**Development of Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Kenya and East Africa**

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd has been developing in Kenya since 2008. The first atrium development was, in 2009, at St Crispin’s Anglican Church, Bungoma along with an atrium development at the Hope for All Pentecostal Church in a rural area West of Bungoma. Within a year or two there were about 4 Churches with atria developing in the West of Kenya and work had commenced on initiating the ministry in Nairobi in the Central area of Kenya.

More detailed background points

* Church Army Captain John Jaffe, linked to St David’s, chooses to visit St Crispin’s following prayer. Present in western Kenya on mission to a Pentecostal Church, Hope for All during 2005.
* St David’s links with St Crispin’s in 2006
* CGS Australia is invited to do a L1 training at Masaka in Uganda, St David’s sends Gladys, independently Hope for All also send people., in early 2008
* Gladys is very enthusiastic about CGS so CGS Australia & St David’s bring her to visit Brisbane and see at firsthand how atriums work with children
* In mid-2009 a team from St David’s goes to St Crispin’s and does L1 training. Hope for all also come. A L1 atrium is fully set up at St Crispin’s and Hope for all start building one
* In mid-2010 a team again goes from St David’s and does L1 training again and the first part of L2, people from Emmanuel ACK church and from Mbale join us (we met the Bishop of Mbale in 2009)
* By now there are about 5 people with some formation leader training, so a Kenyan Association is started with the view of extending the work to Nairobi. The Archbishop is keen to have it in his diocese, All Saint’s Nairobi. By now Vicar General Kistos is the MD of the Kenyan Association.
* After much discussion and searching Emmanuel ACK Church and School, in the Kibera slum, decide to want to have CGS. A training is run there in 2011. The team now is Kenyan with John and Kaye as formation advisors. An atrium is created at Emmanuel. Because access to Emmanuel was so hard All Saints Diocese suggested we do further training at St Nicholas ACK Children’s home, Karen

Some quite significant ways in which the development of CGS seems to have been guided by God:-

1. It is quite clear that the Holy Spirit lead John Jaffe to St Crispin’s which is now the principal training centre
2. The independent involvement of the Pentecostal Church seemed to be God reminding us that they had to be included and the work was to be Ecumenical. We work also with the Catholic Church.
3. The initial linking with the Bishop of Bungoma who in 2009 became Archbishop meant that the ministry was known and loved by the Archbishop right from the start.
4. Getting to know the then Bishop of Mbale during the Enthronement of the Archbishop seems to have paved the way for the quite significant development now happening in Mbale
5. We had earlier prayerfully thought that it would be good to have CGS in the Kibera slum and it turned out that was the only place open the ministry, initially in Nairobi!
6. At St Nicholas we started to develop the idea that CGS would work well in schools, simply because there is no Church there. Now the majority of new atrium developments are at Church/schools and leads to a better utilisation of atrium facilities.

The ministry has since grown rapidly in scale and extent as follows:-

* In addition to the 4 Churches with atria in the Bungoma area, there are now 4 more developing. Of the 8 atria, 4 are in Church schools with the aim that all 3 levels of atrium will be developed so that all of the school classes can be involved with an atrium
* In Nairobi there are now 2 atriums with another 7 developing. Of these 9, 7 are in Church schools
* In the East of Kenya there is one atrium at Stephen’s Anglican Church in Makueni Diocese. This atrium also, is linked to the school nearby. More atriums will start up soon in the Makueni area.
* In Mbale, in East Uganda an atrium has been established at the Namatala, Church of Uganda Church. There are 2 more atria developing, both associated with Schools.
* A start has been made on an atrium at the Episcopal Church of Sudan and South Sudan, Cathedral at Panyagor, in South Sudan.
* Discussions are underway about the development of the Ministry in Rwanda.
* There is now interest in the Ministry in 5 Anglican Dioceses in the West of Kenya and two more in the Central area of the country, plus the Makueni Anglican Diocese in the East.
* In 2011 a Kenyan Association of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was established. The Association now has 5 Formation Leaders trained to conduct training courses for Level 1 and 2 with another 12 Formation Leaders developing.
* There is now a training centre at St Crispin’s with a second at St Nicholas in Nairobi. The Association has recently decided to open a third training centre at Namatala, Mbale and it is quite likely, that soon there will be the need for a fourth training centre in the Makueni Diocesan area, to serve development of the Ministry in the East of Kenya.

