

# Rooted in Jesus with the Masai

Thank you to those of you who prayed for the *Rooted in Jesus* team which visited the Covenant Church International in southern Kenya this month. Alison Morgan, Martin Cavender and Andy Sachs were working with colleagues Erasto Mollel (from Tanzania) and Lucy Mgwanya and Albert Ngare (from Kerugoya in Kenya). The Covenant Church International (CCI) is a Masai denomination of some 300 churches which has recently been identified as the fastest growing denomination in Kenya. We were invited by David ole Kereto, its founder and General Secretary, to provide teaching and training on discipleship for the pastors of churches in the Kajiado, Narok and Transmara administrative districts. During the twelve days of our visit we worked with over a hundred people, ranging from district overseers responsible for 12-15 churches to illiterate local church members. Five denominations were represented amongst the leaders, and *Rooted in Jesus* discipleship groups will now start in 24 congregations, training leaders who will in turn lead future groups. 'Go and make disciples', said Jesus; 'who will teach others also', insisted Paul. This is what CCI has now committed itself to do through *Rooted in Jesus*.



We arrived to find a dry and dusty land where there had been no rain for six months. Local Anglican minister Obadiah Mushene came to tell us that God had told him that rain would be given as a sign of his blessing on this new work. We had asked you to pray for rain, and as soon as we arrived rain came – thundering, wet, heavy rain. A green haze appeared on the land in a single day; sheep drank from puddles and weaver birds began to build their nests. As we prayed for God's blessing on the people with whom we were meeting there was more rain – spiritual rain, as people engaged with the Holy Spirit in repentance and worship. Some had invested a great deal in the conferences – almost all walked for at least 10 km to reach us each day, having pastured their animals before leaving; and a group of 3 pastors had come 7 hours on foot over the hills. The days were not without challenge – travel over bumpy roads to remote destinations, more people attending each day, the cancellation of our third conference due to famine; and the prayer challenge of a rioting Pentecostal church which demanded David's support and intervention. But there were many highlights – the ministry and worship times, the sheer determination of many of the pastors (all of whom are unpaid), the wonderful hospitality and the gifts of beads and sticks with which we were showered at the end - and not least the news brought by Lucy and Albert from the Diocese of Kirinyaga.



Five years ago Martin and Alison were working as part of the SOMA mission to Kenya. As part of that we ran two workshops in Kerugoya on *Rooted in Jesus*. Albert and Lucy attended them. Albert persuaded his pastor to reorganise his church of 600 people into cells, and during the last 5 years this has enabled it to grow to 1500. Lucy taught *Rooted in Jesus* to her 200 Sunday School children, then established groups for the Mothers Union and for the Men's Association. The groups became interdenominational, and now meet for a monthly prayer vigil. Lucy and Albert both said that before 2004 it would not have been possible to imagine the churches of Kerugoya meeting and praying together, but now it feels as if they are all part of a single Church of Christ in the town. Their next plan? It is government policy in Kenya that all those in prison should be exposed to the gospel, and Lucy has been invited to train the 300 people studying at the national college for prison warders in the use of *Rooted in Jesus*. Her vision is that *Rooted in Jesus* should be used in every prison throughout the country. We plan to support her!

