

# Peter Silverwood

## Reflections on the Rooted in Jesus Junior Team to the Diocese of South Rwenzori

And a personal testimony

Uganda, June 2014

The Team Preparation was excellent. Jonathan patiently explained the details of RinJ very thoroughly to Sue and me and gave us a very good idea of what to expect – as far as that is possible for Uganda. I have travelled widely on business but this was my first visit to Central Africa, and some aspects of life there have to be experienced first-hand however well the preparation.

Jonathan's leadership was very thoughtful, thorough and effective. His knowledge of the programme is first class and his experience invaluable. There were areas in my experience – both cultural and spiritual - about which I felt unsure, but Jonathan was always a great help, providing guidance and building confidence so that I quickly became more effective in the programme.



The support from office, and beyond, was amazing, especially during the time we were away. Knowing that a network of prayerful people was behind all that we were doing gave us confidence and encouragement on a daily basis. This was a very full itinerary – three 3-day conferences with very little time between – and could have proved exhausting but for the knowledge that we had such strong support channelled through the office network. It was still physically exhausting but our spirits never flagged.

I have to say that I fell in love with Africa within a few hours of landing. Where-ever one travels it always helps to be greeted by faithful brothers and sisters but the people of Uganda were all so very welcoming and kind. I quickly learned about 'Africa Time' and learned to leave behind my impatience and eagerness to schedule time, and to have everything planned. Sometimes it is more important to spend more time engaging with others and leave the scheduling of more mundane matters to God. I truly believe this was a Spirit-filled experience and one that has influenced my attitude towards time, even now. (Some might say that I never was a particularly good time-keeper and now I am worse! I don't mean to hide behind a lazy attitude toward punctuality but I am sure that God sometimes means me to spend more time listening and being aware of people around me, rather than living life to a strict timetable.) I have brought home with me a greater respect for time and I try to see its use more from a heavenly perspective.

The faith, humility, kindness and gentleness of so many the Christians that I met also had a profound influence on me. Sharing ministry with people who have so little in material terms and yet who have such faith and dependence on God was a very humbling experience. The young man who, after walking across the mountains for several hours, arrived at the conference and took from his small rucksack polish and brush with which to clean his shoes has left me feeling rather lazy, but determined to be more like him.

Having spent many wonderful hours in ministry to others, praying for their lives, their fears, their health and their problems, the opportunity arose to ask the team to pray for my own health. For some 30 years I have suffered with a hiatus hernia which imposes severe limits on the food that I can eat. No fat, no sugar, no fruit, no fish – the list is a long one. I have taken daily medication for the condition for many years and take a double dose when I am away from home. On this trip, living out of a suitcase, I managed to lose a quantity of tablets and asked the team for prayer. We asked the Lord not only for help managing without medication but for complete healing. From that day onward I stopped taking medication and have now been without for over 8 weeks. I would say that I am substantially healed and am able to eat very many foods that previously I could not. I still get the occasional bad day, probably because I have been too adventurous, but I would estimate a 90% recovery. My brothers and sisters at St Mary's and I are continuing in prayer towards a complete healing and I give thanks and praise to God for his grace and power. I am now able to eat in restaurants and so can take my wife and family out socially much more easily, which is such a blessing. Praise the Lord!