Some quite amazing happenings:-

1. Bishop George, Bungoma Diocese where St Crispin’s is situated has increasingly warmed to the ministry and now wants it across all churches in that Diocese.
2. A couple of years ago the Governor of Bungoma Provence got all the Church leaders together to discuss how the growing youth violence could be stemmed. The decision was to work harder on the Christian spiritual nurture of children!
3. Recently a Pastor of a Pentecostal Church in a poor area of Bungoma, starting an atrium and many children came including several Muslim children, then their parents started to come to church. A complaint was made to the Governor without success!
4. Bishop Joseph was on an ABM sponsored visit to Australia and almost by chance ended up spending a morning in the St David’s atriums. Ever since he has loved the work and promoted it at the Council of Bishops. They have now adopted this ministry as an official program of the Anglican Church in Kenya. Bishop Joseph also wants this ministry all across his Makueni Diocese.
5. The effectiveness of this ministry is becoming more known across the church. We met the Bishop of Bondo Diocese in Nairobi. He decided to send a couple of senior people to a Clergy and Pastor’s conference in Bungoma. Just recently a team was sent by the Association to Bondo for training and there was 150 representing every parish in the diocese.
6. At Emmanuel when Kaye and John went there with a team to do L1 training in 2011, we were targeted by a gang and had to have a Police escort. This happened 3 days into the course and the church authorities wanted to shift the training away from the slum. Instead after praying we decided God wanted us to stay and complete the training. One of the Police guarding us was Stephen who was very interested in the work. He has since became a Police Chaplain and is now planning the development of an atrium at the Kibera Police barracks.
7. The Association prayed about Rwanda following interest expressed by Dr Bititi (King), He is a lecturer in Economics at the Rwandan State University and a member of the Pentecostal Church of Rwanda. We had a chance encounter with King. This happened when we had just arrived in 2013 and having dinner with some of the Association executive and he was at the next table and asked if could have this children’s ministry. When we were in Nairobi last Dec preparing for a one day clergy conference, we seemed to be urged by our Lord to invite King. He came for the conference and stayed for a formation leaders meeting and the Association AGM. All we knew was that King came from Rwanda, the city he comes from is Huye, in the south of Rwanda. He knows the Anglican Bishop, Nathan, in that area really well and he works with the Bishop’s wife. Kistos last year went on a SOMA mission to The Congo. He went by road to Huye! Then flew with the others to the Congo. Kistos met Bishop Nathan a couple of years ago and knows him as a very progressive Bishop. Maybe the establishing of CGS at Huye will lead progressively to it going to the Congo. And King grew up in the Congo and goes there twice a year to do honorary lecturing.
8. Many stories of children bringing parents to church, including Muslim families. Stories of children bringing their peers to Jesus and of children acting as peacemakers at school. This is one of these stories, Bishop George’s office is at St Crispin’s. One afternoon he happened to be passing the church when he noticed two young school girls go into the church. He stepped into a side entry and watched them. They went down to the front of the church and kneeled down. One of the girls placed her hand on her friend and prayed that she would know the love of Jesus like she does. Later, it was realised that the young girl praying had been going to atrium for a couple of years and that her friend was a young Muslim girl.
9. Prophecies during prayer that God is raising up an army of young people with Christian spiritual maturity through this work

Some important aspects of the ministry approach

* Using wondering questions and always accepting that the Holy Spirit is the teacher of the children. Don’t teach but guide and have learnt to always pray and ask the Holy Spirit to guide when doing a presentation with the children.
* Materials and presentations have been adjusted to suit the Anglican and Pentecostal Churches in Kenya and now also in Uganda.
* Children are encouraged to pray and older ones to lead atrium worship

Some features of the Kenyan Association

* Several good Formation leaders who have participated several times in training at each level and are now very capable of running courses and workshops
* A well-developed capability of making materials and fitting out atriums
* Most of the leadership are honorary, only one or two situations where a small stipend is paid
* The Association is always seeking to be led by the Holy Spirit and goes where the Holy Spirit seems to be making the opening. In effect the Association adapts to suit what it senses God is wanting and leading it to. God is much better at developing the places and the people and the resources to do the ministry than we are.

In Summary, the Association is simply working to provide the Ministry under God’s direction and is always prayerfully seeking to be led by the Holy Spirit to places as directed. In this approach to children’s nurture, it is not the leader, but the Holy Spirit that teaches the children. All leaders are trained to work in this way and God honours this approach of the leader just being the humble guide and allowing the Holy Spirit do the nurturing. The wonderful thing is that, even though atriums are often more crowded than would be ideal, the children are being beautifully nurtured by our Lord and children have an incredible hunger for the atrium experience.