

## Rooted in Jesus in the diocese of Kirinyaga, Kenya

Lucy Mgwanya and Albert Ngare joined the Rooted in Jesus team to the Covenant Church International in Narok in March 2009. They told us what has been happening in Kerugoya since our visit there in 2004.

After learning about *Rooted in Jesus* during a SOMA conference in Kerugoya in 2004 Lucy began to teach it to her Sunday school of about 200 children. They completed the two books they had, and encouraged by the response, Lucy began to set up adult groups, first of all among the Mothers Union, and then among the men. After completing the books they continued to meet together to pray, and then began to meet with members of other churches from other denominations.

From these churches they created united teams of people who now meet monthly to pray, to review the memory verses, and since the post election violence to hold all night prayer vigils every last Saturday of the month. Lucy told us that before doing *Rooted in Jesus* the different churches would not have been able to even imagine meeting together, but that now they feel that they are just different parts of a church of Christ in Kerugoya, which transcends denominations. They are now planning a mission team to visit people in the town to talk with them about Jesus. Lucy has plans to introduce *Rooted in Jesus* to the Kenyan prison service. It is government policy that all prisoners should receive Christian education, and Lucy has been invited by the chaplain of the national College of Prison Warders to train 300 future warders in the use of *Rooted in Jesus* so that they will take it into prisons all over the country. In the meantime *Rooted in Jesus* will be used in Narok prison by the chaplain there.

Lucy's determination is infectious. She told the story of her son, for whom we prayed with her in 2004. He'd been awaiting an operation to deal with a chest and nose problem he had had for some time, and she returned to find him completely healed. He's now doing very well in school, and the problem has not recurred. 'We have seen Christ doing miracles in our lives'. She ended, 'I urge you, if you take this message positively, it will change you, change the society round you, change the church. Don't take it just as a seminar – take it as a turning point'.

Then Albert spoke. Albert is a head teacher, and he too had a story to tell. He and Lucy worship in different churches, he said. In 2004 he was just a church elder. But he went home from the seminar and managed to convince his pastor of the importance of small groups. They had 600 members in the church, and the pastor agreed to divide them into small groups. In 5 years the church has grown from 600 to 1500 members. He is now the chairman of the church, and oversees 14 groups himself. His greatest task is to visit the groups. They are able to reach many people who don't want to go to church through the groups. Each meets weekly, and has 3 leaders – chairman, secretary, treasurer. They invite him to attend the groups regularly. Last year they took the 14 groups on a retreat to the Samburu game reserve for 2 days. Now they have decided to choose 2 people from each group to mount a crusade, preaching door to door. They will meet on 28<sup>th</sup> March to commission them. At Easter the groups will go on a Challenge weekend, with speakers from Limuru university. 'I have seen the need to have groups. We want now to divide the bigger groups to make more groups, so that we will reach more people'.

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