

# ROOTED IN JESUS

## Annual Report for 2019



Rooted in Jesus is published and supported by the Mathetes Trust



### The Diocese of the Rift Valley, Tanzania

The Diocese of the Rift Valley (left) became the first diocese to hold two Rooted in Jesus conferences in a single year. The first was held in February and the second in November, both led by Jacob Robert. Coordinator George Mbago reported that groups had started in every parish, with 40 doing particularly well, most of which have now moved on to the second book. Groups are led by pastors, catechists and Mothers Union members; others are being formed following the second conference. Perhaps the most striking testimony came from Bishop John Lupaa, who had himself led a group for just four people in a small rural church with a dilapidated building and very few members. Having taken those four through the first book, he encouraged them to start groups of their own. Just under a year on, that church has 84 members and a new building!

### The Diocese of Kondoa

Also in November, the Diocese of Kondoa held its first conference. Kondoa is located in the rural centre of Tanzania, in an area where 90% of the population are Muslim. The diocese is growing steadily under the leadership of Bishop Given Gaula, who hopes that Rooted in Jesus will help the Christians, many of whom have had little formal education, to grow in faith, as well as providing them with a tool they can use to reach out to their communities.

### The Diocese of Mpwapwa

Dustan Mtoro has served as Rooted in Jesus Coordinator in Mpwapwa for 8 years. He reports that there are nearly 300 groups in the diocese, some using Rooted in Jesus Junior; many have completed the course, and in every parish both church commitment and every member participation have risen dramatically. Last year an ambitious fund raising campaign for a new building organised through the RinJ groups raised the sum required within three months. Dustan has now retired, and his successor Anderson Madimilo adds that "For us it is a success everywhere; it has raised the giving, it has established the faith in our Christians. The number of Christians has grown, because we no longer lose people to other churches as we used to. Because the groups pray together, many people have had their problems solved, their lives changed."

**R**OOTED IN JESUS is a practical discipleship programme for Africa. It covers the basics of Christian faith and ministry from an African cultural perspective, and is designed for use by people of any educational background. There is a companion programme, Rooted in Jesus Junior, for use with children in Sunday Schools.

Since its creation in 2002 Rooted in Jesus has been introduced to over ninety dioceses, denominations and theological colleges in Africa. It has been translated into over 40 local languages.

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### NEW THIS YEAR

2019 has been an encouraging year. Conferences have been held by us and our partners in 8 countries, bringing the total number of people now trained to lead groups to just under 16,000. Translation of the books into the appropriate local languages is an ongoing task, and this year we have produced booklets in a further 5 languages. In the course of the year we have received reports from nearly 40 dioceses, and we have a growing number of invitations for next year. We are grateful to all those who have given up their time to go on teams, and to our dedicated group of intercessors who pray for each conference as it happens. We are also thankful for the generosity of those who have supported Rooted in Jesus financially this year.

### Tanzania holds its fourth National Coordinator Conference



Rooted in Jesus was commissioned and pioneered in Tanzania. The Provincial Director is Bishop Stanley Hotay, who hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> National Coordinator Conference in November. "Africa is home to 400 million Christians," Stanley reminded us, "more than anywhere else in the world. We must understand the Word of God, believe it and live it, use the resources given to us by God, investing not just in adults but also in children."

Tanzania has much to be proud of. Over the past 18 years, 20 dioceses have hosted 59 conferences, nearly 5000 people have been trained to lead groups, and 23 people have served on teams to other dioceses. There have been many reports of people coming to faith and experiencing life-changing healing, of churches growing in strength and numbers, of increasing confidence in ministry among church members, and increased financial growth.

## Rooted in Jesus goes to Ghana

In August a Rooted in Jesus team travelled from the UK to Ghana at the invitation of Bishop Felix Annancy, to provide the first small group discipleship training for the Diocese of Koforidua. It was a first for Rooted in Jesus too, as Ghana became the 17th country to introduce the programme.

