

Ugandan Style Evangelism

Seminarians Mentored in Mukono Diocese - Reflections by Mr. Christopher Culpepper

This was a day I had been waiting for. The Scriptures came to life for me as we went out to evangelize the local neighborhood, just as the disciples did.

As I reflect back on this day I am reminded that we are “fishers of men.” Jesus cast a wide net by sending out many teams (remember the 70), and we went out like that.

I was reminded of Luke 10 – the disciples went out, taking nothing extra with them. Where they were received, they stayed. Where they were not received, they dusted off their feet and went on. Our experience was like that.

I was reminded of Genesis 3:9, where God went looking for Adam, and also the parable of the lost sheep. We were seeking the lost.

We witnessed to many selling food on the side of the road. God asked, “Why do you look for food that perishes when I have the words of eternal life?” (paraphrased). I was able to use that as a gateway to those people challenging



This is the day! We and our Ugandan friends are ready to take the Gospel to the local neighborhood.

them to consider that while they sell food that only nourishes the body, God gives us food for eternal life. It was a powerful moment.

I saw Paul contending with the philosophers in Acts when meeting opposition to the Gospel message. We said, “Why do you argue against the gospel when salvation has visited your house today?”

Just as Jesus did, we evangelized the children.

We walked the roads and crowds followed us, as did the crowds who followed Jesus and the disciples.

Finally, we experienced many hearts that were hardened to the Gospel message, and I was reminded that Paul planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.

Yes, that day was truly awesome. And at day’s end we gathered together to share our stories, just as the disciples did.” ■

God is Using SOMA to Impact Future Leaders

Ask yourself a question: “Who will be the leaders of our part of the Body of Christ 15 years from now?” SOMA believes that God wants us to find ways to shape and influence young emerging leaders. Several of the stories in this newsletter tell how SOMA seeks to live out this mandate of our Lord.

The team from Nashotah House Seminary: Mr. Christopher Culpepper, team leader, Mr. Eliot Barron, Mr. Iain Boyd, Mr. James Fraser, Mr. Gregory Pickens, Mr. Mark Stockstill.

Report from the Field...

At the invitation of the Rt. Rev. Benazir Kisembo, SOMA USA and SOMA South Africa held a conference for clergy and some lay delegates of the Diocese of Rwenzori, Uganda. Our unusual team of six included three clergy and three laity, a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and a wide age spread.

Ida Bunyan, age 15, was a significant and impressive addition to our team. She presented an excellent and well-received Bible study on John 15: 1–11 which modeled the ministry that youth can have in the Church. A youth worship team that blessed the conference by leading worship in song and dance adopted Ida as their own.

The Rev. Canon Lovey Kisembo, wife of the inviting bishop and National Director of SOMA Uganda wrote, “Thank you, SOMA, for the great work



The SOMA team enjoys preparing the day's teaching.

you did for Rwenzori Diocese during your January mission to us. The team you put together was wonderful! Up to today the participants are talking about how impressive all the teachings were to them.

Already two Archdeacons who previously used to be very much opposed to the things of the Spirit have organized teaching missions to run in their areas.

One of these missions took place one month after your mission visit and 1,000 people accepted Christ as their Lord and Savior! I have been invited to go with a team of four to the other Archdeacon's place to teach and to launch Renewal. He has organized the congregations of his nine parishes to come together at the headquarters. Please pray for us, because that means handling huge numbers of people.

People are excited about starting small groups. We have started with small groups of Intercessors in every congregation within the Diocese. I know very many things are going to happen.”

Team list: Mrs. Edwina Thomas, team leader, SOMA USA, Miss Ida Bunyan, the Revs. Praveen and Veena Bunyan, and Mr. “Cobb” Grantham, St. James, Newport Beach, CA, and the Rev. Chris Viljoen, SOMA South Africa.

Surprised by Joy

Team Debriefing from Mbale Diocese

On one wet and rainy Sunday morning, the SOMA team from Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry (TESM) made a journey by car and on foot to a church located in the foothills of Mt. Elgon, Uganda. They found this was a Sunday for baptisms; one hundred forty-seven persons were to become part of the body of Christ. All but 10 of these persons were converts from another faith. The three priests, two from SOMA and the local priest, performed baptisms at one of the three doors of the church.

On another Sunday, a wedding took place in the service where the team was ministering. During the procession down the aisle, the bride stopped and knelt. John Macdonald led her to accept Jesus as her Lord. Her joyous marriage ceremony followed.

At this same service, the noise of a crowd interrupted the service. Children ran outside to see, even as some persons were fearful that this might be an attack on Christians. A local woman of another faith had woken that morning with a message from God that she should turn to Christ as her Savior. She went to the nearby local Anglican Church. The lay leader there knew that SOMA visitors were preaching at another Anglican Church three or four kilometers distant. The entire congregation of the first church walked to the neighboring church—they were the talking and singing crowd that brought the interruption. Together, they all celebrated God's power to save through His son, Jesus. More than thirty persons came to faith that morning. ■

Team list: The Rev. Canon John Macdonald, team leader, Stanway Institute, TESM, Mr. Alan and Mrs. April Morris and Mr. David Newhart, TESM, and the Rev. Barbara Nixon, All Saints, Sacramento, CA.

