



# Sharing

The Newsletter of SOMA USA • Volume 33 • Issue 1 • April 2017

## SOUTHERN NYANZA, KENYA: A GLIMPSE INTO GOD'S PURPOSES



SOMA took a cross cultural team of six to lead a conference for the Diocese of Southern Nyanza, Kenya—a new diocese for SOMA mission—at the request of Bishop James Ochiel. The Southern Nyanza Diocese had been formed as a result of exponential growth in another diocese where, years earlier, SOMA ministry had sown seeds of renewal. An estimated three hundred and fifty clergy, lay leaders and church staff attended the conference.

According to the team: “Most of the teaching and ministry centered on the presence and working of the Holy Spirit and on the call and character of the Christian, especially applicable to these leaders. Because of their repentance (the thinking in a new way, coupled with a change in action), and because almost all the leaders of the diocese were present, this was a momentous turning point.

There was a great sense of unity, of God’s call on their lives, and of his presence and power to see his kingdom come and will be done in a greater way. I believe that in the years to come this diocese will look back and say, ‘The Lord started all this at the SOMA conference.’”

It was a surprise and joy for team leader Rev. Brook Batchelor to discover that Bishop Ocheil had come to visit and minister at his church in the US fifteen years earlier, during a time of that church’s growth and transition—the church he now leads as its rector. It’s not often possible to see the ways the Holy Spirit weaves together people and circumstances. Yet here was unmistakable evidence of his hand in ministering to his people, using SOMA and those who stepped out to go as his instruments.

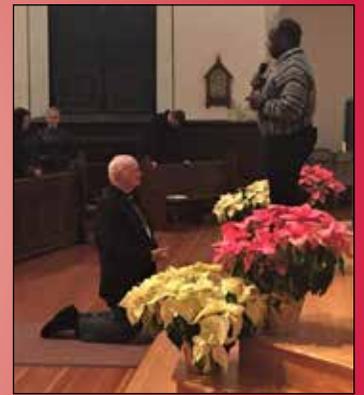
### **From a SOMA team member:**

*“What touched me the most during the mission was the hunger that I saw in the Kenyan people to hear from God, and the kindness that the people showed to us throughout the entire trip in Nairobi and Homa Bay. I was also impressed with the amount of worship that takes place in each church service. It reminded me of the first church that I ever attended when I gave my life to Christ.”*



Team: Rev. Brook Batchelor, TL, All Souls Anglican, Jacksonville, FL; Sean Price and Emma Yates, All Souls Anglican, Jacksonville, FL; Lynn Atlee, Christ Church, Jacksonville, FL; Rev. Philip Matee and Zipporah Katunga, Diocese of Makueni, Kenya.

# MISSION TO THE USA: Empowered for Gospel Witness



The Anglican Diocese of New England under Bishop Bill Murdoch partnered with SOMA USA and International SOMA Chair, Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi from the Diocese of Jos, Nigeria, to lead a conference for his clergy and lay leaders. Held at All Saints' Anglican Church in Amesbury, Massachusetts, the primary focus of the mission was on ministry and evangelism—the power of the Gospel in our lives, ministry and culture.

Following the conference, Bishop Murdoch sent a pastoral letter to his clergy, summarizing his impressions and insights from the event. “Archbishop Kwashi’s opening remarks warmed my heart: ‘God is still counting on you for something great.’ His challenge to us came in the form of a question: ‘Have you found one person to bring to Jesus this year, or have you failed to commend the faith that is within you?’ It is a strong and convicting question that we were able to explore together over the course of those three days.

“Ben Kwashi’s witness of his marriage to wife, Gloria, his ministry throughout the world, and his courageous stand in the face of Islamic terrorism in Nigeria are legendary. Together the Kwashis have taken in over four hundred orphans to save their lives in the midst of a ravished country. It is out of this experience that he exhorted us to remember that the Spirit of God gives us eyes to see opportunities for mission wherever we are. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, through whom we experience the power of the Gospel, will lead to our transformation and the transformation of others. I was pleased to hear Archbishop Ben’s life verse was the same as my own, Romans 1:16: ‘For I am not ashamed of the Gospel ...’”

