

# ACTION Newsletter

Action International Ministries

November 2010

## Global Children's Ministry Conference

There was a clear sense that we were part of something much larger than any of us.

On September 16, 17 and 18, 2010, 250 men and women from 32 countries representing countless ministries, churches and mission agencies gathered at the University of the Holy Spirit in Beirut, Lebanon, for the first-ever Global Children's Ministry Conference. It was my privilege to attend along with my wife and ministry partner, Susanna Smoak.

Colorful banners on the stage declared the focus of each day around the three themes of Reaching Higher (toward God), Reaching Farther (to the unreached) and Reaching Together (for the Glory of God). From the first moments, God spoke to us through Pastor Stephen Mayanga from Uganda, that He wanted to touch us anew with the power of the Holy Spirit and through us spread His love for lost and dying children everywhere.

Between the morning and evening plenary sessions our time was enriched with a choice of nearly 80 different workshops on themes ranging from puppetry and music to child counseling and learning styles. Presenters were from every continent on the planet and with a great range in age and educational level, all deeply experienced children's ministry

workers who shared their love for the Lord Jesus. ACTION's Harry Bryans gave a workshop on the internet as a tool for promotion, child evangelism and discipleship. Harry has taken an active part in the preparation of open-sourced materials and curricula for this growing movement.

None of us will soon forget the joy and energy embodied by the young Iraqi volunteers as they played the piano and sang on stage after the program on the last night. There was a clear sense that we were part of something much larger than any of us. There was no owner of this movement but we were each a part of it.

José Gonzales from Uruguay summed it up in his closing remarks to the plenary gathering on September 18, "The global shift of missions worldwide toward children's ministry through movements like the 4/14 window is not a program or temporary focus, it is a change in paradigm for the foreseeable future of the church."

*Thomas Galphin Smoak III*

Associate Latin America Coordinator



# Worldwide News Briefs

by Andrea Johnson

Although challenges are vast and prayer requests abound on the mission field, it is essential to remember the faithfulness of God and to thank Him for His provision. ACTION missionaries are involved in excellent endeavors worldwide where they minister in the name of the Lord through instruction and encouragement as the following verses command: "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (Colossians 3:16-17, NASB).

ACTION is thankful for the guidance and provision of the Lord as shown in the following accounts of a new missionary in Malawi, encouraging ministry in a Zambian mental ward, perseverance in ministry to Filipino street children, the beginning of a drug rehabilitation center in Colombia, and baptisms of young people in Ecuador.



Michelle Clark in Malawi



Construction continues on the Cijanano campground and ministry center

## Africa

### Malawi

Michelle Clark is currently in the USA raising support so she can return to Lilongwe, Malawi. She lived and ministered in Malawi for three years previously, but now will be part of the ACTION team working to develop women's ministry programs alongside local churches in the Magwai village in Lilongwe.

Michelle visited the chief of the Magwai village earlier this year. He told her, "Michelle, we need you to teach our women. They are excited about coming to your classes. Please come back soon!" Michelle will primarily be working to disciple and encourage mothers in the village. She writes, "If you teach a mother, you teach a family and can then change a nation." Please pray for Michelle as she raises support to begin her next phase of ministry to women in Malawi.

### Zambia

Kelly and Tricia Huckaby moved to Lusaka, Zambia, in July to work as coordinators for Cijanano Campground & Ministry Centre. Since their arrival in Zambia, the Huckabys have been asking God to show them what regular community service He has for them during their time of orientation. When Kelly and Tricia recently visited Chainama Mental Ward with fellow ACTION Zambia team member Luke Whitfield they felt God call them to minister to people at this place.

Tricia writes, "We participated in the informal program Luke led at Chainama Mental Ward with female patients. Luke, along with pastors from ACTION Pastors' College, conducts visits to clinics and institutions in Lusaka on a weekly basis to lead worship, share about Jesus, and pray with people.

"Kelly and I were rather intimidated before arriving at the institution because we had heard it is a difficult place to visit, but God took away our fears and our time was amazing! We met with the women in a large room for worship; many of the women came

alive when the singing began. After the time of worship Luke shared about the great value each woman has in God's eyes. Then we prayed individually with each sister.

"Even though there was a language barrier, praying with these believers was one of the most wonderful moments for me in our time so far in Zambia. I am thankful to be able to worship a powerful, loving God who cares about people, like these women, that others may toss aside. Please pray that we will be able to visit Chainama regularly and bring the hope of the gospel to these women."

