

# Rooted in Jesus visit to the Diocese of Eastern Zambia

12<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June 2008

Bishop: William Mchombo

Team: Alison Morgan, Amorim Rocha, Amanda Johnson, Nigel Rawlinson, Charles Mchomboh

*Rooted in Jesus* programme coordinator: Canon Missioner Fr Jolophan Phiri, with Mrs Susan Mumba.

The Anglican diocese of Eastern Zambia consists of 11 parishes with 118 congregations, staffed by 8 priests and 100+ lay leaders. It is divided into 3 archdeaconries, and we were invited to introduce *Rooted in Jesus* through a series of three 3 day conferences in Chipata, Mfuwe, and finally Petauke.

The conferences were attended by all the clergy, by the lay leaders and by representatives from the Mothers Union and the Veronicas. At the end of each conference participants were presented with certificates by the bishop – 56 in Chipata, 52 in Mfuwe and 72 in Petauke. Each parish met to form a plan for the way ahead, and it was decided that groups would begin at the start of July. Only those who had attended the conferences would lead groups initially; it is hoped that after participants have completed book 1 some will be able to start new groups, whilst continuing to work through book 2 with the original leader.

Each conference consisted of plenary sessions, demonstration and practice lessons from the course, seminars on aspects of leadership, extended times of ministry and prayer, and a planning session. We were particularly fortunate to have on the team Amorim Rocha, the *Rooted in Jesus* coordinator from the neighbouring diocese of Niassa in Mozambique, and Charles Mchomboh, brother of Bishop William and also from Niassa, whose linguistic ability, local knowledge and wisdom were invaluable.

Our visit had been planned with great care, and *Rooted in Jesus* was welcomed by all participants as a new and strategic tool for the spiritual development of the diocese. Many of the lay leaders have received little training in the past, and they responded with great enthusiasm both to the ministry and to the teaching. Some had walked or cycled up to 86 km to take part in the conferences. Many gave testimony to physical, emotional or spiritual healing during the ministry times. Amorim's teaching on the Holy Spirit was particularly appreciated.

The kind and generous hospitality extended by the diocese to the team made our visit a great blessing. We were also extremely grateful for the wise and effective prayer support extended to us by those who had agreed to intercede for the team, participants and diocese; as ever, this made an enormous difference to the outcome of the conferences.

Revd Dr Alison Morgan, June 2008

*'On behalf of all the participants I wish to thank you for giving us such excellent spiritual food, so that our roots, fully anchored in Christ Jesus, will never wilt, but be ever drawing water to sustain us throughout our Christian journey. Rest assured that we shall precious guard against losing the knowledge and new pastoral skills for church growth which we have obtained from here. With the help of the Holy Spirit we will deliver to the highest capacity of our strength, joyously, as this course has tremendously uplifted our spiritual wellbeing. May the Able God profoundly bless you!'. Fr Elias Mwale, Mawanda parish, Petauke.*

