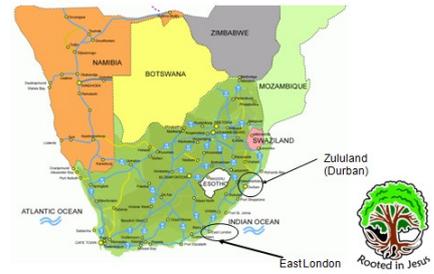


# Rooted in Jesus Conferences in the Dioceses of Zululand and Grahamstown with Umzimvubu, South Africa, 2010

a report by Mike Cottrell



**Team** Leader Revd Mike Cottrell. Team: Fr Edmund Cargill Thompson, Mrs Sally Baily, Fr Trevor Pearce (Director of Grow the Church Province of Southern Africa), Mrs Rebecca Shika 1<sup>st</sup> Conference, and Ms Kwena Chelope 2<sup>nd</sup> Conference (both from St Mark's Diocese).

## 1. The Diocese of Zululand

Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> October to Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October. Venue: Diocesan Retreat Centre, 'Kwanzimela', Zululand Diocese. Bishop: Dino Gabriel. Coordinator: Fr Brian Mahlambi.

46 delegates (8 Archdeacons, the Dean and The Bishop, 10 Clergy, 12 female laity, 11 male laity & 2 Nuns). Trevor Pearce brought with him as a delegate Tony Lawrence, the Provincial Youth League Coordinator, with a view to promoting (youth) *Rooted in Jesus* through his department.



This Conference was well organized by Brian Mahlambi with the Diocese team. The Retreat Centre was spacious, welcoming and generally very good for the purpose. The Conference was residential. Most of the delegates seemed to know each other and their relationship to their Bishop was exceptionally warm, loving and humorous. The Bishop attended the majority of sessions and was partly resident. He provided very clear and strong encouragement for the delegates to get on with starting *Rooted in Jesus* Groups as soon as possible and that while other bodies with the Diocese will be encouraged to accept it, they should make a start. He made it clear that *Rooted in Jesus* was Diocesan policy agreed at Synod. It was decided by the delegates, that if they started 'now' they could get in 4 lessons before breaking for the Christmas holidays. The youngest delegate aged 20, planned to start with her fellow youth in 2 days time! They regretted more lay people and youth were not invited to the Conference. I strongly encouraged clergy, however busy, to run a group themselves, giving personal testimony to the effectiveness of this within the life of a Church, stating that it can transform, encourage and empower their own ministry.

Pray ministry was widely offered and asked for; and several people were healed during the conference of physical conditions. One evening I offered an additional optional session on Healing with some teaching on Deliverance ministry, with the encouragement of the Bishop; this was attended mostly by lay people. Once the Conference had started we were asked to change the timings, this we did happily as it enable a pre breakfast Eucharist where the Devotional talk for the day was given.



A number of sisters from The Convent of the Holy Name, on the same hillside as the Conference Centre, attended the conference with several extra sisters join us for later parts of the conference. They were enthusiastic. Apparently this is the only growing Anglican Convent. One sister was pleased with the teaching on the Holy Spirit because she found this was a concept that people struggled with a lot. Liturgical worship in the chapel and informal worship during session was vibrant and engaging.

**Expected result:** RinJ was clearly already accepted before our arrival as a strategic tool for the Diocese. There was a high level of acceptance and excitement about implementation. The Diocese is already organized within Archdeaconry Groups and using these established support structures for RinJ group leaders seemed sensible. Feedback session with the Bishop led to a discussion about training more people urgently and the high cost of a

conference. Given input we had received already, I suggested that they consider 3-4 conferences next year but held in different areas using Churches and boarding school accommodation as a cheap way of doing this. This seemed to be a revelation to them. I believe they are beginning to plan for 3 conferences back to back in this manner. Brian Mahlambi has been given a small parish specifically by the Bishop so that he can give necessary time to RinJ.

## 2. The Dioceses of Grahamstown and Umzimvubu

Monday 1<sup>st</sup> to Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November. Venue: St. Alban's Church, Vincent, East London, Eastern Cape. Bishop: Ebenezer St Mark Ntlali. Coordinator: Ven Mark Spyker.

80 delegates of which 32 delegates joining us from the Diocese of Umzimvubu. Bishop: Mlibo Mteteleli Ngewu. Coordinators: Fr Cornelius Mashiyi and Mrs Zukiswa Kobus.



The very welcome presence of the delegates from the Diocese of Umzimvubu made a considerable difference to the Conference. They were a mix group of African Xhosa speakers, including youth, laity and some clergy. No translation was felt necessary as English was good to adequate amongst them. They were a very dynamic bunch; many had not been to anything like this before. They were very eager to learn and to implement and contributed greatly to the worship and the spontaneity of the conference. Clearly they loved it and were warmly received.

