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Renewing the body of Christ: Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA) USA and transnational charismatic Anglicanism, 1978-1998¹

Abstract

Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA) was formed in the late 1970s as an international organisation for the cultivation of charismatic renewal amongst leaderships within the global Anglican Communion. This article explores the ethos and activities of its American national body. It argues that its short term, cross-cultural missions increasingly displayed mutuality and long-term partnership rather than one-directional American influence, and thus reflected a developing shift in the understanding and practice of global mission in the late twentieth century. The organisation shaped awareness of the global Church amongst some US Episcopalians and constructed an influential transnational network within charismatic Anglicanism. Furthermore, SOMA's network was one context for the emergence of global north-south conservative solidarity in the politics of the Anglican Communion.

In April 1985 leaders of the Episcopal charismatic renewal movement gathered in the flagship charismatic evangelical Truro Church in Fairfax, Virginia, to discuss the formation of a new mission body in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (ECUSA; also known as The Episcopal Church or TEC). In attendance was a visiting Englishman, the Revd. Michael Harper, a leading figure in the transnational renewal movement. A charismatic evangelical and committed Anglican, Harper was the International Director of Sharing of Ministries Abroad (SOMA), an organisation dedicated to promoting Spirit-filled renewal, particularly within the Anglican Communion. He shared exciting news of world-wide developments - stirrings of the Spirit in Kenya, India, and in the South Pacific islands – and then his vision to extend the organisation's scope to “reach and testify in every Anglican Diocese in the world by 1990”.² The strategy was to form SOMA ‘national bodies’ to coordinate cross-cultural missions which nurtured ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit. SOMA would not achieve the ambitious coverage which Harper envisaged, but nevertheless became a conduit for charismatic renewal within the Anglican Communion. The American national body was particularly active: between 1987 and 1994 it coordinated approximately seventy short-term missions, more than any other group.³

¹ The National Director of SOMA USA, Dr Glen Petta, kindly granted permission to access and reproduce items from the organisation's archive. The following, involved past or present in SOMA USA, were interviewed in summer 2013: Revd David Harper, Richard Hines, Dr Glen Petta and Edwina Thomas. Where they are quoted and identified this is done with permission. I am grateful to each of them for their openness and hospitality. SOMA materials at the Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall, Doncaster, are used with permission of the trustees. This paper has also benefitted from peer review comments from other authors at a two-day workshop in Middelburg, Netherlands, in summer 2015; the feedback of another anonymous peer reviewer; and the advice of editors of this special issue.

² SOMA USA minutes, 29-30 April 1985, SOMA USA archive, Fort Worth, Texas [hereafter SOMA USA archive].

³ *SOMA International: Consolidated List of Missions and Other Visits by the SOMA National Bodies* (1994). During the same period, for example, around 55 missions and visits were organised by SOMA UK, 42 by SOMA Australasia, and 11 by both SOMA Canada and SOMA Ireland.

The acronym SOMA, Greek for ‘body’, is a New Testament metaphor for the Church – Christ’s body. As such, it provides an interpretive metaphor for this article. ‘Neo-Pentecostalism’ became a feature of American Episcopalianism after Pentecostal influences emerged from the mid-1950s, and received widespread attention following reports in *Time* and *Newsweek* of tongue-speaking in Dennis Bennett’s congregation at Van Nuys, California, in 1960. In ECUSA it came to emphasise the gifts of the Spirit, personal salvation and the authority of Scripture in a high church context, and by the 1980s was increasingly evangelical in emphasis. Despite clear family resemblance with Pentecostalism, from the 1960s the term ‘charismatic renewal’ was deployed to reflect a commitment to existing denominations and make the movement more acceptable to them.⁴ A key feature of the charismatic renewal was a commitment to democratized (i.e. clerical and lay) ministry of the supernatural gifts – for example, tongues speaking, healing and prophecy – in local churches. SOMA’s primary purpose was to reproduce this ‘body ministry’ amongst Anglican dioceses in the global south; or as Brian Stanley remarks in *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism*, it was “a conscious attempt to export the message of charismatic renewal to Anglicans in the non-Western world”.⁵ However, while SOMA USA sought to transmit ‘renewed’ patterns of ministry to the global south ‘body of Christ’, this was not merely a one-way expression of American or western influence. From the beginning there were efforts to steer away from paternalistic models of cross-cultural engagement. Denominational identity and structures, furthermore, were significant. While many American missions abroad were para-denominational, SOMA USA was committed both to working within the Episcopalian Church and within an Anglican Communion whose provinces were increasingly interdependent.

Charismatic Christianity is now a major block within global Anglicanism and a key dynamic in the complex identity politics of the Anglican Communion. While SOMA was a relatively low-key organisation, during the 1980s and 1990s it played a vital role not only in the growth and development of charismatic renewal in various contexts, but also in the establishment of long-term linkages between conservative, Spirit-filled Anglicans in the global north and south. Indeed, the present-day Anglican Communion and its internal politics cannot be fully understood without a historical perspective on the transnational charismatic and evangelical networks to emerge from the 1970s. What follows, which is based on access to SOMA USA’s own archive, its magazine, and interviews with a selection of its missionaries, is divided into three sections. First, the background to SOMA USA is discussed. This describes the Anglo-American dimensions of SOMA’s development out of the Anglican International Conference on Spiritual Renewal (1978); scrutinising also the milieu of Episcopalian renewal in which SOMA USA emerged. Second, with reference to various dioceses – particularly in South America and East Africa - it explores SOMA USA’s approach to mission. Finally, it looks briefly at the organisation in the context of the growing divisions within global Anglicanism over sexuality in the 1990s, and the tensions between the American national body’s solidarity with evangelical in the global south and its own relationship with ECUSA.

Background: ‘Let the Holy Spirit mind the nervous system in my body’

⁴ See discussion in Connie Ho Yan Au, *Grassroots Unity in the Charismatic Renewal* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 14.

⁵ Brian Stanley, *The Global Diffusion of Evangelicalism: the Age of Billy Graham and John Stott* (Nottingham: InterVarity Press, 2013), 200.

In 1975, Everett ‘Terry’ Fullam, Rector of St Paul’s Episcopal Church in Darien, Connecticut, went to Rome.⁶ With Michael Harper, he was invited to take a place amongst ten thousand delegates at the International Conference of Catholic Charismatic Renewal. The experience led the two leaders to discuss the idea of a similar event for Anglicans. Planning began for an Anglican International Conference on Spiritual Renewal (AICSR) in Canterbury, England, to precede the decennial international gathering of Anglican bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1978. AICSR was largely an Anglo-American initiative, with the Episcopal Charismatic Fellowship (ECF) collaborating with Harper and Anglican members of the Fountain Trust, a largely British renewal network.⁷ At the ‘Leaders of Leaders’ conference, 110 delegates were registered from Britain and 61 from the USA.⁸ Fullam, Revd. Charles ‘Chuck’ Irish of the ECF, and William C. Frey, Bishop of Colorado (later Dean of the evangelical Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry near Pittsburgh), were amongst the main speakers, and plans were made for two jumbo jets to transport American delegates to a final ‘open’ conference of clergy and lay charismatic leaders.⁹ One feature of the conference was widely publicised: a Eucharistic finale where various bishops were photographed ‘dancing’ before the altar of Canterbury Cathedral. Harper described the event as ‘strangely reminiscent of the day of Pentecost.’¹⁰

A significant aspect of AICSR was the recognition of the global dimensions of Anglicanism. The organiser’s vision was to promote renewal within the whole Anglican Communion. The gathering occurred during a period in which the worldwide denomination was fast evolving. In the words of one commentator on the eve of the 11th Lambeth Conference, there was a “new look” to the Anglican Communion.¹¹ It was now largely composed of autonomous churches with increasingly indigenised leaderships, and new and growing Provinces emerging, for example in Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania. The establishment of the Anglican Consultative Council and ‘Partners in Mission’ strengthened a sense of ‘family ties’ between national churches. The presence of various indigenous global south leaders at AICSR – for example the exiled Bishop of Kigezi reportedly under the watchful eyes of press corps sent by Idi Amin,¹² and Bishop Joshua Chiu Ban It, the leader of Singapore’s indigenous renewal – was evidence of such global Anglican developments.

