

2010 Project in South Africa, August 2006

En route to visiting contacts in Madagascar, it was an absolute pleasure to be involved for a few days with the 2010 Project in South Africa, and we'd like to take this opportunity to commend it to you- for your prayers and also your involvement as far as you can.

It's an initiative by a predominantly white group of brethren to reach out to the black community in South Africa, with the stated aim of achieving 2000 converts by the year 2010. This may sound ambitious but spiritual ambition is a much needed feature of our spiritual lives. The project aims to reach out to people in all ways at all levels. Bible education centres are being opened in well positioned, easily accessible areas, and Bible courses offered in as many languages as possible in this the ultimately multi-ethnic nation. What impressed us most of all was the spirit of witness to others which is overtaking the lives of ordinary brothers and sisters. We noticed, e.g., adverts for Bible courses on the cars of brethren, from retirees to salesmen.



Photo: Advert for free Bible courses on the car of a salesman brother

We had the chance to visit the Bible Education centre in Yeovil, a black suburb of Johannesburg, spearheaded by Leon & Joan Shuker. The amount of work to be done renovating the large building and preparing it for action as a drop in centre is simply huge, and they need all the support they can get.



Photo: The building acquired for the Yeovil Bible Education Centre

If front line preaching isn't your forte, the amount of work to be done in cosmetic repairs and preparation of these buildings is huge. Additionally, there's pastoral work. Take brother Elijah in Soweto, the infamous black township. Bound to a wheelchair, he has a wonderful knowledge of the word, having been baptized many years ago by CCM workers. His son is now baptized, and he is eager to develop a home church. Advertising has resulted in a number of good contacts in the township, and some have now completed Introducing Bible Basics and Bible Basics in various languages. Just going to hold Bible studies in his home twice a week would likely result in the development of an ecclesia, under an ideal leader in brother Elijah.



Photo: Pastoral time with Brother Elijah in Soweto

What left an abiding impression upon us was the weekly street preaching conducted in the black inner city suburb of Yeovil by a wonderful mix of brethren- Afrikaaners, retired Brits, a Polish brother, local black brethren, and immigrant black brethren from the Congo, Zimbabwe and other parts of southern and Central Africa. We joined in by standing on the street handing out fliers, but were then reminded by the local brethren that actually, the idea was to engage people in conversation- a welcome reminder as to the need for one on one, personal relationship building in our witness. "Do you read the Bible?" was the standard opening line, and unlike in Europe, we found most people answering 'Yes' and being prepared to enter into significant conversation on the street.



Photo: Street preaching in Yeovil, Johannesburg

There was a focus for the activity- people were directed to a bookstall, where literature was available in many languages.



Photo: Directing people on the street to sign up for Bible courses

The bookstall featured a game- for the nominal sum of 1 Rand, people have the chance to move a metal ring around a contorted brass wire without touching it. If they touch it, the buzzer goes off and they've lost. If they take the metal ring through to the end of the brass wire, they are presented with a Bible and Bible Basics in the language of their choice, they have their photo taken, and they are invited to come back next week to receive a print of the photo. There's a picture gallery of past winners.



Photo: The 'Win a Bible with a steady hand' game on the bookstall

The game's quite hard- there are only a few winners each day. But the important thing is that it gathers a large crowd, who also look at the literature on offer and sign up for the Bible courses. About 15 people remain gathered around the bookstall most of the time.



Photo: Crowd around the free Bible literature bookstall in Yeovil



Photo: People initially attracted by the 'Win a Bible' game signing up for Bible education courses and receiving Introducing Bible Basics in many languages



Photo: The crowd applauds as someone wins the game



Photo: Presenting a Bible Basics to the winner

The courses can be done by post or email. But there's another option- people can e.g. take away an Introducing Bible Basics, do the lessons, and return their answers to Sis Leonie Verster at the bookstall by hand. She then marks the lessons as they wait and gives them the next lessons. This way, continuity is built up and relationships develop towards baptism into Jesus.

'Win a Bible' games aren't the only 'indirect' form of preaching going on here. In other places, young folk from England and Australia have come over to assist running soccer matches for HIV victims [of which there are very many in Southern Africa], indeed the possibilities in this project appear endless. We've been happy to assist providing Bible Basics material in various languages, but we want to push on and have something in all the 11 main languages of South Africa. Additionally, many of those getting in contact through the street witness are refugees from Congo, Rwanda, Burundi etc- there's ample opportunity to preach to them in French and Swahili.

Summing up, it was good to see a community of brothers and sisters in the grip of the spirit of preaching and reaching out to the world around them. We can only thoroughly recommend it to you all, hoping that ripples from this wonderful outreach will spread and inspire us all world-wide to greater efforts for this world before the Lord returns. So we commend the South Africa 2010 project to your prayerful support.

With love from your brothers and sisters of CCM