

## Lesotho, Africa, Mission Trip Journal

### December 14-27, 2025

I hope you enjoy reading this journal I kept of the recent mission trip to Lesotho, Africa. It was such a blessing to go with our team and see how God used Mike, Debbie, Lyn, Seth, Scott and myself in various ways on the trip. At the end of the journal some of the mission team members also shared a few words of how they saw God work on the trip, and I know you'll want to read what they wrote. Finally, I pray this journal will encourage you as we continue to take the gospel to the nations at First Burk. **-Pastor Brett**

**Matthew 28:18-20** “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

#### 12/14/2025—And we're off...

The flight from DFW left around 8:30am with all members and luggage accounted for. In total we had six team members (Brett, Seth, Scott, Mike, Debbie, Lyn) and 10 checked bags. Six of those checked bags were ministry supplies such as the 488 quart sized gift bags that Debbie and Lyn coordinated putting together in the weeks leading up to the trip. Since we had such an early morning, getting to DFW airport by 5:30am, we stayed in a hotel near the airport and Lindsey and Mr. Lynn dropped us off at the terminal.



One of the things that was a bit of a concern in our travel plans was a snow storm going through the Northeastern USA, because our flight route was DFW/Dallas—>JFK/New York City (3 hr), JFK—>AMS/Amsterdam (7hr), AMS—>JNB (10r). Thankfully, it did snow some up in the northwest, but not enough to disrupt our travel plans. When it was time to take off from JFK things were a little backed up from the weather so takeoff was delayed a little, but overall it was an answer to prayer that no flights were cancelled. Another aspect on our travels was also some of the people we met along the way. On the flight from JFK—>AMS, Scott was able to have a very good, extended gospel conversation with a lady next to him who was a nominal Muslim from the Netherlands. On the long flight from AMS—>JNB, Brett sat by a retired Dutch reformed pastor from South Africa. He was very encouraging about the work we had before us and warned against the tendency in African Christianity toward syncretism, which is the blending of Christianity with traditional religions and ancestor worship.

## **12/15/2025-Land!!!**

It feels so good to get off the plane when you've been in the air ten hours. We arrived in Johannesburg a little after 10pm, and thankfully the airport was not busy. This made going through customs timely, and after getting our bags we met Stan and Angie. From there we stayed at BIMS, an International Mission Board facility that serves as a key hub for mission work in this part of the world for our missionaries. It was great to see one of our IMB facilities that services our missionaries in this part of the world. Needless to say, we were all exhausted and slept great.

## **12/16/2025-The Mountain Kingdom**

Today we left BIMS around 6am headed to Lesotho. On the way we stopped for supplies in Bethlehem and by the end of our shopping excursion, both of Stan and Angie's Toyota Helix pickups were filled to the brim with luggage and supplies. From Bethlehem we crossed the border into Lesotho and took the mountain road to Stan and Angies' place, called The Gathering Place. We arrived at The Gathering Place around 7pm, and began unloading, organizing and putting up supplies, followed by supper together, a team meeting, then off to bed.



We are staying at The Gathering Place, a property Stan and Angie built within the last three years. It has their house, a large classroom building with a full kitchen and storage, a guest house, a guard house, stand alone restrooms and beautiful landscaping with walking trails around the property. This area is fenced in and is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre in size. It is a great ministry tool as it is in one of the mountain villages and is a place where so much ministry is happening.



## 12/17/2025 Training Pastors

When was the last time you woke up to rain and thunder, while you were sleeping on a covered patio in Africa? It was a first for me, but it was such a blessing to be awakened from my sleep, then lulled back into it, as God watered the Earth and reminded us of his power as the clouds thundered. In Lesotho the rain is essential this time of year, as they are in the midst of their growing season, with the corn and other crops already up. Praise God for the rains for the crops of these people who rely heavily on subsistence farming in these mountains. Their farming is by hand and oxen, on the side of steep mountains, and is a far cry from what we think of as farming in Texas.



One of the key ministry tasks for this trip was a pastors training for 24 pastors Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Three years ago when I was in Lesotho I taught Hermeneutics in the pastor's training, and now the men have completed over 10 courses that help ground them in the scripture. The courses are a program with the World Hope Bible Institute, which is with a ministry called World Hope Ministries International, and the material is just what these pastors need to be built up and grounded in the Word. The course me and Scott taught is an Introduction to Systematic Theology on Christ and Man. One might wonder why teach the pastors, and the reality is that around the world, an overwhelming majority of church leaders do not have access to theological education, and doing trainings such as this helps build up the church leaders, who can then build up the church and not fall prey to false teaching. False teaching such as the prosperity gospel, or syncretism is prevalent in Africa, which ignores the Word of God and often preaches a false gospel that does not rely on Christ alone for salvation. The pastors are an encouragement to one another and all of our team as they are serving small congregations in the mountains.

