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for the local economy and a sense of ownership of the school. Approximately 500 people have had some involvement with the school construction.

Once the school was built, there was a feeling among some Canadians that we couldn't just plunk a school in the middle of the community and not help sustain it in some way. If they



couldn't afford to build the school, they certainly would need some support

to get and keep it operational. The plan has always been that they would be self-sufficient, but in the meantime, we formed a committee of eight to oversee our participation in this continuing project.

This committee created a Vision and Mission statement. The result of our collaborative work is a Vision of "Hope and Understanding through Education" and our mission the "Rwanda Education & Discovery Project" supports identified educational needs and promotes the development of schools in Rwanda.

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Photos provided by Rev'd Fred Carson and JoAnne Easton. Photo of Fr Michael Harper courtesy of Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies

Please Pray for SOMA

We gladly accept and value your donations



We encourage understanding and trust through exchange of skills and knowledge, providing a foundation for the growth of sustainable communities.

Our focus continues to be fund raising, seeking sponsors for the needy students, providing presentations to explain the Vunga School Project, encouraging visits to Rwanda to gain personal experience and hosting people from Rwanda to promote the project. We are beginning to learn more about the issues facing women and children.

We will be developing "Tourism with a Purpose" programs aimed at encouraging Canadians to



Projects the school has undertaken -- clockwise from the top: beehives, rabbit hutches, maize plantation and an outdoor pump providing water supply to the village.

see firsthand the needs, in order to help seek solutions. Recently we are finding people with relevant skills to share and plans are underway to set up visits to mentor the Rwandan teachers.

I am honoured to share this story with you as it is a way to say thank you for the SOMA mission experience. This one mission has activated me personally, as well as many others to dedicate time, money and prayer, and give people with far less than me, hope and a chance to survive.



Isn't it wonderful how a SOMA mission, while having a specific mandate, can morph into another form that continues to serve and benefit people? Not only does it benefit the people with obvious needs, it gives purpose and joy to those of us who have been infected with a passion as a result of a SOMA mission.

Our next Rwanda visit is planned for October when we will be able to participate in the graduation of the first students from the Vunga Vocational School.

If any readers are interested in learning more about this project, have talents to share or want to join our activities you may reach me at joeaston@xplornet.ca or 519-428-1478.

Mission Adventures

It's never too late to get involved with a SOMA mission! Here are some of the invitations and missions we are working on:

- SOMA Canada mission to **Inuvik** takes place **March 5 to 15 2010**. To date the team consists of The Rt. Rev. Len Whitten, team leader, June Whitten of Pasadena Nfld. and Patricia Halligan-Baker, Edmonton AB.
- Mission to women in **Kigali, Rwanda**, takes place **July 19-23, 2010**. The team consists of Dudley Baker (team leader), Patricia Halligan-Baker, Kjeryn Allard and Karen Spinney of Edmonton AB, Karen Ohashi of Burnaby BC, Ellen Brutsch of San Jose, California and Wanjiku Kironyo of Nairobi Kenya.
- Note the tentative May 2010 mission to **Muhabura Diocese, Uganda** has been postponed to 2011 at the request of Bishop Cranmer Muqisha.

For information on these missions, or if you would like SOMA missionaries to come speak to your church, please contact the National Director via the Soma Canada Office by post, email, phone or by the links on our web site.

SHARING SOMA OF MINISTRIES ABROAD

SHARING

SOMA Canada Newsletter

March 2010

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SOMA Canada is an Anglican Mission Agency serving the Church transculturally, dedicated to fostering renewal and unity in the Holy Spirit

August 10 to September 2, 2009 Mission to Rwanda

Healed, Reconciled and Transformed



Shyogwe, Rwanda
by Fred Carson

SOMA Canada has had a team in Rwanda almost every year since our first mission in 1996. Sometimes there has been more than one team, serving mostly in the central and southern regions. We have built a partnership with the Anglican Church of Rwanda that has witnessed many changes over the years.

The power of God has been evident, as people are healed, reconciled and transformed by His grace. In the midst of the anguish, people have found hope and strength in the risen Christ. And so the Bishop of Shyogwe invited us to return in 2009 to discuss Christian relationships and teach the fundamentals of discipleship based on the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-19)



Our team consisted of Dr. Marie-Helene Goulet, La Peche, Quebec and Marcia and Fred Carson, Simcoe, Ontario. We arrived in Rwanda, knowing that we had a formidable task. We were asked to travel to six Archdeaconries, which meant that we had to virtually cover the entire diocese in less than three weeks.

Although we wondered how this might work out in practice, it was amazing how God had prepared the way for us. He gave us excellent weather to make the roads easily passable; and, most importantly, he gave his people a desire to learn and grow. Each session left the diocesan leaders wanting more.

We discussed marriage and the responsibility and role of each spouse. We knew that there were problems within Rwandan society, as there are in our own, but the methods of dealing with them are,

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Fr Michael Harper, 1931-2010, Founder of SOMA

The Rev'd Fred Carson has informed us of the death on January 6, 2010 of Michael Harper, the first International Director of SOMA. He passed away in Cambridge, England. Michael was one of great leaders in the charismatic renewal that began in the 1960's. He was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1956 and served under John Stott at All Souls, Langham Place.

The last twenty years of his ministry was focused on renewal and ecumenical relations on an international scale. The increasing liberalization of doctrine in the Anglican Church and the ordination of women, led him to leave and he and his wife joined the Antiochian Orthodox Church in England in 1995 where he was ordained a priest.

