

# White Fields Report – October/November 2009

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Our first two months in South Africa have already been an unforgettable experience, I have learnt so much, and spiritually grown more than I have in the last two years! There seems to be so much to do out here and so many people to help that we really didn't know where to start! My immune system really let me down for the first month, but thanks to Dr Mahen and very strong antibiotics I feel healthy again and ready to take on the challenges of the coming months! Here is an update of some of the projects we have been working on so far:

## Happy's School

Sharing the gospel in Happy's school has been really moving. The children struggle to do tasks which we so often take for granted, but show such spirit and determination, it's so inspiring to see. We have been teaching the younger class, looking at bible characters, making noahs ark puppets and teaching them new songs, which they generally reject in favour of richard's "talk together" which they can't seem to get enough of! Last week, new wheelchairs were delivered and distributed to the children who were most in need of them. It was unbelievable how many of them had unsuitably sized or broken wheelchairs, but the company who provided the wheelchair have been a real blessing, as they have educated the children (and the volunteers) in how to fix and maintain the wheelchairs, and will be returning to ensure that they get the right size chairs given to them.

## Lamontville

Lamontville youth class is one of the high points of our week, which is surprising, being on a Friday evening, straight after a class at happy's, the most tired part of the week! The youth there are a very close group who really enjoy each others company and are really welcoming to us. They are keen to question and learn and are always the first to suggest opening their bibles and hunting down verses. We end each session with a group prayer, each taking turns to pray in English or Zulu, which I find really encouraging, as it helps to make it real for them, which will hopefully make prayer a powerful part of their life.



## Mariannahill

The weekly bible class at mariannahill has been a really good experience each week. We have been wowed by the singing, which needs no accompaniment, other than enthusiastic clapping. We also organised a gospel choir concert, led by one of the brothers. The brothers and sisters showed real enthusiasm in getting out into the township and advertising the concert, which was really

encouraging to see. It was great to see the results of all their hard work, as the hall was packed, with close to 100 adults, and the same number of children. We are hoping to continue with these concerts in other locations, including lamontville and the centre of Durban.

In our first week here we laid grass down around the jungle gym at mariannahill crèche, which has grown nicely, thanks to all the rain! (although this was not so good for the road, as most of it got washed away leaving a grand canyon which not even the bucky could negotiate). Another great mariannahill experience was being able to help brother Marcus who is recovering from spinal cancer. His house had been given an undercoat of paint, but he was unable to finish it off, so the volunteer team came in and painted his house (and ourselves), which was a simple job to do, but made a real difference to Marcus.

### **Margate**

We have made two visits to margate ecclesia since our arrival, and have really enjoyed getting to know the brothers and sisters there. We organised a praise session and invited people in the local shopping centre and township to come. On the morning of the praise session, we watched as the bucky returned from the township and 25 people got out! The hall was filled with people and many of the adults signed up to the correspondence course, as well as returning the next day for the memorial meeting. Since then, it has been really good to see the response of margate meeting, who have rearranged their meetings to include a preaching service and organised a driver to collect people from the townships. On the more recent trip we helped Nelson, Cecelia and Fezegile to prepare and run the crèche concert, fed the monkeys (which turns out to be illegal...) and had the privilege to be part of a baptismal interview for Thembe, who subsequently was baptised the following week.

### **Candu**

Our four day trip to Candu was a journey into what felt like to us one of the most remote places on earth! There are a number of sisters who live over an hours drive away from the meeting hall, so we were able to pick them up and bring everyone together for the memorial meeting on Sunday. After teaching Sunday school, having lunch together and then taking them all back home, we thought our work was done. Brother Templeton then explained that we would now be travelling to the home of his sister, who lived an hour away, and having another memorial meeting. So 13 people piled into the bucky and negotiated endless dirt roads, whilst the boys hastily tried to dig up a fresh exhortation! It was such a rewarding experience when we arrived though, as the three sisters clearly appreciated the fellowship so much, and had so much that they wanted to share with us, including a little concert by the children! It was really uplifting and we sang all the way home! During our time at Candu, we also helped in the crèche, and the boys were able to try their hand at ploughing the old fashioned way – oxen and a yoke. It was great to spend time with Templeton and his son Siyanda, who appreciated being able to talk with us about the gospel.



### **Workshop Concert**

A highlight for me has been the concert we played in the workshop in the centre of Durban. Richard, Laura and I sang to a growing audience, some of which stayed for around 4 hours, whilst the rest of the team handed leaflet to the people passing by and chatted to audience members. The guys did short devotional talks encouraging people to visit the BEC, as well as signing up to the correspondence course. We will be repeating these concerts regularly, which will help promote the bible education centre so that the work being done there can continue to bring forth fruit.

### **Next steps:**

Helping at the mariannahill crèche, as well as helping to develop candu and margate crèches.

Organising the coming concerts

Returning to margate to repeat the praise session and advertise the new preaching service.