

Rooted in Jesus Report

Kenya - November & December 2015

by David Gibson

Rooted in Jesus training Courses were run in four locations:

1. Ruiru, North Nairobi, at Ruiru Central PEFA [Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa] Church: new leaders (November 11-13)
2. Bungoma: Vine International: existing & new leaders (November 24-26)
3. Kombewa: existing & new leaders [Glad Tidings churches] (December 1-3)
4. Murang'a: new leaders [centring on a PEFA church] (December 8-10)

All these were 3-day conferences, and the host church leaders were all people with whom all or part of the team had an existing relationship: so it was a joy to walk closely with them.

1. Initial conference at Ruiru, North Nairobi

A team of 4 from Lincoln (Brian & Sheila Keel) and Bedford (David & Lorraine Gibson) ran a three-day conference starting on Wednesday 11th November. There was no need for interpretation at the sessions, so there was ample time to cover all the material in the three-day conference format.

Attendance was about 45. We were provoked after day 1, when asked what the Holy Spirit had done that day: the attendees seemed to be behaving like good students - taking in things academically, without the 18 inch virtual drop to connect the brain with the heart. The second morning, at the end of the teaching session on the Holy Spirit, He broke in after some words of knowledge. Two people had bad backs after motorbike accidents, one person with a groin injury after a rugby incident: all of them testified to (lasting) healing, and ran around the compound to demonstrate God's healing! This did not even disrupt the timetable:



2. Follow up conference at Bungoma Town, Bungoma County

50 attendees. Once again, the Holy Spirit broke in on day 2 of the 3 day conference. There were significant reported healings:

- A Pastor who had been hit by a car, causing considerable pain in his right leg. Having received prayer on several occasions during the conference, he proclaimed himself fully healed by the Sunday morning.
- Another Pastor, Dennis, had a right wrist which was swollen and increasingly painful, meaning he could not operate the throttle properly when he rode his motorbike. After prayer on the Wednesday, at the weekend he was testifying to complete & instant healing - his swollen wrist had returned to normal size & function.

Below is a summary of the accounts from RinJ leaders of the impact on their churches and people from doing book 1 of the course, largely in their own words.

Church growth

1. Helped church and those from outside - discovered people with evangelistic abilities, intercessors and teachers.
2. Church built up by coming into biblical truths.
3. Discovered gift to teach others.
4. A Bishop discovered how to teach and train others. 400 people in network, experienced increase of additional 250.
5. "Book 1 taught me how to teach in the church." Increase from 20 - 50.
6. Helped church members mature, discovering gifts in our lives, and position in Christ. Enabling people to be bold to serve God.
7. Leader experienced delegation of duties, and release of talents in members.
8. Many have become believers, and were taught truths of salvation; some beginning to teach others. RinJ has enabled an increase from 5 to 20 in the church.

9. RinJ has given foundation to members of church, enabling them to remain firm in their faith. Through the memory verses those who cannot read have been learning the scriptures. People are being encouraged to pray more, and helped to gain courage.

Increase

1. Been sharing individually with friends - 7 people,
2. Been helped personally spiritually and in prayer life.
3. Course has given confidence and boldness to church members to witness to others.
4. Helped to mature church members - increase of numbers from 6 - 90.
5. Led small group 10 (1st week) - 20 (2nd week) - 30 (3rd week) - after 1 month others helping to lead.
6. People grounded in faith, others saved.
7. Started with 7 people in 1 group - now 3 groups.
8. Started with 1 group of 5 people - now 2 groups. People able to quote scriptures in church
9. Leader working amongst Muslims, had planted 1 church, now 2 new churches have been added. Those on RinJ experienced expanded thinking, and now number 53.
10. People knowing who they are; they now know what Christianity means. Brought healing into people's lives - forgiveness.

Helping leaders

1. A leader from Mumias who had 3 groups, and saw increase - 6-30, 10-25, 12-36. He saw that RinJ was
 - congregation centred, as opposed to leader centred
 - helps to release talents in different people
 - those who didn't really know who Jesus was, now do so
 - enables growth in the congregation.
2. Leader meditated on Book 1, which brought understanding which he passed on to others. Started with 1 group, now has several.
3. Leader described 'RinJ' as 'the way of the Spirit' - memory verses help us to take scriptures with us everywhere we go - walking with us. Learned of our position as a Son of God, and Jesus being the way, the gate into fullness of life. Group members learned how to live life from studying the book, learning forgiveness. Some have become new leaders in church.
4. 'RinJ' easy to learn. Memory verses helped overcome challenges of people not used to sharing. People who have never been to school, able to share memory verses, and share faith easily; becoming grounded in their faith.

