

South Africa 2010

Ministry, Matches, and Animals

May 28-June 25

What an amazing trip! Since the inception of a seemingly crazy idea to go to the World Cup in South Africa, everything coalesced beautifully into a trip of a lifetime. Thomas, Ian, and I began planning for this trip in March of 2009, with the intentions of simply seeing matches and vacationing. But, after meeting Riaan (the pastor of Eastside Community Church in Pretoria) in November of 2009, I knew that we had to add a ministry component to the trip. With this in mind we continued to plan the trip, and arrived at an itinerary that had Thomas staying a week, Ian two weeks, and me four weeks. I worked with Riaan's ministry for the first two weeks, and Thomas and Ian joined me in South Africa at the beginning of my third week. All three of us went on ministry at the beginning of the third week, and then saw two matches (South Korea v. Argentina at Soccer City, and US v. Slovenia at Ellis Park; both stadia in Johannesburg). Unfortunately, Thomas had to leave, but Ian and I continued the trip and saw animals at Kruger National Park and another game reserve and the US v. Algeria match at Loftus Versfield Stadium in Pretoria. The following pages will give more details on our ministry, matches, and animals, and I hope you enjoy it!



Ministry

Weeks 1 and 2 (for Nathan)

Week 1

I worked with the Ignite team to organize materials for their ministry. The Ignite program has young people work for Eastside during their gap year (between high school and college), and the main ministry focus for the year was the Trailer Ministry Program. This ministry happened during the four weeks of the World Cup, and involved more than 25 churches in rural areas partnering with Eastside. The trailers were loaded (as seen in the picture to the left) for three separate parts of the day: vacation Bible school in the mornings, playing soccer in the afternoons, and showing a Jesus DVD or a match on a big screen in the evenings. Therefore, with the three different aspects and the scope of the project, the Ignite interns and Eastside had to collect and organize very much equipment. Two of my favorite statistics were that they collected over 900 soccer balls and over 5,000 blankets, which will be distributed to the surrounding communities and used by those in need.

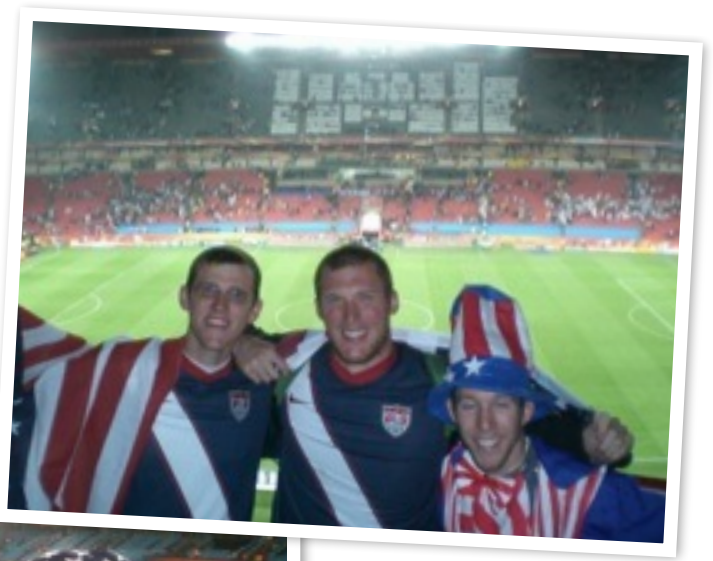
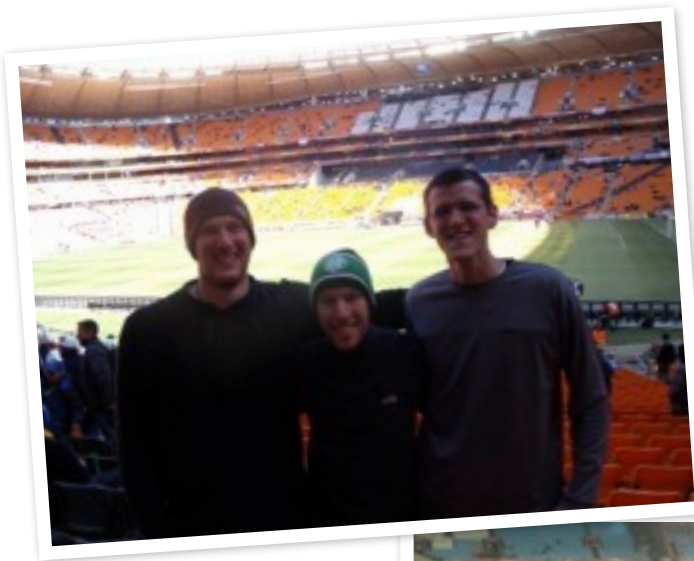
Week 2

