

## **EACH ONE! BLESS ONE! YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

If Each One Will Bless One, the World as We know it Will Change!

*Emmanuel's Blessings to You! Peace and Love in Christ! PLC!*

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## **Each One! Bless One!**

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### **Report of South Africa World Cup 2010**

Minister George Blamoh, Liberia

Our Country Liberia didn't qualify for the World Cup, but our AIA Sports ministry in Liberia did send a team of soccer players to assist in *The Ultimate Goal* outreaches. We all came from Monrovia in Liberia, we arrived on 4th June 2010, initially staying with the Bitters, and on the 5th June a welcoming braai was held at NUC. Friday 11th June 2010 was the first of our planned outreach events: The Big Screen, The first World Cup match was Bafana Banana versus Mexico. People arrived even before the Opening Ceremony was screened.

Refreshments (provided by the ladies of North Cliff Union Church) were available throughout the afternoon, though spectators were hesitant to help themselves at first, as it seemed they didn't understand that the food and drink was free! Before the Big Screen Game, a DVD called *The Prize: Chasing the Dream* was shown, which included testimonies of World Cup players from Brazil, Italy and Spain, and by that time the Scout Hall was filling up. By the time the match began, the hall was full of very enthusiastic soccer fans. After the match, Bernie Bitter shared the Gospel using the Gospel Soccer ball and our Liberian Team were sharing tracts as well.

Monday 14th June Soccer Tournaments, Clinics and Exhibition Matches; The start of a two-week Fun Soccer Festival at the Northwest Christian School (NWCS). The first week, Monday to Friday, was for the under 13's, and the second for the under 13's, and the second for older kids. Our Liberian team missionaries from several other countries together with AIA countries, were now living at the school, sleeping in classrooms, with meals provided each day by one of the NUC Home Cell Groups. All the helpers for the day, led by Bastiaen Norel, the principal of North West Christian School, got together for prayer ... as the children started arriving for registration.

The coaching (provided by our Liberian team), supervision and refreshments were all provided at no cost to parents, and 65 children registered initially, with a few more arriving during the course of the morning. NUC's Gary Blackstock who

is a sports coach at the school, together with Wesley Smith, was responsible for the organization of these events. He explained that the kids were divided into teams for friendly games? No winners at this stage? With three games going on simultaneously, and teams being rotated so that each one played against the others. "Each day will be similar," Gary explained, "but eventually there will be more 'formal' games with kids playing against the coaches." After a break for cool drinks and biscuits ... we the coaches told the kids about their faith in Jesus Christ, and explained how they could have a saving relationship with Him.

Although football still tends to be predominately a sport for boys, there were a fair number of girls who came along, too! Coaches taught the kids about, e.g., passing, stopping the ball, heading, defending, etc. The skills taught were different each day. The weather turned bitterly cold during the week, which may have deterred some children, so numbers varied between 65 and 45. Bastiaen Norel commented, "I was encouraged as there were quite a number of children who don't come to NWCS, and they are the ones we want to reach out to." Rati, aged 12, said she had learned how to show God's love through football. "The J3.16 soccer ball helped kids to understand about God," she commented, "and the coaches' talks helped people who don't know about Jesus, as well as those who are not sure if they have a relationship with Him."

Gary Blackstock believed the kids had responded well to the Liberians' coaching and listened well to the messages. "We learned a lot; they learned a lot. It was a lot of fun!" he concluded. (Subjects covered in the talks included "What do you do when things don't turn out the way you want them to?", "What do you do when you don't get what you want?", and "What do you do when things are not fair?", to which one child commented, "Homework's not fair!") From the 21st to the 25th June it was the turn of the high school kids, the over 13's. And from the very first day there was occasion to praise the Lord, when seven of them indicated they wanted to accept Jesus as their Saviour, after I (George Blamoh) had explained the way of salvation. Numbers varied between 20 and 40, and Wesley Smith commented that for the older children there was less "clinic" and more "tournament", as most of them had sufficient soccer skills and ability. "The soccer has been good, played in a good spirit," he said, though there have been some little misunderstandings on the field, but