The organisers of AICSR discussed in advance the desirability of “a kind of international renewal committee for Anglicans”. However, the major prophetic theme of the conference – “love in action all over the world” – was inspired by the prayer of an unnamed African

⁶ Fullam’s parish became known as a model for charismatic renewal following the publication of Bob Slosser’s *Miracle in Darien* (Plainfield N.J.: Bridge-Logos, 1979).

⁷ On the background and organisation of AICSR, see: Michael Harper, ‘Introduction’, *A New Canterbury Tale: the Reports of the Anglican International Conference on Spiritual Renewal Held at Canterbury, July 1978* (Bramcote: Grove, 1978), 3-4; Michael Harper, *Charismatic Crisis: the Charismatic Renewal: Past, Present and Future* (1980).

⁸ List of leaders attending AICSR, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive, Donald Gee Centre, Mattersey Hall, Doncaster [hereafter Fountain Trust archive].

⁹ Michael Harper to Donald Coggan, 11 April 1977, Coggan Papers, Lambeth Palace Library, London, f. 292.

¹⁰ See Harper, ‘Introduction’, 3.

¹¹ ‘Why Lambeth 1978 will be different’, *Yes*, July-September 1978, pp. 4-5. This was the magazine of the Church Missionary Society.

¹² Anne Coomes, *The Authorised Biography of Festo Kivengere* (Eastbourne: Monarch, 1990), 387.

leader. Other prophetic utterances carried similar notions, including the words: “I weep over my broken body. When one part of my body is in pain, the other parts do not feel the pain. Let the Holy Spirit mind the nervous system in my body.”¹³ To the organisers, the words confirmed the need for an organisation to nurture Spirit-filled ministry in the global south. In the following months, Harper and English colleagues consulted with American members of the ECF over a name. ‘Christians in Partnership’, ‘Love in Action’, ‘International Christian Ministries’ and ‘SHARE’ were considered before ‘Sharing of Ministries Abroad’ was eventually selected.¹⁴

The name implied the sharing of resources of renewal with the entire body of Christ: of ministry in a “needy world”.¹⁵ There was a conviction that western churches had been riding a wave of Spirit-filled renewal in previous decades, and churches abroad required access to these ministries to experience the same release of gifts, depth of worship and power for evangelism. At the same time, despite this emphasis, from its inception SOMA reflected a wider shift occurring within Anglicanism/Episcopalianism away from Commonwealth and American networks of influence towards indigeneity and interchange. A 1973 document by the Anglican Consultative Council described this evolving ecclesiological and missiological paradigm:

The emergence everywhere of autonomous churches in independent nations has challenged our inherited idea of mission as a movement from “Christendom” in the West to the “non-Christian” world. In its place has come the conviction that there is but one mission in all the world, and that this one mission is shared by the world-wide Christian community.¹⁶

Harper viewed SOMA as a vehicle for exchange, arguing “the Third World will need Western expertise and finance. The West needs the Third World’s dedication, enthusiasm, spiritually fashioned on the anvil of poverty, suffering and persecution. SOMA is there to stand in the gap and help the mutual sharing of these resources.”¹⁷ SOMA’s leadership underlined a sense of interdependence: its International Board soon included Moses Tay, now Bishop of Singapore, Sundar Clarke, Bishop of Madras, and these were later joined by Gresford Chitemo, Bishop of Morogoro (Tanzania), and Manasses Kuria, Archbishop of Kenya.¹⁸ SOMA was an organisation dedicated primarily to resourcing churches in the global south; however, from its genesis the organisation also sought to reflect the interdependence of Christ’s global body.

The early strategy was to sponsor ecumenical regional leadership conferences, in Singapore (1981), Kenya (Limuru, 1983), Fiji (Suva, 1984) and Tanzania (Mzumbe, 1984; Moshi, 1985). These developed a network of renewal leaders. In some cases they stimulated the spread of charismatic ministry: Bishop Gresford Chitemo reported of the 1984 Mzumbe

¹³ Harper, ‘Introduction’, 7-8.

¹⁴ See deliberations in minutes of early committee meetings between November 1978 and June 1979, SOMA file, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive.

¹⁵ ‘SOMA: the Sharing of Ministries Abroad’, *Acts 29*, Summer 1980, 10. *Acts 29* was a publication of the Episcopal Charismatic Fellowship.

¹⁶ Anglican Consultative Council, quoted in Titus Presler, ‘The History of Mission in the Anglican Communion’, Ian S. Markham et al, *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to the Anglican Communion* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 29.

¹⁷ Michael Harper, ‘The SOMA vision’, 30 June 1983, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive.

¹⁸ See Michael Harper to David Pytches, 8 November 1983, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive.

conference: “the ‘fire’ spread all over. We continually hear reports of things happening in different churches – and it continues here in Morogoro.”¹⁹ Terry Fullam, Chuck Irish and other American Episcopalian leaders were actively involved. In 1983 there was an opportunity for wider American participation. It was advertised that delegates might take in a safari following the conference; and the ECF booked a jumbo jet for a conference airlift of USA delegates to the Limuru gathering.²⁰ This was a striking step of faith - the plane was never filled - but it offered travellers a taste of short-term ministry abroad. During the same gathering a prophecy uttered by a British delegate that SOMA’s future was “not in the big conference hall” confirmed Harper’s view that the way forward was ‘month by month facilitating of worldwide ministries’.²¹ The decision to establish SOMA USA was the first step in a policy of setting up national bodies to coordinate short-term missions.²²

After the decision to establish SOMA USA in 1985, the American national body maintained close links with SOMA International but was also able to operate unilaterally, with particular responsibility for advancing renewal in Latin America.²³ The organisation was closely integrated with ECUSA. It attended General Conventions and from 1990 participated in the Episcopal Council for Global Mission.²⁴ The early support base came from two clusters of ‘renewed’ parishes: Truro Church and Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, Church of the Word, Manassas, and All Saints, Dale City, all in northern Virginia near Washington D.C.; and St James’, Newport Beach, St Margaret’s, South Gate, and All Saints, Bakersfield, in southern California (another key supporter was St Bartholomew’s, Nashville). Church of the Apostles, which had recently experienced rapid growth, and was an outreach-orientated church (since its beginnings it gave fifty per cent of its income to mission), and which like its mother church, Truro, attracted members of Washington’s elite, was particularly influential.²⁵ In 1986 the Revd. David Harper, a New Zealander and member of SOMA International Board, became its Rector; and the Revd. Brian Cox, the first U.S. National Director, joined him from St James’, Newport Beach as Assistant Rector the same year. By 1992 17 partner parishes were associated with the organisation.²⁶ SOMA USA was a small organisation, but some supporting parishes were influential in charismatic renewal circles.

¹⁹ Quoted in Jeanne Harper, *Visited by God: the Story of Michael Harper’s 48 year-long Ministry* (Cambridge: Aquila, 2013), 51. See also Tammie M. Harvey, ‘Gresford Chitemo (1927-2009)’, Online Dictionary of African Christian Biography; Gresford Chitemo, “The Rt. Rev. Gresford Chitemo, Bishop of the Diocese of Morogoro in Tanzania: My Short History,” (Morogoro: Anglican Church of Tanzania: 1986).

