



“Growing the Church”

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Diocese of George

Rooted in Jesus Training Conference: 22nd-24th February 2013

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1 Introduction

The Diocese of George has been through a difficult time – serious financial irregularities were uncovered, the Bishop retired, various key staff members resigned and tribunals are underway. The new Bishop, Brian Marajh felt that Rooted in Jesus would be a good way to help the Diocese regain its focus and get back to its central calling to make disciples. Because he felt it was important for a Bishop to lead the process, he invited me to lead a team from Growing the Church (GtC).

†Brian appointed Revd Titus Daniels to be Diocesan Coordinator, and he did a superb job of planning and organizing. He was ably assisted by a team, especially Revd Lyndon du Plessis and the people of St Paul's, who pulled out all the stops to welcome us. The food was outstanding, and the venue proved to be excellent. A special highlight was the Sunday service, where music was led jointly by a jazz band and a robed choir and the church was packed with more than 800 worshippers. The sermon, on the rewards and challenges of ministry, led to an extended time of ministry with many in the congregation responding to the invitation to receive from God.

Overall, we were amazed at the hunger and thirst of the participants for the word of God. They participated eagerly in everything we offered. Although the programme was packed and we thought they must be very tired, they refused to cancel the last workshop before lunch on Sunday – everyone insisted that they wanted to get full value from the conference.



Ministry after the sermon during the Sunday Eucharist.

2 The Team

We had two goals in assembling a team for this conference:

- 1) To present the best possible RinJ Training for the Diocese of George;
- 2) To train future RinJ Conference team members and leaders.

The team therefore comprised one person who had led conferences before (†Martin), two who had been part of RinJ Conference teams before (Estelle Adams – the RinJ Coordinator at GtC and Amanda Ohlsson) and two newcomers (Alison Bourne and Nicole Corlew). The team proved to be superb, each one contributing their particular gifts and passions to the overall experience. We took time to meet, pray and evaluate progress each day.

3 The Programme

As has been mentioned above, it was a challenge to fit a meaningful programme into the time available (Friday evening until Sunday afternoon), but in fact it worked out very well. The programme and team notes are attached for information. We removed some of the devotional addresses, and included times of RinJ teaching and ministry in morning and evening prayers and the Sunday Eucharist.



Nicole Corlew leading one of the workshop sessions.

We increased the number of Small Group practice sessions to 3 – one led by a team member and two led by participants. Each of these was followed by an evaluation session, using the six questions that our team in Mara,

Tanzania began to develop last year. This proved very useful and helped the groups to keep focused on what they were supposed to do. The six questions are:

- 1) Did the groups learn the **memory verse**? (Would anyone like to demonstrate?)
- 2) Did you make use of the **practical demonstrations**?
- 3) Did everyone **participate** and what was done to encourage this participation?
- 4) Did the group **stick to the subject** and not get distracted by other issues arising from it?
- 5) What was the **main point** of the lesson? (Summarise it in your own words)
- 6) Did the group **pray together** and pray for one another?

Because we had four team members (apart from myself) we were able to offer four workshops – and each team member was able to lead a workshop in an area where they have particular skills.

Although it is not ideal to squeeze a Training Conference into such a short time, the intensity of the schedule developed a momentum of its own, and everyone seemed to be caught up in it. In particular, I think the leaders enjoyed doing the teaching, healing, discipling ministry of Jesus rather than being focused on destructive church politics.

4 The Participants

About 50 leaders, young and old, clergy and lay, from the Diocese of George participated in the Conference. During the weekend there were two times for local planning meetings to take place. Most people emerged from them with concrete plans to start RinJ groups. We repeatedly emphasized that the golden rule is start small and let RinJ grow. The multiplication exercise demonstrated the power of making disciples who make disciples (2 Tim 2:2).



Tired by happy participants in RinJ George.

I must put in a special word for Bishop Brian Marajh and the senior leadership of the Diocese. Their humble presence and active participation in the conference was a wonderful example. The fact that they were keen to learn, and their relaxed but authoritative relationship with their people were an inspiration to the team and other participants alike.

5 Conclusion

Since the conference I have heard of a number of participants who have started RinJ groups in their parishes. It will be good if we can send a team back to George in 2014 to follow up, encourage them, and train more leaders.