

# Rooted in Jesus Annual Report 2017

## OVERVIEW

Rooted in Jesus is a practical discipleship programme in which trained leaders facilitate small groups of people who wish to deepen their discipleship. It is not a Bible study programme – it is an applied, interactive programme which aims to change people’s lives, churches and communities. Designed specifically for Africa, Rooted in Jesus covers the basics of Christian faith and ministry from an African cultural perspective, using only resources that are commonly and freely available.

*Rooted in Jesus* has now been running for 16 years, and *Rooted in Jesus Junior*, the companion programme for use with children aged 8-14, for 6 years. During that time it has been translated into 42 languages and introduced to over 80 dioceses, denominations and theological colleges in 16 African countries. It’s always hard to measure the impact of a programme, but during those 16 years we have trained over 12,000 people to lead groups, and we estimate that over 100,000 people (adults and children) have joined groups. We continue to receive remarkable testimonies from group leaders and local coordinators, and many of these are posted on our website. *Rooted in Jesus* has become a key resource for the African church, and it has been a privilege to watch its growth and to support those using it.

*Rooted in Jesus* is published and supported by [The Mathetes Trust](#). It has offices in the UK, in Tanzania and in South Africa. Both *Rooted in Jesus* and *Rooted in Jesus Junior* are endorsed by the Anglican Communion.

## CREATING A CULTURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

Rooted in Jesus is inspired by the Great Commission, the command to go and make disciples (Matt 28.18-20). We understand a disciple of Jesus to be a person not just who knows Jesus or has made a commitment to Jesus, but a person who is learning to become like Jesus, both in life and in ministry. Disciples of Jesus live as Jesus taught them to live, they minister as Jesus taught them to minister, and they help others to become disciples and do these things too (2 Tim 2.2). And they do this not as private individuals but together – ‘the plural of disciple is church.’<sup>1</sup>

None of this happens by accident; it happens when we take steps to make it happen. If there is an intentional culture of discipleship and disciple-making within a diocese or network, then the lives of individuals, churches and communities within that network will be transformed. Discipleship is not just one of many things that we do: it is the core from which everything else flows.

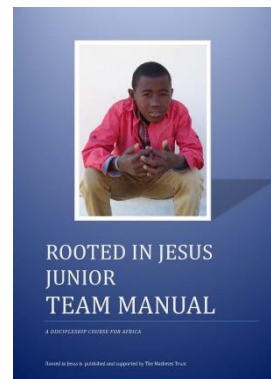
## ROOTED IN JESUS TRAINING IN 2017

This is the vision which we have continued to pursue over the last year. In 2017 we sent teams to facilitate training conferences in Malawi, Kenya, Madagascar and Uganda. We provided further financial support to the Diocese of Kajo-Keji in exile and to the Province of Tanzania, where *Rooted in Jesus* is directed by Bishop Stanley Hotay. We provided fresh supplies of books to Uganda, Tanzania and DR Congo as groups there progressed and new groups were established. We printed five new translations, and published a [Rooted in Jesus Junior Training Manual](#) for use by conference facilitators and diocesan coordinators.

### [Malawi : Diocese of Upper Shire](#)

The first conference of 2017 took place in February in Blantyre, where a team led by Revd John Lee returned to offer a second RinJ conference for the Diocese of Upper Shire. Coordinator Elliott Litereko reports that the mission statement of the Diocese, *a Christ-centred Church that is commissioned for discipleship and the proclamation of the gospel*, fits

<sup>1</sup> Alison Morgan, *Following Jesus: The Plural of Disciple is Church*, ReSource 2015



