

Rooted in Jesus Junior in Holy Trinity Moshi, DMK

A report from Revd Dr Linnet Smith, March 9th 2014

Linnet Smith is working on secondment to the Rooted in Jesus national office in Arusha, Diocese of Mount Kilimanjaro, Tanzania. After a day at Holy Trinity Moshi, she wrote:

“I had the most wonderful day yesterday at Holy Trinity, Moshi. The high spot of the day was meeting about 60 children who have completed RinJ Book 1 and presenting them with their certificates during the second service. (Charles tells me there are more than a hundred more children who have also finished Book 1, and that the adults at Holy Trinity are now saying ‘When are we going to start our group?’). I was able to give a short word of encouragement to them and to the whole congregation, and was so thrilled to see them stand up and recite the memory verses, complete with the most expressive actions - one verse refers to Jesus’ sheep going in and out and finding pasture - I wish you could have seen the action representing hungrily eating the food - I nearly cried for joy!!”

Linnet’s full report is as follows:

The purpose of my visit to Holy Trinity was to present certificates to children who have completed Rooted in Jesus Junior Book 1. The Diocesan Coordinator, the Rev Charles Unjiro, told me that there were around 150 children altogether in Moshi Deanery who had completed Book 1 and this was the first opportunity to present certificates to the children from one of the Churches.

Charles and I arrived while the first service was going on, during the sermon. March 9th was Women’s Day so the service was led by and the sermon was preached by members of the Mothers Union. As a member of the Mothers’ Union in the UK, it was great to be with them on Women’s Day. After the first service, we drank tea and I signed the certificates. Then we joined the children in the classroom – 57 of them. The Deanery RinJ coordinator, Josef, introduced the teachers (some of whom attended the Junior Conference in Arusha last May) and outlined some of the challenges they face there. There are 120 children who come to Sunday School, about 60 attend on any one Sunday. They are divided into four groups according to age and taught by six teachers. However, the site is small and it is difficult to find space for the groups. Also they do not have blackboards. Some of the children come from some distance which makes regular attendance difficult. Then I had opportunity to speak to the children and their teachers and Charles followed using the cover picture of the RinJ book to emphasize the importance of roots. He communicated really well with the children who listened intently. The children were asked to stand up and recite the memory verses. What enthusiasm and joy!! They had learned all five perfectly and accompanied the words with appropriate actions – it was such a joy to see and hear them.

Charles and I joined the adults in Church and after some while the children came in, recited their verses and received their certificates. Charles told them that they were the first group in the Diocese to receive certificates and they have already started studying Book 2. (Also he told me that the adults in that church are now asking the pastor when their group is going to start? After Lent seems to be the answer.) I then had opportunity to encourage the adults and made a point of thanking the teachers, hoping to give the role a higher profile. The service continued, the children having gone back to their classes, with lovely exuberant worship and a powerful sermon about the role of Christian women. ‘Lazy women buy blue mosquito nets’ so that they don’t have to wash them too often!!

After the service we were served soda in the home of one of the pastors and then went to the home of the other pastor for fellowship and food. As part of the Fellowship time we all introduced ourselves and said what children we have. With a little help I managed that in Swahili, much to everyone’s delight. Holy Trinity have laid the foundations of a large new building, now they are ready to start building the walls. Indeed, God is building His church in Tanzania through the work of RinJ.

I want to thank Rev Charles Unjiro for arranging the visit to Holy Trinity and for looking after me so well. He is really committed to the work of RinJ and his enthusiasm and commitment are infectious. I thank God for him and look forward to working with him again when I return in July.

