



## **SOUTHERN AFRICA**

Ayoba 2010! Ayoba! You might be asking what that means, its slang for cool, sweet, agreed, OK, alright and it can also be used as a greeting. Without a doubt 2010 is definitely going to be "Ayoba" and one of those years that leaves it's mark on history and is remembered for years to come!

Right after Christmas ACTS South Africa had a team of 10 from the United States travelling to the New Life Homes in Swaziland. New Life Homes provides a loving and stable home on a 195 acre farm in a Christian environment for children who are orphaned or abandoned and have no alternative for care in a safe home. Each home has approximately 8 children with a house-mother to raise them in a loving and self-sustaining environment. The team spent their mornings running a Vacation Bible School for all the children on the farm and some of the children from the community. They shared God through story time, crafts, games and songs. It was not entirely clear whether or not the children fully understood them, until one afternoon when the team was with the children playing and could hear them singing these songs. It was simply precious. In the afternoons the team, along with the ACTS crew, worked hard in the heat helping with different projects and chores around the farm.



The whole team left the farm blessed by God's love through the children and the ministry of New Life Homes. As one of the team members said of the children, "You can see some of God's greatest gifts in them".

From an ACTS volunteer side of things, a team from Delaware University kicked off 2010 with enthusiasm and eagerness by moving into our brand new ACTS volunteer house at the beginning of January. They were shortly thereafter joined by some more eager serving hearts in the form of individual volunteers that were signing up to serve at [Living Hope](#).

Since their arrival, both the team from Delaware and the individuals have been nothing short of showing what it means to truly have an attitude of humility and grace. With Living Hope offering such diverse opportunities of ministry, it really requires people who have a genuine heart towards others less fortunate. [To view volunteer opportunities in Cape Town, please visit our website...](#)

The Delaware group have spent their mornings at the Living Way Campus doing a lot of the dirty work such as pulling weeds, while their afternoons have been spent working with the Kid's Club in Capricorn and Overcome. In everything they have done, from pulling weeds to running the afternoon program with the kids, they have done it with a willing and joyful spirit.

One of the first days the group was at Kids club in Capricorn they did a play about Jesus coming to town for the Passover. The first time through they did it straight out of Scriptures, and then they did a crazy Remix version as if it was 2010 and Jesus was coming to town. After it was all over, the only thing you could hear the children chanting as they play was, "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Jesus is coming to town!" It was such a good lesson for the kids to have a better understanding of when JESUS IS COMING TO TOWN.



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### **ZIMBABWE - UNPRECEDENTED OPPORTUNITIES**

Zimbabwe is changing, the churches are uniting and doors are opening. It is difficult to express in a few short words how the doors are opening for "the church", but amazing opportunities are coming our way. Only this week I found myself in meetings strategically discussing with churches and senior people in government how "the church" can serve the police and prison services. In short we have been granted open doors into every prison in the country as well as the police service. While these organs of state have effectively been closed to some of the world's leading NGO's, they are open to the church. Prison involvement is to include evangelism, alpha courses, life skills training, acts of service (medical, agricultural), etc. The police have opened the doors for involvement in officer



training, cadet training and serving police stations in various ways. There is a real sense of God responding to unity in the church and a wonderful opportunity exists in late March as 2500 church leaders look to gather in each of Bulawayo and Gweru.

Changing gear, during the month of December we said a sad farewell to Nic and Suzanne Paidas who have served us wonderfully in recent years. We wish them well as they pursue further studies and teaching careers in South Africa. The Harare office is filled with fresh energy and enthusiasm in the form of Carmen Maggs (our new volunteer co-ordinator), Stephen Hepple (full time guide) as well as Sarah Carroll (formerly from the US). Sarah will be co-ordinating much of the behind the scenes administration.

As far as trips go, 2010 is looking like it will be far busier than 2009 which saw many cancellations due to the "credit crunch". In Zimbabwe it is our hope that a number of visiting teams will be able to partner with the Zimbabwean churches in reaching into the police force and prisons.

The team of brave cyclists, on expedition down the length of Africa from Morocco to Cape Town will have been on the road for 2 months by the time you read this. The team, along with their ACTS support vehicle is now in Guinea Bissau. For more on their journey you can follow their blog on [www.cycleforhope.org](http://www.cycleforhope.org).

