

# Rooted in Jesus conference in St Philip's Theological College, Kongwa, Tanzania

17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> November 2014

Team members: Revd Andrew Petit, Canon Dunstan Mtoro, Revd Joseph Mangugi, David Gibbons

This conference took place as a result of an invitation from the college principal, Canon John Madinda. The college is primarily involved in training priests and evangelists for the Church of Tanzania. It was thought that not only would the RinJ training provide an invaluable resource for their future ministry, but since all the students were involved in weekly placements in local churches, many if not all would have the opportunity to put RinJ into practice in the near future in the local area.



Joseph, Andrew, Dunstan,  
Canon James (staff), David

A total of 48 students plus one member of staff attended the training conference. There was some reticence and reservation on the first day, partly due to the fact that the RinJ programme involved some changes to the normal college routine. We discovered that the students were not used to having teaching sessions in the afternoon and that the much valued *Chai* break that came mid-morning seem to come at just the wrong time for the RinJ programme (half-way through the RinJ workshops). Having identified the main problem areas and got the kitchen staff to agree to change the time of *Chai* by 30 minutes we managed to get the timetable to work much better on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent days. But it did highlight that there are additional issues when doing a conference at a college where the expectation is to fit in with a pre-existing time-table as opposed to a normal diocesan conference, where the time-table can be tailored to the conference.

The students clearly grew in enthusiasm for RinJ as the week went on. Joseph (the RinJ coordinator for Kiteto diocese) was quiet and reserved. But when Dunstan suggested that Joseph should lead the teaching session on the Holy Spirit, he suddenly transformed into one of the most energetic and dynamic preachers I have ever seen. Whilst David and I could not understand his words – being in Swahili – (apart from *Roha mtakatifu* which we discovered meant Holy Spirit), we were completely transfixed by his great variety of voice and manner, poise, gestures and acting out of illustrations. He did a wonderful job of enthusing and encouraging the students and from then on they became very positive about the training.



There were a number of testimonies, but they were in Swahili and we only had two translated: one effusively praising God for filling her with the Holy Spirit and another challenged as a father to seek the forgiveness of his children.

48 students and one member of staff received certificates. The students, all produced extensive actions plans. They made two copies so that they could keep one and Canon James Bendera, the member of staff in attendance, could have a copy as well.



Canon James Bendera was appointed college coordinator since, as a member of staff, he would be in a position to follow up the students and encourage them to put into practice their action plans. Dunstan Mtoro, the coordinator for the local Diocese of Mpwapwa, can provide support for James if required.

I would say that by the end of the conference, the response was very positive, with several asking us when we were going to return (including Canon James Bendera). However, being based at a theological college, having a follow-up conference at the college might be problematical in that a good proportion of the students will have left the college in a year's time.

The team that we had worked very well together with a good range of gifts and personalities that complemented each other well. The two Tanzanian members had already done 4 or 5 RinJ conferences and so had considerably more experience than me. The team members were gifted and supportive which is what enabled the conference to go so well. We were also enormously grateful for the prayer support and encouragement given to us by the RinJ prayer team.

**Revd Andrew Petit**

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