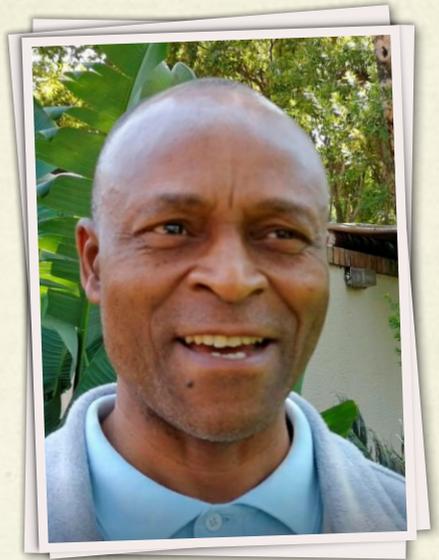
Each of the 31 parishes had been asked to send up to four people. The conference was marked by singing and dancing, with people attentive in their listening and enthusiastic in their participation. Delegates took full advantage of the opportunities to lead a small group through a practice lesson, and engaged the team with many comments and questions during the workshops on prayer, pastoral care and small group leadership. Prayer was a keynote of the conference, with people praying now quietly in ones and twos, now passionately in groups. The daily ministry times offered further opportunities for people to bring

their needs to the Lord. At the end the new group leaders were given certificates, and books in the local language of Asante Twi, or English for those in non-Twi speaking areas.

The programme was formally launched across the diocese at the beginning of December.



*A group tries out a practical demonstration*



Bishop Dintoe Letloenyane of the Diocese of the Free State, South Africa, shares his thoughts about Rooted in Jesus

“I must say we are very excited about this ministry, Rooted in Jesus, which is all to do with making disciples for Christ in his church. We started last year with a workshop, and then we went back to our own local churches. In the bishop’s office I lead a Rooted in Jesus group for the staff. We can see that Rooted in Jesus is helping a lot of people to come to the Lord, to know who they are, to develop their faith, and it’s also helping their families, because whenever there is trouble or challenges at home, people do know that Christ is there to help them. May I also say that we have a priest who has really taken the local church by storm through Rooted in Jesus. We have seen how people have given their commitment and their life to the Lord - men who never really thought that they could give their services, they have come to work in the church. We have seen women with spades and forks doing gardening and making vegetable gardens for themselves and to feed the people around them. But it’s really about bringing people to the Lord Jesus Christ, who feeds us, who quenches our thirst, who heals us, who really has given the promise that he will walk with us each and every step of our lives. And so we are very excited about Rooted in Jesus.”

Bishop Ernesto Manuel of the Diocese of Nias-sa, Mozambique, speaks about Rooted in Jesus

“Rooted in Jesus is a programme which is simple, practical and very profound. People are able to deepen their faith, their spirituality. The programme of Rooted in Jesus opens up many opportunities. As a new diocese we face the problem of how to get going. We have identified three priorities. The first priority is to transform our congregations. Then we must train leaders, and then we must plant new churches. And so we ask ourselves, how are we going to do all this? There was a risk of starting as an institution rather than growing people. So Rooted in Jesus is a critical tool for all our plans. We have seen that those who are trained, now they have formed their own groups, and people are coming. In these groups we have discovered that leaders are emerging, parishes are being transformed. And from these groups new congregations emerge. So we are excited about the programme.”

## Rooted in Jesus spreads across Southern Africa

In South Africa Rooted in Jesus is supported by Growing the Church and coordinated by Estelle Adams. In 2019 training was offered in the Dioceses of Lesotho, Natal, Free State and Johannesburg. In September Estelle reflected: “I can’t contain myself when I see how amazingly this Discipleship tool is working in the dioceses, but also in the lives of individuals.” The first to introduce Rooted in Jesus to South Africa was Bishop Martin Breytenbach, who now ministers with Rooted in Jesus across the Province and beyond. In February he conducted a series of interviews with Rooted in Jesus bishops - see the panel on the right.

### Lesotho welcomes Rooted in Jesus

In April Trevor Pearce and a team from the Cape Town and Free State dioceses led a discipleship conference for the Diocese of Lesotho, training small group leaders in Rooted in Jesus, Rooted in Jesus Junior and in our urban, post-modern discipleship tool, The God Who Is There. Lesotho TV aired part of the conference, and afterwards delegate Dr Joseph Morenammele wrote “I am totally humbled as I reflect on the weekend—words will never be enough to express what the Lord has done here! It was a wow experience. As Isaiah 43:18 says, ‘God is doing a new thing.’ Several participants heard the gospel for the first time and committed their lives to Jesus.”

