

Ghana:

The Canvas of Mission

by Edwina Thomas

Accounting for what happens on a mission team is complex, a bit like explaining an intricate painting with color, pattern, and texture. The end, after the brush is laid down, is not really the end, for the eye and the mind continue to find connections, contrasts, and complements that intrigue and instruct the heart.

Reviewing our mission to the Diocese of Accra, Ghana, at the invitation of Archbishop Justice Akrofi is like sitting before such a beautiful painting. The underlayment for this “painting” was SOMA’s international team that worked awesomely together. Each person was anointed and released to accomplish more in God’s Kingdom than we could have dreamed. Everyone carried a fully loaded separate assignment, yet worked in absolute concert with the team.

In retrospect, we experienced a living, well-functioning Biblical model of the body of Christ, even if only for 2 weeks, as powerful as the most powerful worship experience, as powerful as the strongest season of intercession and prayer.

The overt subject matter for the painting was training leaders in healing and intercession.

During the week prior to Pentecost, Sam Ewou (African Director for Youth for Scripture Union) and Edwina Thomas taught a course for intercessors which was attended by 45–65 persons daily. The prayers and worship, the responses of repentance with weeping, as well as subsequent e-mails, tell us that God worked mightily in the hearts and minds of these intercessors.

Clergy and lay leaders from the diocese and university student leaders attended a simultaneous conference on healing led by the Rev. Doug Sherman of St. Martin’s, Monroeville, PA, the Rev. Mark Mukan of Jos, Nigeria, and the Rt. Rev. Tunde Adeleye (National Director of SOMA Nigeria) of the Diocese of Calabar, Nigeria.

Although preparations were thorough, every teacher laid aside notes and followed the Spirit. “I taught as I have never taught before,” said one of these men. The teachings were laced with opportunities for response to God’s message through questions and discussion, the opportunity to “repent and return,” receiving the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and receiving an anointing for ministry.



Archbishop Akrofi and Bishop Adeleye enjoy dancing in the freedom of the Spirit.

Debbie Petta from St. Andrew’s, Ft. Worth, led the on-site prayer room covering the above two separate conferences. She describes the prayer room this way:

“This team prayed as though we had prayed together for years: interconnected, respectful of other’s gifting and with ears able to hear and ‘stay focused.’ One would receive a scripture, one ‘heard’ a song, one received a picture and we collected it all throughout the day. Sometimes we finished the ‘work’ and sometimes it continued through a dream that night or a word in a quiet time the next morning. God gave me insight to tie it together and others confirmed or adjusted from their perspective. It was a well-functioning team of like artisans creating what they were directed day by day. As a result, we received key ideas and God’s vision to pray for the diocese and specific leaders. Through identification, repentance and deep worship, specific demonic strongholds and their ‘strongmen’ were identified and delivered to Jesus.”

Bishop Tunde Adeleye made the biggest “splash of color” when he preached a magnificent sermon for an open-air healing service on the afternoon of Pentecost. He drew the crowd together with song and shared a powerful message about the Pentecostal experience and power for healing. Momentum built among the clergy seated to the side in their white cassocks and the thousands of lay folk seated under a large tent on the grounds of the Cathedral. The three bishops present offered anointing with oil for everyone, and afterwards, priests and the SOMA team prayed for individuals.

We know that God is bigger than the greatest challenges in the Diocese of Accra. We also know that a strong spiritual foundation was laid for further breakthrough. ■

Colombia: Into the Future

by the Rev. Canon Leslie Martin



Praising God!

During the last week of week of July, a SOMA team consisting of the Rt. Rev. Henry Scriven, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Rev. Canon Tom Prichard, missions pastor at Christ Church Anglican, Overland Park, KS, and me traveled to the Diocese of Colombia.

This mission—a follow-up of an earlier mission in December 2004—was part of Bishop Francisco Duque’s plan to help his diocese strategically move out of the past and into the future. Our purpose was three-fold: to provide the teaching for a retreat with

Uganda: *Mukama asekibaway!*

by the Rev. Sharon Lewis

We heard this many times per day in Uganda. All the planning in the world could not have prepared the team for the mighty work that the Lord did, bringing hope and healing to pastors and lay leaders from the Diocese of South Rwenzori in May. ***Mukama asekibaway!*** (Praise the Lord!)