²⁰ SOMA pan-Africa conference in Nairobi: progress report, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive; ‘Africa SOMA Conference being planned’, *Acts 29*, Nov-Dec 1982, 13.

²¹ Michael Harper to James Haigh-Ferguson, 13 November 1983, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive.

²² SOMA UK had been set up in 1980. SOMA Canada and SOMA Pacific (SOMA Australasia from 1988) were established in 1986; SOMA Ireland (Colann Ministries) in 1991; SOMA Southern Africa in 1992; SOMA New Zealand in 1994 (SOMA Australasia had become SOMA Australia in 1991 in readiness).

²³ SOMA meeting minutes, 29-30 April 1985, SOMA USA archive.

²⁴ ‘New Council for Mission forms in St. Louis, will Promote Cooperation’, *Episcopal News Service*, 21 June 1990, no. 90158.

²⁵ On Church of the Apostles, see ‘An update...Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, VA’, *Acts 29*, Summer 1982, 1,3; Tom Beckwith, ‘Poised for Greatness’, *Acts 29*, September-October 1993, 12-15

²⁶ National Board meeting minutes, 18 January 1993, SOMA USA archive.

When the Episcopal Charismatic Fellowship was first formed in 1973 it was recognised that charismatic renewal involved both the denomination's 'catholic' and 'evangelical' streams²⁷. By the 1980s and 1990s, the Episcopalian renewal movement, in which SOMA emerged, was increasingly evangelical in emphasis. By the beginning of the 1980s many evangelicals had joined the denomination from outside (at the ECUSA General Convention in 1982 it was reported that 58% of members originated in other Christian denominations, including 17% from Baptist churches),²⁸ and many were drawn to larger 'renewed' congregations. Miranda Hassett describes the growing strength of a "conservative charismatic/evangelical movement" emphasising the extent to which the streams co-occurred.²⁹ There was increasing cross-fertilisation in the theology and practice of charismatic and conservative evangelical Episcopalians, particularly following the opening of the Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in 1976 as a "rallying point of the evangelical/charismatic renewal in the Episcopal Church".³⁰ Importantly, charismatic Episcopalians increasingly looked to the 'power' ministry and evangelism teaching of John Wimber of the Californian Vineyard churches, developed links with charismatics from the English Anglican evangelical resurgence such as Bishop David Pyches, the Revd David Watson and the Revd Michael Green, and were influenced by Singaporean Archbishop Moses Tay.³¹ It became common for theologically conservative Episcopalians of various hues to utilise 'evangelical' as an umbrella adjective, particularly to contrast with the liberal impulses of the wider Episcopal Church.³²

SOMA USA did not use an 'evangelical' label, neither did all those involved in the organisation identify, at least primarily, as such (furthermore, during the course of the 1990s, the 'charismatic' label was used less).³³ This partly reflects the porous and non-exclusive boundaries between evangelical, charismatic and catholic identities and practices in ECUSA in comparison to the historically more rigidly demarcated 'church party' identities in the Church of England. Various SOMA parishes displayed this eclecticism. For example, Church of the Apostles, Fairfax, a radical charismatic congregation which had experienced

²⁷ *Acts 29: Where we are NOW in the Continuing Acts of the Holy Spirit* (Episcopal Charismatic Fellowship, 1973), 4.

²⁸ Jason Bruner, 'Divided we Stand: North American Evangelicals and the Crisis in the Anglican Communion', *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 8/1 (2010), p. 107.

²⁹ Miranda K. Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis: how Episcopal Dissidents and their African Allies are reshaping Anglicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 34.

³⁰ Janet Leighton, *Lift High the Cross: a History of the Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry* (Wheaton IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1995), 87. The Revd Dennis Bennett, the high church pioneer of Episcopalian charismatic renewal, in 1986 expressed concern at the growing influence of evangelicalism within the renewal movement; see his letter, *Acts 29*, 4/1 (1986), 11.

³¹ For example see, Joan R. McKean, 'Bishop Pyches and team to return', *Acts 29*, March 1988, 7; Michael Green, 'The thump of the avocado', *Acts 29*, September 1981, 1,6; David Watson, 'Called and committed', *Acts 29*, 1/3 (1983), 5-10, 14; 'International Renewal Conference set for LA in '85', *Acts 29*, 3/1 (1985), 5. Pyches and Tay both became involved in the leadership of SOMA.

³² Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis*, 35.

³³ Some explicitly Anglo-Catholic parishes have been, and continue to be involved, in SOMA USA. See 'SOMA: The New Breed of Missionaries', *Sharing USA*, Winter 1988-89, 1. It follows that not all those individuals discussed in this article necessarily identified, at least primarily, as 'evangelical'.

significant growth, described by one observer as “Bible-believing and tongues-speaking”,³⁴ was rooted in a “three streams; one river” identity, seeking to balance evangelical, sacramental and pentecostal influences.³⁵ Overall, however, the combination of charismatic and evangelical influences within SOMA in the period discussed was significant. Some involved in the organisation had links with Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, the evangelical centre for scholarship on mission. In the words of Edwina Thomas, a former member of St James’, Newport Beach, who moved to Virginia in the 1990s to become SOMA USA’s second National Director: “The world-wide church needs the empowerment of God’s Holy Spirit, and those within the church need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”³⁶

Renewing the body: ‘Givers who function as a pipeline’

SOMA USA described itself as “dedicated to fostering renewal in the Holy Spirit worldwide among Episcopal and Anglican leaders so that the Church is equipped to fulfil Jesus Christ’s Great Commission.”³⁷ Brian Cox, the first National Director, associated it with a “broader understanding of the apostolic vision and ministry”, referring to English evangelical leader Revd David Watson’s description of local congregations sending out teams to church plant or foster renewal in existing churches.³⁸ Alongside this notion of apostolic ministry, however, there was also from the beginning a belief that the Holy Spirit was ushering in a new approach to missions to replace the existing paradigm of sending and receiving countries: a *mutuality* within the body of Christ based on sharing ministries with churches abroad to equip them to foster Spirit-filled patterns of renewal ministry.³⁹ Later, Edwina Thomas described SOMA missionaries as “givers who function as a pipeline through which the Body of Christ can be reproduced.”⁴⁰ In the following discussion of SOMA’s approach, two questions are particularly salient. How did SOMA, with its commitment to promoting a particular - though flexible – emphasis on Spirit-filled renewal, work within the episcopal authority structures of an internally diverse Anglican Communion? How effective was SOMA in bringing, or nurturing, ‘renewed’ ministry, while avoiding a sense of paternalism?

SOMA USA mission teams were small, usually involving 5-7 volunteers. They included at least one clergy member but significant numbers of laity also participated or led teams. Its volunteers were portrayed as ordinary Spirit-filled men and women from many social and employment backgrounds.⁴¹ The model of self-funded, short-term mission was widely adopted in the post-war period, for example by Operation Mobilisation and Youth With A

³⁴ Linda Kaufman, ‘Waiting on God’, *Sojourners*, July 2013. See <http://sojo.net/magazine/2013/07/waiting-god> : accessed 26/1/2015.

³⁵ Beckwith, ‘Poised for Greatness’; David Harper, *Three Streams, One River: a Statement of Identity, a Model for our Life* (May 2003): <http://storage.cloversites.com/churchoftheapostles/documents/Three%20Streams%202007%20in%20Verdana.pdf> accessed: 26 January 2015.

³⁶ Edwina Thomas, ‘SOMA: Sharing Renewal Overseas’ in Sharon J. Stockdale, *New Wineskins for Global Mission* (Pasadena CA: William Carey Library, 1996), 407.

³⁷ See *Sharing USA*, 7/ 2, 1992, 1.

³⁸ Revd Brian Cox, ‘SOMA: an Apostolic Mission’, *Acts 29*, July 1988, 17.

³⁹ ‘SOMA: a vision of sharing’, *Acts 29*, 3/5, 1985, 3-5.

