

“Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, ‘Don’t be afraid; just believe.’” Mark 5:43

African Outreach Ministries ***Newsletter***

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Dear Friends,

All of us face the new year with a bundle of emotions, expectations and often worries about the future. For me this season is always filled with a special joy and I normally enjoy the process. But, many of us are concerned about the future, whether it is the nagging worry of terrorism, Iraq or job security. Worries for me are centered around our physical health and the future of the ministry. We can see the future as insurmountable challenges or opportunities for God to act.

Jesus has a word for all of us in Mark 5:43. The first thing he did was to ignore what the crowd was saying. We can listen to voices of the world, the devil or our friends, who may be faithless, and make our decisions on the shrieking of the world around us. But, Jesus would tell us to listen only to the voice of God in our hearts and in his Word. Ignore everything that is contrary to what God has said and promised. The second thing Jesus did was to tell the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid.” Fear in any form is paralyzing to spiritual choices or growth. Fear is the opposite of faith. Then the third thing Jesus said was “just believe.” “Just” believe. Simply put your whole confidence and trust on God’s Word. His statements are true and his promises are sure. His Word will always come true and we can rely on his faithfulness to sustain us and see us through to our redemption.

So friends, as we face the future, let us determine to “ignore” the world and listen to God’s voice in our hearts and in his Word. Let’s then “just” believe in a wonderful God who loves us so much he chose to send his only Son to die to save us and who lives forever more as our King and Lord.

Your Brother in Africa, Allen

Allen and Janelle Avery
Scott and Lisa Harris
Johannesburg, South Africa



2004 Highlights

What a fast and busy year. It doesn’t seem possible that we have completed our first year here in South Africa. Reflecting back over everything that we have done and accomplished as a team, we give all glory and honor to God. He has been faithful and shown His love and care for us time and time again. Here are a few highlights and memorable pictures of the last year.

⇒ The Averys and HARRISES left Chicago on January 4th and arrived in Johannesburg on the 6th. The trip was good and our new country and life was off to a good start. The Carlsons met us, and our 14 suitcases plus carryons, at the airport with flowers and food waiting in our apartments.

⇒ By April 1st, both families had purchased used 4X4 Toyota trucks, secured safe housing, the containers had arrived from the States and Zimbabwe, and both families had “moved in.”



⇒ The Zimbabwe Orphan program went through some changes in light of the difficult economic conditions with the country, and the Zambian Orphan program started and expanded. We praise God that over 200 orphans were blessed this year through AOM.



⇒ Four trips were made to teach and visit the churches in Zimbabwe, and five different trips were made to Zambia. Many different courses and seminars were taught this year, some of which were: Old Testament Survey, the African Family, Natural Church Development, and special training for Sunday school teachers.

⇒ AOM discipleship materials have been translated into French and Portuguese and should be printed in early 2005.



⇒ Allen and Scott made an exploratory trip into northern Mozambique in September and the foundation for a new church planting work among the Yao, an unchurched Muslim tribe, has begun to take shape.



⇒ Foundations of a program for training teachers in South Africa using a third-world oriented curriculum, Bible Training Centre for Church Leaders (BTCL), have progressed and should begin early 2005.

Looking Ahead: Team Planning Retreat

“No electricity! Only candles, bottle gas and solar lights! Where is Allen taking us?” Lisa jokingly asked Janelle. Four hours north of Joburg found us driving through extensive tribal lands that were desert dry and filled with cactus trees. I began to pray that the sudden change I had predicted would come soon as doubts about my “nature lodge” began to be voiced by the “non-believers.” Fortunately for me, we rounded a bend and drove straight up into the mountains, finding pine trees and indigenous forests on every side. Our farmhouse lodge was 2 winding miles off the main road. We braaied (barbequed) out in the front yard that evening, smelling the pine forests and taking in the beauty of the night sky.



Team Mountain Retreat

Morning broke with sunbirds and Oliver Bush Shrikes calling through a gentle breeze blowing in the trees and flowers. We committed that day to seeing the area (Scott and Lisa had never been to the Tzaneen area) and visiting the Christian school. That evening we ate at the Rest Kamp where Janelle and I had been several times before with our children. We discussed the

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Natural Church Development Training in Zim

We have set a goal this year to help and assist our churches in Zimbabwe and Zambia to grow numerically and as a body, specifically by helping them focus on the 8 universal aspects of healthy growing churches. To that end, we have committed ourselves to walking these churches through the evaluation processes and improving in each of these eight areas.

In early January, Scott and Allen went to Bulawayo, Zimbabwe to meet with church leaders and conduct a follow-up seminar to the Natural Church Development course taught last May. Specifically this was supposed to be a time of sharing evaluations from each of the different congregations represented, however only two churches came prepared to share, about the number we expected.



Allen Teaching



Scott Teaching

We began the seminar with a comprehensive review of these 8 universals found in growing churches. While many had attended the May seminar, at least half had not and they were hearing these things for the first time. Even those who were part of the first course found it was important to review the material again.

On Saturday, we began by focusing on the importance of identifying the spiritual gifts of each church member. Time was spent teaching the leaders how to evaluate, graph and organize each ministry they have within their local congregations, so they can begin using the right people in the right places. Mentoring and training up of new leaders in the cell groups was emphasized. Finally time was spent on evaluating the self-assessments each church was asked to do, working through where they are currently, and then identifying where they want to go.

We are encouraged and excited not only about what God did during the weekend, but also about what He is yet to do



Sharing down time with some of the leading men.



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Team Retreat (continued)

future of the ministry while sitting under a porch as a tremendous storm front drenched the mountain forests all around us. Everyone kept saying that the area reminded us of Washington State forests and mountains.

Saturday was dedicated to prayer and recording the vision and schedule for 2005. We will be making many trips back to Zimbabwe and Zambia, with an emphasis on helping the church leaders to implement the 8 universal ingredients for growing a healthy church. We also planned our first



**Looking down a valley
 Towards Tzaneen**

of several trips to northern Mozambique to teach in the Operation Mobilization training school.

Pray that God will grant us all the grace to serve the churches with Spirit-filled teaching and lives of integrity and service. 2005 looks to be a wonderful year.

Prayer Requests

- ☞ For God's empowerment and growth of the ministry.
- ☞ God to bless all the church leaders with encouragement and steadfastness in 2005.
- ☞ For God to open more doors of ministry in Mozambique.
- ☞ For safe and fair elections in Zimbabwe, and for the churches to remain strong in difficult times.
- ☞ For physical health and protection of each team member.
- ☞ For the children to have a good and safe school year.