

## Hold on to Your Socks!

A testimony to the power of the Holy Spirit.

from North Kigezi Diocese, Uganda  
report following two diocesan clergy conferences on integrity

Dear SOMA Team,

We pray for the whole SOMA group for the new chapter started in our Diocese. In every church, people talk of the spiritual revival and the spiritual surgery in many believers' hearts after the pastors' and wives' conference [in May].

The Dean of the Cathedral invited me to preach on the Day of Pentecost. While I was still in the pulpit, a group of people came in straight to the altar carrying a sick person. They left the girl there and went back to sit in the pews. When I finished preaching, the Dean announced to the whole congregation that I was going to pray for the sick.

You can imagine what I felt, but by the power of the gift of the Holy Spirit I received [at the conference], I told God that it was His duty to heal this girl. She had demons that could not allow her to open her eyes and evil spirits were talking in her stomach. Her limbs were so weak that she could not stand up right without support.

Thank God I had just to follow His instructions through the power of the Holy Spirit. I commanded the whole Cathedral worshippers to stand up with their hands up. I requested those who could come forward to join me to pray. No sooner had I prayed for about one minute than people burst into ecstasies. Some, about 10 people prayed in tongues and others in languages of their choices. I prayed and prayed. To cut the story short the girl received her sight back, she stood up on her feet and was healed instantly. The girl that had tried several hospitals with no help at all is now in good health. She and her parents are glorifying God's healing power.

What followed next? There was confusion in the whole church. People feared. What? I cannot tell. Such a miracle had never happened in our Cathedral before. The whole Cathedral was on Spiritual fire like it was on the Day of Pentecost. Praise the Lord.

That was God's healing not mine. I am still excited by the power of the Holy Spirit and I wanted to furnish you with one of the true records of the work you did in North Kigezi Diocese. May God bless you.

Yours truly,  
Rev. Canon Eliab Tumwesigye  
Principal of Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College



# Encouragement. Fellowship.

## Witness. *By the Rev. Canon Dr. Les Martin*

These three words speak of the deeper purposes God had in mind when our SOMA team visited the Rt. Rev. Dr. Benjamin A. Kwashi and the Anglican Diocese of Jos, Nigeria, in April and May.

The people of the diocese were in profound need of encouragement in the wake of the brutal attack on the Kwashi family this past February. Everywhere we went, people were cheered just by our presence...the pain came out, the story was told again and again, and joy was expressed. "You have visited us just like Jesus," one Archdeacon's wife said. Their lives encouraged us as well. Rachel, one team member, wrote, "I felt so ridiculous preaching on suffering. I couldn't help but think...what are you doing? Listen to their stories. They know what it is to carry their cross. They know what it is to die daily. They know what it is to follow Jesus."

Our team consisted of two clergy and two young people, and so we spent a good bit of time working with the youth of the diocese. Recognizing the commonalities of the struggle against secular youth culture, praying, sharing stories and seeking strategies, we found in these young men and women a vibrant and committed church of today and tomorrow.



*Rachel with the children in Shendam*

Personally, the crux of this mission concerned witness. The 2003 Muslim-Christian riots in Shendam, Wase and Lantang made world headlines as thousands were killed and churches went up in flames. Some 40 plus persons died even as we were visiting. To stand with our Nigerian brothers and sisters at the graves of the martyrs and say, "Yes, their blood matters to God and to His people," was perhaps the most important thing I could have done. The remembrance of the moment will remain with me all my days.

To be the body of Christ together, in mission together, until every knee shall bow, that is our task. Trips like this keep all of us focused and strengthened for the work that lies ahead. ■

*Team list: the Rev. Canon Dr. Les Martin, team leader, SOMA USA; Ms. Rachel Acquaviva, Mr. Robert Acquaviva, and the Rev. Nancy Chalfant-Walker, St. Martin's, Monroeville, PA.*



## To Go or Not to Go?

*By the Rev. Doug Sherman*



*Ministry in a village church*

That was the question. First there was bird flu, then wide spread rioting due to the Danish cartoons and just before we left an attack on the bishop's compound that left one killed and another wounded. What was the "responsible" thing to do? Each time we prayed we got the same answer. "Go and encourage your brothers and sisters."

Who were we to encourage them? We were two newly ordained priests and three lay people from two small parishes in a shrinking denomination on the verge of splitting. What did we have to offer a diocese of a hundred thousand, where building programs

can't keep up with the growth and converts from other faiths leave everything they've known to serve Jesus? Yet, we obeyed and went to Wusasa Diocese in northern Nigeria.

Our goal was relationship building. We saw some awesome things. We preached in churches so full that people leaned in the doors and windows to hear what we were saying. We visited a hospital and rural mud hut villages and were privileged to tour schools and meet the secondary school girls that we support.

The public times of preaching, teaching and advising were good; we engaged in real ministry that touched lives. Yet it was behind the scenes in conversations with a few at a time that heart links were formed and God knit us together. Our Nigerian brothers and sisters told of us of their struggles with poverty, religious discrimination and corruption. Our hearts hurt. When we shared about the bondage of materialism, the struggle in our church with heresy and the breakdown of the family, their hearts hurt for us. It was clear we needed one another and were better off for having the other in our lives.