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## **ACTS – KENYA**

Wow, what a two months this has been in East Africa! Having seen the dramatic change from drought to green, almost all over, we thought the 'short rains' in November were at an end and the hot, dry season was about to start. Indeed the promised arrival of the 'el Nino' weather phenomenon, which brings very heavy rains in this region, seemed not to have materialised. But before the end of December it arrived with a vengeance! Floods were widespread with the rain continuing well into mid-January. There has been loss of life and crop and other damage, but the reservoirs and dams have filled up, the landscape is green again and crops in many areas are looking good.

Throughout all this time we had ACTS Volunteers, and what blessings the Lord has poured out as a result of their coming to serve Him in East Africa! Blessings to those they have visited, but also abundantly upon them! Read some of their comments, excerpts of their debriefing at the end of their time with us:

**Highlights:**

- Giving the children the opportunity to experience something they have never done before (using scissors, painting)
- Seeing the joy and pleasure on the teachers' faces as I worked WITH them to develop new lessons, ideas and resources such as posters.
- "Working with the children and caring for the children blessed me so incredibly. I have learnt so much and have so seen the outpouring of God's presence on all that ACTS does"
- "when the women (in slum ministry) received their bibles and were told they were going to keep them, I will NEVER forget the joy in their eyes, the thankfulness in their hearts and them jumping up and starting to praise the Lord! I teach bible study and I can not express in words what it felt like to give them their first bible. Thank you for that experience!"

**Things learnt and perspective gained**

- It has just opened my eyes to the incredible need for Jesus in the people's lives
- I have realized that it is not about me coming in and fixing everything and then leaving but rather it is me working with the people/programs, offering them new ideas etc but not creating a dependence on me, rather empowering them to help themselves. And I feel that I have achieved this, blessing the projects I worked in, which in turn has blessed me 1000x."

**Reflections:**

"I have gained a deeper relationship with God, He has touched me so much during this time. I have gained knowledge about things I did not understand in terms of poverty, how helping can help or hinder and how precious life is and that God's heart is to see all people living free and happy lives. I have also seen just how crucial education is for the people to be able to help themselves and change their futures."



## **KENYA MISSION TRIPS**

In early December 2009 ACTS East Africa was privileged to provide logistical support to a church group from North America assisting Rick Maples, a missionary with African Inland Mission based in Karungu, just north of South Horr, in the north-western region of Kenya on the road to Lake Turkana. Although it is hot, dusty country, the scenery is stunning virtually all the way,



especially the 2,000 metre drop down from the Elgeyo Escarpment looking towards the Suguta Valley. ACTS supplied the team with "Cocky Robin", our 22-seater Mercedes and a Land Cruiser for the long, (over 400 kms), and bumpy road up from Nairobi. As there was not adequate accommodation everywhere, we set up a tented camp when needed along with food and sanitation. Groups went out to neighbouring villages to spread the good news of the Gospel, but since almost all the adults of the villages, especially the men, were out with their herds all day long trying to find fodder, most of the work was successfully carried out around village fires in the evenings and at night. The stories of evangelising under the stars around a fire were both exhilarating and inspiring and more than one of the visitors want to return soon. Their planned time in the Samburu Game Reserve on the way home was shorter than intended as unexpectedly heavy rains caught the team on a section of black cotton road and it took some hours to get out! Though we do our best to keep to the itineraries, of necessity, flexibility has to be the order of the day on such trips into the hinterland of Africa!

In January this year we arranged a mission trip for a mixed team from Brainerd Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, from Entebbe to Mbarara, Uganda. There they worked with a project on economic empowerment for women, helped build a house for a widow to provide her with self-sustainability and conducted evangelism campaigns in a local police barracks and a refugee camp, as well as HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns with local pastors and other community members. Team members were really excited about what God had achieved during their visit and again many expressed the desire to return. God worked in the hearts of two team members in a very specific way and they got engaged on the trip!

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## **WORLD CUP FEVER - Blowing the trumpet for Jesus!**



2010 has finally arrived and excitement around the Soccer World Cup in South Africa in June/July is mounting rapidly! With this spectacular event less than 130 days away, soccer fever is rife (and growing!) all over the world. With a vast number of people expected from many different countries, the World Cup brings with it a unique and amazing opportunity to reach people for Christ. ACTS is already facilitating over 200 people coming to serve on short-term mission trips over this incredible time, and our volunteer projects are being presented with some wonderful opportunities to get involved in the surrounding communities. So, if you're interested in bringing out a group, or joining our World Cup volunteer project, this is a chance not to miss ... and it's not too late!

### **Contact us NOW!**

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*"The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, announce freedom from darkness for the prisoners and release from prison for the captives."*