Scott and I are doing the teaching for the pastors' training by alternating lessons as we work our way through the 9 lessons in this course. The content focuses on Christ and Man, and



today's lessons dove into the truth that Jesus is fully God and fully man. In teaching such a foundational doctrine that has been attacked and twisted throughout Church history, we were reminded of the need for precise language in this aspect, and how thankful we were for our translator, Neo. He is a joyful man, who pastors a mountain Church, and speaks English exceptionally well. His testimony has a fair share of trauma and tragedy, and an even greater dose of the grace of God that is evident in his life. The general schedule for the days with the pastor training are breakfast around 7:30/8am with those attending the training, begin the teaching around 8:30am with breaks as needed, lunch around 1pm, then finish up by 4:30pm. The teaching is done with a translator, and the men are very engaged and attentive to the teaching from the Word of God, and quick to ask questions and be involved in the discussions.

During the pastors' training Mike, Debbie, Seth and Lyn would occasionally help with hosting the training by preparing food, tea or coffee, washing dishes and making sure everyone was taken care of. They also baked Christmas cookies during the day, and I'm not quite sure what they will be used for as of yet.



Today was a great start to the ministry in Lesotho, with a somewhat slow day for most of our group, which was not a bad thing as our group is still so exhausted and getting over the travel tiredness. Therefore, naps were in order for most in the group at some point in the day. The day ended with supper with our group, Stan and Angie and about 10 of the pastors who will be staying the night in the classroom. There are sleeping on mattresses they will place on the floor and sleep there, which is what Seth, Scott and myself are doing on the closed in porch of Stan and Angie's house as well.

### **12/18/2025—Cookies, Beans and Apples**

Did I mention it gets light really early here? Sunrise happens around 5am, but it is dark around 7:30pm. The longer we are here, the better we will overcome the jet lag and altitude, but hopefully today will be the last day of severe tiredness for us on the team.

Yesterday's pastors' training went well as we focused on the incarnation of Christ and it was a great training, but it was a rainy dreary day. Today, the sun was out and everyone was ready to learn with great questions, discussion and attentiveness. The three lessons focused on Jesus as our Prophet, Priest and King, the obedience of Christ that fulfills the law, and how Jesus is the greater Adam. The teaching times are packed with theological precision, and a ton of bible verses read and discussed among the group. During the trainings, one of the blessings is the times of singing to the Lord. The men love to sing together, without accompaniment, and the rich baritones and deep bass voices of these



men worshipping the Savior is powerful and inspiring. Their joy resonates in the praises because of the joy and peace of the Lord.



The rest of our crew were doing a variety of things while Brett and Scott were with the pastors. Baking Christmas cookies was a big part of the morning and afternoon again today. These cookies were used as a special gift and blessing for people Stan and Angie know, and the team has been using both kitchens baking Christmas cookies. In fact, Seth has even been in on the action of baking cookies, and eating the broken ones as well.



In the afternoon two ladies came by The Gathering Place, which turned into divine appointments. One lady came by to drop off some more grass baskets the Basotho women make in that area, and around that time another lady came by to sell Angie some beans. The lady with the beans had done some work recently, but instead of being paid in money, she was paid in beans, and she hoped Angie would be able to buy the beans from her. Angie was able to buy the beans, and help Debbie minister to both of the ladies by sharing a Bible story with them. Debbie shared the story of the parable of the two talents, and this was a divine appointment with the ladies, and it really stretched Debbie with this spur of the moment opportunity to share and pray for these ladies. The bean lady had quite a few beans, and she walked down the mountain with her wheelbarrow to The Gathering Place, which was quite a hike. When it was time for her to go, Seth loaded her wheel barrow into the truck, and he and Angie gave her a ride back to her house, which provided another ministry opportunity. Her daughter has some problems that were spiritual oppression or possession, and they asked Seth to go and pray for her. He did go and pray for the daughter in the name of Jesus and he said you could definitely feel a heaviness there.

Later on Stan, Mike and Seth made a trip to buy apples in Ha Sheshote, which was about 20 minutes drive away. This busy village of stores and market was bustling since it was right before Christmas, but even in the hustle and bustle Stan saw some familiar faces of people they have ministered to over the years and was



able to encourage them to remain faithful in following Jesus. The Muslim owner of the store where they got the apples also was given some Christmas cookies the team had been baking. Stan said he didn't know how this would be received, but it was received very warmly by this man.

