



Report on Rooted in Jesus mission to South Africa

19-29 September 2009

The purpose of the visit was to lead a four day conference for 70 clergy and lay-workers from the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist. The conference consisted of introducing the *Rooted in Jesus* Discipleship Course and times of worship, teaching and ministry for the conference delegates. Outside of the conference the team preached and ministered in a number of churches around the Diocese.

The team that travelled from the UK was Revd John McGinley, Michael Lyden, Anne Scott and Nicola Bishop all from Holy Trinity Church, Leicester, and Merisa MacInnes from Cheltenham. A significant and sad event during the preparations for the visit was the death of one of the team members, Oscar Hamsine from the Diocese of Niassa, Mozambique. Oscar had been asked to be part of the team because of his work with *Rooted in Jesus* in the Diocese of Niassa. Our prayers continue for Oscar's family and also for the Bishop and staff of the Diocese where he will be greatly missed. As the team prayed in response to this news there was a clear sense of God saying that we would lack nothing and that we had everything we needed within the remaining team, and this was to be one of the significant characteristics that marked our time together.

The four day conference took place in a Catholic Retreat centre to the North of Polykwane, the town at the centre of the Diocese (we doubt there has been a more luxurious conference venue for an African mission!). The preparations that had been done in advance of the conference by the Bishop, Rt Rev Martin Breytenbach, and his Diocesan team provided an excellent platform for the conference. Each delegate had been personally invited with a request for parishes to provide support so that every parish and outstation was represented. The importance of attending the conference was emphasised because of the expectation from the Bishop that, following the conference, every Parish would launch at least one *Rooted in Jesus* Group.



The conference followed the established Introductory *Rooted in Jesus* Conference format. The mornings consisted of opening worship and Bible reading with daily testimony of God's work among us, followed by teaching or training in using the *Rooted in Jesus* material. The afternoons involved smaller seminar groups looking at Prayer within a *Rooted in Jesus* Group, the Character of a Christian Leader, Pastoral Care and How to Lead a *Rooted in Jesus* Group. After this each day concluded with teaching and ministry. The ministry times each day were wonderful times in which the conference delegates were so open and ready to receive from God. Team members would share words of knowledge to encourage people with what God wanted to do for them and we saw many people filled with the Holy Spirit for the first time, healed and set free from evil. In a time of testimony at the end of the conference one priest said "I have been a priest for over 40 years and this is the most precious ministry I have received." Here are a number of these stories:

- **Margaret** had arrived at the conference with a severe headache that caused serious sickness and tiredness. This resulted in her having to stay in bed and miss the second day of the conference. The following day she attended the conference and received prayer. As a team member prayed for her there was no improvement, and the team member asked her about anything she might need to forgive. She spoke of the past abuse from her husband that she couldn't forgive. Over time Margaret came to forgive her husband and then as she received prayer God set her free from her pain and sickness.
- **Samuel** had been suffering from a severe and constant headache for over 12 months and had developed different ways of coping with this but it greatly affected him. He received prayer and was completely healed.

- **Kikela** had been suffering from pain her leg for some time. She came to receive prayer and after some prayer there was slight improvement. The team members continued to pray and she was completely healed.
- **Lucky** was a young man who came to be prayed for the filling of the Holy Spirit. During this time of prayer he became disturbed and collapsed to the floor groaning. This was discerned to be due to the influence of an evil spirit. After ministry was suspended for a short time he was able to renounce evil and with a simple prayer of deliverance in Jesus' name and authority he was set free completely and walked around smiling and receiving God's blessing from the rest of the conference.

Outside of the conference team members preached and prayed for people in a Charismatic conference and in a number of different churches. At a particular team meeting we discussed how to minister in a number of situations. We happened to talk about a model to use to pray for someone wanting their sight healed. The next day at a church service a woman with only about 20% sight left in one eye asked for prayer and the team member, feeling confident in how to approach this, prayed for her and her sight was completely healed.



During the conference it was clear that God was using each member of the team to connect with different conference delegates and minister according to their different gifts. In the time of testimony at the end of the conference a number of people referred to different team members who had been significant in God blessing them. It was also a great encouragement that many people commented on the way the fruit of the Spirit, as well as his gifts, was evidenced in the whole team's approach (love, peace, gentleness, kindness) which enabled people to receive from God through us. One example of team members using their gifts was Nicola Bishop

who prepared banners on the themes of the conference while we were still in the UK. She also brought painted illustrations for her talks and all of these were given to parishes to take back as a visual representation of what they had received during the conference.

At the end of the conference each parish presented clear plans on how they will implement *Rooted In Jesus* on their return. There is a clear structure of who will provide support for this from the senior leadership team of the Diocese, and the Bishop has given clear expectations that these plans must be auctioned within a few months of the conference. John McGinley met with the senior leadership team to agree patterns of leadership and follow up that they will use to support the parishes. There is an invitation from the Bishop for a follow-up *Rooted in Jesus* Conference in March 2011.

As well as introducing *Rooted in Jesus* to the Diocese of St Mark this conference seemed to have a wider significance. We hosted two priests from the Diocese of Zululand who have returned there to share all that they received. Trevor Pearce also attended the conference who is the director of Grow the Church South Africa. This is an organisation which unites many churches across the whole province in providing encouragement, teaching and resources to strategically plan and resource the growth of the church. Trevor talked with the John McGinley about the possibilities of using *Rooted in Jesus* as a key resource in this. The Bishop is also on the leadership of this organisation and is keen to make the link between Grow the Church, SOMA and *Rooted in Jesus*. There was some discussion about the possibility of holding a Grow the Church Conference when the follow up conference for the Diocese takes place.

Revd John McGinley, Team Leader
Photos by Anne Scott

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