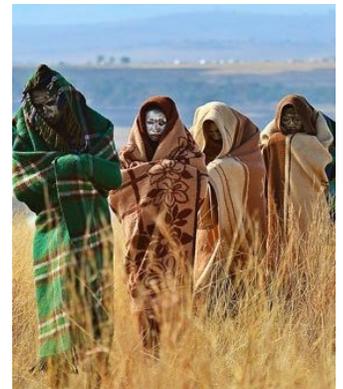


THE BLACKWELLS  
CHURCH PLANTING  
IN SOUTH AFRICA

30 September 2020

Dear Prayer Partners,

Two weeks ago a young man (18) approached me for Bible verses to explain to his parents why he shouldn't participate in the **initiation rites to manhood**. There are 4 major rites of passage in African culture: Birth (naming ceremony), Initiation (into adulthood), the Wedding ceremony, and the Funeral (becoming an ancestor). Each is deeply rooted in African Traditional Religion (ATR), with a worldview predominated by ancestors, spirits, curses, and amulets to ward off evil. His parents have made professions of faith in Jesus, but also hold onto the beliefs of ATR that they were raised in. This syncretism of mixing ATR with Christian beliefs is so common in Africa. If you do not follow these practices, you are effectively walking away from your culture and your people. If this young man wants to be seen as an adult and be fit for marriage, then he needs to go to initiation "school" in the bush. The rites include: circumcision; cutting to mark the body and face; drinking concoctions and having incantations performed along with sacrifices of goats and chickens; "training" to become a responsible man in society; and facing various hardships. He has already decided to make a stand for God, but the pressure and ridicule will continue to mount against him. Please pray for Bokamoso to continue to stand strong like Daniel in the OT, and to trust God to provide a wife in the future who also trusts only in Jesus Christ.



Our two congregations, **Swartland Baptiste and Grace Baptist**, have restarted Sunday services. The fellowship has been good, and our people are encouraged. Economically, things are going a bit better for everyone, as most are back at their jobs. We are thankful that one man who got sick with Covid-19 has fully recovered and others who had contact with positive cases have remained healthy. "**e-Bible studies**" continue to be well attended on weeknights. How to Interpret the Bible, is a class to help prepare key couples to lead home Bible studies in the future. Our mid-week Bible study will soon finish up a study of the Minor Prophets. Also, Nancy and I are enjoying working together in premarital counseling with a young couple getting married next year.

Exciting news is our **first pastoral student at Swartland Baptiste!** Please pray for Gerbrandt Bezuidenhout as we meet together weekly. He has an intense desire to be used of God in ministry, and I appreciate the passion he evidences in our studies together. Also, in **Zimbabwe** we have gained another pastoral student! Huverenga has a deep desire to know God's Word and he has been diligently studying under the watchcare of Pastor Mike and Pastor Shadreck. I am providing guidance from a distance as I still cannot travel to Zimbabwe due to Covid-19 restrictions there.

A final item is a praise and prayer request. The Lord has provided the funds through various individuals for the purchase of a **portable brick machine** for church construction in Zimbabwe! The owner of a trucking company, who is a believer, is trying to help us import it into Zimbabwe. Corruption is so high at the borders, please pray that his agent would find favor with the customs officials regarding the importation fees and taxes.



Thank you for faithfully praying and supporting us here.

*Marc, Nancy, & Matthew*