The setting of the conference in the Church was restricted by having to use pews. However the Church was light and roomy enough and amplification helped. Worship was often led by a young white pastor on guitar, who often chose and led Xhosa songs, good but restrained; occasional outbreaks of more lively African traditional style songs were welcome.

Mark and Simone Spyker and their girls welcomed us into their home and hearts and we all become good friends. They did much to help us relax and arranged several trips for fun as well as visiting a Baptist Aids/HIV project and a very poor no resources nursery in the worst township area. Following the Conference the UK members preached or visited local morning services. Richard, the curate at the host Church, has just been appointed Chaplain to a prestigious boarding school in SA. He is enthusiastic to run RinJ within the School.

**Expected Results:** Grahamstown will run *Rooted in Jesus* courses, but this may suffer from lack of clergy time and perhaps not having trained people who would be in more contact with the lesser educated Xhosa speakers. A follow up conference, particularly aimed at lay leadership and RinJ groups within existing groups like Mothers Union or youth is likely to be beneficial.



In the Diocese of Umzimvubu: Very enthusiastic support and take up for RinJ and demand for more leaders to be trained, especially amongst youth and young adults. If the delegates at the conference are a reflection of fertile ground in the Diocese and the strategic choice of delegates represents careful choice – then this could be a runaway success.

### The Team

The team gelled and worked very well together and enjoyed each other's company. Leadership was I hope, effectively shared and open. What particularly helped me and the team was the inclusion of Sally Baily, my Parish Administrator from my Parish. She played a strong and relaxed admin role and management of what was needed when and where. This enabled us all to have a much more relaxed approach. Sally also took a full part in leading and teaching. Sally communicated our prayer requests and updates to the Intercessors, this worked well. Edmund Cargill Thompson was loved for this clear teaching and dramatic illustration together with this ability to learn bits of Zulu and Xhosa which he also used in liturgy! Trevor Pearce joined the team to provide him with deeper insights into the working of the course, as he wishes to promote it throughout the Province of Southern Africa. Rebecca for the 1<sup>st</sup>

conference and Kwena for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, were sent to join the team by Bishop Martin of the Diocese of St Marks, as they had experiences of running R in J small groups. Both fitted into the team well and made excellent contributions.

**Rebecca wrote:** “My experience with RinJ mission was extra ordinary. The team was very organized and prepared. The level of interaction was very fulfilling. I grew up spiritually and gained knowledge about Jesus. My relationship with God improved. The experience made me realize that with God and willingness on my part, I can be a disciple. Looking at the enthusiasm of people at Zululand, made me realize the Greatness of God in action, and how people are thirsty about the word. This gave me a challenge that I need to give more time to the work of God, teaching community about RinJ.”



**Kwena wrote:** “I learned a lot from the presentations and preparations of RinJ. I grew up emotional and spiritually. I am prepared to undertake tasks to teach people about RinJ. The singing and the enthusiasm from the people of the Grahamstown blessed me a lot.”

**Sally wrote:** “I thoroughly enjoyed the preparation for and delivery of the two conferences in South Africa. I felt the team worked well together and we each appreciated the others’ giftings. My event management background and experience of teaching English to speakers of other languages served me very well in this environment. I struck up a good rapport with both local co-ordinators and was flexible in our approach to meet their different needs. I was pleased with the contribution I made and felt blessed to be part of the whole process of teaching and encouraging the implementation of RinJ. I have many fond memories of our trip and look forward to the next opportunity.”

**Edmund commented:** “Thank you so much for the blessing of letting me come on this trip to Zululand and East London. I have learnt and received so much through doing it. It was an especial pleasure to work under Mike – his leadership style was very open and generous. In a team where in a sense all are leaders, it is not always very easy to gel – but Mike had a wonderful way of drawing us all together, bringing our gifts out of us and making us all feel valued. I really appreciated his style. Both conferences were a time of great blessing for those of us on the team. We saw a couple of physical healings during the ministry time and even more people who had been blessed dramatically on the inside by the Holy Spirit. Rebecca and Kwena shared wonderful testimonies from their own experience in St Mark’s diocese – and we heard amazing testimonies from Trevor about what is going on in Angola and Mozambique. And the worship (especially in Zululand) was fantastic.”



## Personal Comments

This was a high quality team that worked well together. I feel privileged to be their leader as well as to service the three Dioceses in the ways we did.

*Revd Mike Cotterell, St Paul’s Church, Slough*



**Bishop Dino writes:** “Just a quick note to share with you the great excitement we are all experiencing as we launch RinJ in the diocese. There is no doubt in my mind that God’s anointing is upon us as we meet.”

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