⁴⁰ Thomas, ‘SOMA: Sharing Renewal Overseas’, 410.

⁴¹ ‘SOMA: The New Breed of Missionaries’.

Mission (YWAM). Such opportunities often attracted school leavers and graduates; but SOMA volunteers, primarily middle-aged or retired, displayed a widening demographic. Women played an important role, accounting for half of the 26 SOMA missionaries in 1988.⁴² Its literature presented a narrative normal people volunteering abroad – this was ‘The New Breed of Missionaries’.⁴³ The missions were essentially the transplantation of charismatic every member ministry to the mission context. A strong sense of spiritual adventure could be apparent. While teams prepared as best they could, they expected to be Spirit-led. “It is a joyous adventure,” Thomas explained, “to go on a trip unprepared, lay the plans before God and have the Holy Spirit rework the plans to meet the needs of the people.”⁴⁴ For Richard Hines, who travelled extensively from the late 1980s, the missions were distinctive:

What happens to you when you are doing SOMA ministry: you’re not painting houses... You are living on the cutting edge of what God is doing someplace. Tremendous challenges and you’re just... flying with the Holy Spirit, because if you’re not flying with the Holy Spirit it doesn’t work.⁴⁵

SOMA missions, like the Spirit they claimed to minister, were expected to be unpredictable.

The organisation’s *modus operandi* was to work only at the invitation of a local bishop, and therefore under the authority of an increasingly indigenised Anglican hierarchy. The rationale was partly spiritual: to support the bishop’s vision of the diocese, rather than undermine their leadership and so “allowing the enemy a foothold”.⁴⁶ The memory of acrimonious divisions between charismatics and non-charismatics within some U.S. dioceses remained fresh, and there was a determination to avoid creating similar divisions abroad.⁴⁷ Despite the explosion of Pentecostalism in South America, the renewal movement had made few inroads in Anglicanism. Province IX⁴⁸ and Brazil, like the ECUSA, tended to emphasise “decency and order, vestments and a modicum of ritual”, while in the Southern Cone the influence of South American Missionary Society (SAMS) missionary bishops and clergy brought a conservative evangelical flavour, although increasingly SAMS workers brought charismatic influences.⁴⁹ A few bishops from Latin America had attended AICSR 1978, but SOMA was also proactive in establishing relationships; developing links with Province IX bishops at ECUSA General Conventions and visiting bishops on exploratory trips to dioceses. In other cases bishops heard of SOMA USA by word of mouth from colleagues in the province who had received teams.⁵⁰ The organisation’s first mission was to Honduras in November 1985, and links were soon established in Ecuador, Argentina and Uruguay. In 1989, however, it was announced in

⁴² ‘1988 SOMA Missionaries’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 1989, 2.

⁴³ ‘Meet Two Ordinary People...and how God is Changing them’, *Sharing USA*, Vol. 7/No. 2, 1992, 1-2; ‘SOMA: The New Breed of Missionaries’.

⁴⁴ Thomas, ‘SOMA: Sharing Renewal Overseas’, 408.

⁴⁵ Richard Hines interview.

⁴⁶ Thomas, ‘SOMA: Sharing Renewal Overseas’, 407.

⁴⁷ Richard Hines interview.

⁴⁸ Province IX is a province of ECUSA made up of various dioceses in the Caribbean and Latin America.

⁴⁹ Douglas Milmine, *The History of Anglicanism in Latin America* (Tunbridge Wells: South American Missionary Society, 1994), 104.

⁵⁰ Richard Hines interview.

Sharing USA that the Holy Spirit was also shifting attentions towards Africa.⁵¹ The national body became increasingly active in African dioceses, particularly in Uganda, Kenya, and Zaire; in Pakistan, and the Diocese of Nandyal in India; while finding new opportunities in Latin America, including in Brazil, Mexico and Bolivia.⁵² The scope of influence was expanding.

Diocesan bishops had a variety of motivations for inviting the Americans. Often invitations came with the purpose of deepening the spiritual life of the diocese.⁵³ In other cases teams were invited for more specific reasons. In the Diocese of Argentina (Bishop Richard Cutts attended both AICSR 1978 and a follow-up event hosted by SOMA International ten years later) early SOMA missions appear to have contributed to efforts to expand beyond the boundaries of an English chaplaincy church.⁵⁴ In 1989 a team assisted Argentinians seeking to church plant in Ushuaia, on the Tierra del Fuego archipelago.⁵⁵ Other bishops were concerned by the attraction of alternative and competing expressions of religion, notably Pentecostalism.⁵⁶ During the early 1990s, one bishop was said to have informed SOMA that he wanted locals to understand that “being liturgical does not mean you have to be boring. Latinos, inherently, cannot not clap or stomp their feet or raise their hands.”⁵⁷ Some bishops saw SOMA missions as opportunities to model Spirit-filled ministry within the context of liturgical Anglicanism. There were also invitations, often as follow-up visits, to address specific and pressing issues for the diocese: for example, religious ‘syncretism’; reconciliation between clergy; or topics such as healing or worship.⁵⁸ The overall approach was designed to be attentive to local demands: efforts were made to understand and support the bishop’s vision for a diocese. The organisation perceived itself as a ‘servant’ ministry.

SOMA’s approach was based on principles drawn out of denominational affiliation rather than a strategy for extending influence. However, working within the Anglican hierarchy could nevertheless bring significant access. If a bishop opened up his diocese to a SOMA team, then there were possibilities of reaching a significant cross-section of clerical and lay leadership. Furthermore, the bishop was asked, where possible, to commission the American team on arrival, which symbolically underlined the visitors’ credibility and authorisation to minister.⁵⁹ In many cases, long-term links were established with particular bishops and their dioceses. However, a pitfall of SOMA’s *modus operandi* was the danger that a new bishop,

⁵¹ ‘SOMA USA plunges into Africa’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 1989, 2.

⁵² See *Consolidated List of Missions and Other Visits*.

⁵³ See John and Valerie Lowe, *The role of SOMA in Anglican Renewal* (1992). The authors were administrators for SOMA International from 1986 to 1991.

⁵⁴ On the Diocese of Argentina, see Sheldon F. Judson, ‘Southern Cone’ in Cyril C. Okorochoa (ed), *The Cutting Edge of Mission: a Report of the mid-point Review of the Decade of Evangelism* (London: Anglican Community Publications, 1996); List of leaders attending AICSR, Box 7, Fountain Trust archive.

⁵⁵ Richard Hines, ‘A SOMA mission to the ends of the earth’, 1989, SOMA USA archive; ‘Church Planting in Argentina’, *Sharing USA*, Spring 1989, 1.

⁵⁶ Edwina Thomas interview.

⁵⁷ Edwina Thomas, Report on Latin American Mission, March/April 1992, SOMA USA archive.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Edwina Thomas and Richard Hines. Team members were often selected according to particular ‘gifts’ or specialisms required, see Thomas, ‘Effective Training for Short-term Missions’, in Stockdale, *New Wineskins for Global Mission*, 198-9.