Fred remembers Michael... "I have many wonderful memories of Michael and Jeanne, their devotion to each other and their deep love for Jesus. I will never forget the encouragement and support that he gave me when I



Father Michael Harper, after he had been ordained as an Orthodox priest.

became National Director of SOMA Canada.

Of course, I had heard of Michael Harper for many years before I had actually met him. I remember his early writings, his ecumenical involvement and the leadership he provided within the charismatic renewal generally and the Anglican Church particularly. However, it was when he and Jeanne stayed in our home, spent time with Marcia and me, and challenged us to go deeper with the Lord and to see the true potential of SOMA, that I really appreciated his wise leadership. It was then that I saw the man behind the articles and books."

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in many cases, very different.

We provided an opportunity for the delegates to address these issues among themselves, looking at them from a Christian perspective. Reconciliation is preferred, but divorce is sometimes necessary and needs to be considered for the mental and spiritual health of the individuals. This is contrary to the views of many

in Rwanda, so couples (mostly the women) suffer quietly, while the situation is ignored. We tried to help the delegates understand a holistic approach to healing and building relations

In our discipleship program, prayer was emphasized. Both private and corporate prayer is necessary for the building up of the Body. We found

that intercessory prayer struck a chord with many and so time was spent discussing what is meant by intercession as well as some of the methods.

What does it mean to be a Christian? What happens to new Christians to assure they have every opportunity to grow and to be

equipped to pick up their cross and to follow Jesus? Does the Church provide opportunities for its members to achieve their potential in Jesus? These are but a few of the questions we considered.

God is giving the leadership of the Rwandan church an increasing desire for personal growth. He is also busy equipping his people both to be disciples and to make disciples. As a result, we have been asked to develop a course of study on discipleship that the diocese might use for training purposes.

God continues to heal the people and the land. This is a new day in Rwanda, but the church recognizes that positive change and eternal hope must begin with the Church. The Body of Christ is not only to be an example of healthy living, but it is also to be a living catalyst in bringing about the transformation God wills for society.



Rev'd Fred Carson teaching at Shyogwe. Left to Right: Rev Canon Emmanuel Gasana, Dr. Marie-Helene Goulet, Marcia Carson, Rev Fred Carson, and two leaders from the Archdeaconry.

After a 2006 SOMA Mission to Rwanda.

Vunga, Rwanda
by JoAnne Easton

Do not think that once a SOMA Mission is complete, that it is the end of the journey. For me it was just the beginning.

When our 2006 SOMA spirit-guided mission to Rwanda (**Sharing**, September 2006) was completed, we were notified of a serious situation. Bishop Jered Kalimba, Rev John Wesley Kabango and Rev. Fred Carson, our 2006 team leader, shared with our SOMA team of five a dream that had been percolating for some time.



At the school's dedication in 2007. Holding the left side of the flag is Bishop Jered Kalimba of the Diocese of Shyogwe in Rwanda. The Canadians are from left to right, Rev. Canon Tony Bouwmeester, George Zubick, Roger Vermeulen, Jill Zubick, JoAnne Easton, Jane Schuyler, Glen Schuyler, Rev. Kendall Reimer, Bob Easton and Josh Zubick. Senator Romeo Dallaire gave the Canadian flag for the dedication which we are holding.

The Journey Continues

The young people in the area of the remote village of Vunga needed help. They could not become self-sufficient and survive in their world without developing a skill to make a living. Where could they go after a grade six education? They find themselves with no available school, no money, no means to learn a skill or earn a living, and in most cases no parents or family support. A vocational school in their community and an answer to help them out of poverty were greatly needed.

This dream became my dream and I returned to Canada to pass on the message and to do my part to help get them their school.

By the summer 2007, through the generosity of many Canadian's and the assistance of African Community Technical Services (ACTS) the school was built, with plans to begin classes in September. That summer, I saw with my own eyes the completed school, and, with a group of ten, participated in its dedication.

We have seen some interesting spin-offs to the construction of the school. The government,



The Vunga school: "Not only does it benefit the people with obvious needs, it gives purpose and joy to those of us who have been infected with a passion as a result of a SOMA mission."

seeing the importance that the school would have on the community, connected the village to the main water line several miles away, giving the village and school, water access.

A brick factory was needed to supply the bricks during construction and the length of the permit was extended, allowing continued production after the school was built. This operation continues to provide employment for the people and an industry for the community.

During the construction, the local men and women were employed, providing wages, opportunities to gain experience, stimulation

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Do Not Hinder Them, For the Kingdom of Heaven Belongs to Such as These

SOMA Canada has again been asked to minister to women in Kigali, Rwanda. In order to do this the organizers need assistance to rent transportation, a suitable venue to house and feed about 180 to 200 women for a week as well a plenary space for teaching and ministry. SOMA's share will be roughly \$8,000.00.

The women will be from small urban and rural churches whose congregations cannot afford to the teaching and ministry usually available in the capital.

Jesus said " let the little children come to me, and



do not hinder them for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matt. (19: 14) and in Matt.18 He says that childlikeness is needed to enter the kingdom of heaven. Children usually are trusting and open to receive and they do not have pretensions beyond who they really are and they are eager to freely share what they receive with neighbours. That describes these women.

Donations, marked *Women in Rwanda* can be mailed to the SOMA office, or Canada Helps at canadahelps.org, or through our web site, somacanada.ca. You will receive a tax receipt for your donation.