly in this way to the current situation in Ukraine.

Although SOMA is not an aid agency, the mission was greatly enhanced because the bishop of Kensington encouraged local churches to support the Anglican Ukrainian priest Revd Sergiy and his Ukrainian contacts with supplies for the displaced Ukrainian refugees, but Sergiy needed help delivering the supplies. Then the Bishop of Europe then asked if we might help displaced people find their way from the border to loved ones in Europe. A local school offered their minibus for the trip and so the SOMA mission was enhanced by all our contacts who were also drawn to care for the nervous system of the body of Christ.

Constant intercession

All SOMA missions are built on a foundation of constant intercession of the saints, this mission was no different, hundreds of people prayed for Richard and Dan throughout the trip and in their words they were carried by our Lord, they both faced numerous obstacles on the journey and yet each time they were able to overcome them. SOMA even featured on BBC News which has been viewed over 5.4 million times already. As Dan (who has since traveled again with SOMA to visit displaced people from the DR Congo) said *“I can only assume it was life altering for the people we had the chance to help, but I know it was for me. I am a man of reason and of logic, and the number of times in 4 short days that we faced adversity only for a solution to present itself led me to what I now know to be the obvious conclusion that had been staring me in the face for 45+ years – that God, in his mysterious and unfathomable way, will provide the tools if I know how to accept them.”*

the Body of Christ'



The van used to carry the provisions for the trip

As so often happens in a short term mission, it is those who take that leap of faith by going on a mission are those who encounter God in a remarkable way. For Dan it was a life changing experience of the living God. Do you have any life changing experiences to share from a mission you have gone on? Please get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you and be encouraged together about all God has done through SOMA UK.

In June this year a SOMA team visited some refugee camps in Uganda (which we will report on in the next edition). But please hold the people of DRC in your prayers as you read this.



Dan and Vika (the translator for the trip)

Financial provision

God has been very gracious to SOMA in 2022 and our budget deficit for 2022 has been fully covered after three incredibly generous gifts. Please join us in praising God for this and keep praying for ongoing provision for our expanding vision to connect the church worldwide.



Richard at St Stephen's Twickenham, a SOMA UK mission partner

Why not book a SOMA speaker for a SOMA event at your church? We'd love to come and minister with you.

Intercessors:

We have a monthly Zoom meeting bringing encouragement and support. Join these wonderful times of prayer, news and prophecy! 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 8th of July. Get in touch with us at info@somauk.org for details. We hope to see you there!
Would you like to get intercessor updates: email info@somauk.org to become an intercessor for SOMA.

Meet the new trustees



Kevin Roberts, Sonia Home and Wayne Massey

Sonia Home

Former CEO of a charity for children with eye cancer, Executive Director then Executive Ambassador of SAT-7 Trust, charity consultant and founder of a psychometric profiling business. Being ordained as curate in Bristol Diocese. Brings challenge to enable growth and a focus on issues of organisational culture and talent development.

Wayne Massey

Publishing background including publishing manager at HTB church, co-leader of the innovative B&A church in Bristol. Brings a passion for mission and evangelism in and through the local church, wherever that may be. A track record of overseeing and enabling change. Experience in publishing, marketing and communications.

Kevin Roberts

Former Director of Re:Source, Archdeacon of Carlisle and Vicar of Meole Brace. Brings historical perspective as a longstanding supporter of SOMA UK and a team leader (14 ministry trips to Africa in 25 years). Guided Re:Source through organisational change. Contacts with Senior Leaders.

"I have a deep longing to see a renewal of the Holy Spirit in the Anglican church in the UK and across the world, with SOMA as a conduit along which the living water of the Holy Spirit can flow across the continents" Ven Kevin Roberts

'Girls' Project' in Boga, DR Congo



Some of the delegates from the mission

In February this year a SOMA team was sent to Boga, DR Congo. The Diocese of Boga (based in Bunia) has set up a "Girls' Project", to give encouragement and help to girls and young women who have been abused and displaced in the violence that has affected that part of the DRC for several years.

This was the background to the mission. The Team Leader was Revd Canon Beatrice Oloo, from Kisumu, Kenya, who had been on a previous SOMA team to Bunia in October 2019. In addition to Beatrice, these were: Revd Mabel, Susan, Mary and Julie.

The mission was a great success as we can see from this quote from Revd Beatrice "We thank God, for He was with us throughout the mission, and brought us back home safely. We thank God that at Yambi Church a number of people gave their lives to Christ. We have had a positive response from all the team members and the delegates we met, including the beneficiaries of the Girls' Project. As a team from Kenya we have agreed to support those girls who have already been trained, to get sewing machines so that they can continue with the work of sewing and embroidery, to enable them to earn some income. We are praying over this matter, and before long we will be mobilising our Christians to assist in this course of action." Praise God for this mission and let us pray for this project to grow.

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Missions planning

As world travel begins to open up again it is a real joy to be able to join in again in person with what God is doing in his global church. We are planning and preparing to send four international teams over the coming few months. At the time of writing this edition of Sharing the first team will be in Uganda already visiting the diocese of Mityana and North Kigezi and then hosting a conference for clergy in South Rwenzori and visiting those seeking refuge from the DRC in Rwenzori. There will be an opportunity to meet a lot of the clergy who minister across different parts of West Uganda and for us to share in their ministries. It will also be exciting to meet with the bishops of Uganda during their gathering in Kampala before they come to the UK in August for the Lambeth conference. Our scheduled series of missions in South Sudan begins this coming October starting in the Western Equatoria Internal Province and the Amadi Internal province. These series of youth missions (youth goes up to 35 years of age in South Sudan!) will visit each of the Internal Provinces in South Sudan over a three year period culminating in a national renewal conference in February 2024. This is a really exciting opportunity for church leaders in the UK to take teams from their parishes out and learn from leaders in South Sudan in renewal ministry and church planting. Could your church step out in faith and send a team to one of these youth missions? We are also planning missions to other parts of East and Central Africa over the coming months including to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, as well as exploring mission possibilities in other parts of the world and with international teams in the UK. We appreciate all your prayers as we pray, plan and prepare for the different types of missions ahead.

Lambeth Conference planning



Richard with The Most Revd Tito Zavala, Archbishop of Chile and The Most Revd Dr Justin Badi Arama, Primate of South Sudan, Chair of Global South and Chair of SOMA International

Richard was recently able to meet Rt Revd Justin Badi Arama and other Primates at their pre-planning meeting for the Lambeth Conference. We are hugely grateful for all of the orthodox bishops in the Global South who feel able to attend Lambeth this year, 44 years after SOMA was birthed in a move of God at a fringe meeting of the 1978 Lambeth conference. Please pray for the upcoming conference and for SOMA National Directors who will have a stall there as they seek to listen to, learn from and support visiting Bishops. May God pour out his Spirit afresh on the Bishops of the Anglican Communion.