### The Diocese of Kimberley & Kuruman

Glynis Moorcroft reports that a Rooted in Jesus Training Conference was held in the Diocese of Kimberley and Kuruman in September, led by four facilitators from Growing the Church. “The Holy Spirit gave us the freedom to pray for each other. Some were moved to tears. Worshipping God through song and prayer during the training was meaningful and enriching. Many received Christ and left the training feeling transformed, encouraged, strengthened, and ready to serve others by starting their own Rooted in Jesus groups in their parishes. One lady said to me: ‘I did not find it all that exciting until we did the Holy Spirit session. I stood there and others prayed and laid hands on me. I started crying and the Holy Spirit touched me deeply.’ Another told me how she cried with release and relief after the teaching on the Holy Spirit. ‘The teaching on the Holy Spirit was more powerful than we could ever have imagined.’

## A surprised participant: Augustine Baafi shares his experience



“I didn’t really want to be part of this conference. But I spoke to my grandfather. He said to me, “Augustine, I want you to be part of this programme.” So I took it with brave courage and I said I am going just to witness and not to be part of it. So I came by, and when I came here, it’s not like an institution or a church programme, but it was more or less like a family. And I’ve learned here that Jesus is not only what we read about in the Bible, but is more like a father to us, a brother, a sister or a mother to us. Jesus is real to us, and whenever we call on Jesus, he’s going to be part of our life and he’s inviting us also to be part of his family, this great and big family that he’s calling us to be with. I came here to be an observer, but I have learned that I’m part of the group, and the big family that God wants me to be part of.” Augustine is now training for the priesthood in his Diocese of Koforidua, Ghana.

## Supporting ministry in difficult situations

Many of the countries which have adopted Routed in Jesus enjoy peace and stability, if not always prosperity. For others, the situation is more demanding. It is our particular privilege to support those who minister in these challenging situations.

### Diocese of Kadugli, Sudan

In October a Routed in Jesus conference was held in Kadugli at the invitation of Bishop Hassan, led by a team from the linked Diocese of Salisbury, UK. Team leader Andrew Evans writes that the churches in Kadugli have undergone a very difficult time due to the political conflict which has dominated the country. A Roman Catholic priest explained that the wars had drawn Christians of all denominations closer – they had all been perceived as the target by the Islamic government. He also said the people were traumatised by war and were much strengthened that Christians had come from England to encourage them. Six denominations were represented at the conference, with 75 people attending in all. Many testified to healing from the pain of the past, and the conference closed with a joyful commissioning (photo, right) at which all were given copies of the course in Arabic and encouraged to form a discipleship group when they got home.

### Diocese of Katanga, DR Congo

Routed in Jesus was introduced to the Diocese of Katanga in 2014, and in March we reported how Bishop Elisha Tendwa used it as the basis for ministry in the missionary Diocese of Kalemie. In July we were glad to be able to send some Bibles for the new groups in one of the refugee camps, and in December we received the following report from Coordinator Stephane Makata:

"The RinJ teachings have helped all the parishes in the Diocese; many testimonies have been seen and confirmed among the believers. Through these teachings God will help the church to have the good way to follow and how to remain faithful to Him. The RinJ teachings have helped us reach many goals. The group

members and leaders are growing in number, churches are planted (especially in the province of Tanganyika around Kalemie in the camp of displaced people). These teachings are helping the believers to take hold of the word of God. RinJ leaders and members have participated in the processes of conflict resolution and peace making; this does not mean only to teach people the word of God but also to teach them how to love their neighbours, forgive them and build peace."



### Diocese of Toliara, Madagascar

The Diocese of Toliara covers a huge, undeveloped area in southern Madagascar, and suffers regularly from drought, violent cyclones and famine. They have been using Routed in Jesus since 2011, and the programme is now overseen by CMS missionary Derek Waller. During 2019 Derek and his team have provided ongoing training in each of the 10 parishes of the diocese, with people walking long distances both to attend and to lead their groups. Derek reports that in Ankilifaly a group has completed all 4 books, and 6 of the members are now leading groups of their own. Progress is inevitably slow, but people are growing and new churches being planted.

### Diocese of Niassa, Mozambique

Another diocese affected by both material and educational poverty is Niassa, in Mozambique, where Routed in Jesus has been in use since 2006, when it contributed to a period of great renewal and growth. Relaunched with a new generation of leaders in 2018, it is now supported by coordinator Anold Gezan, who has been conducting day seminars to support the new leaders across the diocese. Next year Bishop Vicente plans to introduce Routed in Jesus Junior for the first time.

