

Rooted in Jesus team to Diocese of Kericho, Kenya, October 2013

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Total population: 1.5 million Some Key challenges: disease, especially HIV/AIDS & malaria; severe water shortage; unemployment; low literacy; poor roads; recent political unrest.

The church in the Kericho Diocese: around 100 small rural congregations, 13 pastors, led by Bishop Jackson Ole Sapit - see more at: <http://trinitycheltenham.com/global-mission/kenya-partnership/>

There were a total of 34 people present for the 3-day conference. Of these, all of the clergy were present - 18 pastors responsible for a number of churches in their area; the Bishop was there throughout - this was incredibly significant. He chose to stay rather than go to the huge GAFCON gathering which was happening the same week in Nairobi. That was a massive signal to his own team of his commitment to them locally, as well as an endorsement of how important he felt the RinJ initiative to be. The 3 archdeacons were among the clergy team. The remaining 16 were local lay leaders from each area, including 3 women. Only 4 of those present had received the previous training in 2011 in Narok/Kilgoris.

The conference

Went amazingly well! From the outset, there was a strong sense of engagement, and high levels of participation, interest, involvement throughout. It felt extremely important to present a compelling vision of WHY the RinJ programme would be beneficial, or more than that, why we prayerfully felt it was the Lord's gift to them at this time. With a vision of why this mattered, it was then more straightforward to address the practical 'how' questions and introduce the material. They loved it all. A couple of key decisions in that process seemed to be of the Lord and very helpful: the first was to select only the lay leaders, not clergy, to lead the practice groups (on the second morning). This included asking all 3 women to lead a group. We had 5 groups with about 6 in each. This worked a treat, and confirmed for sure that RinJ is not something only to be handled by the elite ordained. Secondly, since the first practice went so well and was a major moment of revelation that this was great and accessible material, we repeated the practice groups on the third morning too (with a new set of lay leaders). Even though we had to cut this one short for time reasons, it was again so valuable for them to learn by doing. And great to see things being acted out in little groups, and groups praying arms round shoulders at the end, around the compound under various trees!

It was probably the Bishop and senior clergy who took the most time to see that RinJ was clearly the right approach, but their confidence grew with every session. By the end, there was no question, as they had seen the enthusiasm with which their people had responded. So when it came to the final implementation planning time it was wonderful. We left them to chat among themselves (not wishing for them to be constrained by our presence and the need to be polite) - when we returned an hour later, there was a full computer spreadsheet with all the co-ordinators appointed, at Diocesan and archdeaconry levels, all the lists of potential invitees, numbers of books needed, languages, timescales for starting and reporting back etc. Remarkable!



There were lots of encouraging comments and feedback. Here's one story: There was one lay leader Frances from Narok who was so enthusiastic about the whole thing that it kept him awake on return to his town that Friday night. And at 2am in the morning he felt the Lord prompt him to go to the church (ACK St Luke's) where they have an all night prayer meeting every Friday. He spent from 3am to 6am in utterly abandoned joy and laughter! He is now the area coordinator for RinJ.