The evening ended with a supper of rice, chili, mixed veggies and peach cobbler. Everyone cleaned their plates and Lyn's cobbler turned out remarkably good, or so I heard because it was all gone when I went to get a piece. After supper our team spent some time with Stan and Angie talking about the day, looking at the Word and in prayer. Once again, our team is so grateful to serve with them in Lesotho, as it is a joy to be a part of what God is doing here.



### 12/19/2025 Pastors' Training Complete

Today was the last day of the pastors' training and it was such a blessing to teach the men about the doctrine of humanity, which has a huge focus on being made in God's image, the sinfulness of man, and our need for a Savior. The men are not only attentive during the trainings, but are also very thoughtful in the questions they ask and how they approach scripture. This is such a blessing to see, and the reality is that it is a tremendous blessing to pour in to them, so that they can better handle the Word of God. They are so humbly grateful for the trainings and us coming to be with them for this.



While Scott and I were focused on the pastors' training, the rest of the group got to do some kids ministry, as Fridays are a day kids from the village come to The Gathering Place for games and stories from the Bible. Mike, Debbie, Lyn and Seth presented the Two Kingdoms gospel presentation to the kids, and Debbie also taught about the Christmas story. It was such a blessing to see all the kids running around and having fun and listening to the gospel.

This evening was pretty slow, as our group cooked supper, hung out and tried to stay awake till bedtime. Tomorrow will be a shifting of ministry gears, where we will begin



conducting the Christmas outreaches and gift deliveries in the villages.

## 12/20/2025 Shifting Gears

Today was an exciting day as we shifted ministry gears from training pastors to doing Christmas Outreaches in villages and delivering gifts to the children. Although many in our team have been making a few small preparations while me and Scott were training the pastors, the preparation for the Christmas gift outreaches is a months long process. The local village churches identify the neediest of the children in the villages and this year's list was around 300 children across 27 mountain villages with about 11 Basotho churches. This is a ministry that has been going for about 12 years and has grown from 30 kids to 300 this year. The children will get some school shoes, pants and a shirt (dresses for girls) and a few other items they need. In addition to these kids receiving these gifts, many other kids come to the outreaches where the gospel is shared through the Two Kingdoms story, and all the children receive an apple, some peanuts, a drink and a quart size ziplock bag with a Christmas coloring book, crayons, pencils, toothbrush, a toy car, stickers, small stuffed animals, a pen and a few other small items. Our group brought 488 of the quart sized bags with us, and these will be given out at the outreaches to all the children who come. The Christmas outreach's are a unique ministry to the villages in conjunction with the churches in the villages and valleys.



Today we did two Christmas outreaches, Makhoabeng and Ha Ramokoaton, which were relatively close to The Gathering Place. The first was just about a 10 minute drive, where about 40 kids came. We spent time playing games with them for a while, then Debbie, Lyn and Angie went in a nearby community building to do a bible study about Mary with about 5 ladies who were there. The Lord really used Lyn and Debbie as they ministered, and while the ladies met, the rest of us played with the kids outside with things like frisbees, a small parachute, hula hoops, a jump rope and a soccer ball. Speaking of soccer balls, have I mentioned that Lesotho is full of huge mountains? Where we are at, it is about 7,000 feet elevation. In addition to that, there aren't many flat spots to kick a soccer ball, and when one gets away, it rolls a looooooooooong way down the mountain. Thankfully, when this happens, the boys are more than happy to trek a few hundred yards down the mountain and retrieve the ball and hike back up. The time of playing ended with us singing songs with the kids outside and after that we went in the building to share the Two Kingdoms story. The Two Kingdoms story is an overview of the Bible that covers creation, fall, depravity, salvation and redemption, and we use some pictures to help explain the message of the story. The story originated with Jim Flora, an IMB missionary in the area, who is now with the Lord, and it does an excellent job of contextualizing the gospel message to this culture. In fact, we use pictures as we tell the story and Lyn did a great job

getting the pictures ready before the trip and they are a blessing in the presentation of the gospel. One of the things that sticks out is how well the children listen and remember the story. Although some of them may have heard the story before, they are very attentive and engaged. After the Two Kingdoms



story, it was time to give the gift bags to all the kids who came and then the other bags to the kids who were on the orphan list of the neediest of the needy. All the kids were so thankful with whatever they got. One thing that was interesting was that in the quart size ziploc bag gifts all the kids received, they were so excited to get a toothbrush and the notepads to write on. The outreach at Makhoabeng had around 40 kids and the second outreach at Ha Ramokoaton had 4 kids there.



The evening finished up with a delicious meal of Ostrich steak that Stan grilled. After Supper was cleaned up we had a time with Stan and Angie of sharing about the day and also making the game plan for the next day. It was a blessed day of ministry!

