



**A Journey
that Touched
One Life and
Continues to
Change Many**

An Interview with the Rev. Jeff Cerar

Q. What did your first trip with SOMA do for you?

A. My first SOMA trip in 1995 showed me the universal scope of the church. My previous experience had been local: I had never been abroad to where other Christians were engaged in the mission of the church. I encountered their challenges, their faithfulness and response to the challenges. I saw the sacrifices they were making and the incredible things they were doing to carry out mission.

Also, I experienced miracles and direct testimony about miracles. I was aware that God does miracles, but having firsthand experience has really deepened my faith.

Q. Did this make a difference to your church?

A. I accepted the call to St. Stephen's, Heathsville, VA, about a year following my first SOMA mission and have been there for twelve years. St. Stephen's has become a mission-oriented church, world mission-oriented. A big portion of our giving goes to mission-oriented organizations. Last year, I counted and one fifth of our congregation has been on a mission trip, including almost all of our youth. In all, thirty people of our congregation have been on serious mission trips. Mission is part of our life.

Q. How big is your congregation?

A. 125 persons.

Q. Has this mission experience affected how you disciple your people?

A. Now, we are highly Biblical. 90% of our congregation is in a weekly Bible study. We have 11 Bible study groups.

Q. Did your mission experience prompt this focus on the Bible?

A. There were really two reasons we have moved in this direction. First, we had to decide what we believe, particularly since General Convention '03. Secondly, we have been impacted by Christians from elsewhere: they prompted us to decide that our people need to develop faith through Bible study.

Q. How has your congregation been impacted by overseas guests [some of whom initially come through SOMA's program, *Mission to the USA*]?

A. Our guests have given us a cross-cultural awareness. We grow in appreciation with real understanding. We see such quality and depth of faith. The high education level of our guests is humbling—it heals our natural arrogance of thinking that we have more to give than to receive.

Having [Global South] guests gives us a perspective on what is going on in the American Church from an outside perspective.

The Rev. Stephen Kazimba, now bishop-elect in Uganda, preached saying "I was over at the rector's house. The refrigerator was crammed full. When my family prays, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' we mean it quite literally."

Q. What has your relationship with SOMA done for you personally?

A. Mission has taken me out on a limb where only the Holy Spirit can rescue me. I realize that if I can't do this, I will never know how to trust God. You [SOMA USA] have dragged me around to places where I absolutely had to trust God

Continued on next page



Greeting old friends and making new ones during GAFCON.—Photo by Joy Gwaltney

SOMA Builds and Nurtures Relationships

GAFCON has been described and discussed everywhere—in the newspaper, on blogs, and in sermons. My few reflections here are not comprehensive nor complete: First, there was extraordinary harmony among primates, between evangelicals and Anglo-catholics, and among women who were ordained and those who were not and don't support such. Secondly, there was joy in the camp! I did not know how much I thirsted for JOY in our wider church gatherings. Thirdly, most of this meeting, but not all, reflected the already accomplished shift of the leadership from the West to the South.

For SOMA, we reconnected with so many of our family: friends and partners in mission stretch around the communion. For twenty-three years, SOMA USA has been on the move, serving where bishops in the Anglican Communion call us to come.

The LAMBETH Conference, a once-a-decade gathering of bishops and their wives, also includes many

in our SOMA family, some who attended GAFCON and many who did not. SOMA USA shared a display booth with SOMA UK in the Marketplace, the Lambeth exhibit hall, to meet, greet, pray and encourage our friends.

SOMA USA is orthodox in our US affiliations: we serve and partner with most of the Anglican Communion around the world. — Edwina Thomas, Director

A Journey—Continued from page 1

because I didn't have what it took. Now, I voluntarily put myself in those places because I do trust God.

Also, I've learned to appreciate the power and significance of prayer warriors. When I come home from a trip and hear some of the things they have prayed, some of the things they discerned about our circumstances thousands of miles away, it has been "WOW! What an amazing experience!"

The Rev. Jeffrey Cerar has served on SOMA missions to India and Kenya. He also has led a SOMA mission to the international students at Virginia Seminary and hosted a SOMA *Mission to the USA* to the Northern Neck of Virginia. His congregation supports SOMA financially, and hosted a week-long meeting of the SOMA International Board of Directors.

God is Moving in Peru!

The missionary spirit in Peru is something to behold. I have never seen anything like it. The Lord is anointing leaders and really using the people as Deacons and Presbyters. They work sacrificially in their ministries and are not weighed down by the pursuit of money, power or authority. They simply work toward the Glory of God and the increase of His Kingdom.

The Lord is moving in lives and bringing healing and deliverance. A man spoke about how his dad was healed after we prayed for him. Everyone is asking, "What's going on?" He went from being extremely sick for years to normal. What a witness for the power of God! The heads of the seminary have been praying for a way to break down barriers and have the clergy moving in the power of the Spirit. Seeing the power of the Lord, the people are so hungry for more that the door is wide open! — The Rev. Mike Chapman



The women and children dug out the rocky hill for this church plant.

The Rev. Mike and Linda Chapman, The Holy Way, Moravian Falls, NC, spent several months this spring mentoring seminarians at The Saint Augustine Seminary of the Anglican Diocese of Peru. The seminary began in 2000 in Arequipa. In December 2004, the first class of seven students graduated. They have made a real impact in growing and planting churches.

In 2005, an additional campus was founded in Lima. Presently, there are 26 students in Lima and 14 in Arequipa.

The lame shall walk...

