

'Rooted in Jesus' training with the independent Glad Tidings and Vine International church networks - Kenya April/May 2014

Leadership Development Partnership

Brian Keel

From first encountering 'Rooted in Jesus' we became aware of the potential within this unique course for the African church; and none more so than for those churches in rural locations who had so little by way of meaningful resources. So after extensive preparation on our part, and planning with two locations in Kenya where we had developed strong relational connections, the opportunity dawned for us to begin delivering the training course for 'Rooted in Jesus'.



Sheila and I agreed to support David and Lorraine Gibson on these first two conferences as they took responsibility for heading up the training programme. The first location was in **Kombewa**, some 30 kilometres outside of Kisumu, where some of us have been involved for the past decade, with a network of churches known as **Glad Tidings Churches**. The team were able to train some 66 people; most of whom were from 10 churches in the locality, along with some leaders of Masai churches from further afield. We distributed course books in 3 languages which we had with us: English, Kiswahili and Masai, and made arrangements for translation into a 4th language – Luo, as this was the largest request after English, and the common local language in Nyanza. At the conclusion of the 3½ day conference we committed the ongoing development into the hands of the recognised overseer and three coordinators, each of whom covered a geographical area. This was our first 'RinJ' training conference which we think went extremely well, amongst pastors and cell group leaders representing some 15 or 16 churches in total.

The second week was in **Bungoma**, Western Kenya, where four independent church networks have begun working together, under the name of '**Vine International**'; and we had the privilege of bringing 'Rooted in Jesus' training to 103 people who all intended to start 'RinJ' groups. These people came from over 30 churches, and their course books which they received were in English and Kiswahili. Several who attended came from outside of Bungoma, and were the only people from their church group, but made it clear that they would be returning to their areas to recommend 'RinJ' training conferences there. Amongst the delegates there were some 5 or 6 leaders of other networks who came to experience the conference for themselves; there was one man who was an administrator for a group of 38 churches and was wanting to recommend 'RinJ' to each of those churches, and another senior leader travelled from Uganda in order to get a sight of 'Rooted in Jesus'.

After the completion of this training conference we met the following morning with the senior overseer (bishop) and the 3 coordinators, all of whom are network leaders, who were very enthusiastic of the feedback they had received from the delegates with whom they had been communicating, some wanting to begin their courses the following week. By the close of the conference, the Bungoma team were already receiving enquiries from other leaders who had heard of the training, and wanted to know when there would be another such 'RinJ' training facility.

Later in the day we met up with the overseer from the first conference in Kombewa who informed us that the translation work into Luo was going well, and they had begun test trialing Lesson 1. He spoke of attending a 'RinJ' group meeting the previous evening where the Luo material was enthusiastically received, even surprising him; particularly by a 90 year old group member who was illiterate, and was delighted by the open format of the 'RinJ' group meeting where she willingly shared her testimony .

So from our first two 'RinJ' training conferences we have left behind excited church leaders and members who now have tools by which they can reach out to fellow believers to see them become disciples who would then desire to see even more disciples being raised up. The challenge now for David and Lorraine, leading the 'RinJ' part of LDP, is to know which of the incoming requests for additional conferences to include in the next visit.

Brian Keel, Lincoln May 2014

Dan Makecho is the bishop leading the 'Vine International' collection of networks in Bungoma, and the overseer we left there to lead forth the 'Rooted in Jesus' programme. Dan is an experienced church leader who has been in the ministry for over 20 years, and planted some 15 churches. He writes –

"We enjoyed your presence with us and are looking forward for more when you come. There already testimonies about Rooted in Jesus. Yesterday there was no preaching at Bungoma church. We just enjoyed Rooted in Jesus and the result two people gave their lives to Christ it was wonderful time for us. I have never seen people excited and participating as I did yesterday, no dozing off ,very attentive and full of enthusiasm. People contributed so much and at the end of the service every body could describe what is a Christian. It was just a trial for us but gave great results . We are looking forward now to study lesson one together in groups."

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