

# Rooted in Jesus Conferences in Ugandan Dioceses of Karamoja and Soroti November 2017



Team leader Revd Mike Cotterell

At the invitation of Bishop Joseph Abura of Karamoja and Bishop George Erwau of Soroti, Rooted in Jesus Conferences were begun in their respective Dioceses on 8th and 14th Nov. Revd John Onyao was Coordinator for Karamoja and Rev. Emmanuel Elianu for Soroti, both men knew each other well and John joined us for much of time in Soroti; in fact, he introduced and commended us to the Soroti Conference. Both were Diocesan Missioners. Attendance Karamoja 84, language: Karamoja. In Soroti 222, languages used Ateso and Kumam, materials had been translated only into Ateso.

The team: Rev Mike Cotterell (leader), Rev Capt. James Tumwesigye of East Ruwenzori Diocese Uganda, Rev Ben Brady, Miss Lucy Henderson.

## Karamoja

**Karamoja** had a R in J Conference the previous year and although this was to be a follow up conference we used the 1st conference material. The Conference was held in Moroto, where the Diocese HQ is situated. The region is semi-arid with a strong emphasis on cattle. Until five years ago there was serious insecurity in the area due to cattle raiding and related issues. The Church, like the area, was still recovering from this, but many new signs of security and growth were evident, albeit with challenges remaining. A new Chinese constructed road to Soroti was nearly completed; new modern construction housing was underway on the edges of town. People were walking around happily at dusk. The Church had been planting new churches and reaching out evangelistically to people in the mountains. There were many exciting testimonies. Both the team and the Diocesan team found it helpful to have a day of rest and 'getting to know you' time including a local visit to small distant village where a church was being started. We visited local Churches and the Cathedral. The Diocese had organised and prepared well in advance; invitations to attend had been thoughtfully and strategically planned. Revd John Onyao had also kept a record of previous groups started and their progress. He led the closing session of the Conference where future strategy was discussed and decided with skill and clarity. We left confident in his leadership and that new groups would start and previous groups would be encouraged and some restarted.

The night before the conference started, most people were already present; in almost darkness we had an informal introduction session with story-preaching and we did this on two following evenings after dark as an 'extra'. The Bishop moved the conference from the Cathedral, due to loud music from the sports field next door, to a bush area on the edge of fields which proved excellent and cooler - demonstrating how little is required to run R in J and its small groups! The Conference was well received, people quickly warmed to us, attendance at all sessions was constant. Together we had lots of fun alongside the teaching.



Participants receive training certificates

Testimony/feedback on the last day - Blessed by the conference 100%; those received some sort of physical healing 50%; Inner healing 30%; Born again 1 person. The varied uses of dramatic illustrations were particularly commented upon.

## Soroti

The **Soroti** Conference was held in the town of Soroti, the seat of the Diocese. This was a more densely populated, wealthier and a diverse agrarian area. The town had many modern African features including an airport. The Conference was held in a college a short car journey from the centre of Town. For this initial conference, the Diocese had planned well, had good resources and facilities. Those invited to attend were limited to those who would be willing, able and available to run small R in J Groups. The conference was loud enthusiastic and very ready – by lunch time on the first day it felt like an average third day when people have relaxed and have understood what the conference was about! The need to have two translations didn't seem to slow the pace and often just English and Ateso were used. As with Karamoja, people quickly understood the concepts and engaged well in the practice small groups and the workshops. Coordinator Emmanuel did an excellent job, especially considering the numbers involved and by the second day was relaxed and carrying a big smile. We felt sure the future coordination of R in J in the Diocese would be carefully and enthusiastically pursued. We didn't offer extra evening meetings but we did visit and speak at various schools and a technical college, and preached locally and at the Cathedral three times to large numbers and at its Sunday School. The Bishop is preparing to retire in the near future and we were invited to join him at one his leaving events.

Feedback was again very positive and again we felt that the Holy Spirit had been at work in powerful ways, to which many gave testimony. Of the 57 parishes 34 sent people. During testimony time at the end of the conference the responses to questions asked revealed: 100% felt blessed by the Conference; 100% felt energized; 100% going to start up a R in J Small Group; Heard God speaking in a new way 12%; physically healed 25%; Inner healing received 95% - that was how they indicated! Again, we felt that God had done a significant work whatever the stats were from His perspective.



John Onyao, Ben Brady, Mike Cotterell,  
Emmanuel Elianu

As Leader, I am very thankful for the Team, who worked well, became family together, gave lots of mutual support, encouragement to each other and many interesting discussions happened. We all seemed to learn from each other. Jennie Snow was our Intercessors Coordinator and we are grateful to her and all who support the team and Conferences in prayer. The Dioceses were welcoming and caring and provided well for the team as well as for those coming to the Conferences. We hope that a translation into Kumam will happen in 2018.

Mike Cotterell

[www.rootedinjesus.net](http://www.rootedinjesus.net)