

# Agape

Children's Ministry



“But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”  
Titus 3:4 (NIV)

It doesn't seem possible, but the New Year is really upon us isn't it?! We hope you had a wonderful Christmas. We did. Ours was a little unusual. We had more than 30 missionaries and their children for Christmas dinner at our home here in Kenya. It kept us busy, but we had a great time. We had baked chicken, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, string beans, and lots of tasty desserts. The mashed potatoes, string beans, and desserts were brought by our guests.

To feed that many, we had 11 chickens baking in three different ovens here on our compound. That went fine until the electricity went out. But God is good. We got power back after only about a half-hour and dinner went on without a hitch. Everyone loved it. Special thanks to our recent team for bringing the Stove Top stuffing for all of us to thoroughly enjoy. Our guests couldn't believe their taste buds! It was a special time of very good food and lots of fellowship for all of us.

We are extremely excited about this New Year and all the Lord has in store for Agape. There is so much happening it is difficult to keep track of it all. January is scheduled to start the year with a bang!

Don and Hughena Breneman, from Canada, are taking over for Marg and Tom Tucker at The Farm. They are a wonderful couple who love our boys and the community of Matoso. They are a welcome addition to our Agape team. Please pray for them as they assume responsibility for Agape's vocational training arm. They are initially committed to six months of ministry with the likelihood that they will leave for six months and then return for six months after that. We need wisdom and direction from the Lord as to how to best fill the six month gap to keep things running smoothly at The Farm when Don and Hughena are away.

After years of diligent, faithful ministry with Agape, Marg and Tom are again picking up their ministry of evangelism, particularly to the Masai people. We are

### Darla's Corner

“...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

I am so thankful for all the people God is bringing to Agape. It's evident that this is His ministry and His hands are over every aspect. I feel so happy and privileged to be a part of what God is doing in Kenya.

I will let Blake share with you this month about all of the exciting new people God is bringing to us.

For His glory, *Darla*



grateful for all that Marg and Tom have contributed to Agape. We will miss their leadership and ministry at The Farm, but know they are following the Lord's call on their lives. When they visited us just before Christmas it was a joy to hear their exciting reports of what the Lord is doing to reach the lost.

For the next three months, Don and Hughena will be helped by dear friends from our days long ago at Bethany Church, Steve and Betty Bishop, now from Gainesville, Texas. They will be assisting Don and Hughena and will be focusing on discipling and mentoring our students, helping to prepare them for life in the “real world” after they complete their vocational training and graduate from Agape.



On January 10, our son, Tyler, and a team of four other fellows arrive to erect our new Dining Hall and Kitchen. The components of the building have been sitting in two large containers on our campus for nearly three years. Now, at long last, everything is ready and by the end of the month, our boys should be eating their meals in our brand new facility. We can't wait to see Tyler—and to have our new Dining Hall!

By mid-year, we are praying that Chris and Tammy Page will be able to assume their duties as Directors of our main Agape campus. They and their four children are anxious to be here and to begin their ministry to our Agape children. A

significant portion of their monthly financial support has already been raised, but there is still some to go. Please pray the Lord will meet this need quickly so the Page family can be off to Africa! Pray, too, for their adjustment as they settle in to life in a new place, new culture, and with totally new responsibilities.



Towards the end of the year, Lord willing, our Agape missionary team will increase again, with the addition of Eric and Lisa Kjeldgaard and their family of eight children. Eric and Lisa and their daughter Kate visited Agape early in 2010. As a result of their visit, they have already become deeply involved in helping communicate the Agape story. We are truly blessed by that. But we are even more blessed to report that the

Lord is leading them to full-time ministry with Agape. They are in the process of completing their applications to become Agape's newest missionary family.



The plan is for Eric, Lisa, and all eight kids to spend the last month or two of 2011 and the first ten months of 2012 in Kenya, helping at Agape. When they return to the United States, they will be involved in spreading the word about what the Lord is doing in and through Agape.

The many projects on our main campus continue to move ahead. By the end of the month, we hope the rain water collection system will be fully operational, the final touches on the Guard House completed, the new Dining Hall erected, some new walkways will be in place, our new soccer goals and nets up, and on and on.

While we have shared what we believe the New Year

holds, we know that all of these things—the new missionaries and the projects—are in the Lord's hands and are totally dependent upon Him. But we believe He is in all of these things and is bringing them about to His honor and glory and we are excited to see and to be in the midst of all that He is doing. We wish you could be here to enjoy it and be amazed by it with us!

We are missing Megan Barnes. She returned home just before Christmas. She was a blessing as a talented, insightful counselor to our boys and a special "buddy" for Esther. Her impact is continuing to be felt as a result of all of the training and equipping she did with our staff. Ryan Benchwick is still with us. He is a delight, is a great help, and has a wonderful relationship with all of our boys. We are blessed the Lord sent both Megan and Ryan our way.

Thank you for your prayers and faithful financial support. They are what make it possible for us to be here and we are grateful for them. We wish you a New Year filled with the Lord's presence and rich blessings.

We love you,

*Blake & Esther Gibbs*

#### **Praise Reports:**

- The first corneal transplant for Aaron was successful. He will be checked again early this month. Assuming his recovery continues to go well, they will probably do the second eye later this year.
- The Page and Kjeldgaard families are becoming part of our missionary team.
- The Lord has faithfully provided the financial resources for the ministry throughout this past year.

#### **Prayer Requests:**

- Aaron's continued successful recovery.
- The remaining financial support necessary for the Page family to come to Kenya to begin their ministry with Agape.
- The Lord's continued provision for Agape's financial needs so we can impact the lives of many more children.



Our Agape's 2011 calendars are still available! Agape is using the calendars to raise funds for the ministry; they cost just \$10 each. If you would like to order one, please indicate on the response card on the "Other" line how many you would like to receive. Agape will mail the calendars to you right away. \*Due to IRS regulations, the purchase of a calendar is not tax-deductible.\*

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