

TANZANIA



Diocese of Mpwapwa

August 2000

Brian Thompson reports:

The team:- Philip and Jean Kirk from Congresbury, Nr. Bristol; Brian and Patricia Thompson from Rode Heath, Cheshire, and Abraham Tsongo Kima and Kasereka Tsongo Kessy from the Diocese of North Kivu , DRC.

The purpose:- To provide spiritual input into the triennial diocesan Clergy

Retreat and Synod.

The Retreat (9th –11th), was attended by Bishop Simon Chiwanga and his wife Gladys, all the pastors and their wives, together with the Parish Chairpersons (all lay) and their spouses, some 200 people in all.

The theme set by the bishop was " Equipping the Saints for Ministry." (Eph.4:11-16)

The Synod (13th – 20th), was attended by all the pastors, some of their wives, and two lay representatives from each parish, again some 200 people in all, and chaired by the bishop and Lay Chairperson. The theme set by the bishop was "Carrying out our ministry in full" (2 Timothy 4:1-5), and the time was divided fairly evenly between diocesan business and spiritual ministry.

We became more and more aware of the tremendous privilege of ministering at such an important event, and at such a crucial time for the diocese. We felt that we were being used to build up the leaders of God's people, who work largely in isolation and in many cases had become discouraged and confused. The Word and the Spirit brought them to a new vision of the wonder, mercy, grace and power of the Lord.

Various people told us at the end that this Synod had been totally different from those held in the past. The sense of unity had been very powerfully felt.

We will remember....

#The way in which God unified us as a team, and enabled us to work together although we had not known one another previously. We really needed those evening times of shared prayer and listening to the Holy Spirit.

Brian preaching at the Ordination Service at the opening of the Synod (a first).

The openness with which retreat and synod members both asked for prayer for the Holy Spirit and personal needs, and gave thanks for answered prayers.

The joy of discipling people who were hungry for teaching from the Word, and who showed their desire to put it into practice. It was wonderful to see people visibly changed and set free.

#Praying as a team for the bishop and synod members for the fulfilment of the aims of the synod during the next three years; being asked to witness some of the covenant forms that the bishop asked all synod members to sign committing them to implement these.

The genuine love and warmth shown unflinchingly to us as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

The members from ECUSA who had been providing input to the diocese during the past three years, and who were there for part of the time sharing the ministry with us. We learnt much from them, and really appreciated their friendship. (We were glad they had been able to cover for us at the beginning of the retreat, as our travel schedule meant we did not arrive until the evening of the 9th).

The extreme conditions produced by the drought, which nevertheless could not eclipse the amazing beauty of the country, or quench the spirit of the people.

Jonas, our cook, who never ceased to amaze us with his creative ability to tempt our palates from a restricted range of provisions.