

# Report on Rooted in Jesus Conferences

Diocese of Lweru (17-21 August) and Diocese of Victoria Nyanza, Tanzania (24-26<sup>th</sup> August) 2015

The team consisted of Mike Cotterell, Mike Langworth, Helen Broadbent and Susie Jacob from St Paul's Church, Slough, UK, with Canon Jacob Robert, Bishop-elect of Mara and Regional RinJ Coordinator for Tanzania, and Revd Leonard Giligwa, RinJ coordinator for DVN. This team worked well together and enjoyed each other's company. The UK members were greatly assisted by Jacob and Leonard and by the Bishops and their staff, coordinators and translators and others. Report by Mike Cotterell.



## Diocese of Lweru: Bishop Jackton Lugumira

The Lweru Conference took place in Muleba, c70km south of Bukoba, in the Cathedral. The team stayed in Katoke Secondary School and travelled to the conference every day.

I was grateful for the Bishop's communication from the initial stages of setting up the Conference. We were warmly welcomed and looked after. We believe small groups will start and were much needed in the town and rural churches. The conference was well received.



The Conference started on time with attendance of approx 120. The Venue was good as was the catering. The whole programme went ahead as planned very smoothly. The Bishop was fully supportive and engaged as were other members of the senior staff, including The Vicar General and the Diocesan Secretary Josiah. Renata Bombo was appointed diocesan coordinator - a young Church Army Captain who had just finished three years training in Nairobi and was working as a Chaplain in the School. Renata is lively, intelligent, well-educated and fully engaged with RinJ. She is employed by the Diocese. She will work under the Diocesan Missioner.

Bonus: During one practice small group session three men committed their lives to Jesus at the invitation of the Group Leader. Very caring Bishop and staff, beautiful surroundings and accommodation; and our hosts the Head teacher Rowena and her husband Peter were so helpful. Mike L spoke to the assembled school and Helen to the Staff. We were taken to see 3 new churches that had started in recent years, all small mud and stick structures with little or no furniture and had either pine needles or grass for floor covering. One team member was reminded of the aroma of Christ by the smell of freshly laid flooring. These were difficult to access by vehicle. These buildings and their Priests and Evangelists served small communities and the churches were growing – it was not hard to imagine a group of people sitting on the floor doing RinJ. One of the churches had been built through the vision of a seamstress who gave 10% of her earnings to build the church. After the last day, a few hours off were planned by the lakeside down a long track as a relaxing time, but we found a whole small fishing village turning out to see us there. Before long Mike C was standing by fishing boats on the shore with fishing nets spread out, telling the story of two fisherman who left their boats and nets and followed Jesus, ending with an appeal. Mike C preached on Sunday before the Conference.

## DVN Diocese of Victoria Nyanza. Bishop Boniface Kwangu

The DVN Conference was held in a parish Church in Mwanza (not the Cathedral); with the team staying at a training institute hostel belonging to the Bank of Tanzania. This was a followup 3 day Conference from the previous year.

About 120 people were expected at the conference but initially only about 60 came, a few came later and some just on the last half day! 10 people from the previous conference attended but the seminar for existing leaders on day two was only attended by 4. The church and site were ideal for the conference and most of those who came travelled in each day but we never started on time so there were adjustments and minor changes to the programme. Those who attended were excited and pleased with the teaching. Leonard the Coordinator was very keen and competent as a leader, speaker and organiser but was disappointed by a lower than expected turn out. Leonard was described by a team member as 'quiet when talking, then on fire when preaching'.

We believe further RinJ groups will begin as a result of this Conference. I think a four day Conference would have been better but costs were clearly a challenge. The team were greatly helped by John the new Diocesan Development Sec who was also interpreter and by Pauline another interpreter.

**Bonus:** Safe and good accommodation and friendly helpful staff. Mike C and Mike L preached at different services on Sunday. The Bishop's sharing and fellowship together with visits to the Cathedral, DVN Isamilo International School, and a visit to the Diocesan Bible School. This was newly returned to the control of the Diocese.

**At both Conferences** the team were frustrated by the language barrier and unable to chat to people and have much time for 1:1 prayer ministry. The response to ministry sessions was a standard everyone praying out loud. One or two folk were prayed for including Jacob who had a URT infection but generally we were unaware of any healings. Jacob assisted by Leonard did interpreting and introduced sessions and led worship – this was most efficient. Jacob and Mike C worked well together and were in reality like joint leaders; both introductory talks they delivered together sharing sections. Jacob dealt with a number of arrangements and issues for the team and went to considerable trouble to care for the team's needs and safety. He had to leave us for a family funeral the middle weekend and travel some distance but returned on Sunday evening for the next day.



The team were supported by a great many intercessors for which we were grateful. Sending messages was often problematic on the second Conference. We are grateful to our intercessors – thank you and also to Carina Brown and Clemency Fox for passing on prayers requests and encouraging messages.

**Mike Cotterell's reflection:** A great privilege to do this work, very inspiring and humbling. Grateful for the team including Jacob and Leonard and the Interpreters for their energy and commitment; all were very gifted speakers and leaders and brought many other gifts and skills to the mission. Mike L was as always a great support and it was particularly good to see Helen and Susie take further steps forward in ministry and in faith. I thank the team for their patience, love and putting up with my humour, acting and the glove puppet 'Chicken the Evangelist'.



**Susie Jacob's reflection:** I was very nervous about going but kept trusting God through it and it was like He gently took us through as my worries were not founded so actually things were much better than I had anticipated. I kept praising God as He nurtured me through it all, gently walking with me & not throwing me in the deep end! I was concerned about leading as I was the youngest team member ministering to pastors and evangelists but again kept praying about it and I had one reading which said that we cannot do everything and this can be overwhelming but do the something which God has asked you to do; so I just tried to be confident in Christ knowing that He will use whatever I offer for His glory. In the end I felt the Holy Spirit helped me on many occasions, leading me, speaking for me and helping me to handle the situations we faced. I received some good feedback after from the locals and the bishop there which was encouraging for me.



**Helen Broadbent's reflection:** This was my first visit to Africa. I had been given advice and encouragement by people who had lived in Tanzania, and by people who had been to Africa and on RinJ trips. However, I was unprepared for the complete cultural contrast. I hadn't expected Africa to look and feel like an article from the 'National Geographic' magazine. Rural Tanzania was beautiful, green and fertile, with dark orange tracks cutting across the land to small villages of simply made houses, hidden in the banana plantations. The people were warm and friendly and generous. Urban Tanzania was busy, noisy, dusty, with dwellings varying from shacks to opulent houses with gates and security guards. The people were again warm, friendly and generous. Highlights of the mission included: The first time I was offered a bowl and water to wash my hands – an example of servanthood that immediately reminded me of Jesus washing the disciples' feet. The trip to the shore of Lake Victoria, listening to Mike telling a Bible story to the villagers. Seeing the Holy Spirit at work in the prayer workshops, as people prayed and listened and prayed for each other.

**Mike Langworth's reflection:** I felt particularly enabled by the Holy Spirit in the first conference and it was good to see Helen and Susie growing into their roles and flourishing. Two interpreters at Muleba became honorary members of the team and we enjoyed very warm fellowship with them in our travels to and from the venue. We all worked well together. Mike C as usual was a great team leader and encouraged us with his humour as well as spiritual insights. For both conferences I think many delegates really got into the teaching and the spirit of *Rooted in Jesus* and left equipped and hopefully motivated to start new groups quickly.