⁵⁹ Edwina Thomas interview.

perhaps with a differing vision for the diocese, could quite suddenly bring to an end a relationship with a diocese – this appears to have happened on various occasions.⁶⁰

The mechanism of conferences – for diocesan clergy, lay leaders (or both), youth leaders, or young people – were used to engage with localities. Visiting teams valued partnership in practicalities and ministry. The diocese was expected to provide room, board and local transportation, and so have a material stake in the mission.⁶¹ The team, instead of being remote in a hotel, usually lived among locals, staying in diocesan accommodation or homes and eating the local food. The visitors, furthermore, often worked alongside ‘renewal’ leaders from the diocese.⁶² The ideal was to develop local leaders to nurture patterns of Spirit-filled ministry. This could work successfully; for example, in the Diocese of Nandyal, India, visited between 1989 and 1992, a local team of around fifteen clergy and laity was reportedly mentored which later ran its own mission to another Indian diocese.⁶³ However, short-term missions and conferences may have risked inadvertently fostering spiritual dependency. In Ecuador, SOMA USA visited on 12 occasions between 1986 and 1991 (during which time the diocese was divided into two: Central Diocese and Littoral); it furthermore sent a missionary to work for six months in south Quito and the towns of Riobamba and Babahoyo, and arranged for Ecuadorian leaders to visit Church of the Apostles and SOMA International’s follow-up to AICSR in England prior to the 1998 Lambeth Conference.⁶⁴ This contributed to the growth of charismatic practice in Ecuador and seemingly a continued trajectory of church growth already underway under Bolivia-born bishop Adrián Cáceres.⁶⁵ SOMA’s ministry was in many ways a success story; but there were also challenges. Before a mission in 1989 the team was aware of “the need to avoid ministering in a way that might create – or perpetuate – any dependency on SOMA”. The mission report stated that some Ecuadorian leaders felt like the mission visits “could be like blowing up a balloon which would burst the moment a team left” - a danger which SOMA leaders were aware of and keen to avoid. There was a sense that more organic growth in the country was necessary. Overall, while SOMA’s conference ministry could provide vital stimulus, nurturing deep indigenous roots could prove difficult –depending partly on the situation on the ground.⁶⁶

There was a commitment to cultural sensitivity. By the 1990s, the Central Intelligence Agency’s *World Factbook* was used to help interpret the local context.⁶⁷ As Thomas asserted when interviewed, SOMA volunteers were informed “our goal is to go and represent the

⁶⁰ Richard Hines and Edwina Thomas interview.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 407.

⁶² ‘Mission to Argentina and Uruguay’, *Sharing USA*, Summer 1988, 1.

⁶³ Thomas, ‘SOMA: Sharing Renewal Overseas’, 410-11.

⁶⁴ Edwina Thomas, Status report and operations plan for Sharing of Ministries Abroad USA, 24-26 January 1994, SOMA USA archive; ‘Fruit of recent SOMA/USA missions’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 1988, 3; ‘Storm Harvey in Ecuador’, *Sharing USA*, Spring 1988, 1.

⁶⁵ By the 1980s the Diocese of Ecuador was already widely recognised for the effective leadership of Cáceres. The church growth principles of Roland Allen had been applied to plant flexible indigenous churches, growing between 1971 and 1988 from just 394 members to 240 congregations with 20,000 members and 48 clergy. See Charles H. Long and Anne Rowthorn, ‘The legacy of Roland Allen’ in James M. M. Francis and Leslie J. Francis, *Tentmaking: Perspectives on Self-supporting Ministry* (Leominster: Gracewing, 1998), 362.

⁶⁶ David Harper, ‘Report on the ninth Ecuador mission’, June 1989, SOMA USA archive.

⁶⁷ Edwina Thomas, ‘Effective Training for Short-term Missions’, in Stockdale, *New Wineskins for Global Mission*, 198-9

kingdom of God with kingdom values not American values and American culture [...] and in so far as we were taking our own culture there and making our own value judgements we are doing a disservice to our mission.”⁶⁸ It is difficult to find evidence to determine the success of this approach; however, it is evident that mission teams were urged to avoid a cultural imperialism, of not “equating our culture with the Gospel”.⁶⁹ This sensitivity was evident in the everyday practicalities and cultural negotiation, but also the approach to ministry. An example of this is an invitation received from Benoni Mugarura-Mutana, a chaplain at Makerere University, Uganda, to demonstrate forms of worship for university students who were apparently dissatisfied with traditional Ugandan forms of worship. Teams visited in 1994 and 1995, but reportedly with the aim of showing how ‘spiritual renewal, contemporary music, and the richness of the liturgy can be mingled within the Ugandan context’. There was no desire to ‘impose a western style’ but rather to share principles which might then be adapted (although it was also realised, with surprise, the extent to which young Ugandans were influenced by American youth culture).⁷⁰ Flexibility was evident in attempts to negotiate provincial or diocesan variances in churchmanship. The common charismatic practice of anointing with oil for healing came to be avoided in those Anglo-Catholic dioceses where this was strongly associated with the priest marking the head for baptism.⁷¹ Despite female clergy being widely accepted in U.S. charismatic evangelical parishes, before visiting dioceses of a strongly ‘traditionalist’ persuasion concerning gender and ministry SOMA tended to ask the bishop whether they should bring female clergy on the team. In some dioceses this was avoided; although African bishops on occasion specifically asked teams to include women, to give the diocese an opportunity to witness their ministry.⁷² Sensitivity was evident in missionaries’ awareness of historical injustices. On some visits to African dioceses, American visitors reportedly asked forgiveness on behalf of their nation for the enslavement of African people.⁷³ Such actions could be seen as a requisite for establishing spiritual solidarity in which renewal might flourish.

Visiting teams sought to embody the practice of charismatic renewal, “teaching and modelling the spiritual gifts, and giving encouragement and support to others”.⁷⁴ The content varied considerably, as did the responsiveness of dioceses. On a first mission, conferences - often for the whole diocese - consisted of basic teaching on the kingdom of God, the work of the cross, and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁵ These gatherings drew on the ‘Life in the Spirit’ seminars of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, and the centrepiece was often the invitation to receive baptism in the Spirit. While the term ‘baptism in the Spirit’ was now used less often in the U.S. Episcopalian renewal (the less doctrinally rigid notion of being ‘filled’ was often preferred) the notion of a baptism, particularly in context of dioceses which had not experienced charismatic ministry, perhaps reflected the ‘apostolic’ dimension of SOMA’s ministry. In some cases, there were reports of a dramatic response to this; for

⁶⁸ Edwina Thomas interview.

⁶⁹ David Harper, SOMA USA: Report on the ninth Ecuador Mission, June 5-16 1989, SOMA USA archive.

⁷⁰ Richard Kew and Cyril Okorochoa, *Vision Bearers: Dynamic Evangelism in the 21st Century* (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 1996), 91-2.

⁷¹ Edwina Thomas interview.

⁷² David Harper interview; Edwina Thomas interview.

⁷³ See, for example, Edwina Thomas, ‘Reflections on a SOMA mission to East Africa’, *Acts* 29, July 1987, 10-11.

⁷⁴ Thomas, ‘Sharing renewal overseas’, 410.

⁷⁵ ‘SOMA: the New Breed of Missionaries’, *Sharing USA*, Winter 1988-89, 1.

example, it was claimed that one local conference in the Diocese of Northern Argentina, in 1988 ended with all the clergy present receiving prayer for baptism in the Spirit;⁷⁶ at another joint American-British mission in Western Kenya “Persons who one week before had preached against the Baptism of the Holy Spirit were gloriously filled”.⁷⁷ The emphasis on the kingdom of God brought key themes into focus. There were prayers for healing – as a sign of the kingdom – and missionaries frequently testified to observing the miraculous. The influence of the Wimberian notion of ‘power’ ministry was sometimes evident. The kingdom of God was contrasted with a kingdom of darkness. It was believed ‘Signs and wonders’ ministry was particularly effective in global south contexts with a belief in the spirit world. Missionaries often testified to encountering Christianity combined with traditions such as voodoo, animism and ancestor worship, often described in terms of ‘superstition’ or ‘occultism’, and understood as spiritual warfare.⁷⁸ Repentance for practising indigenous traditional religions could be seen as a precursor for renewal. In one mission to an African diocese in the 1990s, an East African member of the SOMA team spoke on the *Wagangas* – the evil spirit world of Africa – before asking leaders present to renounce any former practices. Here there was little response, although during a previous conference it was reported three quarters of the sixty clergy “came forward to renounce former practices” before receiving prayer for the baptism in the Spirit.⁷⁹ It was regarding so-called syncretism that SOMA’s message could most uncompromisingly question local practices; though it was often local leaders concerned for ‘orthodox’ Christianity who identified a need for such teaching in the first place.⁸⁰