As team leader I was joined by parishioners Gerry and Scott Gardner from Church of the Holy Spirit, Osprey, FL, Dan Page from All Saints’, Woodbridge, VA, and the Rev. Ben Mugarura-Mutana and his wife Joyie from Makerere University in Uganda. We did not know Dan or Ben or Joyie, but God put us together as only He can!

We were blessed with 112 participants at the conference, many walking great distances to get there. They came tired, worn out, and weighed down. They came to be revived and restored: clergy, evangelists, lay leaders, Bishop Jackson Tembo and his staff. Each day began with a time of worship—one drum and many voices praising the Lord! There was not just one leader—rather an awesome witness of submitting one to another as different people led different songs. How beautiful was the native language as the worship went up to God! Oh, how we leaned not just on but into the Holy Spirit for everything. Teaching by teaching, healing by healing, the conference was built. The theme: reconciliation with God, with oneself and with others. Confessing,

the Diocesan clergy, to provide support and encouragement to the bishop, and to offer a memorial service in the wake of the London bombings.

The retreat was held at a Carmelite convent in the breathtaking city of Medellin. The team offered instruction in Kingdom Theology and the principles of being a “Three-Stream” church. Of great import as well were Bishop Scriven’s conversations concerning the general state of affairs in the Communion.

In the wake of the terrorist attacks in London, Bishop Duque had a vision of offering a memorial service for expatriates and members of the British community in Bogota. This service was a wonderful outreach to segments of the population that have not always been reached by the church. The service, with Bishop Scriven masterfully preaching in both English and Spanish, was quite profound. Ten or more ambassadors attended, as well as representatives of the local Muslim, Jewish and Roman Catholic communities.

The possibilities for growth and transformation in the Diocese of Colombia are vast. It is a great blessing that at the last two events where all the clergy were present, it was SOMA USA that was asked to present the teaching. Clearly, we are valued. Certainly, we are needed. I believe that God has something in store for this Diocese and that He is using SOMA as a very important tool in His plans. Please join with me in praying both for the Diocese of Colombia and for wisdom as to how we might strategically assist them in the future. ■

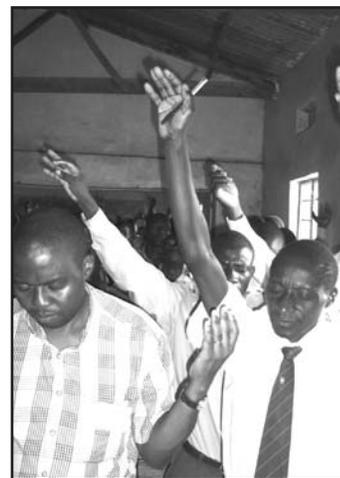
renouncing and repenting paved the way for deep inner healing corporately and individually. As we wept and laughed together, God’s Spirit penetrated our hearts, and we all were joined as one.

*It felt like community
from the first day
and never stopped.*

A priest cried out at one point: “Why has this taken so long to come?” My heart broke within me: Why have we taken so long to come? The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few.

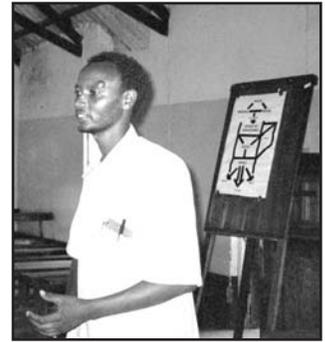
None of us will be the same again. Not when God engraves on your heart His vision of healing and reconciliation the world over. I can see their beautiful faces even now as I write, and I begin to weep so gratefully for their witness of courage, endurance, and love of Jesus Christ. People, who have so little, give so much. I am broken--broken once again.

We have been asked to come back to continue the work that God has begun. ***Mukama asekibaway!*** ■

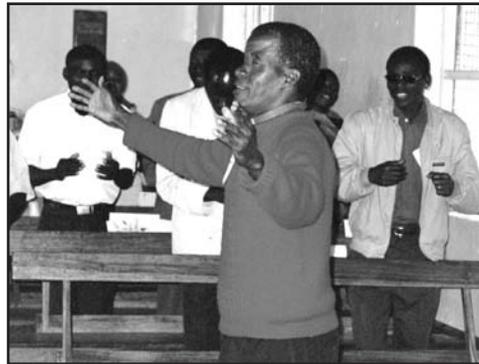


Mukama asekibaway!

