

Mission to India

God Answers Prayers

by Mr. Michael Gardenhire



Seminary students at Yavatmal College for Leadership Training

God is so good and provided so much for us and blessed us in so many ways. Jesus is a God who answers our prayers.

Aside from a 24-hour delay on our return trip, we could not have asked for a smoother trip to and from India in late November. Jesus provided rest for us by leaving empty seats so that we could lie down and sleep on the plane. We passed through customs with no hassles. In car rides He kept us safe. In India I would say they drive down the best side of the road. Whether that "side" is the middle or the right or the left of the road doesn't matter. In many instances, cars and trucks would be headed straight for us and we would be inches away from being hit. But, we were kept safe thanks to God answering the many prayers for safe travel.

We started out in Umri at a Christian hospital, nursing school, elementary school, and hostel. We prayed that what we taught would be pertinent for the 90+ nursing students. The head tutor told us, "It was like God sent just what we needed to hear." We wish all could have seen the joy on the faces of the more than ten dear students who invited Jesus into their lives for the first time and the joy of their already Christian sisters surrounding them.

The Lord continued to answer our prayers as we went to Yavatmal College for Leadership Training. Each teaching session was somewhat different from what we had planned but again the topics were just what was needed. The professors of the seminary commented that we introduced new ways of how to look at the worldview of different religions that was very helpful to them. We even had the great privilege of leading the students in prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and commissioning for ministry the day before they each (all 107 of them) left to go on a three-week mission trip to poor, remote parts of India.

At both locations we prayed for healing for many people and God answered our prayers. The Lord relieved physical and emotional pain and brought peace. We also prayed for the fullness of God's Spirit so that each person would have everything they needed for life and ministry.

We saw God pour out His Spirit on His people.

Team list: *The Rev. Dr. Margaret Short, team leader, St. James, Mesilla Park, NM; Mr. Michael Gardenhire, First Evangelical Free Church, Las Cruces, NM; Mrs. Minerva Romero, Holy Cross Catholic Church, Las Cruces, NM.*

New Chairman of SOMA International

Rejoice with our SOMA International family that the Rt. Rev. Benjamin Kwashi, Diocese of Jos, Nigeria, has accepted the call to chair the International Board of Directors of SOMA. Bishop Kwashi will follow in the footsteps of the Rev. David Harper, rector of Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, VA, who has served as International Chairman since 1988.



Missions to Mexico

God's Assignment - Our Assignment

by Mrs. Patricia Vazquez

"The mission trip had a profound impact on me—of trust, of realizing that if I open my mouth in His name and in witness to Him, the Holy Spirit, out of the Father's love, really will fill it." Pam Hernandez

I love going on SOMA assignments. There is always so much blessing and adventure. On this trip (to Guadalajara in the Diocese of Western Mexico in October), the Holy Spirit showed me the value of His being our interpreter. So often we try to fill in the blanks about the unknown and do something unnecessary or even sinful. In the Bible these passages always begin with, "He/she thought." For example: We learned through our interpreters that the diocese was planning to turn our temporary home into a seminary. We assumed that there would be students sleeping in the rooms we used. We bought towels, coat hangers, mirrors, and so on to bless the new students. Surprise! It's going to be a day school.

How different it is to trust the Holy Spirit! As we prayed over His beloved during the "Life in the Spirit" seminar for clergy and lay leaders, we learned later that He would give the same prayers to both Spanish and English speakers. One would pray in English, one in Spanish, one in tongues and there was no need to know what had been prayed. We could see the blessings on the face of the one for whom we were praying. At the same time, some of our team members who had never participated in an event like this received much inner healing. There was much favor from God.

Faith reminds us that we don't need to understand everything or even to know the outcome. God knows, and our assignment is only to pray. Our mission was a testimony to God's great faithfulness in answering the prayers of His people. ■

Team list: *The Rev. Tom Danitschek, team leader, Mrs. Pam Hernandez, the Rev. Andrew Kline, Dr. Cindy McRae, Christ Church, Denver, CO; Ms. Tonya Sorge, the Rev. Stace and Mrs. Sarah and baby Luke Tafoya, Church of the Epiphany, Denver, CO; Mrs. Patricia Vazquez, Fountainhead Four Square Church, Carson City, NV.*



Clergy Blessed by SOMA Team

The Rt. Rev. Benito Juarez, Diocese of Southeast Mexico, invited SOMA USA to bring a team to conduct a clergy retreat in October. Led by the Rev. Paul Frey, Christ Church,

Laredo, TX, the team included two SOMA national directors.