## Conference testimonies

At the start of one of the morning breaks, a young mother came for healing for her son. He was totally full of fear and refused to leave her side. Whatever she did had to be done with an extra limb attached to her leg. The lad was about 3-4 years old, the same age as my youngest grandson who is totally fearless. We prayed for the lad and cut him off from his ancestral spirits. Within an hour he wandered up to me on his own to give me a high-5 and then ran back to mum. By the time we got to lunch he was going out the front with the other children and by the end of the day he was going home with some of the others whilst mum stayed at the conference. Mum had also been unwell when she came and was also healed. *Barry Blackford, Diocese of Kadugli*

"It has been seven months since I converted from Islam to Christianity. Then one of the parishioners called and asked if I would like to attend a Routed in Jesus course. Not knowing what to expect, I agreed. "The facilitators explained the difference between a convert and a disciple of Christ. We were divided into three small groups to read and discuss scriptures in the bible. Some of the priests shared beautiful testimonies of what happened to them when the bible was first opened to them. While I was engaging, there was always someone that would share a scripture that would speak to me. We also made acquaintances with people from other parishes. I was intrigued by their enthusiasm and how they wanted to know more about the Word of God. Others shared ideas on how they were going to start small discipleship groups and work from the books received. Routed in Jesus helped me understand more about the Christian faith, the power of prayer and how to stand firm in the faith. The material in the course has also given me so much peace of mind. It has taught me to live as Jesus did and assured me that whenever I face challenges, God will always be with me." *Firoza, Diocese of Kimberley & Kuruman*

"It was a really anointed weekend with people fired up to go and make disciples in a big way with God's help. What a positive and encouraging experience we had. We saw how God's Spirit worked in people. I felt that this course was guided by God from the time it was conceptualised. The training and the results were beyond my expectations. Our gratitude goes to GTC. I'm am looking forward to the ministry which will follow in the parishes". *Ven Tsepo Matubara, Rector of St Andrew's, Soweto, Diocese of Johannesburg*

"Our diocese is growing numerically, but how are we growing spiritually? The mandate Jesus gave was to go and make disciples. When Routed in Jesus was implemented last year it really made an impact. You can see that from the clergy, even in the communities, because we have established small groups and people's lives have been changed. When you see that, it's a great joy to you as a servant of Jesus" - *Bishop Vicente Msosa, Diocese of Niassa, Mozambique.*

## Blessing in two directions: team members share their thoughts

"I have never had such a big lesson in relying so entirely on God. It has been a very exciting and defining moment, and I have never been so free of doubt and so confident in him. Since coming back, this has hugely helped the way I lead in my own ministry and the way in which I approach the unknown, hand things from my control over to his, and to trust everything to him." – Ben

"The experience has confirmed my struggle - I cannot believe that it's possible to live an authentic Christian life in this country without a meaningful and sacrificial relationship supporting and being supported by, our brothers and sisters in poorer countries; I'm challenged to believe and trust more, and I have a different perspective on the issues and problems people face in this country" – Andrew

"I was convinced God wanted us to go, and there were indications that God intended to do something, so I had a sense of anticipation. Did he act? YOU BET! It was a real privilege to see God working in power among the participants, and to experience his blessing myself. Furthermore, I found God had additional aims, as he used our visit to encourage believers who were traumatised by 30 years of civil war. I have gained in confidence, and speak with more assurance. I have also become increasingly hungry for God and for means to serve him better." – John

"The delegates on both conferences were so encouraging and welcoming. It was hard work, we didn't stop from morning prayers 7am to 3:30pm, but it was so uplifting and enjoyable to be with such wonderful Christian people. I loved every minute of the conferences and prayerfully so did the delegates." – Sarah

"One day I might be able to tell you just how much Routed in Jesus changed my life." – Stephen

# Burundi, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia

## The Diocese of Butere, Kenya

In October the Diocese of Butere held its third set of Rooted in Jesus conferences. 140 existing and new leaders attended during the first week, and 89 Sunday School teachers came together for the second. Team leader Ben Beecroft reports that the Sunday School teachers (below) responded with great enthusiasm and really threw themselves into all elements of the conference. Both conferences were marked by strong engagement with the sessions and a spiritual hunger to grow. Adult groups are running all over the diocese now, and Ben observes that Butere has the potential to become a flagship diocese for RinJ & Junior in Kenya, with many leaders who could help with RinJ teams elsewhere.



## The Diocese of East Ruwenzori



We first went to Uganda back in 2012. Since then Rooted in Jesus has been adopted by 9 dioceses, of which the most recent is the Diocese of East Ruwenzori. A team from the UK, Burundi and Tanzania visited in May. 171 people attended the conference, with all 7 archdeaconries and 42 parishes represented. Participants included the clergy, Mothers Union leaders, parish Mission Coordinators, Lay Readers and Fathers Union leaders. The books were provided in Runyankore.

