

# the OUTCRY

July/August 09

*Alan and Sheena Gaston work with children in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa*

**The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore. (Psalm 121: 8)**



### *A at her birthday party with S*

We said goodbye to A and S at the end of June when they moved on to a long-term foster family after 5 months with us. During their time with us we had prepared them for this move as, from time to time, we had prayed for a 'forever family' for them. It's hard to know how much children absorb, but they seemed excited to have a new family where they could stay permanently.

As you can imagine, this wasn't an easy process but it went better than we could imagine. **We give God the glory that He made possible both their coming and their going.** Both came from an abusive, neglectful situation and benefited from their stay in a stable, loving home. As far as we can tell they have gone to a warm loving family. We miss them but are enjoying regrouping as a family now. Sheena is also enjoying a break from daily clothes washing!

We know that much prayer went up for a Christian home for these children. As far as we know, they have not gone to a Christian home. This is a sadness for us, but we know that God loves them much more than we do and we have to trust that He holds them in His hand. **We continue to pray for His presence in their lives.** At this stage we do not make contact with them as this would be too unsettling for them – and also for us. We have had some telephone contact with their foster mother and we know they are settling into their new situation and that the new family is enjoying having them.

We take our hats off to our own children who adapted very well to the extended family and have also adjusted to being without A and S. They learned to share their things and also their parents – not easy, but a good experience for them.

We look forward to seeing who comes into our home next and have made ourselves available to several agencies. We also are hoping to develop a link with the hospitals where there are sometimes children who need short-term care.

**Please pray for the right timing to have new children.**

## Future Vision

We would have loved to see the children going to a Christian home. We have a heart to see if any process could be established here in PMB where Christians interested in long-term fostering and adopting could be linked up with children who need such homes. We were encouraged recently to meet a young couple who want to adopt. Their reason? Because God has adopted us into His family.



*We all enjoyed having Owen McMurray from Belfast with us for a few days. Owen, your lamb shank dinner lives on in the memory!*



## God's Timing in Edendale

Recently Alan was talking to a consultant paediatrician who commented on what a difference it made to have the Zanini Bantwana ('ZB') staff working in the wards. It was a great encouragement to hear this. He then went on to say that what he really needed was a 'special needs' teacher. There was a boy of 11 paralysed with TB of the spine who was becoming very depressed and needed some help. Imagine the doctor's surprise when Alan told him that a special needs teacher was coming from Ireland the very next week! God's timing is amazing! Marian and her sister Phil were with us for over three weeks and they were a wonderful blessing. They worked hard in the hospital every day and had a real love for the children. Even though very few of the children speak any English, Marian and Phil communicated love in so many other ways. Like almost all the children in hospital here the little boy with TB

is also HIV+ and will die of AIDS if he does not receive treatment with ARV's. The doctors were not able to start him on these drugs because the hospital did not have the money for the drugs. Please pray that the government will put resources into providing the drugs children need.

### New Opportunities

ZB has become very much a part of the 'team' in the children's wards of Edendale hospital with Toyse and Hlengiwe there all day, not just during visiting hours. God has provided wonderful Christian staff with a real love for the children. This new approach requires a good bit more finance, but it is a much more effective way to reach the children and we trust the Lord to provide. It also provides good jobs for Christians in desperate need themselves. We have now started a similar scheme in Grey's hospital with Sethembile and Mpume based there and it is working well.

We make no secret that ZB is a Christian organization showing God's love to the children by

playing and teaching, but also by telling Bible stories, singing and praying. Recently Sethembile started to tell a Bible story when Hindu parents were visiting their little boy. Far from objecting to Christian stories being told in a government hospital, the parents asked that the story be told in English as well as Zulu because their son did not speak Zulu. We are amazed at the freedom we have to tell the good news of Jesus Christ in word and deed, but we are also aware of our responsibility to respond to this opportunity.



*Marian and Phil at Edendale*

Zanini Bantwana is registered in South Africa and is an associate ministry of African Enterprise.

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Donations can also be paid through any of the African Enterprise offices, making cheques payable to African Enterprise and marked clearly for the 'Zanini Bantwana' hospital work or 'Khayelihle', the place of safety in our home.

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