

# Rooted in Jesus

## Report on the Visit to the Diocese of Ogbaru and Ihiala, Anambra State, Nigeria. November 2011

Team Members: Bp John Hayden, Revd Simon Holloway, Ven Ephraim Umeh

### Background

Anglican Church in Nigeria is strong in numbers already with an estimated 20 million members in 156 Dioceses and 14 Provinces, of which around 30 are Missionary Dioceses. Both of the dioceses we visited were such, having been formed in the last 5 years. Although these are new dioceses, the church attendance at the Sunday worship in the places we visited was between 600 - 1000, in both the English and Igbo services.

It is a praying church, most meet at 5.30am weekdays and all-nighters on Fridays once per month, as well as many other prayer and bible study groups. There is a weekly Miracle Clinic for healing and deliverance. They churches have a strong teaching element with all age Sunday school as well as bible study during the week. They have strong organizations such as Boys and Girls Brigade each with a strong Christian basis. Large churches have one or two clergy but rural ones share one between several churches. Both Bishops Samuel and Raphael have received good theological training. Bp Samuel was awarded his doctorate in Nigeria and Bp. Raphael trained at Trinity College, Bristol and worked for Scripture Union for many years.

### Invitation

The invitation to come to Nigeria came from Bp Samuel from Ogbaru after his visit to a SOMA conference in UK with his wife in November 2010, where he met both Alison Morgan and Simon Holloway. In May this year, he met up with Bp John in London to discuss the details and finalize plans for the Conferences. The team of four was reduced to two due through illness, but +John and Simon still resolved to continue with the conferences looking to locals to help us, especially the Diocesan Coordinators.

Our travel and accommodation arrangements were made by Bp Samuel who met us in Abuja and accompanied us to our destinations. We were well provided with ensuite rooms with variable A.C. We kept in good health and food was adequate for our needs, having a main meal each lunch time with the Bishop and his wife.



Revd Simon Holloway and Bishop John Hayden with Bishop Samuel and Chinyere Ezeofor of Ogbaru Diocese

### OGBARU DIOCESE

Bishop Samuel Ezeofor. RinJ Coordinator: Ven Ephraim Umeh

We expected 160 and this number did attend the Conference at St. Luke's Church in Ogbaru, which is a suburb of Onitsha (pop.1 million), and near to the river Niger, formerly part of Diocese on the Niger. This is Igbo country. As far as we can ascertain the conference was attended by all clergy including the bishop, and their wives as well as key leaders from each church - 26 churches in 11 parishes. The attendance was kept up each day and we were delighted that all submitted lists at the commissioning service and intend to start a group of around 12 people within two weeks. When we preached in two churches on the Sunday after the conference, we were encouraged to witness the enthusiasm of the clergy for the course and their intention to start during the following week.

### IHIALA DIOCESE

Bishop Raphael Okafor. RinJ Coordinator: Canon Luke Ezerioha

We expected 130 and almost 140 came to this second conference although Bp Raphael only expected around 80 originally. We met daily at St Silas Cathedral in Ihiala, about 40min south from Onitsha. The cathedral was almost completed and including the balcony could probably hold several thousand. We used two areas - one for plenary and another for 12 small groups. As in Ogbaru, we concentrated on using visual aid objects on Day 2 and using drama on Day 3. Groups quickly picked up the teaching methods as we focused on this and the groups were led by a variety of people. The drama was great.



Both Bishops were very keen to suggest a follow-up conference in a year's time. We were very grateful for all the prayer support from UK, despite the fact that we had no internet connection and we were reliant on text messages instead.

John Hayden

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