Emotionally Free” to Bring Healing



Teachers trained in 2003 present the materials.



Leaders are refreshed.

Isaiah 61:1-3 expresses God’s call to the SOMA “Emotionally Free” team and to the people we went to serve in central Tanzania. The goal for this mission was to follow-up on the 2003 “Emotionally Free” Mission to Mpwapwa Diocese and to take soul-healing prayer to other dioceses.

We held 7 seminars in 3 dioceses throughout the month of July. We gained new understanding and we saw again the fruit of the healing God brings as people learn about soul-healing prayer. People were saved, delivered from witchcraft, set free from the bondage of sin, released from unforgiveness, reconciled with their brothers, released from loss and shame, physically healed, refreshed and encouraged. For those who took their excuses to the Cross of Jesus, “whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in Heaven” (Mt 18:18) became real and true for them. As oppression lifted and joy was released men and women from all walks of life experienced the healing that God can bring when we pray and let Him touch the pain in our lives.

Next year SOMA has been invited to more dioceses in Tanzania to bring the principles of soul-healing prayer that God taught Mrs. Rita Bennett of Christian Renewal Association and her prayer partners. We plan to print more texts in Kiswahili, the language of the people of Tanzania and East Africa. ■

by Gail Patton



le.” During worship the power of God ng healing and deliverance.

am:
t the Marketplace, Albuquerque, NM; Mrs. Gail
Saint’s, Woodbridge, VA; Mrs. Mary Nigeri
d Mrs. Devota Lupaa, Singida, Tanzania; the Rev.
iven Gaula, Dodoma, TZ; Mrs. Madelina Mbani,
gwa, TZ; Mrs. Nely Lubangala, Kongwa, TZ.



Praying for healing from hurts in life (soul-healing prayer).

Tanzania: Giving on Mission...Receiving on Mission...

by Linda White



Sharing love.

When God called me to go to Africa I couldn't have been more surprised...or more resistant. I'm just not the adventuring type! I like nice hotels and predictable travel. It took God a year to make me finally understand that He did mean for me to go and that, yes, He would take care of the details! As I revealed my call to mission, God laid out His plans. I found two other wonderful people who had the same calling at the same time--the Rev. Charles Gill, my pastor at St. Andrew's by-the-Sea, Nags Head, NC, and Jenny Jeske from Christ Church, New Bern, NC, a teacher I soon came to love as a sister! Bishop Phillip Baji of Tanga Diocese in Tanzania invited us to visit. SOMA took care of most of the travel plans and training. Everything came together so perfectly. The only thing missing was my purpose for going!

Since I have been a primary school teacher for over 30 years, I felt sure God wanted me to help with something in the schools or with the children. But it wasn't very clear what that something could be! It was not until our mission to Tanzania

was half over that I realized God's plan was as much about what the African people could give to me as what I could give to them. My spirit grew each day as God unfolded new experiences to us and introduced us to new brothers and sisters in Christ as He stripped away the comforts and conveniences we thought we needed.

God is so good...and so full of surprises! Never could I have imagined that a people so poor in material wealth could be so rich in spirit and so eager to share their riches with me! I will always remember the beautiful faces of the children, the spirit-filled music in the churches, the humility of the priests, and the warmth and hospitality of all the people we met!

I found Jesus in every soul I met. Tanzania has fed my spirit and helped me grow! ■

and Unpacking the Gift....

by the Rev. Charles Gill

But it remains that the greatest event of all was to return home knowing that the mission trip is now beginning...the journey of Life itself. When life has been reconnected with Life in Christ there is no question that you will know your God-given task: reconnecting with God's purpose for your life.