We went to offer encouragement; yet, in the end we think we were the ones most encouraged. Sounds like a God thing, doesn't it? ■

*Team list: The Rev. Doug Sherman, team leader, Ms. Mary Pat Acquaviva, Mrs. Debra Horn, St. Martin's, Monroeville, PA; the Rev. David Grissom and Mr. Harold Hicks, St. Alban's, Murrysville, PA.*

# “Across The Waters”

## Nigerian Preaching Mission to the USA

By the Rev. Charles Mann



Bishop Lasebikan on left  
Bishop Adeleye on right

**D**uring May, the Evangelism Committee of the Diocese of SW Florida held a Nigerian Preaching Mission entitled “Across the Waters.” We wanted to challenge those in our diocese to carry out the call of evangelism in our communities in a revival like we are seeing in countries like Nigeria. Through SOMA’s *Mission to the USA*, we hosted Bishop Tunde Adeleye of Calabar Diocese and Bishop George Lasebikan of Ondo Diocese for an entire month.

Both these gentlemen brought the Word of God to us in powerful sermons, wonderful testimonies, and a challenge to carry the Gospel to everyone for whom God opens doors. Bishop George and Bishop Tunde were a wonderful “tag team” that showed interest in mission, excitement in the movement of the Holy Spirit, and an expression of genuine love for our Lord Jesus Christ. As one parishioner from Dade City put it, “I wanted to tell you what a blessing the visit of the Nigerian bishops was to our parish; [they] were charming, articulate and patently filled with the Holy Spirit—and, they were stirring preachers to boot. Many thanks to you, the Evangelism Committee and to the sponsoring organization [SOMA] for sending them to us.”

I think the biggest impact to our diocese was hearing first hand how God is working in the hearts of believers all over the world and being challenged to be more open to the Holy Spirit’s movement in our ministry. No matter where we are there is one Lord and Savior who is doing a mighty work all over this globe. The Lord truly crosses all geographical boundaries as He works in those who belong to Him. I think this mission also showed us that within the Anglican Communion we are truly in ministry and purpose with one another. Bishop Tunde and Bishop George opened our eyes to see our world is not only that which we see and experience in our own little corners...but to see and, in a real way, experience what God is doing across the waters.

The challenge for us is to take what we have seen and heard and now apply it to our own ministries. This time together provided us with a fresh zeal for allowing the Holy Spirit to work in and through us and not be complacent with our faith. As Bishop Tunde said when he left our parish, “I want to see this congregation doubled when we return.” ■

### The SOMA USA Newsletter

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### Hold on to Your Socks! (continued from page 1)



Worship



Intercessors



Praise

Team list: Mrs. Edwina Thomas, team leader, SOMA USA; the Rev. George Beaven and Mrs. Kathy Oravetz, Christ Our Lord, Woodbridge, VA; Mrs. Chris Brown, the Rev. John Guernsey, Mrs. Gail Scott, All Saints’, Dale City, VA; the Rev. Bill Murdoch, All Saints’, West Newbury, MA.

## *Everything Depends on God!*

by Edwina Thomas

Perhaps studying 2 Chronicles 20 will shed light on the conflict in the Anglican Communion or some other battle in which you find yourself.

Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, was not perfect or righteous (2 Chron. 19: 2-3). But when Judah was threatened by enemies, his response was to inquire of the Lord (2 Chron. 20:4). What follows is a powerful prayer (v. 6-9). At the end Jehoshaphat declares, “For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you” (v. 12). There is no other place to be than at the mercy of a living and loving God. Woe to us if we fight a battle in our own strength (pride) rather than in His (humility).

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, who spoke a prophetic word: “Do not be afraid or discouraged...for the battle is not yours, but God’s” (v. 15). The prophecy then tells of the enemy’s exact plans. “You will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you...do not be afraid; do not be discouraged” (v. 17). The response of the people was to fall down and worship. But some stood up and praised the Lord. Jehoshaphat appointed singers to praise the Lord for the splendor of his holiness as they led the army out (v. 21). Praise is a powerful weapon. With it, we remember who God is, His character and His ways.

“As they began to sing and praise, the Lord set ambushes...”(v. 22). The passage tells us that those who were attacking Judah destroyed one another (v. 22-23). Jehoshaphat and his men collected the plunder for three days (v. 25). On the fourth day, they praised the Lord (v. 26). They went to Jerusalem rejoicing with instruments of praise (v. 28). “The fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the countries when they heard how the Lord had fought against the enemies of Israel. And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side” (v. 29-30).

This story from long ago is not just some myth or ancient history. It contains powerful spiritual principles. The chief one is this: Everything depends on our relationship with God. We take our fear to Him, our weakness to Him; we submit our will, plans and human ideas to Him. He then can rule over us. He inspires, gives directions, and fights our battles. Maybe, as Judah learned, our greatest weapon is praise—constantly walking in humility by lifting up His character in song, which engages our body, soul and spirit. ■