## Asia

### *Philippines*

God is working through Erin Johnson and the Filipino street children in her ministry. Erin writes, "God is moving in our ministry! This does not necessarily mean that we have only good news to report, but I believe God is bringing victory in the lives of the street children and families He has brought to our ministry. Though we continue to face challenges, I believe God gives us difficult times so that we can lean on Him and trust Him more.

"Sometimes the most frustrating aspect of ministry to street children is the will of the child. We can do everything in our power to lead him or her to the right path, but each child must individually choose to trust God. Prayer is so important because only God can change a hardened heart. For example, three of the street boys in our scholarship program recently skipped classes for various reasons. We encourage the street children to return to school and pray that God will change their hearts. Please keep praying for these boys.

"An incredible answer to prayer is that we

now have a local church informally partnering with us in our ministry to street children. A pastor recently planted a church in Silang with the specific focus of reaching street children and their families. Now every Sunday over 60 people from the community, including many of the street children in our program, are attending Hope Christian Fellowship. We are amazed at how God has orchestrated this; now the street children and families we are trying to help can be nurtured spiritually and further grow in their faith."

## Latin America

### *Colombia*

Phil Legal is the Field Director of Colombia and ministers with his wife, Mariela, in different areas in and around Bogotá. In their current newsletter Phil told about a new ministry opportunity at a drug rehabilitation center.

Phil writes, "I have begun working with a local pastor to establish a ministry to men at a drug rehabilitation center in the mountains of Colombia. Pastor Hernando Ascencio and I recently visited 12 men who are fighting their addictions at the center called 'A Time of Love.' These men are each struggling to defeat drug and alcohol dependencies.

"Pastor Hernando's goal is to bring biblical truths to each of these men and he prays that he will be able to introduce each one to the Lord and continue leading all of them in discipleship. He will be conducting weekly studies at the center and I will meet with the group once monthly to oversee the ministry and to encourage the group.

"Last week after I presented each man with a Bible, one man told me, 'Phil, please come back again soon. You have brought great joy to our

*continued on page 4*



Erin Johnson with street children in the Philippines



Francisco Vargas performs baptisms at camp in Ecuador (see story on page 4)

lives and we are thankful.' Please pray for my continuing ministry with Pastor Hernando as we work with these men and also that they will find freedom in Christ."

### Ecuador

Francisco and Nita Vargas minister to young people by holding clubs and camps, conducting weekly discipleship classes and facilitating Bible studies with some of the children's parents.

Nita writes, "We recently had a wonderful camp for 37 young people and are excited to report that seven youth were baptized. This is the first time that we have conducted baptisms in our ministry. We have been praying for an opportunity to discuss the importance of baptism with our youth. God answered this prayer by sending a young man from our church to serve as a counselor at our youth camp.

"He came to the camp longing to share with the young people in attendance about his conversion and desire for baptism. He told them that he had recently become a Christian and believed that God commanded His followers to be baptized. He was the first youth to follow the Lord in baptism at the camp; six more youth did the same before the week ended. We praise God for how He called this young believer to share his conviction with the youth! Please pray that each one will continue to follow the Lord."

### Memorial Gifts

<u>In memory of</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Designation</u>
Irv Monteiro	Marcia Johnson	India—Childs Ministry
	Anne Lamb	India—Childs Ministry
	Joe & Ruth Monteiro	India—Childs Ministry
	Warren & Marilyn Moore	India—Childs Ministry
	Ellinor Rowan	India—Childs Ministry
Van C. Porter	Barbara Porter	Zambia—Ciyanjano
	John Strobel	Cathy Mosher

## Praise Corner

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, NASB). Please join us as we thank the Lord.

- For Michelle Clark's desire to return to women's ministry in Malawi.
- That He has provided Kelly and Tricia Huckaby an opportunity for ministry at Chainama Mental Ward during their time of orientation.
- For the partnership of the Filipino street children ministry with the church plant in the poor community.
- For the new ministry to men at the drug rehabilitation center in Colombia and for Pastor Hernando who desires to introduce these men to the Lord.
- For the seven young people in Ecuador who followed the Lord's command to be baptized.

—Andrea Johnson

# Happy Thanksgiving!



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Printed in USA