She is 86 years of age—a lady who has a heart for God—one who diligently prays for others. She was present when the first brick was laid for her church in South Africa. She walked with knees touching, twisted so that her feet were far, far apart. She moved with great difficulty assisted by a crutch and a loving arm extended for her support.

From the moment I saw her compassion welled up in my heart. ‘The Lord doesn’t want her walking this way.’ When asked if we could pray for her she was very willing. Slowly the legs began to straighten, the feet moved closer together, she could sit normally, she stood, and she began to walk. At first, she moved slowly, tentatively. It had been many years since she had walked normally. A little practice, bending her knees, moving more quickly, she is walking. The crutch is no longer needed. Even steps can be negotiated alone. With tears of joy she offers praise and thanks to her Lord.



Crutches no longer needed.

Teaching Healing Prayer in South Africa



Participants listen intently and make many notes.

For three days we met with 27 South Africans—five churches, their leaders and rectors, and Bishop Diseko from the Diocese of Matlosane—teaching, praying, using materials from Vanguard Kenya and *Emotionally Free*. As we sought to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit we watched God work miracles with the participants. They began to understand that they could do the same kind of prayer and ministry as our team. One participant stated it this way, “I now know that I can do this ministry; the Holy Spirit is for everyone not just certain people; the Holy Spirit is the empowerment for ministry.” Others agreed. There is a new conviction in their hearts that they themselves can pray and do the work. They are already planning to introduce the seminar materials in churches throughout the diocese.

As we learned, sang, danced, laughed and cried together, our many cultures became one. It felt from a western, Americanized perspective more like what the church should be. It wasn’t perfect. It wasn’t Pentecost. It wasn’t a revival of thousands. It was doing God’s work, building His Kingdom one person, one prayer at a time and passing on God’s gift of healing.

Team: Gail Patton, team leader, Sue Wheeler, All Saints’, Woodbridge, VA; the Rev. Fred Hoffman, All Saints’, Concord, NC; Margaret Mann, St. Margaret’s Anglican, Woodbridge, VA; the Rev. Mike and Mrs. Sandy Messina, Bobbi Topping, St. Patrick’s, Ocala, FL; the Rt. Rev. John Lupaa, Diocese of Rift Valley, Tanzania; Peter Greenwood, St. Alban’s, Pretoria, South Africa.

Sharing about Intercession

SOMA has eight strategic goals that were hammered out among all of our international family. The first one reads, “Increase the number of intercessory prayer members and teams.”

I invite you, friend of SOMA, to pray for us that we may continue to fulfill this decision. The need for prayer for SOMA, including leadership, missions, finance, strategy, etc., is extraordinary. We move on the back of intercession.

If God is prompting you to pray for us, contact office@somausa.org.



SOMA USA

National Director Edwina Thomas
Administrator Carol Updike
Missions Coordinator Gail Patton
Address 5290 Saratoga Lane
Woodbridge, VA 22193
Phone 703.878.7667
e-mail office@somausa.org
Home Page <http://www.somausa.org>

Board of Directors

Chairman The Rt. Rev. John Guernsey
All Saints’, Woodbridge, VA
Chief Financial Officer Kerry Walters
All Saints’, Woodbridge, VA

Board Members

The Rev. Christopher Culpepper
Diocesan Mission Vicar, Fort Worth, TX
Ron Davis All Saints’, Woodbridge, VA
Cynthia Drennan St. James, Newport Beach, CA
Richard Hines
Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, VA
Rose-Marie Edwards-Tasker
St. Luke’s, Akron, OH
The Rt. Rev. William Love Diocese of Albany
Dr. Glen Petta St. Andrew’s, Fort Worth, TX
The Rt. Rev. Henry Scriven
Diocese of Pittsburgh
The Rev. Dr. Margaret Short
St. James, Las Cruces, NM

SOMA International Chairman

The Most Rev. Dr. Benjamin Kwashi
Jos Diocese, Plateau State, NIGERIA



SOMA USA
5290 Saratoga Lane
Woodbridge, VA 22193

Return Service Requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Orange, VA
Permit No. 97

Director's Corner by Edwina Thomas

I have been engaged by ideas from Kenneth E. Bailey's new book, Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes. He references two old testament stories that tell of Gentiles engaging with the God of truth: Elijah and the widow of Zarephath (I Kings 17), and the healing of the leper Naaman (II Kings 5).

After brilliantly unpacking these stories of Gentile heroes of the faith, Bailey makes this statement: "The gospel is not safe in any culture without a witness within that culture, from beyond itself." Bailey continues, "In every culture the message of the gospel is in constant danger of being compromised by the value system that supports that culture and its goals. The stranger to that culture can instinctively identify those points of surrender and call the community back to a purer and more authentic faith."

Many times I have stood before a sea of beautiful African faces and shared my story of God's grace as He, bit by bit, convicted me of racism and prejudice. I have proclaimed God's goodness

by recounting how He then clothed me with love for people like them. Then I ask, "So what about tribalism in your context? Who do you make jokes about? Who are the most undesirable people in your society?"

An African clergyman once gently confronted me: "Westerners give much money to protect our elephants, but who will help us save the children who are dying? You treat your animal pets like children and so many of our children are in dire need." Zing!

Humility seems to be the key. Yes, an outsider can more easily see how a society's values do not line up with the Kingdom of God as proclaimed in the Word; but can such insights be expressed with humility and anointing? Can we receive?

We, in SOMA, work hard to honor and teach principles of the Kingdom, not lessons from our own culture. We need the Word and Truth proclaimed in power. We need His correction, His grace, His compassion, and His justice advocacy. In turn, these are also all we have to give.

