

October 2010

Ambassadors in Sport, Ireland



'bringing hope through football'

Robert and Kyla CUTHBERT



I have become more and more convinced of the impact and value of football ministry and this is especially true in Africa. The 'Cycle for Hope' was an amazing adventure, but more importantly, through the project, we have seen doors open up for future ministry in nearly all of the 16 countries we travelled through.

Kyla and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their prayers and support over the past year! It has been an incredible year and we value your encouragement and partnership in the work we do with AIS.

It feels like such a long time since we finished the Cycle for Hope in Cape Town and so much has happened since then. We spent the summer in the USA leading a team of coaches running AIS camps in partnership with various churches. It was a great summer and it also gave Kyla a chance to meet staff from the International Office which is based in Cleveland, Ohio and get a better idea of what AIS does around the world. We're now back home and just this week have moved into Carrickblacker Avenue where we will spend a few months until we are able to get something more permanent. George Ruddock, a member of our church, has kindly offered his house while he is in India so we praise God for this!

'Cycle for Hope—The Ultimate Cycle'

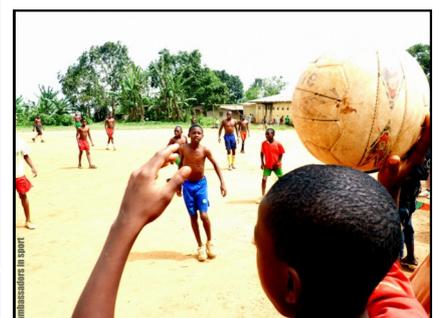
Football: The sport is a global phenomenon. Across the globe, the beautiful game is played by millions and watched by billions more! At AIS we have found this to be true and also seen that we can work in and through the sport to reach many for Christ. On the cycle, our love of football opened up many opportunities for us to share our faith with people, from simple conversations on the street or in the village to interviews on national radio and Television going out to millions of people.



Faith: The cycle was also a chance for us to grow in our own faith. 6 months away from home, living with 10 others, having little or no personal space and seeing the needs all around us was definitely a challenge. Having to trust God, forgive each other and pray with each other as well as learning again the importance of God's word and understanding more and more His amazing Grace in our own lives had a huge impact on us all. We met pastors who have very little, simply living out God's call on their lives. Many face persecution and spiritual attack as a result. We heard of Christians killed for simply following Jesus. The needs all around challenged us and seeing so many people who have no chance to hear the gospel was heart breaking. We live in such freedom and luxury while so many live without ever hearing of Jesus and the hope that He offers. There is such need but so few willing to go and tell them about Jesus.



Future: So what do we do about the need we encountered? AIS currently work in 6 African countries, but we have made contacts in many of the 16 countries that we cycled through. Partnering with the local church, our desire is to see many more come to know Jesus and football can be an incredibly effective means of reaching out and building friendships in our communities. AIS isn't the best organisation in the world, but I do believe that God has called us to be salt and light in the world of football and we need to be faithful to that. Pray for us as we follow up on these contacts and seek to help churches reach out to the many across Africa who need to hear about Jesus.



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Thanks for your support for the cycle. We are keen to share our experiences of the cycle with youth groups, churches, schools and other groups. If you would be interested then please just get in touch! We pray that the legacy of the cycle will be a call to mission so that many more will come to know Jesus.

For more on the cycle, please go to: www.cycleforhope.org

USA SOCCER CAMPS



The theme for this years camps was 'Answer the Call' and was based on the story of Jonah. The camps are brilliant and we led a team of coaches from SE Asia, England, USA, Haiti and of course NI. It's a great way to get alongside and impact the kids who attend as well as their families. In 4 weeks we saw over 40 kids become Christians at our camps with many others making the same commitment at AIS camps all across the USA. The kids really look up to their coaches and this enables us to share our faith with them in a relevant way. The entire week is based around the same theme with a skit team doing assemblies every day, kids learning a memory verse and the 'hot seat' features a coach selected to be grilled by the kids and also share how they came to Christ. The kids love it and it has a huge impact on the whole family, many of whom aren't church goers. Each week we partner with a different church to run the camp and a highlight for me this year was seeing Jon Forsythe on the coaching staff. Jon was a camper when I coached here in 2003 and is now old enough to coach and encourage the kids to make the same commitment he made when he was younger. There were around 3000 kids attend camps this summer which is incredible and we would value your prayers for all the kids but especially the ones who became Christians from a non-Christian families. Pray that the church will be able to follow up with them and help them grow in their new faith.

Praise:

For health and safety on our epic 15,000km cycle!

For many opportunities to share our faith

For contacts made for future ministry

For the kids who became Christians at soccer camps

It's great to be back home again although we do miss being out on the bikes and simple things like cooking on the open fire, pancakes every morning, an ice cold coke in the heat and just shopping in the African markets! We don't miss the sleepless nights in the tent with rain leaking in, 50 degree heat, mosquitoes everywhere, infected bites, sickness, cycling up mountains and some of the other tough times we had. It's hard to get anywhere near describing the experiences on the cycle. We have learnt a lot and as a couple it has brought us closer together. Pray for Kyla as we look for a job for her and as she helps with the finances in the office a bit in the meantime. It will take some time for us to fully settle back but it's good to be back into church and to see family and friends again!



Thanks!!

A huge thanks to everyone for your faithful prayers and generous support over the past year. We really value your partnership and look forward to catching up with everyone.

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