

Africa News

Spring 2008

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Burundi News becomes *Africa News*

as RENEW International expands its efforts to South Africa with the all-new *RENEW Africa* process in the Diocese of Port Elizabeth.

RENEW Africa launched in Port Elizabeth

A new RENEW program by and for Africans

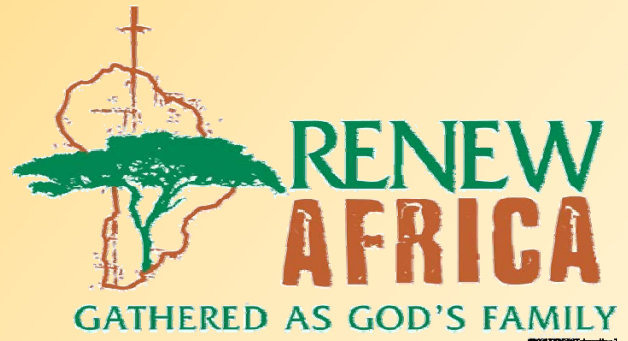
Meet Christ Today! This is the theme for the first intensive six weeks of *RENEW Africa*.

Over 500 members of *RENEW Africa* Core Communities from over 70 parishes participated in two series of workshops in October, 2007 and February/March, 2008.

RENEW Africa is our response to the need for a RENEW process rooted in African culture. The faith-sharing materials are written by Africans and the graphics have been created by South African artists.

In July, the parishes of Port Elizabeth Diocese will conduct Sign-up Sundays for members and others to join Small Christian Communities. In September, there will be four regional diocesan events to launch *RENEW Africa* formally.

In October, the communities will begin meeting with the assistance of a trained facilitator. At the end of the first six weeks on the theme, Meet Christ Today! communities will continue to meet, reflecting on the Sunday Gospel.



RENEW Africa logo designed by Gershwin Buezacht, a young graphic artist of the Port Elizabeth Diocese.

Testimonials from Port Elizabeth

"I received an invitation from the parish priest to serve on the Core Community for my parish and so I participated in the October introductory workshops. As I left, I felt truly renewed spiritually through the prayer and faith sharing. The following day I received the news that my son had been killed. I couldn't believe it. I felt totally lost and wondered where God was in all this. It was the members of my Parish Core Community who gathered around to support me. I was able to draw on the spiritual experience of the workshop and I have come through this terrible experience. Now I know the real reason I was invited to join the Parish Core Community, and I can witness how God has led me."



A Parish Core Community at Training Workshop



Bishop Gervais Banshimiyubusa of Ngozi and Sister Marie

First Priests' Conference Held in Burundi

Diocese of Ngozi

Forty-five priests attended a conference provided by RENEW on Social Analysis at the service of pastoral ministry.

The conference was held at the diocesan center for two days in January and two days in May at the request of Bishop Gervais Banshimiyubusa. The social analysis method will assist the priests and laity to

surface the key issues for the up-coming diocesan synod.

The January conference provided input and research methods. The May conference was based on the priests' analysis of pastoral issues and allowed for greater honing of skills and mutual exchange.

First *graduates* of RENEW process in Burundi peace initiative



In the Diocese of Ngozi, forty diocesan trainers completed the five RENEW training sessions and returned to evaluate their experience in January.

RENEW workshops begin again in the Diocese of Bururi

Second Diocese requests Priests' Conference

Bishop Bernard Bududira, who welcomed RENEW International into his diocese of Bururi in August of 2004 was called home to God during 2005. At that time, many pastoral activities were suspended, preventing RENEW staff from returning for successive training workshops as planned.

With the appointment of Bishop Venant Bucinoni in September of 2007, came an invitation to return. During a meeting with Sister Marie Cooper of RENEW Bishop Venant outlined a plan for recommencing the program. The first event was a priests' conference in May, 2008.

Burundian Trainers encourage advocacy for justice

Pope Paul VI is often quoted as saying, "If you want peace, work for justice." RENEW's training in Burundi focuses on the building blocks of peace. Both theory and practical methods to pursue social justice form an integral part of our training. Our trainers have taken many initiatives with Basic Ecclesial Communities to prepare and encourage leaders and members to seek non-violent action on behalf of justice.

Their responses vary from mediation in cases of domestic violence to encouraging individuals and communities to seek their rights before the law.

Through these actions, many parishioners have received assistance and have grown in the belief that they have power to deal with the many problems that beset them.

Help keep RENEW's mission active and effective in Africa

When RENEW works in Africa, we must provide staffing and much of the funds needed for transportation and materials.

Respect, mutual understanding, right relationships, growth in faith, justice for all, harmony and peace are built slowly.

If today, individuals and communities have come to believe they can make a difference and build peace in Burundi, it is only thanks to our many donors who have contributed to this project since 2004.

You, our readers, have supported our efforts in the past. We call on you again to renew your support.

If today RENEW can provide African materials for Africans, it is also thanks to you, our supporters who have generously come to the fore since the fall of 2007.

For example:

A gift of \$ 25.00

will provide a Trainer with workshop materials in Burundi

A gift of \$50.00

will provide ten Small Community Leader handbooks in Burundi

A gift of \$ 150.00

Will provide a three-hour training workshop for five Small Community Leaders in South Africa.

Justice, unity and peace are built one person at a time, one community at a time. A new Burundi, feeding its people, providing education for the young, jobs for all and assuring the rule of law, is being built through small Christian communities.

This new moment in the South African Church is being strengthened one person at a time, one community at a time, one parish at a time through study, prayer, sharing and living the gospel, week in and week out.

Gifts may be made by check or on our secure website: www.renewintl.org by credit card.

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