The overwhelming focus of SOMA USA was spiritual renewal and church growth, rather than addressing directly socio-economic issues. Charismatic Christians were increasingly aligned with the wider church growth agenda from the late 1980s, with, for example, the formation of the International Charismatic Consultation on World Evangelization (ICCOWE, also led by Michael Harper). However, there were holistic aspects to the organisation’s work. The unity of Christ’s body had been a core emphasis of the renewal movement since the 1960s, when Protestant-Catholic divisions were challenged. It was not uncommon for bishops to invite SOMA teams specifically to address their diocese’s internal divisions,⁸¹ and reconciliation was also perceived as a spontaneous Spirit-led fruit of a mission. The practice of reconciliation was evident in early SOMA USA missions; following one Latin American mission in the late 1980s, for example, *Sharing USA* reported that the Holy Spirit had brought together clergy who had previously been divided.⁸² However, SOMA USA was increasingly active in central and east Africa, where ethnic tensions were often strongly apparent, and reconciliation became increasingly a prominent component of the organisation’s ministry. A

⁷⁶ ‘Fruit of recent SOMA/USA missions’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 1988, 3.

⁷⁷ Thomas, ‘Reflections on a SOMA Mission to East Africa’, 11.

⁷⁸ ‘Third world ministry for SOMA teams’, n.d., material provided by Mrs Jeanne Harper, reproduced with permission.

⁷⁹ Edwina Thomas, SOMA mission report, SOMA USA archive.

⁸⁰ For the example of a Nigerian priest concerned about such practices, see Augustine C. Ezeigwe, ‘The challenge of evangelism in Nigeria’, *Acts 29*, no 22, 1984, 6-8 (reprinted from a SOMA newsletter). This article described how ‘cultural revival has called for a re-drawing of the battle lines in the war with syncretism.’

⁸¹ Edwina Thomas interview.

⁸² ‘Fruit of recent SOMA/USA missions’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 1988, 3. Brian Cox, SOMA USA’s first National Director, went on to work extensively in the field of faith-based conflict resolution after leaving SOMA.

multi-national SOMA mission to Rwanda in 1996 - which included team members from the United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand and Canada, as well as seven African countries – included conferences in eight dioceses, and a service at Kigali Cathedral. The focus was reconciliation within the deeply divided, war-torn Rwandan Church.⁸³ SOMA USA teams increasingly worked in areas of religious, ethnic and political instability.

The emphasis on interdependence and partnership within Christ's body became increasingly evident. In the late-1980s, the stretching of resources due to the number of invitations being received required continued reflection on strategy. One board member asserted the following:

We used to think, when SOMA was started [...] that the goal of SOMA [...] was to bring teaching on...Baptism in the power of the Holy Spirit and...that solved the problem. Well we learned fairly soon that ... they wanted us to come back. And the question in our mind was, well should we do that? I mean should we be going back to some place where we've done our thing...or should we be going to some other diocese – because there are lots of dioceses in the Anglican Communion – should we be going somewhere else taking our resources [...] where they haven't yet received the teaching? Well [...] certainly the US board had to consider this...explicitly and we reversed the policy, we said no – in fact a policy of relationship...continuing relationship, was part of what we were perfectly happy to do. So that literally if any bishop that we had been to before asked for us to come back that bishop went to the head of the line.⁸⁴

The organisation appears to have increasingly understood its role as a builder of long-term partnerships for renewal. The traditional missiological paradigm of 'sending' and 'receiving' countries was further undercut as the organisation blended its mission teams. By the 1990s, these teams were more frequently transcultural, often including members from the continent being visited.⁸⁵

Further research is necessary to shed light on local reception; however, it seems clear the organisation could successfully influence patterns of ministry at a diocesan, or even to an extent a provincial, level. There are, of course, examples of diocesan visits with little or no impact. Following one mission to a South American diocese in the early 1990s, for example, it was reported that a local evangelism committee looked blankly when SOMA's vision of Spirit-filled ministry was explained and there were doubts about the compatibility of SOMA's emphases with the bishop's vision for the diocese.⁸⁶ The work of SOMA in Uganda and Kenya was sometimes regarded with suspicion by those tracing their roots to the East Africa Revival, who believed their Church had *already* experienced a spiritual renewal and revitalisation.⁸⁷ However, despite SOMA being a relatively small organisation, the strategy of long-term partnership was often fruitful. In the province of Uganda, where the influence of SOMA USA on worship has already been discussed, there were 7 missions between 1986 and 1994. A SOMA national body was later established in the province and relationships were

⁸³ Don Brewin, *It will Emerge...the Joys and Heartaches of over 15 years of Short-term Mission*, 2nd revd. edn. (Lulu.com: 2014), ch. 9.

⁸⁴ Richard Hines interview.

⁸⁵ 'A way ahead for SOMA', 1993, SOMA USA archive. Furthermore, in 1993 a SOMA national body was formed in Southern Africa.

⁸⁶ Edwina Thomas, report on a Latin American mission, SOMA USA archive.

⁸⁷ Interview with Richard Hines.

established with leaders who came to have key roles: Henry Orombi, discussed below, became Archbishop in 2004 and his successor Archbishop Stanley Ntagali, enthroned in 2013, reportedly participated on SOMA missions and hosted teams in the Diocese of Masindi-Kitara.⁸⁸ Another example of SOMA USA's contribution to patterns of ministry was in the evangelical diocese of Recife in north east Brazil, a province which was otherwise liberal and high. The team first visited Holy Trinity, Recife, the fastest growing congregation in the country, in 1992, running a Life in the Spirit course for 150 lay leaders.⁸⁹ The local leadership ran further seminars once the team had left, with Assistant Rector, Miguel Uchoa, reporting the church was continuing the work through a team of lay leaders impacted by SOMA's "blessed" first seminar.⁹⁰ A U.S. team was asked to return in 1994 to run an 'advanced' Life in the Spirit programme;⁹¹ and then in 1999 to lead, at the invitation of the bishop, a conference on reconciliation for his diverse clergy (who included those influenced by liberation theology and Pentecostals). By then, Holy Trinity, including various leaders who had attended the Life in the Spirit conferences, had planted six new churches. One congregation, the Church of the Spirit, led by Uchoa, became one of the largest Anglican congregations in Latin America. Further visits to Recife were made in 2002 and 2005.

Mission in a divided body: Anglican tensions and charismatic solidarity

SOMA USA contributed to the building of a 'soft' transnational network based on bonds of partnership and affection. This was part of a wider trend in ECUSA since the 1960s towards interaction with dioceses abroad with, for example, the formation of the Companion Diocese Movement and other short-term mission agencies. By sending missionaries, providing financial support, and through prayer (SOMA teams sometimes faxed groups of 'intercessors' at home prayer requests with details of local circumstances) various U.S. parishes became connected with co-denominationalists in the global south. Such linkages contributed to some U.S. Episcopalians' awareness of the global Anglican Communion. One Episcopalian leader whose church became involved in the organisation described how the link with SOMA shaped the congregation's understanding of mission, enabling them to understand the meaning of being "world Christians".⁹²

Linkages were also fostered by foreign bishops' visits to the USA, for preaching, fund-raising or sabbatical. However, from the early 1990s, National Director Edwina Thomas began to conceive a different type of engagement. Could leaders visit the USA not to 'receive' but impart spiritual blessing? She envisioned a model where leaders could give to "the American people", to "bless, teach them, share your faith, show your stuff".⁹³ Henry Orombi, the charismatic evangelical Bishop of Nebbi, Uganda, led the first SOMA mission to the USA, ministering at diocesan 'days of renewal', clergy conferences and various parishes. *Sharing USA* wrote "These charming Ugandans proclaim, without shame, what seems to be 'pent up'

⁸⁸ On the Province of Uganda, see Kew and Okorochoa, *Vision Bearers*, 90-2; 'Milestones in mission', *Sharing*, 20/1 (2013), 4.