The Dean of the Cathedral, the Rev. Dr. Nathan Baxter, shared his notes and reflections from Archbishop Kwashi’s teachings in the following excerpts from his report on the diocesan web site ([www.ad-ne.org/diocesan-news/soma-new-england/](http://www.ad-ne.org/diocesan-news/soma-new-england/)): “The Holy Spirit comes to give power for witness to the Life of Jesus, the life manifested in real transformation for areas no one else can reach. If we desire empowerment for witness, we must yield ourselves and our plans to God’s principles and purposes, led by and fueled by the Holy Spirit.

“‘We are not at liberty to not preach the Gospel’ (based on II Timothy 1). Yet evangelism is rooted in prayer. We must remember this in order to maintain our courage in Gospel witness, particularly the sacrifices of those who have gone before us and the sacrifices we have already made for the sake of the Gospel. We must remember the ways God has invested in us and how He has called and saved us. Remembering helps us to fan into flame the gifts of God and to protect the fire from being quenched or dampened. The Spirit will take us to places where we can witness and do things for the good of others, beyond our fears and beyond our natural capacities to think and love.

“As Christians, we can and must refresh ourselves in our identity in Christ (Colossians 3:12-17). Because we are God’s Chosen Ones, Holy and Beloved—because each of us is now a Kingdom Personality—we can and must put on the daily ‘clothing’ of the Kingdom. Similarly, we can and must allow the Peace of God to enter and rule in our hearts. We also can and must allow the Word of God to dwell richly in our hearts. As we do these things together faithfully, family members find it increasingly easy to relate in Gospel-transformed ways: we forgive and are forgiven; we serve and honor and love one another.”

Archbishop Kwashi ended the conference by speaking about Gospel power through the Church to the culture, from Romans 1:16-17. “We need to discern, in each culture and time, what the will of God is for his children. The Scriptures are the touchstone for that discernment, especially when the Scriptures are trusted and obeyed. We can and must identify with the Gospel and live unashamed of that Gospel, for it is God’s power of transformation for anyone, anywhere, anytime. The Gospel is not an abstract idea but a lived experience. There is no culture that the Gospel cannot reach and transform. The power is in the Gospel by the Spirit, not in us or in our skills or strategies. Our call is to live and proclaim the Gospel and trust in the Spirit’s power, thus bearing fruitful witness to God’s transformation.”

Team: Archbishop Benjamin Kwashi, Diocese of Jos, Nigeria, TL; Dr. Glen Petta, SOMA USA.

## PALETWA, MYANMAR: TRANSFORMED BY GOD'S LOVE

This past fall Bishop James Min Dein of the Diocese of Sittwe asked SOMA to bring a mission team to the village of Paletwa. This area in Myanmar has endured years of ongoing conflict, and travel to the area is restricted by the government; a second visa is needed to come to this part of the country. The means of travel to Paletwa are also a barrier—after landing at Yangon, the team took a domestic flight to the town of Sittwe, followed by a two hour car trip, concluding with a six hour trip up the river to reach the village of Paletwa. With these barriers, it's understandable why the diocese had never received a mission team; and there had been no missionary presence for forty-six years. A team member reflected upon the warm welcome by the people of Paletwa, and noted: "The former bishop of the Diocese of Sittwe, who joined with Bishop Min Dein to greet our team upon arrival, had prayed for many years to see the day when the Church beyond Myanmar would care enough to send missionaries to this remote village."



The desire of Bishop Min Dein was for his clergy and lay leaders to have a deepened spiritual life and receive the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit to enable them to do the work of ministry in this majority Buddhist culture (96% of all citizens). The Holy Spirit moved powerfully through the team during ministry time with physical and emotional healings. The love of Jesus was palpable. According to one team member, "Not two hours into the first day of the conference, (attendees) responded in droves to the call to come forward for prayer—for a deeper knowledge of God's word and experience of Christ in their lives, a more intimate fellowship with God, and healing of relationships and physical disabilities. The Holy Spirit's power and lovingkindness flowed throughout the building."