The new RinJ Junior Training Manual

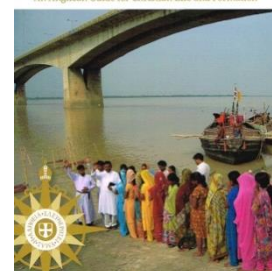


Rooted in Jesus conference, Diocese of Upper Shire



### *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making*

An Anglican Guide for Christian Life and Formation



Creating a culture of intentional discipleship

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closely with the objectives of Rooted in Jesus. He adds: "This is why there is a tremendous growth of Rooted in Jesus groups in various parishes. We have received good reports from group leaders that they have formulated means of supporting themselves if one member of their group is sick or admitted to hospital. It is one way of preaching about love in action. Priests and laity are working together in the proclamation of the Gospel to unbelievers. In our context we target Muslims; we regard them as a mission field, hence intensifying evangelism. The Anglican Diocese of Upper Shire warmly welcomed *Rooted in Jesus*, and we have already started reaping the fruits of the seed that was planted two years ago." 31 clergy and 49 lay leaders attended the conference; the Diocese has appointed regional coordinators and plans to run further regional training conferences.

### [Kenya : Diocese of Butere](#)

In June a team led by Revd Richard Morgan travelled to the Diocese of Butere in Kenya to launch Rooted in Jesus for the first time. Butere is a well organised diocese with a focus on mission and discipleship – hundreds of people had made a profession of faith in a recent mission. The two conferences were organised by Benjamin Kibara, the Diocesan Secretary for Mission and Ministry Training, who explained: "As a diocese we are very keen to start the Rooted in Jesus discipleship program. We have 48 parishes, 50 ordained clergy, 13 associate ministers, 176 evangelists, and 378 lay readers. We have already laid a structure where all the Christians in the diocese will be part of a small group of 10-12 people for discipleship." Not surprisingly given this background, these two 4 day conferences turned out to be the best attended we had ever held, with a huge turnout of over 300 invited delegates. Afterwards Bishop Timothy Wambunya remarked: "We are using *Rooted in Jesus* as a foundational course to train our pastorate leaders, and we are hoping that they will establish groups, and then we can use those groups to disciple the ten thousand or so Christians in the diocese. We are now beginning to engage in serious discipleship." By November groups were meeting in most of the parishes, and encouraging reports were received from the clergy at the annual diocesan review and planning retreat. Benjamin reported "The impact has already been felt in many ways:

- Many have grown in their faith and practice
- Commitment and turn up in local church prayer meetings has increased
- Stewardship and giving has improved as disciples get rooted in Christ.
- Marriages that were at the verge of breaking up have been restored.
- More people have volunteered to serve in church
- The RinJ books were recommended as the confirmation books in the diocese."

The diocese has invited us to facilitate a follow-up conference in 2018.

### [Madagascar : Dioceses of Fianarantsoa and Toliara](#)

In August a team led by Canon Jacob Robert travelled to the Dioceses of Fianarantsoa and Toliara in Madagascar to introduce *Rooted in Jesus Junior*. Both dioceses had been using *Rooted in Jesus* to to disciple adults since 2011. Both are young dioceses with parishes scattered over an enormous geographical area, and both are subject to debilitating cyclones and short on staff and resources – but both are experiencing steady growth. In **Fianarantsoa** coordinator Ven Jean Flobert explained that RinJ is in use in every parish, that many groups have completed all four books, and that "we no longer give out certificates, because everybody would have one." Over the next four days the team worked with 87 keen Sunday School teachers from across the diocese, offering the first training and the first resource material for use with children, painstakingly translated into Malagasy by Nolavy Arisoa. By the end of the year Ven Flobert reported that all Sunday Schools are now using RinJ Junior, with over 1200 children in groups.

The Diocese of **Toliara**, inaugurated just 4 years ago, is led by Bishop Todd and Revd Patsy McGregor. In that short time 70 churches have been planted, a cathedral has been built, and many local ministers ordained. 40 Sunday School teachers had been invited to learn how to disciple children using RinJ Junior – and, a first for us, to bring the children with them. This meant that the teachers were able to try out the new material in situ with the children, which gave them much greater confidence. The diocese have just recruited a CMS partner, Derek Waller, to oversee discipleship in the diocese; he will work closely with Revd Donn  Ratsimavo, the RinJ coordinator and one of the pioneers of the diocese.