⁸⁹ 'God on the move in Brazil', *Sharing*, 14/2 (1999), 2.

⁹⁰ 'Brazil: Church replicates SOMA's ministry', *Sharing*, 9/1, 1994.

⁹¹ 'Advanced course in "Life in the Spirit"' (letter from the Revd. Miguel Uchoa), *Sharing USA*, 9/1 (1994), 1.

⁹² Edwina Thomas, 'SOMA Has Changed our Church', *Sharing USA*, Summer 1991, 1-2.

⁹³ Edwina Thomas interview.

inside of evangelical Americans – the joy and abandonment of God.”⁹⁴ Follow-up missions, with the objective of rekindling the fire of renewal in the American Church, contributed to a growing sense of interdependence.⁹⁵ Thomas later shared some of her thinking at the 73rd General Convention of The Episcopal Church, arguing “we Americans like to be on top. We like to be the givers. We like to be in control. We like to meet their needs.” While SOMA, she argued, had always sought to encourage “mutual cultural understanding”, it was now necessary to honour overseas partners “by allowing them to give to us spiritually...Rarely do we see that we can be learners, that we are needy.”⁹⁶ SOMA was increasingly recognising the possibility of a two-way flow of charismatic renewal.

The hub of this international renewal network was the continuing SOMA International-sponsored gatherings of charismatic leaders preceding the decennial Lambeth Conferences of bishops in Canterbury, England. These events had a similar feel to the Anglican International Conference on Spiritual Renewal of 1978, aiming to bring together from around the world leaders to listen to the Holy Spirit and sustain a network of fellowship. In 1988, participants for a ‘Leaders of Leaders’ conference were drawn from 47 nations, and a total of 67 nations were represented at a follow-on ‘open’ conference. These included various SOMA USA contacts, including six Ecuadorian leaders, four Argentinians, five Brazilians and the Bishop of Uruguay. The programme included a Latin American evening of songs and testimonies hosted by SOMA USA.⁹⁷

The Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie’s address to the 1988 Lambeth Conference of Bishops referred to his attendance at the preceding SOMA event, applauding “[SOMA’s] loyalty to our communion and their longing for the renewal of the whole church on the freshness of faith.”⁹⁸ However, SOMA’s work within the Anglican Communion would become increasingly complicated by the emerging politics of sexuality.⁹⁹ Developments in ECUSA had resulted in controversy, with tensions concerning debates over the ordination of openly gay and lesbian clergy; and in 1997 a motion (narrowly rejected) to approve the development of a rite or rites for the blessing of committed same-sex relationships at General Convention. In the build-up to the 1998 Lambeth Conference, where sexuality would take centre-stage, various initiatives began - including in the U.S. Ekklesia and the American Anglican Council, both organisations which built links abroad. In 1997 an Anglican Life and Witness conference, organised by American and English evangelicals, was convened in Dallas, with bishops attending from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.¹⁰⁰ The two main focuses of the conference were international debt and sexuality, and its ‘Dallas Statement’ declared “it is not acceptable for a pro-gay agenda to be smuggled into the

⁹⁴ ‘First SOMA mission to the USA’, *Sharing*, Autumn 1996, 1.

⁹⁵ See, for example, ‘Operation Breakthrough’, *Sharing USA*, Summer 1992, 3.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Nan Cobbey, ‘Convention learns mission works both ways’, *Episcopal Life* selections: <http://arc.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal-life/GC-2way.html> accessed 10 November 2015.

⁹⁷ ‘Canterbury ’88 draws participants from 67 nations’, *Sharing*, Summer 1988, 1.

⁹⁸ Quoted in Brian Cox, ‘The message of Canterbury ’88’, *Sharing*, Summer 1988, 3.

⁹⁹ On the politics of sexuality, see for example: Christopher Craig Brittain and Andrew McKinnon, ‘Homosexuality and the Construction of “Anglican Orthodoxy”: the Symbolic Politics of the Anglican Communion’, *Sociology of Religion*, 72/3 (2011), 351-373.

¹⁰⁰ Miranda Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis*, 59.

church's programme or foisted upon our people and we will not permit it."¹⁰¹ SOMA USA, which was not a lobby group, made no formal pronouncements on specific developments in ECUSA. However, the wider 'renewal' constituency watched developments closely. In June, the Revd. Edward Little II of All Saints' Church, Bakersfield (who had been on the board of SOMA USA), wrote in *The Living Church* that the vast majority of Anglicans lived in the developing world – there were more in Nigeria than in the United States, Canada, Britain, Australia and New Zealand combined - and would be understood by Americans to be "evangelicals". From personal experience, he explained, he knew "our third world brothers and sisters" viewed developments in ECUSA "with increasing gravity".¹⁰²

SOMA USA had vast experience in negotiating differences of theology and practice within the Anglican Communion. When asked, for example, by some African bishops whether they took a position on the ordination of women, they explained they were not a lobby group.¹⁰³ However, in comparison to this issue, Anglican leadership in the global south was very largely opposed to the revisionist view of sexuality; and most parishes associated with SOMA USA were conservative on this particular issue. As the Lambeth Conference approached, it appears that SOMA, with its primary focus on mission, did not intervene directly in the controversy. However, the pre-Lambeth Conference renewal gathering that year, co-sponsored by SOMA International and Anglican Renewal Ministries (ARM), allowed further engagement between evangelical/conservative leaders.¹⁰⁴ There was particular distress amongst African leaders over a recent interview article in *Church of England Newspaper* with American Bishop Jack Spong, in which it was said he described African Christians as "superstitious" (a word he later described as communicating "an unfortunate message").¹⁰⁵ As an act of reconciliation during the SOMA/ARM leaders' retreat, some Americans present publically asked for African leaders' forgiveness for the insult against them, with African leaders coming forward to embrace them in response.¹⁰⁶

Miranda Hassett's study has shown the developments in global linkages between evangelical Anglicans in the United States and the global South in the mid-1990s, immediately prior to Lambeth '98.¹⁰⁷ The perception of crisis contributed to the formation of new alliances and networks. However, also salient is the longer-term background of transnational relationships, based on renewal, mission or theological training.¹⁰⁸ Edwina Thomas, wrote in *Sharing USA* in the wake of the Lambeth Conference:

¹⁰¹ 'The Dallas Statement' (1997)

<http://www.theroadtoemmaus.org/RdLb/32Ang/Epis/DallasStmnt.htm> accessed: August 2015.

¹⁰² The Very Revd Edward S. Little II, 'Backward?', *The Living Church*, 15 June 1997, 4-5.

¹⁰³ David Harper interview.

¹⁰⁴ The programme for the conference was wide-ranging, covering various issues concerning mission and ministry. Furthermore, not all those present, or otherwise linked with SOMA or ARM, were necessarily of the same opinion on issues of sexuality.

¹⁰⁵ Andrew Carey, 'African Christians? They're just one step up from witchcraft: what Bishop Spong had to say about his fellow Christians', *Church of England Newspaper*, 10 July 1998, 13. For Spong's response to the article see David Skidmore, 'Bishop Spong apologies to Africans', 28 July 1998 <http://www.anglicannews.org/news/1998/07/bishop-spong-apologizes-for-perceived-insult-to-africans.aspx> accessed 17 August 2016.

