

MISSION USA: Times of Refreshing

A SOMA Clergy & Wives Conference was led by Archbishop Ben and Gloria Kwashi in October with over 25 couples in attendance from twelve dioceses of the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), plus clergy from three countries. Throughout the conference the couples spoke of the blessing of being together with other couples in ministry and the opportunity to be with the Kwashis in a small setting to receive ministry from their teaching and life witness. Following the conference, one couple wrote about how their lives and ministry had been transformed.

“We married young and began ministry the day after our honeymoon. It seems that we have had to forge every trail we’ve walked. We have had the blessing of good pastors and guides, but in many ways we have experienced our entire adult lives as children tossed in the deep end of the pool (or have jumped in it of their own will). I’ve wondered if we should seek counseling, but in truth, we’ve hungered for good *models* more than *medicine* to help us in our marriage.



“We are just a few months away from our 15th wedding anniversary. I’ve felt that this anniversary would come and go with as little attention as the past years have seen. We’d probably make last minute dinner plans, and I’d try to appreciate the 2 hour pause from the never ending demands of family life, parish leadership, and diocesan growth. The unexpected opportunity to spend this weekend away together was both the retreat and the guidance we needed, but it is something we would have never sought out or designed for ourselves. The Lord knew that

about us, and through unlikely circumstances, I met Glen at a conference less than two weeks prior—and he invited us to this retreat. With such short notice (we didn’t have time to calculate all the ways this trip wouldn’t make sense!), we knew it must be a gift from His hands.

“We didn’t need a typical conference where expert speakers essentially read from their published books. We have plenty of access to information about marriage: how to improve it, how to be a better spouse, etc. What we really needed was to see a kingdom partnership in the flesh, a couple who have locked arms for the long haul and won’t be deterred in their love for God, for God’s word, and for God’s purposes for the world.

“As we approach our 15th anniversary, I sometimes feel frustrated at how little progress we’ve made in our marriage over the years. I wonder if we’ve sidelined one another or sacrificed health for the sake of expanding ministry. The Kwashis haven’t figured it all out or mastered ministry—they wrestle everyday with what faithfulness looks like, and they just keep going. Nothing inspires me like seeing saints who have put their hands to the plow and won’t look back. With honesty, openness and a dogged drive, they keep going.



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While their peers retire, they choose to expand their borders and add to their household, trusting God to increase their hearts' (and their home's!) capacity. That is the life we are after, too. It is one thing to read a saint declare, 'Jesus will be worth all of this—keep running the race.' It is another thing altogether to look into the eyes of those who have known every kind of hardship we have known or can imagine, while they assure us that not only is Christ worth it all, but our joy is being made complete!

“Coming out of this SOMA retreat, I feel re-centered and refocused. Our Lord sees us and knows us. He wants our marriage to enable and energize the ministry He gave us, not complicate or compete with it. I nearly forgot that. Praise God for His timely reminders and gentle care!”

MINISTERING IN MANDALAY, MYANMAR: “Follow me ...”

Following earlier missions over the past few years in this majority Buddhist country, a SOMA team returned to Mandalay, Myanmar, to lead a discipleship conference for clergy and lay leaders from each diocese in the Province, including five new bishops and two newly established missionary dioceses. Under Archbishop Stephen Than's leadership, the Church in the Province of Myanmar has grown not only in numbers, but also in the strength of its Christian witness, standing firm in biblical faith.

Key themes of the training were the importance of intercession for church growth, grasping the depth of God's love in order to give it to others, and adopting a “rule of life” in one's daily Christian walk. The team discerned that attendees needed to grow in knowledge of Scripture, and several methods were presented for studying the Word and applying it to everyday life. Clergy and lay leaders also learned the importance of forming accountability groups and praying for their discipleship ministries. Central to SOMA's vision for each mission is equipping clergy through the training so they can implement what they have received. On this mission, one of the team members from Myanmar demonstrated this very principle through his teaching and leading group sessions with the practices he had learned on an earlier SOMA mission—“you disciplined me, and now I am discipling others.”

One team member shared how participating on the team affected his own ministry at home: “So often we get structured, set and stale amid the routines of ministry! It was such a joy to adapt on the fly and not be surrounded with resources or immersed in my routine for a week. It was a blessing to unplug, be in prayer, and be reminded that struggles in walking out discipleship are the same everywhere under the sun. The time to recharge and be restored reminded me how mission truly keeps me fueled for daily mission. Sometimes it takes literally being removed from the

regular rhythms to be reminded of this reality—the reality that we are always on mission, but God often uses the cross cultural missions to bring this forward.”

Team: Dr. Glen Petta, TL, SOMA USA; Bishop Kevin Bond Allen, Diocese of Cascadia; Rev. Alan Kyaw Myo Naing, Diocese of Mandalay; Rev. Marcus Kaiser, Church of the Holy Comforter, Sumter, SC; Rev. Andrew Petta, St. Barnabas Anglican, Fort Worth, TX; Jeff Brown, St. Charles Anglican, Bremerton, WA.