Here are their summaries.

The Rev. Canon Lovey Kisembo (SOMA Uganda): "God's favor was upon us and we ministered in the power of the Holy Spirit and we left them different. One of the participants said, 'I have never felt God's power going through me.' Another lady said, 'We have never experienced such teaching [renewal, healing, transformation].' One member of the clergy said he and his ministry would never be the same again. Some of the sick people who turned up to be prayed for testified of getting their healing."

The Rt. Rev. Leonard Whitten (SOMA Canada): "We prayed, sang hymns of praise, taught and shared our Christian faith for three days. Despite our short time together God did marvelous things. For example, the clergy were able to share their successes, challenges and failures in their ministries. They also prayed together and, for the first time, laid hands on one another for God's healing power. They struggle with limited resources but have a wealth of deep commitment to share the good news of Jesus with others. God richly blessed me on this my first SOMA mission."

Bishop Juarez has invited SOMA to return in 2006. He said, "In the Diocese we have received a great blessing with the arrival of the group of SOMA by which I give God the thanks, and I want you to know that this encounter has been used by God for the strengthening of ministry in the Diocese of the Southeast." ■

Scam Alert!

Beware of any messages from your friends in the developing world requesting money for new projects or medical procedures. There is at least one highly sophisticated scam going around purporting to be from bishops, who have received SOMA missions, asking for money. They appear to be on official letterhead and even include a copy of a check someone supposedly sent in support of their need. Do not hit "reply" to the message that looks like it is from a legitimate new e-mail address. Instead make a separate inquiry using your old contact information.

The SOMA USA Newsletter

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Missions to the USA

Encouragement from Kenya

By the Rt. Rev. James Ochiel, Southern Nyanza Diocese

I should like on my behalf, my wife Christine and the diocese to express our delight for the recognition by SOMA USA to be part of the global mission. Our experience made us ask whether the founders of SOMA in the US 20 years ago had envisaged the greater role the ministry had to play at this time in the life of the Anglican Communion when we are faced with apostasy?



The Rt. Rev. James Ochiel

The congregations we visited [in Rhode Island, Colorado, and Florida] are now beginning to realize, recognize and appreciate our oneness as a Communion, particularly for those who stand for the truth of the Gospel.

A new dawn has come where there is a realization for walking together for the sake of the Gospel. Each side recognizes that they need each other for the fulfillment of the great commission. Those whom we visited testified of feeling stronger in faith arising from the mission.

Our experience was like that of family members who had been apart for a long time but have come to be together at the greatest time of need for evangelism and resource sharing.

The turbulence in the communion at present and more so in the Episcopal Church of America is a blessing in disguise and it is just a matter of time when the Lord is making everything new through the remnant faithful with the companionship of the Global South.

May the Lord continue to strengthen SOMA for its noble vision. May He strengthen those whom we visited and ministered and may He strengthen the new partnerships. ■

“Bishop Ochiel’s visit came at a time when his spirit and message were sorely needed. Our parish had just returned from our diocesan convention where resolutions affirming the Windsor Report and Jesus as Lord and Savior of all people were defeated. We were heart sore and soul weary. Bishop Ochiel’s greetings from Kenya, and his straight-forward faith renewed our spirits and strengthened our courage and resolve to stand firm for the Gospel. We feel clean again and we know we are not standing alone. SOMA’s ministry in bringing people of faith together is desperately needed and appreciated.”

Ms. Leah Turner, St. Andrew and St. Philip, Coventry, RI

Blessings from Nigeria

“We had an amazing week. Mark’s visit was wonderful. I continue to see and hear of meaningful fruit from his ministry as we reap the blessing of his work amongst us.”

*The Rev. David Luckenbach
St. Mark’s on the Mesa, Albuquerque, NM*

The Rev. Canon Mark Mukan, Diocese of Jos, Nigeria, participated in *Mission to the USA* in October in churches in the Dioceses of West Texas, Rio Grande, and Oklahoma. He was motivated in part by a desire to come and see what was happening in America. He found that the church here has many challenges that need to be addressed, including “churches not thinking of expansion, but rather retention; an absence of youth; and a lack of evangelism.” “SOMA ministry is very important in addressing all of this,” says Canon Mark. The Christians he encountered in the US encouraged him. “There is hope if men and women of God will stand up. America is a nation blessed by God. If people will just teach the Word of God, people will leave church [services] changed, and the nation will change.”