I did not realize that my trip to Tanzania would be a trip of repentance... of turning from my ways to the Lord's ways. But it was. Thanks be to God I now know. Part of the mission to which God now calls me involves us all: it is to work as a repentant church among friends and in community to build a stronger ministry among our youth and to send them out on the mission of seeking to serve and to know Christ in every venue. Proverbs 22:6 is my scripture to study and live into... "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." ■

Blessings from Uganda

I was very blessed by the hunger of the people in South Rwenzori to learn all they could. They really wanted all that we had to give. And they believe the Bible--there is no debate about it. It made me realize how much I complicate God's Word in my own life--and how much the Church in America does the same. God's Word is God's Word. Can I not believe with the same child-like faith that I saw in the people of Uganda? They so honor the Word--and their bibles are well-worn and used. I want the same hunger.

Gerry Gardner, South Rwenzori Team (see page 2)

The SOMA USA Newsletter

National Director	Mrs. Edwina Thomas
Associate Director	The Rev. Canon Leslie Martin
Administrator	Mrs. Carol Updike
Missions Coordinator	Mrs. Gail Patton
Address	5290 Saratoga Lane
	Woodbridge, VA 22193
Phone (703)878-7667	FAX (703)878-7015
e-mail	Office@SOMAUSA.org
Home Page	http://www.SOMAUSA.org

Episcopal Advisor	The Rt. Rev. Ed Little
	Northern Indiana

SOMA USA Board	
Chairman	The Rev. John Guernsey
	All Saints', Woodbridge, VA
Chief Financial Officer	Mr. Richard Hines
	Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, VA

Board Members	
The Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Barfoot	Kampala, UGANDA
Dr. Jeffrey Brown	St. Charles, Poulso, WA
The Rev. Praveen Bunyan	St. James
	Newport Beach, CA
Mr. Ron Davis	All Saints', Woodbridge, VA
Ms. Cynthia Drennan	St. James
	Newport Beach, CA
Ms. Rose-Marie Edwards	St. Luke's, Akron, OH
The Rev. Dr. Ron Jackson	St. Luke's of the Mountains
	La Crescenta, CA
The Rev. Richard Menees	St. James
	Newport Beach, CA
Dr. Glen Petta	St. Andrew's, Ft. Worth, TX
Canon Gary Schnelzer	Diocese of West Texas
The Rev. Dr. Margaret Short	St. James
	Las Cruces, NM

SOMA International
Chairman of the Board
The Rev. David Harper

S H A R I N G



OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

5290 Saratoga Lane
Woodbridge, VA 22193

Address Service Requested

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

by Edwina Thomas

How it Gets Done Counts

The jigsaw puzzle I am currently doing is a watercolor reproduction of a beautiful bird, a Painted Bunting. I paused last night and reflected on how the process of putting together the puzzle reminds me of the way mission teams work. Each piece is unique in shape and color. No piece makes sense by itself. It's not meaningful or beautiful when it is seen scattered as the pieces of my puzzle are right now. The picture on the box is a great tool and reminds me that Jesus alone holds the desired result. Our job is to check in constantly with Him and then to obey.

SOMA's team members come from varied backgrounds, ages, genders, and nationalities. We are each unique—but the real beauty comes when we are in right relationship with fellow team members. We are effective when we, together, present a “whole” that is coherent and consistent.

In our training, we say, “You are a walking sermon. Folks may not remember what you say but they will remember whether or not you loved and served one another and them.”

Sam Ewou, a Ugandan team member to Ghana (see page 1) reflected on that mission: “Most of the other groups I have been in don't emphasize the sort of things SOMA emphasizes like interpersonal relationships, etc. For instance, whereas we functioned well in the team I was in two weeks ago [not a SOMA mission], it was more task-oriented than person-oriented; i.e., as long as the ministry got done it didn't matter so much how much we interacted.”

Since the trip to Ghana I have asked myself, “Why is it that not all mission trips are created equal?” And then I laugh, of course. Not one of them is the same in calling, personnel, anointing, or task—of course they are not equal. Yet, why is it that some mission trips transform me forever and irrevocably?

No, I don't have the answers—only God does. I am in awe to understand that something SOMA is doing in our training has the building blocks, the essential ingredients, so that sometimes the synergy happens. Friends, when “it” happens, it is hard to explain: the team LIVES the principles of the Kingdom of God for a short, intense season. “Life as usual” at home is spoiled for us because we have tasted the extraordinary lessons, the blessings of obedience, humility, and love from our Lord through each other. ■



Director's Corner