The team was especially blessed by the faith of a grandfather (the retired bishop) and God's love for him. The Bishop came to inform the team that his five-month old granddaughter was in critical health. She was lethargic and had stopped nursing a few days prior. The doctor wanted to send her to the hospital in Sittwe that night for IV fluids, an eight hour journey by boat and public bus. The faith of this man prompted him to ask the SOMA team

to pray for her and her mother. The very mission team for which he had faithfully prayed was there at just the right time to pray for the healing of his granddaughter. The next morning he came to the conference, sharing news of answered prayer and the healing power of God—she was healed, began nursing again and was restored to health.

The Holy Spirit conveyed through the team's presence how much He cared for each person present—so much so, that He sent a SOMA team from halfway around the world to tell them. "For you formed my inward parts, you knitted me together in my mother's womb" (Psalm 139:13). A team member shared: "One of the best memories I will carry with me will be the times of teaching about how God gives us different gifts to build the church (Ephesians 4:12) and grow in Christ-likeness (v 15), so that the witness of His lovingkindness will be seen by others. I did not expect to experience for myself these truths—that He would allow me to exercise His gifts to me, so that I am a witness of His sovereign goodness. I felt I carried something of God's heart to them. And I am thankful God allowed me to be a part of expressing His love to them."

Team: Glen Petta, TL, SOMA USA; Rev. Stuart Smith, Good Shepherd, Granbury, TX; Rev. Andrew Maw, Diocese of Yangon, Myanmar; Xiaohui Yang and Pearl Yeo, Diocese of Singapore, Singapore.



### SOMA USA

National Director  
Mission Relations  
Administrator  
Phone  
Email  
Home Page

Dr. Glen Petta  
Debbie Petta  
Jane Parrott  
817-737-SOMA (7662)  
office@somausa.org  
http://www.somausa.org

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman  
Ed Speare All Saints', Woodbridge, VA  
Board Members  
Ron Davis All Saints', Woodbridge, VA  
The Rt. Rev. Kevin Allen Diocese of Cascadia  
The Rt. Rev. Ron Jackson Diocese of the Great Lakes  
The Rev. Dr. Margaret Short Las Cruces, NM  
The Rev. Andrew Petta St. Barnabas, Fort Worth, TX  
The Rev. Brook Batchelor All Souls', Jacksonville, FL  
Kristi Heffron St. Barnabas, Fort Worth, TX  
The Rev. Marcus Kaiser Church of the Holy Comforter, Sumter, SC

### ADVISOR

The Rt. Rev. John Guernsey

### INTERNATIONAL ADVISOR

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Michael Nazir-Ali

### SOMA INTERNATIONAL CHAIRMAN

The Most Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kwashi



**SOMA USA**  
2501 Ridgmar Plaza #99  
Fort Worth, Texas 76116

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**Don't miss videos and updates of missions through periodic SOMA "e-News" by email. To be included, please send your email address to [office@somausa.org](mailto:office@somausa.org).**

## **DIRECTOR'S CORNER** *by Dr. Glen Petta*

Many times we don't know the effect of SOMA's ministry. However, I had a conversation with a friend who is a senior Kenyan bishop, with whom I attended the enthronement of Archbishop Jackson Ole Sapit. My friend shared this story about the impact of SOMA's ministry.

The Anglican Province of Kenya has approximately seven million Christians in all the churches it represents. Last summer, Archbishop Sapit was elected from a minority tribe in Kenya instead of from one of the two majority tribes, which is the usual practice. The transition was so orderly and peaceful that some senior ranking government officials came to leaders of the Church of Kenya and asked how they were able to elect a leader from a minority tribe with no violence or law suits. This senior bishop, who was present at that meeting, told the government officials how the peaceful transition came about. He explained that the Church was able to accomplish this task so gracefully and without incident or conflict, because the Kenyan House of Bishops had received two SOMA missions with teaching and ministry on repentance, conflict resolution, and reconciliation. The response from the government officials was, "Do you think that these principles could be shared with the leaders of the Kenyan government?"



I pray this encourages you as much as it did me! Thank you for making a difference in lives around the world through your partnership in SOMA.