Video from the RinJ conferences in the Diocese of Butere, Kenya



Canon Jacob Robert, Ven Jean Flobert, Bishop Gilbert Ratelosen, Diocese of Fianarantsoa



Workshops in the Diocese of Toliara

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## Uganda: Diocese of Mityana

October and November are often the busiest times of year for Rooted in Jesus, and 2017 saw us facilitating conferences in 4 dioceses, all in Uganda. The first was Mityana, where RinJ has been running for 2 years, overseen by Canon John Musaasizi and Revd Jethro Ssebulime, and supported by the link deanery of Overton in the Diocese of Salisbury. Over that time John has sent many inspiring reports from his numerous visits to group leaders around the diocese. The team was led by Revd Tim Carter, and the two conferences were attended by 150 existing and new leaders, theological college students, lay readers and ordinands. Bishop Stephen Kaziimba gave a new Bible to every participant, and the conferences were marked by testimony and prophecy. Mityana is an example of a diocese where sustained and determined followup by a local coordinator, Canon John Musaasizi, has proved to be the key to growth. It was also one of the places where the visiting team members experienced as great a blessing as the participants – and this too is one of the things we pray for, that the visiting team would experience a fresh anointing for ministry at home. Nick James spoke for many when he wrote afterwards:

“The visit was exhilarating in many ways. Such appreciative people, such vibrant worship and such a wholesome, challenging course (I felt personally challenged by some of the material...). I think it more than lived up to my expectations on account of the people we met who were on fire for the Lord, despite little material resource. The chief impact on my ministry is a refreshing of my own call to make disciples, and a firm understanding that Ugandan Christians face exactly the same fundamental issues as I do: am I willing to trust God and follow him wholeheartedly? ”

## Uganda: Dioceses of Karamoja and Soroti

In November a team led by Revd Mike Cotterell travelled to the Diocese of Soroti to introduce *Rooted in Jesus* for the first time, and to the Diocese of Karamoja for a followup conference. **Karamoja** is emerging from a time of hardship and conflict, and Bishop Joseph Abura and the diocese have played a key part in helping bring peace to the region. With just 11 parishes, it has few resources, but a growing determination to foster a culture of discipleship. Coordinator John Onyao wrote that “Like a lot of churches, Karamoja Diocese has a number of people who have been Christians for a long time, are faithful servants of Christ and his Church, are members of congregations, but are in danger of always being ‘empty’ spiritually. We decided that we needed to do something which would rekindle our first love of Christ.” A small introductory conference was held in 2016, and 23 groups had been established; most of the leaders, John says, had reported growing numbers of people giving their lives to Christ, and that the prayer lives and lifestyles of group members had changed. But he also reported that hunger had interrupted the progress of the groups as people had dispersed to seek food; just one of the many difficulties faced by the African church. The conference was attended by 84 people, and was marked by testimony, with pastor James Chegem reporting:

“*Rooted in Jesus* has done a lot in the church I am leading; I used to struggle a lot but when I introduced RinJ it has helped me to grow the church numerically and spiritually. A woman called Lucia had never gone to school but kept on coming to attend RinJ meetings, and learnt how to memorize verses; now she is a good evangelist and quotes scriptures in the Bible which she has memorized. Many of the members who attended RinJ meetings in the church are now committed to church programmes. The church now has 300 members in attendance. *Rooted in Jesus* should not stop.”

From Karamoja the team travelled to **Soroti**, where they were welcomed by Bishop George Erwau and Diocesan Mission Coordinator Emmanuel Elianu. This conference had been long in the planning; all the *Rooted in Jesus* books had been translated into the local language of Ateso, and an astonishing 233 people turned up, all of whom committed themselves to running a group on their return home. It was the largest single conference we had ever held, and the responses revealed a high degree of blessing, with many answers to prayer for physical or inner healing, and increased commitment to ministry. The Karamoja coordinator John Onyao joined the team in Soroti, and commented afterwards:

“We live in unpredictable times and face challenges. RinJ’s vocation is located at the crossroads where renewal and mission meet. Renewal without mission quickly becomes self indulgence. Mission without renewal often results in disillusion. Renewal for mission lies at the heart of the Spirit’s activity in the church. Unpredictable times and discontinuous change make discernment the Church’s most critical capacity for our day. Discernment takes place where Word and Spirit meet, not this time at a crossroads but at a junction, the junction between past and the future.”