3. Follow up conference at Kombewa, Nyanza Province

Over 45 delegates, from a wide area. Once again, in the morning of day 2, the Holy Spirit broke in, and there were words of knowledge, and we gave opportunity in the afternoon for testimonies of healing from several delegates:

- A local lady who was healed of tooth pain in left jaw: she ate lunch today with no pain!
- A lady who had been unable to attend on the previous day (with neck ache) believed God told her to come today. She knew she was healed after prayer. She had a growth on the back of her head - raised up and the size of a 50p piece: white on the top. On Saturday (3 days later), the swelling was seen by a member of the team, & it had reduced to the size of a 5p piece. Otherwise, the skin has returned to its normal colour, and even where white, the colour is breaking up. Hair is again growing over the swelling.
- Another lady was healed of an ache in her left jaw, though she wasn't at the testimony session.
- Lawrence shared the next day that he'd listened very closely, especially to a word of knowledge that there was someone with an accelerated heart beat - he came forward for healing & felt the power of God in his life: he is now feeling 100%.
- Another testimony shared the next day: 2 months ago, a lady fell down and hurt her ribs, but yesterday, there was a word of knowledge to which she responded (and also about pain in the jaw). She was totally healed - & still is healed today!
- On the Sunday morning, during a United church service which followed on from RinJ, a Pastor from Madiany who had been touched on Wednesday, and healed of an irregular heartbeat (& itching over his body) testified to the Lord's healing: he had wanted to assure himself that this was a lasting healing!

The local church in Kombewa - Kombewa Worship Centre (a Glad Tidings Church) organised a full programme of outreach around Rooted in Jesus: each afternoon after the RinJ sessions there was an open air crusade meeting, followed by an open air revival meeting each evening. These were very blessed, with 4 conversions on one afternoon when Brian preached, and others on other afternoons.

In a meeting with the network's overseer, Moses Jagero, after the Kombewa conference, he expressed the view that there were more participants than 18 months ago. Last year, some were sceptical: would RinJ work? They now knew it did, & he thinks there will be a greater take up after the follow up conference. People were enthusiastic! He was excited at the take-up: he recognised that 30% was an encouragement: these were 'early adopters'. Hereminded us that the small group teaching & discussion format was quite new to the Kenyan church.

A report of the impact of Rooted in Jesus in the first year and a half of being run in churches in the area is appended below. These are accounts from RinJ leaders of the impact on their churches and people from doing book 1 of the course, largely in their own words.

Evangelism & Memory Verses

1. People enter into the truth of the Bible: "memory verse makes the word of God easy to share: it creates greater confidence in people's lives".
2. Some with a study group are now able to lead - spiritual growth is evident. Memory verses encourage people to study the bible.
3. Going through book with (the leader's) family, helped him lead his family to Jesus: his children (8 & 10?) learned the memory verses.
4. Memory verses make evangelism easy, and become rooted in the Word. Understanding the power of the word of God.
5. Group very rural, made up of elderly people, some of whom were illiterate. Memory verses were very helpful.
6. Memory verses were easy to learn.

Discipleship

1. Going deeper into the Word
2. People are equipped to know the word of God, and having confidence to evangelize - seeing church growth out of Rooted in Jesus.
3. See progression going through the studies: it's good material for new converts.
4. People become hungry and enthusiastic about the Word of God.
5. Work load for Pastor reduced as people gained confidence & took leadership roles in the church.