SOMA's Policy (cont'd from page 4)

ethnic concerns which Christians face every day. SOMA ministers should be committed to Biblical standards regarding money and possessions, relationships, and sexual purity. We define sexual purity, or chastity, as faithfulness within heterosexual marriage and sexual abstinence outside of it. Above all, we recognize the truth of Jesus' words: 'Apart from me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). And so we commit ourselves to seeking the presence and the power of the Holy Spirit in our Christian discipleship, that we may bear fruit for the Kingdom of God." ■

“Mission to the USA” to International Students at VTS

by Mrs. Lori Sandoval

When we first met the international students at Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) who attended our retreat, they exuded enthusiasm and excitement. Their expectant hearts gave the false impression that they dwelled in a joyful place, a place of blessing far from the effects of a life of struggle. I have come to look back at that greeting with great awe; they were cheerful not because everything in their life was in order, but because the God they serve is so much greater. I know with my head that the joy of the Lord is not dependent on circumstance, but these folks are a living testament of it. As their stories unfolded, they all had experienced more heartache and catastrophic loss than most people face in a lifetime. These were not old men, but their hearts were broken, and their souls ached.

The beauty though was their resolve in the truth by which they navigated their life choices. It remained totally unshaken. Despite the stumbling blocks life has thrown them, they still stand. It was at this place that the SOMA team humbly offered ministry. Our first task was to come alongside these men of God, who have forsaken their homelands and families for a year or more, to better serve the Kingdom. The second was to minister to them in that place, to bring refreshing and soul healing to their weary hearts and to minister by speaking the truth to them.

But what we gave was meager compared to what the Lord did and what they shared with us in return. Their witness and their supernatural joy was testimony to me of the sufficiency and great love of the Lord. It is easy to say I will lay down my life for the Lord, until I see someone who has really done it! Glory to God for His gift and love to these students, and glory to God for the honor of serving them!! ■

Team list: Mrs. Gail Patton, team leader, Mrs. Lori Sandoval, Mrs. Gail Scott, Mrs. Carol Updike, Mrs. Sue Wheeler, All Saints', Dale, City, VA; the Rev. David and Mrs. Margie Harper, Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, VA; Mr. David Barton, Christ the Redeemer, Chantilly, VA.

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“Mission to the USA” from Madagascar

Bishop Roger Chung Po Chuen and Mr. Alex Totomarovario from the Diocese of Antsiranana came to be missionaries among Episcopalians in the USA. They spent one week with each of three churches: St. Martins, Chagrin Falls, Ohio; St. John's, Petaluma, CA; and Christ Church, Charlottesville, VA.

The Rev. Brian Vander Wel of Christ Church said, “It was very engaging to listen to Bishop Roger. Because he has an obviously deep relationship and walk with the Lord, I wanted to listen and hear what he had to say.

“At times he was challenging, really funny, and he shared incredible wisdom. He spoke with authority and presence. I know people's lives were touched and people were changed, but we don't always know how to speak about those things. God is showing our people how God works.”



Bishop Roger Chung Po Chuen

The Rev. David Miller of St. John's reports that Bishop Roger was especially good at one-on-one interactions, encouraging and exhorting the people to consider their giftings and use them for the building up of the Body of Christ. He also enlarged the parish's vision of the Anglican Communion and gave them a deeper appreciation for the work of the Gospel in an area of the world new to most of them. ■



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Where SOMA Stands

In keeping with SOMA's calling to serve the Anglican Communion and the worldwide Church, and in light of the present controversy in our Church, the SOMA USA Board of Directors passed the following motion on March 10, 2004, at their annual meeting in Newport Beach, CA:

"We affirm the foundational beliefs that have always undergirded the ministry of SOMA as expressed by the National Directors' meeting in Uganda in October 2003:

- *We believe that God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *We believe that no one is reconciled to God except through Jesus Christ, His Son (John 14:6).*
- *We believe in the sole and final authority of scripture, in all matters of faith and practice, as interpreted and taught by the historic tradition of the Church. (See Article VI of the 39 Articles of Religion.)*
- *We believe that scripture can only be rightly understood through the illumination of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). Any claim to God's truth can never be contrary to or at variance with the plain meaning of scripture (2 Tim. 1:13-14).*
- *We believe that the love of Christ compels us to extend his grace to all people, since all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (2 Cor. 5:14; Rom. 3:23).*
- *We believe that all need to know the power of the cross for forgiveness, healing and transformation (1 Cor 1:18).*
- *We believe that the Church is called by God to minister this grace of Jesus Christ by faithful teaching and application of the scriptures, and by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

And we further reaffirm our longstanding Policy Statement about holiness of life:

It is the policy of SOMA USA that all persons who serve this ministry as employees, board members, and team members, be committed to the highest standards of Christian faith and life. Conversion leading to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and an experience of the empowering and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are essential for all SOMA ministers, as is sensitivity to cross-cultural issues, the ability to work in a team and the willingness to respect the leadership and gifts of other team members, male and female, lay and ordained. SOMA ministers should be humble in the exercise of authority and power, flexible in communicating the truth of the Gospel in other cultures, and mature in dealing with the complex and painful (continued on page 2)