Bishop George Turyasinga writes: "We are thankful for the team that came and introduced Rooted in Jesus in our Diocese. The team

was used by God to bless us with the Spirit filled message. We were overwhelmed by the members. We had expected 150 people and we registered 171 people. We are glad for the way Mike handled and coordinated the team. Everyone on the team knew what they were doing and every participant was encouraged to go back and begin making their own groups. We were encouraged and we are hopeful that we shall register positive results in discipleship. We are thankful that some groups have already started in some parishes."

## Elsewhere in Uganda

Other dioceses to report recently include the Diocese of Soroti, where Coordinator Pascal Odele writes that there are now 107 active groups across the diocese - a great achievement during a period of episcopal interregnum. In Karamoja John Onyao reports that he is using Rooted in Jesus to plant a church in his new parish. And in Mityana coordinators John MUSAASIZI and Jethro Ssebulime continue to visit parishes to provide teaching and support:

"Jethro and I are very thankful to the Lord Jesus for enabling us to get to Binikira last Sunday. We wanted to find out whether Mark the Rooted in Jesus trainer is still maintaining the same pace of discipleship multiplication. We enjoyed participating in the reality of our expectation. The trained groups that attended church worship yesterday morning made it crystal clear that they had applied all what they learned in their daily life experience, including forming discipleship groups at their local settings. They also gained respect in the communities where they live. Much was testified. They memorized required Scripture and hid verses in their hearts. We tested them by giving them opportunities to recite what they had hidden in their hearts. They not only recited, but they also explained the application of verses in their daily lives. We thanked Mark for being an outstanding discipleship trainer in the entire Diocese of Mityana. We still have many places to visit and encourage trainers in their work. We will visit all other places for it is God's will, and it brings us great joy as we do it."

## The work of Dignity in Zambia

It has been a privilege over the last 10 years to share Rooted in Jesus with Dignity, a UK charity which plants small community groups in rural areas - initially in Zambia, but increasingly in neighbouring countries. Jo Kimball reports that here are now 763 Life Groups involving over 15,000 people; the groups use Rooted in Jesus alongside Dignity's material which focuses on ministry to the community:

"We are thankful for the role Rooted in Jesus has played in helping many Life Group members draw close to Jesus. Charles has only been attending Life Groups for 3 months and can already see a change in himself. 'There are a lot of changes in me since I joined a Life Group. I feel like I have been set free because many of the things I never understood, now I understand them!'"

You can read more of Dignity's remarkable story at [dignityonline.org.uk](http://dignityonline.org.uk).

## Burundi

Elisha Academy is the Coordinator for Rooted in Jesus in the Diocese of Muyinga. He reports that "The Diocese began when they had almost 25 parishes. But now after using Rooted in Jesus, more than 5 parishes have been inaugurated. This is a result of the Rooted in Jesus mission. This place is a good place for doing this ministry because many people need to hear about Jesus." We were delighted that Elisha was able to join the team to East Ruwenzori in May.

We were pleased to support Peter Kay, who this year ran a follow-up conference for the RinJ leaders in the FECABu network of churches in Bujumbura. Peter reports that some 400 people are currently meeting in 25 groups.

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Further information can be found on our websites [rootedinjesus.net](http://rootedinjesus.net) and [mathetestrust.org](http://mathetestrust.org). Regular updates and reports are posted on [rootedinjesus.blog](http://rootedinjesus.blog).

Contact: [office@rootedinjesus.net](mailto:office@rootedinjesus.net).



What does it feel like to be involved with Rooted in Jesus? Mike Cotterell writes:



"Many things happen while on Mission, some planned like the Conferences themselves but then extras, like 'chance' meetings that God seems to orchestrate. A conference looks like this: A Team, a group of participants and a location over four days. But another side of the reality is that there are thousands of significant moments: Person to person conversations, individuals listening and in conversation with God. Sharing of testimonies, acts of kindness, encounters with God; whole conference experiences of the presence of God. So, a Conference is a complex network of lives touching each other, with the Holy Spirit an active ingredient, like yeast in a batch of dough. God inspiring his agenda and firing his people; and this against a background of human weakness and negative spiritual interference."

Mike is a long-standing Rooted in Jesus Team Leader, and a Trustee of the Mathetes Trust.