MUMIAS, KENYA: Empowered by God's Word

In 2019 SOMA sent a cross-cultural mission team to the Diocese of Mumias, Kenya, to bring renewal and healing for over two hundred clergy, evangelists and lay readers. Church leaders were hungry and thirsty for the Word of God, with some reporting, "We have never experienced this kind of Gospel teaching on leadership, not even in our seminary training."



Those who attended were freed from the bondage of unforgiveness and from unbiblical cultural practices. Others realized that they had been serving God without first accepting Him as their Savior and Lord. As the week continued, the Holy Spirit was working in the team members as well, experienced through their seamless team work, praying for guidance, and waiting upon the Holy Spirit for direction. One team member said, "I praise God for giving me the strength to speak about my personal testimony and share my experiences as a Lay Reader with other Lay Readers in the congregation." Spiritual renewal and new relationships among the conference participants and the team were evidence that God had used the mission for His purposes.



Team: Rev. Brook Batchelor, TL, and Leah Batchelor, All Souls Anglican, Jacksonville, FL; Bishop Joseph Kanuku, Rev. Philip Matee; Madelene Musembi, Diocese of Makueni, Kenya; Darlene Fray, Church of the Redeemer, Jacksonville, FL; Ann Allen, Christ the Redeemer Anglican, Fort Worth, TX.

SOMA INTERNATIONAL IN AUSTRALIA: "Feed My Sheep"

In celebration of SOMA's 40 years of ministry and to attend the SOMA International board meeting, the National Directors met in Melbourne, Australia. In keeping with SOMA's commitment to equip and renew Anglican leaders, the directors were sent out the following week on missions in different areas of the diocese.



I (Glen) was privileged to spend a week in Geelong, Australia, ministering with the National Director of SOMA Ireland, Rev. Henry Blair, and his wife, Helen. Rev. Jonathan Taylor, the rector of St. Albans, had requested a team to come to his parish, having participated in a SOMA mission in Viet Nam and had witnessed the team's sensitivity to the local culture and ability to bring passion and renewal to the leaders.

Returning home, he wanted this same revitalization to equip those in his own congregation. Those attending the conference reported a renewal of faith and a re-commitment to discipleship.

the team not only to reach out to their surrounding communities to draw new people into the group, but also to tend and nurture those right within their own group—and to guide every person intentionally through discipleship, whether new to the group or a regular attender.

Home groups were challenged by



Following up with people in the community came into focus when a woman, estranged and disconnected from the church, came to saving faith and embraced her new identity in Christ: "I feel like I am a new person and starting over." The rest of the week

Rev. Blair and I worked with the leaders of St. Alban's on practices of prayer and intercession and strategies for effective outreach. Rev. Taylor spoke of how he was encouraged by the team and their example of being open to the promptings and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who is always faithful to lead us.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER by Dr. Glen Petta

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved; for you are my praise." Jeremiah 17:14

God's redemptive power in our lives to bring healing from the past is an amazing process if we have the courage to submit to the Holy Spirit. I want to share a part of my personal testimony in regards to His work in my own life.

My dad was an alcoholic and a compulsive gambler, which led to my parents' divorce when I was twelve years old. His addictions and the accompanying erratic and unreliable behaviors were very traumatic for me. I was estranged from my dad for about fifteen years, and we never talked during that period of time. I held onto unforgiveness for many years that stagnated my spiritual growth.

A prisoner of war in World War II, my dad was held in a Japanese concentration camp for three and half years. The atrocities experienced by those imprisoned were inhumane and emotionally crippling. If you have seen the movie "Unbroken", you will have an understanding of the severe conditions. My dad never spoke to his family about his captivity. Though his captivity did not excuse his addictions, in time it gave me a deeper understanding of the demons that haunted him. God's grace through the Holy Spirit brought forgiveness and restoration to our relationship before my father died.

I began taking SOMA teams to Myanmar about seven years ago at the request of Archbishop Stephen Than. During that time I found a book in my dad's possessions that I had never seen. It was written by one of his fellow prisoners, detailing the events and conditions of the camps where my dad was held. Those camps were located in Burma (now Myanmar), in a region where SOMA is being called to minister to the leaders of the Church. This area—where my dad had been beaten, starved, forced into slave labor to build the railroad—is now a place of redemption, where God has taken SOMA teams to bring spiritual nourishment, restoration, and freedom in Christ! It is amazing to me that, one generation later, God has allowed me to work in the very place of my dad's imprisonment.

Perhaps there is something in your past blocking spiritual growth with a need for God's redemptive power. Let the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit redeem those experiences—and be amazed at the way God fulfills His purpose far beyond your own life.