RinJ Conferences in Uganda



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## REPORTS FROM ELSEWHERE

We try to keep in touch with all those using *Rooted in Jesus*; feedback enables us to pray in a focussed way for those using the course – we have a dedicated group of intercessors. It also enables us to provide ongoing advice and support, and to ensure that those using the course have access to the books they need, whether printed locally or shipped from the UK.

Rooted in Jesus is run independently in both **Tanzania** and **South Africa**. The annual [Rooted in Jesus Coordinator Conference](#) was hosted by Bishop Stanley Hotay in Arusha. RinJ has now been introduced to 18 of the 27 dioceses in the Province, and between them they provide a snapshot of the joys and challenges associated with the ministry of discipleship. In some dioceses RinJ has had a transformative effect, with group members going on to train as evangelists and pastors, children in every parish learning what it means to follow Jesus, groups multiplying and churches growing. In others, conflicts within the diocese, poorly resourced coordinators, lack of finances and difficulties in distributing books have limited growth. A two year grant from the Anglican Communion Mission Fund enabled great expansion; the challenge now is to make Rooted in Jesus self-sustaining within the Province.

In **South Africa** Rooted in Jesus is overseen by Revd Trevor Pearce of [Growing the Church](#). Rooted in Jesus has remained particularly strong in the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist, which this year ran its own training for both the adult and the Junior programmes. RinJ has now been introduced to 13 of the 25 dioceses in the Province. A new project, 'Leadership for Evangelism and Discipleship', was launched this year, and *RinJ* and its companion course *The God Who is There* are recommended for use by graduates of that programme.

In **Zambia** RinJ has been adopted by 3 of the 5 Anglican dioceses, of which the strongest is [Eastern Zambia](#), where Bishop William Mchombo has prioritised both RinJ and RinJ Junior as primary tools for discipleship. There are adult groups in every parish, and RinJ Junior is in use in the Sunday Schools. The diocesan coordinators now run their own training, books are printed locally, and RinJ has become fully self-sustaining within the diocese. We are keen to make *Rooted in Jesus* available to other denominations, and in Zambia *Rooted in Jesus* is also used by UK charity [Dignity](#) as one of the key resources for its inter-denominational work amongst marginalised rural communities. Dignity now support 574 groups with a membership approaching 10,000 people; their [10 year report](#) makes inspiring reading, with many testimonies to the way changing lives have brought change to the communities in which the groups are set. And in **Kenya** Brian Keel has been working with various Pentecostal networks, where he has provided training for both RinJ and RinJ Junior. Growth has been rapid, with increasing requests for more books.

Inevitably, the most troubled regions are the hardest to support. This year we have sent financial help and books to the [Diocese of Kajo-Keji](#), **South Sudan**, now living almost entirely in the refugee camps in Uganda. Nelson Saya has set up 9 groups in the camps and the Christian College, and plans to run further training for leaders, encouraged by Bishop Emmanuel Modi, who insists that "the believers need *Rooted in Jesus* at this time of distress and spiritual need." We have also sent books to the Diocese of Katanga in **DR Congo**, where Bishop Bertin Subi has adopted the strapline 'a strong diocese which is rooted in Jesus'. There are now over 300 groups meeting across the diocese, of which 200 in the missionary area of Kalémie, where group members have been helping to restore peace after a period of severe tribal conflict. There are still many displaced people, and group members are working in the refugee camps where they hope to plant new churches. This is a diocese with a consistent strategic emphasis on discipleship; and it is growing despite the challenges.

## SUMMARY

The major task for us is to enable the sustained and effective growth of *Rooted in Jesus* across Africa. We are facilitators not drivers, and local ownership is key to the success of the programme; but we want to provide as much support, encouragement and resources as we can. We rely on people to partner with us by going on teams, praying, providing financial and administrative help. We are enormously grateful to all those who have done so this year. If you or your church would like to partner with us we would be glad to hear from you.

Revd Dr Alison Morgan, *Rooted in Jesus*, February 2018



The National RinJ Conference in Tanzania



Bishop Subi meets with group leaders in Katanga



Food relief in Kalémie



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