Personally, his *Mission to the USA* made an impact on him as well. He said that his experience of the trip has laid on his heart a desire to “cry out to God for my brethren who are struggling to find Him in the midst of all they have. [Material] prosperity can be a form of bondage. Comfort, resources and health are not everything. I might have all of this and still crash-land.” He also gained a new sense of his responsibility as a Christian leader. “Practical Christian living is important in my life...people watch [me] even at a distance.” ■



Introducing Mark Mukan to Texas lifestyle.

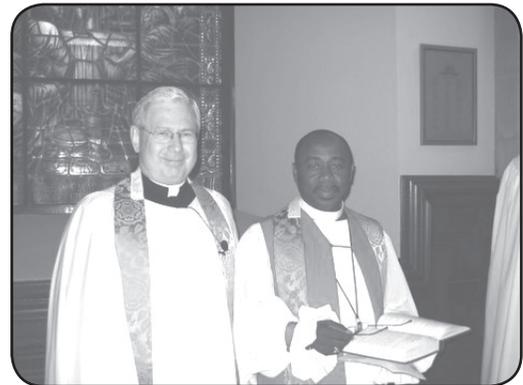
Mission to the USA

Encouragement from Nigeria

By Mrs. Debbie Petta

One of SOMA's greatest gifts of mission is "encouraging others to love and good works" at a local level within the Church. What began as the desire of a senior warden culminated in a diocesan outreach by one of the Anglican Communion's most dynamic leaders.

While ministering in the Diocese of Fort Worth, Bishop Benjamin Kwashi of Jos (Nigeria) led a diocesan clergy retreat and met with the recently ordained clergy. One new priest shared how encouraged he was, despite the uncertainty of the state of the church. After Ben spoke to over 100 young people at a youth dinner, many gave their lives to our Lord



*Preparing for the service.
St. Andrew's, Ft. Worth, Texas*

The Bishop repeatedly encouraged the call to a wider vision and participation within the Anglican Communion as he met with mission outreach committees and vestries and led a mini-conference on evangelism and healing. However, one of the most immediate and precious answers to this call occurred during his time at an Episcopal high school. The students were so compelled

with the validity and integrity of the Bishop's sharing that many stayed to discuss the possibilities of mission careers. In a world that offers youth glitter and flash, which quickly proves shallow, these students not only knew, but desired the "real deal". In answer to a senior warden's heart for the Church, God provided SOMA and Bishop Kwashi as the "real deal." ■



International Mission Opportunities For Young Adults In 2006



In June 2006, YWAM (Youth with a Mission) Singapore, in partnership with local churches and other Christian organizations, including SOMA Singapore, will present an opportunity to reach out and serve those in need in Asia.

Go Fest Asia 2006 will provide up to 400 outreach opportunities in over 15 countries in Asia – Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, East Timor, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. Opportunities include sports coaching, reconstruction, literacy training, teaching English, creative arts, and discipleship training. For more information contact www.gofestasia.com.



Soul Nairobi is a multi-national youth outreach mission, co-sponsored by SOMA UK and Church Army. Participants (ages 18-35) will share in mission and evangelism, reaching out in practical love to people living in poverty. They will participate in a variety of caring projects, and work and fellowship with international teams. Mission will begin July 30 with a week of on-site training and end on August 13. For more information contact don.brewin@somauk.org.



Summer Madness is held in Belfast, Northern Ireland. Every year during the first weekend in July, a high intensity event focusing on the role of youth in ministry takes place in Belfast. Using well-known Christian music groups, inspirational speakers and seminars, Summer Madness is followed by "Streetreach," which enables young people to minister in the poorest areas of Belfast.

Summer Madness draws several thousand youth, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, from all over Ireland, and some foreign countries. The Church of Ireland (Anglican) is a major sponsor along with Christian youth and mission organizations.

The 2006 event will start on Friday, June 30, and end on Tuesday, July 4. "Streetreach" commences immediately and concludes Sunday, July 9. For those who would like to know how to participate in these events, go to www.summermadness.co.uk.

Mission to the Real (not the animated) Madagascar

by Mrs. Edwina Thomas



Lay catechists and evangelists celebrate.

After fellowship at the Lagos All Africa Bishops' Conference in November 2004, the House of Bishops in Madagascar invited SOMA to hold a retreat for them and their wives. After months of building a great team of five persons, including an Anglican Primate, circumstances intervened and we ended up with a great team of two.

The Rev. Ken Munns, retired director of SOMA Australia, and I led the five bishops and their wives in inductive ways—asking questions and addressing their issues. We also presented talks we had prepared.