Group dynamics

1. Every person (in a RinJ group of Christians) having an opportunity to lead the group and grow (under oversight of their married leadership couple).
2. Builds relationship amongst group members.
3. Non church members in one particular group, who were very regular in attendance. One has been born again, but everyone participated.
4. When people are given free time to express and discuss, it leads to people feeling a part of the church, which they had never previously experienced.
5. The course enables the leader to minister specifically into individual's lives: they share, and you know where they're at.
6. Report of a local coordinator: Joshphat (a church leader and school teacher):
 - Very essential programme for both new believers and Christians who have only known Christ on a surface level.
 - It enabled them to get rooted and established in the faith.
 - They've seen people getting saved, and some delivered (using book 1 at the end!)
 - It helps people to have a personal relationship as disciples.
 - They had a very fearful lady as part of the group, now interpreting, preaching & wanting to teach; now enquiring about a possible Bible School!

4. Initial conference at Kahatia PEFA church in Murang'a, Central Province

This was attended on the first day by some 57 people, largely from PEFA churches.

Kennedy Maturi, the Pastor at that location - 2 hours drive from Nairobi, in the Aberdare Hills, the foothills of Mount Kenya - is also principal of Nairobi Pentecostal Bible College, and is a friend of the RinJ team. Once again, the Holy Spirit broke in to the morning session on day 2: there were various words of knowledge given to the team. In the afternoon, delegates were asked to testify if they believed that they had received a healing - that they knew something was different. Although the team tried initially to pray for individuals, so many

responded that we soon realised that we did not have the time to do that for every person. Therefore, we asked them to put their hand on the area that was giving them pain, and to pray along with us as they were prayed for as a group. Those who testified shared:

- Moses had been unable to move his neck: now he demonstrated he could.
- Benson had had pain on the right side of his face (up towards his eyes). Now healed! Pain in neck & heart has also disappeared.
- A lady testified to multiple problems!! Eyes, ears (tinnitus), hips & shoulders all giving trouble. She had told her husband she could no longer tend their goats. She had seen a consultant in Nairobi, who was unable to offer any help. Problems had now disappeared!!! Eyes & ears improved, back ache gone!! All the symptoms went as Brian put his hands on her head - before he even began to pray.
- A lady testified: her neck had been painful, & her ear was painful - This week there was very persistent pain... But no pain any more!!!!

After those testimonies, Sheila reminded folk that, if they had not been miraculously healed *that* day, they should not go away disappointed - "don't let disappointment rob you of your healing!", she said. These testimonies were shared before the commissioning, & were very faith-building for all present.

- A man whose eyesight was causing difficulty had asked for prayer the previous day: he said then that his vision had improved, so David continued to pray for him. Today, he testified that his vision was so improved that he hadn't needed to use his glasses since then.
- A lady with an excruciatingly painful shoulder was prayed for yesterday. Nothing happened, but when she woke this morning, she was pain free, & swinging her arm around in front of the delegates!
- The final testimony was from a lady with painful back & hips. She went to bed that evening still in pain, but woke up pain-free & rejoicing!

Over 60 qualified for certificates and Rooted in Jesus books. 7 co-ordinators were appointed [two from PEFA churches], one of whom is also a chief coordinator. Kennedy Maturi will oversee the scheme in that locality. He has a meeting on Tuesday 14th December with pastors in the area, to explain to them the philosophy of the scheme, and to elicit their enthusiastic support. They are aware of the Rooted in Jesus programme, and in many cases had sent representatives to the conference. We believe they need to be reassured of the positive outcomes anticipated when Rooted in Jesus groups are formed.

Conclusion

After these four Rooted in Jesus conferences, spread over five weeks, the team are exhausted but elated:

- We were so aware of the Holy Spirit's presence and blessing at each conference, and believe a good foundation has been laid
- We were encouraged so much by the feedback at the two follow-up conferences of what God has done within Rooted in Jesus groups, but also in churches and communities.
- At each of the four locations, we feel it is significant that we already had excellent relations with the overseers in each area:
 - In Ruiru, Bishop Peter Chege of PEFA
 - In Bungoma, Overseer Dan Macheko, chairman of Vine International
 - In Kombewa, Overseer Moses Jagero of Glad Tidings Churches
 - In Kahatia, Kennedy Maturi, Pastor of Kahatia PEFA church & Principal of Nairobi Pentecostal Bible College.

So, we are grateful to God for the opportunity of encouraging both those who have already started Rooted in Jesus courses, and seeking to enthuse new people to catch the vision of this discipleship course, whether in small group, church, or the community.

David Gibson, Bedford UK, December 2015

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