I went with three Ignite interns to perform a “dry run” of the ministry. We went to Oukasie, the black township outside of Brits, and worked with Miracle Centre Ministries. It is about an hour and a half to the northwest of Pretoria, and was very rural and mountainous. I was fortunate enough to preach on Sunday, and it was interesting speaking with a translator. The people enjoyed it, and for our ministry during the week we played soccer with the kids (around 250 each day!). They were very receptive to us, and showed us the utmost hospitality even though they did not have very much materially. Spiritually, they were completely filled, and it really touched my heart and lifted my spirit to see their worship and love.

Week 3 (Thomas, Ian, Nathan)

The three of us went back to Oukasie for more ministry, this time performing all parts of the Trailer ministry. We had about 100 kids each day, and it was great to see them become absorbed in the singing and dancing and the stories. We worked with a great team consisting of Americans, a Zambian, and the Miracle Centre volunteers, and everyone bonded well regardless of nationality or skin color. This is how I knew the Spirit was moving in this place: taking totally disparate elements and combining beautifully in two days, and doing it all for the glory of God. It was sad to leave the people of Miracle Centre, but we left knowing they were doing good work and with ² blessings.





Matches

Weeks 3 and 4 (Thomas, Ian, Nathan)

Argentina v. South Korea at Soccer City (Johannesburg)

As you can see in the upper-left picture, we had great seats for this match. Soccer City was a lovely stadium, though unfortunately the sun did not quite shine on us where we were sitting. It was a very cold day, but the atmosphere in the stadium was tremendous. We were sitting in an Argentinian section, so the celebrations after the goals were great. Overall, a very entertaining match to see, especially with such high-quality players on the pitch.

United States v. Slovenia at Ellis Park (Johannesburg)

For this match, we went to the extreme with our dress and American pride (as you can see in the upper-right picture). We wanted to show the world we could be excellent soccer fans, and were rewarded with taking many pictures pre- and post-match with various people. Many were stadium workers, but others were Slovenian fans and other American fans. Hyundai sponsored a 'Fan of the Match' that we should have won, but we did not realize that it was 'fan' singular and not 'fans' plural (all three of us were in the video, so some random kid won it). We also got a really exciting match, again with great seats.

United States v. Algeria

The bottom picture says it all. That is the goal in which Landon scored to win the group, and the picture was taken about 25 minutes after the match had ended. We, along with about 2,500 other US fans, stayed and celebrated the win. Again we dressed to the occasion, and again we took very many pictures. Ian threw down an excellent video for the Hyundai people, and was rewarded by being named the 'Fan of the Match' (his video was played a halftime for the entire stadium). Great seats, great match, great win, great time.

Animals

Week 4 (Ian and Nathan)

Kruger National Park

We drove from Pretoria to the park and spent three days there, seeing many animals while we were there. The animals that we saw included gazelle, various birds species, elephants, water buffalo, baboons, giraffe, zebra, and many others. During a night drive on an open-air game vehicle, we came within 30 feet of an elephant on two separate occasions and came very close to several water buffalo. We stayed at a rest camp, which had small bungalows that were very nicely furnished. The park had roads to do self-directed game drives (a bit like Yellowstone or other of our national parks), and it was quite relaxing being in the park and stopping to observe animals.



Rhino and Lion Park

We got the idea to go to this park from Riaan, and it was very much worth it. The picture just to the left is from this park, where I almost drove over the lion's paws! We saw rhino, lion, cheetah, ostrich, warthog, wildebeest, and other animals, and got to pet lion cubs and see baby rhinos from very close. Overall, a great experience to see the animals, and I would highly recommend it if you are in South Africa near Pretoria.

