

# Rooted in Jesus team to Diocese of Buyoro Kitara, Uganda

## November 2012

Team members: Revd John Lee (team leader), Revd Andrew Petit, Hannah Frost, Revd Derreck Lee-Philpot.

Bunyoro Kitara is situated in Western Uganda. The main town and base for the bishop and the cathedral is Hoima. Bishop Nathan Kyamanywa has been in post for ten years. At the time of the teams visit he was on sabbatical however the senior staff were very supportive particularly Samuel the DS.

We ran two conferences: one in the archdeaconry of Kagadi to the south of the diocese and the second in Bulindi, about 10 miles from Hoima.

### Kagadi

Kagadi is a very rural area. It is the one town of any size, surrounded by very poor roads in all directions. These were made worse by recent very heavy rain. It is seen as a backwater. A travelling businessman told us that when he rang a friend in Kampala to say he was in Kagadi the response was 'Kagadi? They eat people there.' The town is however about to become a district HQ. there is a small hospital and a branch of Stanbic bank has arrived in the last year. Very recent months have been hard with a outbreak of Ebola virus. A church leader was among 18 people who died and it had a serious impact on community, church and economic life. The Bisaka cult has its base near to Kigadi. Bisaka is a disillusioned Roman Catholic priest who declared himself to be divine. He is now in his 70s and very large numbers of cult followers have recently been converted to Christ.

The archdeacon of Kigadi is Rev Eric Twine. He played a major role in building the congregation of All Saints church in Hoima which is very dynamic. He is a very effective evangelist and has helped many cult members to come to faith. We found his clergy already familiar with the concept of *Rooted in Jesus*. There is a vision for a large church building in Kagadi; perhaps it could become a Diocese in due course.

### The conference

Eric asked us to do a 3 day conference instead of 4. Economic circumstances contributed to this. Timekeeping among the delegates was generally very good, and this made the shift easier. Due to Ebola there were fewer delegates, 51, rather than the 100 planned for. There were 9 clergy as well as lay readers and leading lay men and women. We felt the vision was taken on board and by day 3 there was a sense of unanimity about the conference. Eric worked on the local input throughout the conference along with Joyce Asaba (diocesan Mission Coordinator). Written plans and timescales with duplicates kept by parishes were demanded and received.



In the tin roofed church of St Luke's the rain which had arrived every afternoon for the last month would have been a major obstacle to teaching and ministry sessions. We asked the intercessors to pray. No rain fell during the day throughout. In a time of listening to God on the last day Isaiah 2.2 was cited along with a sense that the prophecy about Kiteto might also apply to Kagadi as an unregarded place which God sees as very significant.



### Conclusion

We feel very hopeful about *Rooted in Jesus* in Kagadi. The major advantages were Eric Twine's commitment and groundwork, along with the fact that he has a strong established relationship within Andrew Petit. Eric will act as local coordinator.

## Bulindi

Bulindi archdeaconry is entirely rural. It is about 10 miles from Hoima on a fairly good road. The area feels slight more prosperous than Kagadi, perhaps because of its proximity to Hoima which is well linked to Kampala. The diocesan staff led by the Diocesan Secretary were keenly aware of the need for growing discipleship and very supportive. We were also joined by a small team from All Saints.

### The Conference

The first day of the conference was difficult. The 55 delegates were less prepared and more disparate than those in Kagadi; two major bereavements meant that some were absent for the first day or distracted by sorrow. On day two all the delegates were present and we restated a large part of the first teaching session instead of the opening devotions. This was very effective; we felt that momentum picked up significantly and this was reflected in the depth of the worship. Having 4 days allowed us to work on the values more intensely; particularly repeating the practice lessons. By the end we felt that the delegates were on board and understood.

Once again the rain held off - until a short storm passed by during the commissioning - just long enough to help Andrew illustrate a point about the blessings of God. In the time of listening Isaiah 55.11 and 60.1,2 & 7 and Ezekiel 36.36 were cited.



### Conclusion

We felt that after a difficult start the conference at Bulindi gained a very encouraging momentum. We felt that in contrast with Kagadi there was not one large church where there would be some kind of core beginning; Bulindi is much more dispersed. This could be a great advantage but will need deliberate leadership. I shared this problem with the diocesan secretary who suggested that Eric might meet with the archdeacon of Bulindi on his return. Eric is regularly in Hoima and this seems a good idea to be encouraged.

When we attended devotions at the diocesan headquarters we felt that the diocesan team had really grasped and appreciated the RinJ programme and that it fitted in very well with their vision for the diocese which includes producing mature, active Christian disciples; "the clergy's role is only to empower and enable the disciples to go and make more disciples" (Bunyoro Kitara Diocese strategic plan 2012-2017).

### Overall conclusion

Joyce Asaba will act as coordinator for Bulindi and the diocese as a whole. We hope that Andrew might be as to return with a team for a follow up visit in 2014. At both conferences we were asked to convey their thanks to Alison for providing the *Rooted in Jesus* course.

John and Hannah then met in Kampala with Revd Canon Capt Titus Baraka, mission coordinator for the Province of Uganda, who expressed interest in presenting RinJ as a resource for discipleship to the whole province early in 2013.

### A strong start...

"Rooted in Jesus is a true discipleship tool that every Church that serves the resurrected and living Jesus should embrace wholeheartedly. It has both Spiritual and Social components. What a blessing to have a such programme launched in my Archdeaconry!! St.Lukes'Church has already started two groups. The Parish Priest of Rusoroza is having a Rooted in Jesus Conference on 8th/12/2012 for all his Layreaders,mission Coordinators and Youth Leaders. Be assured that candles were light and brightly." –Canon Eric Twine, archdeacon of Kigadi, December 2012.