Recife Hosts Latin American Renewal Conference

By Mr. Richard Hines

The Diocese of Recife, Brazil, hosted the third “Creciendo Juntos” conference on October 10-12, 2005. The gathering brought together renewal leaders from Argentina, Chile and the host diocese, who joined with Bishop Robinson Cavalcanti and thirty clergy and lay people in Recife to hear presentations on the state of the church, revival, and healthy church growth. In the evenings, several hundred people gathered for revival meetings.

Representing SOMA at the conference, I was blessed to bring greetings not only from our agency but also from the Archbishop of Canterbury. Through SOMA he told the gathering, “I am encouraged by the opportunities for mission which that great continent presents, and I pray that all Latin American Anglicans may be sustained in their identity and calling, and may grow in united testimony and vision for the strengthening of the future life and witness of the Church.”

The executive directors of Anglican Mainstream and the British South American Mission Society (SAMS-UK) addressed the conference. Their participation in the event along with SOMA's, the message from the Archbishop of Canterbury, and separate greetings from Archbishop Yong, Primate of South East Asia, were a great encouragement to the people of the Diocese of

For the second part of our mission we traveled to the Diocese of Toamasina. The Rt. Rev. Jean Paul Solo is a forty-year old who has served as bishop for five years. He is Spirit-filled and has the gifts of wisdom and joy. When he smiles, he glows.

Bishop Jean Paul was the key member of our team as he translated and helped us teach the 160 catechists and evangelists for three days. A catechist is an unpaid pastor and lay leader of the village congregation. Each ordained priest has oversight of many lay catechists.

Most of these folks were farmers from the rural area and a few had walked for three days and then ridden a bus for one day—because they were hungry for training in the things of the Spirit. The biggest question we dealt with in every session was, “But is it Anglican?”

It was a tremendous blessing to serve these special people and see the Spirit of God rest on them and empower them. Please join me in prayer for God to continue to be their teacher. ■

“The theme of the retreat was ‘Renewal in the Holy Spirit.’ The inspiration which flowed from the two speakers gave a fresh anointing to the Episcopal team, furthering the ongoing work of MISSION AND EVANGELISM in a transforming creation.” The Rt. Rev. Roger Chung Po Chuen



Teaching at the revival meeting.

Recife who, because of their strong stand for Biblical orthodoxy, have suffered severe persecution from their former province, the Anglican-Episcopal Church of Brazil.

In Recife the renewal leaders collaborate closely with SOMA, but have not organized as a SOMA national body. They began to develop plans for the fourth conference, to be held in Santiago, Chile, in October 2006. For that event, with a target of well over one hundred participants, a special effort will be made to include renewal leadership from other Latin American countries, where SOMA USA has fostered renewal through short-term missions over many years. SOMA USA is privileged and blessed to be working closely beside them. ■

God is on the move. Are you?

Years ago, I had a mentor in the faith who had a great answering machine message. It simply said, “Jesus said, “Go,” and I’m gone. Leave a message.” At the time, I thought it was really funny. Of late, I’ve been thinking that this message actually has a message for me. The choice in our Christian life, it seems to me, is a choice between being sedentary or missional—of sitting back, thankful that in Christ we are saved, or of pushing forward, working for the advance of the Kingdom while we still have life and breath.

Now this has obvious implications for the SOMA family in terms of going on mission trips and supporting the ministry of SOMA with our prayers and dollars. However, it doesn’t end there. The choice between being sedentary or missional is actually about the totality of our Christian discipleship. Consider:

Bible study—do we let the “old, old story” become the “old, rote story,” or do we constantly let it challenge us anew as to our particular place in the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God?

Prayer—are we satisfied with routine intercession and daily office observance, or do we pray that God will use us radically for His purposes? Do we see prayer solely as a comfort or also as a weapon of spiritual warfare?

Relationships—are we missional in all our relationships? Do our acquaintances know of God’s love for them and his desire to deliver them from sin, death, and the devil? Are we passionate in our evangelism, caring for the lost as much as Jesus does?

This is where God is challenging me at this point in my life. Ours is a God who is on the move, calling me to get up out of the armchair of my life and participate actively in the reconciling work he himself is involved in. True Christian faith is not sedentary, but missional, so I feel called, more and more, to get going while there is still light to work. I haven’t changed my answering machine yet, but I am working on my heart. Could it be that God is calling you to develop a missional attitude in your life as well? ■