¹⁰⁶ See report in 'The Canterbury '98 conference', *Sharing: the Newsletter of SOMA UK*, October 1998. See also a discussion in Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis*, 73.

¹⁰⁷ Hassett, *Anglican Communion in Crisis*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Hassett (34) also notes the importance of pre-existing ties between renewal-minded

Extraordinary events occurred at Lambeth. The bishops approved a resolution which reaffirmed “the primary authority of the Scriptures.” The overwhelming majority voted for another resolution that upholds the Church’s historic, orthodox teaching on sexual morality, while committing to preserve pastoral care. These resolutions demonstrated the shift of strong spiritual leadership of our beloved Anglican Communion to the developing world. SOMA began investing energy, training and people resources into these areas since our inception twenty years ago.

We know that this long-term investment, from our years of building partnerships to refreshing leaders in a pre-Lambeth retreat, “counted” at Lambeth. Many friends sowed seeds into this good soil through our organization, and it bore much fruit, good fruit.¹⁰⁹

SOMA’s network (including its well-established pre-Lambeth Conference gatherings) had already fostered long-term relationships between the global north and south, and this later became a context for the wider development of charismatic/conservative solidarity.

SOMA USA appears to have continued to resist any direct lobbying role in Anglican politics, although its network still provided a point of contact between evangelical or conservative leaders, some of whom became aligned through the Global Anglican Futures Conference (GAFCON). At home, as Anglican divisions worsened in the decade which followed, the relationship between SOMA USA and ECUSA increasingly appeared untenable. In *Sharing USA* it was said that General Convention’s decision to affirm the election of Bishop Gene Robinson in 2003 made relationships with the national Church “tentative”. There was some concern that negative perceptions of ECUSA in the majority world might result in the invitations to visit global south dioceses drying up, but SOMA’s leadership appeared confident that dioceses and provinces “know our heart and understand us to be loyal Anglicans who are people of the Holy Spirit.”¹¹⁰ Eventually SOMA USA was one of various evangelical and conservative missionary societies and agencies to leave the Episcopal Partnership for Global Mission and form Anglican Global Mission Partners.¹¹¹ This body

Anglicans in the United States and Uganda. Another network whose significance might be examined in this respect is the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC), formed in the 1960s, which also organised a pre-Lambeth meeting for bishops in 1998 which reportedly provided “an opportunity for evangelicals to confer on key Lambeth agenda items.” See ‘Pre-Lambeth meeting for evangelical bishops’, *Church of England Newspaper*, 8 May 1998, 3. On the history of EFAC-USA, see Cook Kimball, ‘The Revival of The Episcopal Church, 1961- 1999: a History of EFAC-USA’, *Evangelical Episcopal Journal*, September 1999, 7-11. On the significance of long-term links between Anglican evangelicals in the U.S. and global south, see also Jason Bruner, ‘Divided we Stand: North American Evangelicals and the Crisis in the Anglican Communion’.

¹⁰⁹ Edwina Thomas, ‘Director’s Corner’, *Sharing USA*, September 1998.

¹¹⁰ Edwina Thomas, ‘What has changed?’, *Sharing USA*, Fall 2003, 4.

¹¹¹ Ian T. Douglas, ‘W(h)ither the National Church - Revisited: Changing Mission Structures of the Episcopal Church’ in Winnie Varghese (ed.), *What we Shall Become: the Future and Structure of the Episcopal Church* (New York: Church Publishing, 2013). See also Titus Presler, ‘The Impact of the Sexuality Controversy on Mission: the Case of the Episcopal

became associated with the Anglican Church in North America (ACNA), a denomination founded by former members of ECUSA and the Anglican Church of Canada. Various, though not all, SOMA-linked parishes later became involved in alternative episcopal structures to ECUSA. Some of those who have been involved in SOMA's missions have gone on to play a role in transnational conservative Anglican linkages. For example, in a 2007 interview following his appointment as Bishop for Congregations in America for the Church of Uganda, the Right Revd. John Guernsey, described how his association with the Ugandan Church began with a SOMA mission to the province in 1989.¹¹²

Conclusions

The impulse behind the formation of SOMA was understood as prophetic: minding the “nervous system” of Christ’s body the global Church by cultivating renewal. As Brian Stanley has argued, the “internationalisation” of charismatic renewal from the 1970s was not solely the result of flows of influence from the minority world to the majority world. Within Anglicanism, for example, the charismatic movements in the Diocese of Singapore, and its wider influence in South East Asia, was an indigenous phenomenon; while what Jesse Zink describes as “Anglocostalism” emerged as the Church of Nigeria responded to the rise of rival neo-Pentecostal churches after the civil war of 1967-70.¹¹³ However, SOMA and its American national body also played a role. The organisation, when afforded access by local Anglican hierarchies, was often a conduit for the fostering of ‘Spirit-filled’ patterns of ministry in Anglican dioceses, sometimes with lasting effect. It furthermore resulted in a ‘soft’ network of relationships between leaderships of charismatic renewal within the global Anglican body. As this body later appeared divided, SOMA’s pre-existing network and relationships were already a source of global north – south solidarity.

‘Sharing’, sometimes described in apostolic terms, within the body of Christ of course involved the transfer of particular emphases and approaches, and furthermore the conference-orientated strategy could encounter the potential danger of creating ‘dependency’. However, the evidence suggests that SOMA’s approach was largely based on a belief in the interdependence of the global Christian body and the limitations of paternalistic models of missionary work. There was, as a result, a genuine commitment to working within local Anglican hierarchies, responding to local priorities and nurturing indigenous ministries. Increasingly, furthermore, long-term relationships were emphasised and both transcultural teams and missions from the global south to the U.S were organised. Overall, the case of SOMA USA is a correction to any reading of Philip Jenkins’ thesis which minimises the continuing influence of the north in ‘global Christianity’ in the late twentieth century; but, importantly, it is also a vital correction to any analysis of engagement between north and

Church in the Anglican Communion’, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 33/ 1 (2009), 11-18.

¹¹² Interview with the Right Revd John Guernsey, 21 Sept 2007.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2007/09/21/september-21-2007-interview-bishop-john-guernsey/4035/> accessed 11 November 2015.

¹¹³ Jesse Zink, “Anglocostalism” in Nigeria: Neo-Pentecostalism and Obstacles to Anglican Unity’, *Journal of Anglican Studies*, 10/2 (2012), 231-250.

south which overlooks the significant level of cooperation and mutuality often evident in these relationships.¹¹⁴

A tendency in various recent social science studies on Short-Term Missions (STMs), according to one analysis, has been to argue that “far from being reluctant partners imposed upon by pushy North Americans, those receiving or hosting STM teams find these encounters aligned with their own ministry interests”.¹¹⁵ There are also broad comparisons to be made between SOMA USA’s ethos and the “sister church” model which emerged in mainline North American denominations during this period, described by Janel Bakker as one which places “a high premium on solidarity, the sharing of power between Christians from North and South, sustainable development, and interpersonal cross-cultural relationships at the grassroots level”.¹¹⁶ SOMA’s purpose was not to create sister churches – even though it might initiate the development of such partnerships¹¹⁷ - but its emphasis on authentic cooperation with the global south was part of a broader development within evangelicalism, and North American Christianity more generally.

¹¹⁴ See Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: the Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). I am not suggesting that Jenkins makes either mistake.

¹¹⁵ Robert J. Priest and Brian M. Howell, ‘Introduction: Theme Issue on Short-Term Missions’, *Missiology: an International Review*, 41/2 (2013), 126. The authors are summarising articles by Edwin Zehner, Ellen Moodie and B. Hunter Farell in the same issue.

¹¹⁶ Janel K. Bakker, *Sister Churches: American Congregations and their Partners Abroad* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 4.

¹¹⁷ Bakker refers to one example; see *Sister Churches*, 88.