That happens!" The dynamics are different", added Gary Blackstock. Young kids are more forgiving of their team members, but the older ones are more competitive. There's more aggression, so you have to deal with that." Many of the high school boys were not from NWCC and thus strangers to one another, but during the week friendships began forming. Unlike the previous week,

however, there were no girls ? It seems they don't consider playing football "cool"! Gavin, 16, said his soccer had improved during the week, when he learned about teamwork, respect and self-discipline. He also discovered there are not only "boring ways to worship God; soccer can be just soccer," he said, "but if you include having fun and respecting others, you can worship God through soccer." Indoor soccer games were played in the Scout Hall. Thirteen of these events were planned between 14th June and 9th July.

Although there are specific rules for indoor soccer, the format for the games in the Scout Hall was flexible, in order to adjust for the number of participants and their skill levels. Also, the hall is too small for five-a-side, and three-a-side is more realistic! Our Liberian team began by kicking a ball (which looked like an oversized tennis ball) around, then incorporated others into the game as they arrived. Later on during the weeks of the World Cup, it was hoped to register the "regulars", to form teams and have tournaments for those interested. It is here especially, explained Bernie Bitter, that we aim to attract people in the local community who are not members of NUC, with a view to forming relationships, finding out what their needs are, and attempting to meet those needs once the World Cup is over.

If enough interest is shown, it may even be possible to start indoor soccer leagues. The Scout Hall has been adapted for this purpose, with protective bars over the windows and light fittings. Many black children don't get organized sports at school," explained Bernie, "but just play in the streets, without boots or any kit at all. But often bigger kids will come along and take over the ball, so the younger kids can't play anymore." As with the other Ultimate Goal events, participants had the opportunity to hear the gospel message and were given gospel leaflets to take away with them. The Bram Fischerville Community Church (BFCC) was planted by NUC in 2007, with services initially being held in a tent. Three outreaches were planned, the first being on Monday 21st June, aimed at making contact with children in the Bram Fischerville area, building relationships, and eventually getting them from the soccer field and into the church. The outreaches were arranged by AIA in cooperation with both NUC and BFCC. Besides making contact with local youths, these would also be opportunities for training.

"It's important for some of the BFCC people to see what we do," explained Bernie Bitter, "for purposes of follow-up, but we are also modelling how to do an outreach so they can do something similar later on." In the same way, George Blamoh (I), the Liberian team leader, modeled how to give Gospel presentations so the rest of my team could learn from it. And, as with the Three-a-side soccer

at the Scout Hall, the Bram Fischerville events were designed to be flexible, depending on the number, ages and skills levels of those who came. Flexibility turned out to be essential! On arrival at the designated field, a game was already in progress. It was suggested to them that the two groups could combine, so that everyone could benefit from we the coaches' expertise, but they were adamant on finishing their own game. The outreach group would have to wait for about an hour!

The new BFCC church building But the Lord provided an alternative soccer field, still within sight of the church, and the few people already there were happy to join us. More kids in the immediate area were persuaded to come along, too, and before long there was action! Smaller children were divided into two teams and an informal game got underway (but those showing above average skill could join the bigger kids). The older children's game was a little more "serious", and they were given skills training as well. Later, over cool drinks, there was a gospel presentation using the J3.16 soccer ball. It was hoped that the interest level would be enough to bring them back for the remaining two days, and that they would bring their friends with them. We also had the opportunity of playing, praying and sharing the Gospel with some drug addicts in Soweto. One of them said, he was born in a home were violent and abuse was the order of the day, it was how he got to be addicted with drugs. One of them also said that because of over commitment and poor time management resulted him into drug abuse.

Our time in South Africa during the world, I will say it was a great experience and learning, especially the one week long conference at Pretoria where AIA Missionaries from several countries, it was indeed a great experience, the worship, praying, playing soccer and leaning soccer clinics, etc. What a great blessings and experience for our team from Liberia.

## WORLD CUP REPORT



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