

Bulembu, Swaziland Mission Trip.  
Follow-up report

Bulembu is a small town in the country of Swaziland, Africa located on the border near South Africa. It is an old mining town which suffered the closing of the mine several years ago. Further devastated by the AIDS epidemic, the town has struggled to survive. The country of Swaziland has the world's highest HIV infection rate at 43%. As a result, many children and babies have become orphans or have simply been abandoned. Swaziland also faces an economic decline. Unemployment is 40%. Two thirds of Swazi residents survive on less than \$1 a day.

Christ's Church of the Valley (CCV) is working with Partners In Action to respond to the crises in Bulembu. Their goal is to help reestablish the town of Bulembu by creating a self-sustaining community. They are developing a new economy by establishing new businesses. They have opened schools for the children. They are responding to the needs of the HIV/AIDS survivors through health services, child care, education and spiritual nurturing. For this mission trip we joined a team from CCV and traveled to Bulembu May 6-17, 2008.

While on our mission trip, we participated in several work projects:

- One work team spent two days building a rabbit hutch. Rabbits are raised for food and their pelts are sold and used for clothing items such as slippers.
- One work team spent two days tearing down a barbed wire fence (including digging out 44 fence posts) to clear an area for a large vegetable garden. We then cemented in new fence posts to secure the perimeter of the garden.
- The ladies in the group spent a day sorting donated clothes for distribution while the men spent two days repairing a fence around a playground for the day care center.
- A day was spent cleaning a home which will become the third house for ABC Ministries. (Abandoned Babies For Christ). ABC currently has 35 babies and toddlers who are orphaned or abandoned.

We also spent a day just visiting and playing with the children while touring ABC Ministries, a day care center (60 children), and a local school (130 children). All of the members on our team agreed that these ministries are doing an INCREDIBLE job of providing a safe, loving environment where children can learn and grow.

We also were blessed to visit two worship services on Sunday. I had the honor of preaching at both services. (A different sermon for each service) In the morning service I used an interpreter as the majority of the approximately 200 present speak Swazi. The morning service was very spirited, and very long: 2 hours. We absolutely loved the heartfelt worship and the genuine enthusiasm of the worshipers. The afternoon service did not require an interpreter as all present spoke English. It, too, was a wonderful worship experience.

We did take a break from all the work and ministry and spent two days at the Mkhaya Game Preserve for a safari. It was another tremendous experience.

It is easy to see the hand of God at work through the efforts of Partners In Action and CCV. It is truly miraculous what they have accomplished in just three years of ministry. I highly recommend partnering with CCV for additional future missions trips to Bulembu, Swaziland.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Lawrence

"This is pure and undefiled religion in the sight of God our Father, to visit widows and orphans in their distress..." James 1:27