### 12/21/2025 Go Tell it on the Mountain



The beauty of Lesotho's mountains does not get old on a short term mission trip, and it brings new perspective to the song, "Go tell it on the mountain." The villages scattered across the mountain sides, with the fields covering the landscape, accompanied by a sprinkling of animals grazing is intoxicating when the rains are abundant and the land is green.

Today's first stop was at Ha

Ramonemene, which is just below the peak of a mountain with some of the most amazing views we have seen so far. We attended Church at this village and, there were 42 people in a rondovel

(a round rock house with a grass roof) worshipping the Lord. Most in that group were children, as many of the adults were away that day. The pastor was gracious to allow me to preach, and the message was on the wisemen from Matthew 2:1-12.

This was a great passage with so many children in the congregation. Since many of the adults were away that day, the church service was not as long as the other Basotho services I had been to, but this one was about 40 minutes long. It was very humbling to worship with believers in an extremely different setting than we are used to, and a great reminder of the important work we are doing on our trip.



After the worship service, we went back up to the community soccer field and began a time of playing with the children who were in the Church service and many other children joined us as well. This village was very high up in the mountains, which was beautiful, but we were so

thankful for the larger flat area that allowed us to play soccer with the kids without the possibility of the ball rolling hundreds of yards down the mountain. The kids love playing with one another and our group, which provides a good opportunity to build a relationship with the kids and for other kids to gather as well. The team did an excellent job telling the Two Kingdoms gospel presentation, and the children listened so attentively.



The second Christmas outreach at Ha Theko was at the Church of Pastor Malala. He is a joyful brother who I met on my first Lesotho Trip in 2017 and it is a blessing to see him remaining faithful. This church had many ladies who were there as well, which provided a great opportunity for Lyn to minister to them by sharing scripture with them and encouraging them.

After the outreach, it was time to head back to The Gathering Place. There we unloaded, set aside the bags for the next day, had a short team meeting and then cooked supper and ate together in the classroom building.



### 12/22/2025– Fruitful Ministry and Paper Cups

Since Lesotho is in the southern hemisphere, it is summer, and in the mountains it gets around 80 or less each day, and in the nights it has been raining consistently. It also gets light really early here. Sunrise is at 5am, but it is getting light way before then. I mention this, because an average day is Scott going over to the classroom building and getting coffee started around 5am, and various team members trickle through to get some coffee and help out in any way needed. Mike has been spoiling us cooking breakfast and we usually eat around 7:30am. Breakfast is a great time for the team to pray together, fellowship, cleanup the kitchen and then

work on getting loaded up for the Christmas outreaches for that day. Usually we try and leave around 9am each day with both trucks loaded down with supplies, gifts and people.



Loading up the bags for the places we are going each day is a key part of being prepared for the Christmas outreach. Most days we do two outreaches, but today we only did one at Matsoku. Matsoku is the name of a massive mountain valley with many, many villages, and this is a special valley for Stan and Angie, the missionaries we are working with. This is the valley their Church adopted to take the gospel to in 2013 when he was the worship and missions pastor at FBC Perryton, Texas. Through the church's multiple trips each year to evangelize this valley and make disciples they saw people come to faith and a church start, that continues to this day and is now going out and ministering throughout the valley. In fact, the Christmas outreach today was at Matsoku Baptist Church, the pastor is Neo, who came to faith as a result of Perryton's mission work, and he is doing a fantastic job! In fact, Neo was a double orphan (no mom or dad),

and he came to faith in Jesus Christ and is now being used by God to lead this church. This outreach was the biggest one we did, and was the only one we did today.

After we left The Gathering Place at 9am, we stopped in Ha Sheshote to get more apples and peanuts, then made it to Matsoku Baptist Church around 10am. This Church has something that is rarely seen in our area of Lesotho, a playground. A mission team from Perryton built the playground recently for the kids at the Church and it was a huge hit as our team was able to play with the kids as they were arriving for the outreach. There were a ton of kids, and also a large groups of women and a few men. The children who were there for this outreach were from many villages in the Matsoku Valley, as were the large group of around 20 women, and even a couple of men.



Many of the women are a part of a ministry that started many years ago called Mobile Moms, where these Christian women help support and care for the neediest of the needy kids in the surrounding villages. Their role in identifying needy children is key for the Christmas orphan blessing bags and they are an important part of this ministry.



When it was time to begin, we gathered this very large group of kids and our team did the Two Kingdoms story, then we gave the kids a snack of an apple, a peanut pack and a cup of a drink. While the kids were eating, Lyn and Debbie did a Bible Study with the women, and Scott did a Bible study with the two men. Both of those Bible studies were a blessing! After this, the kids were separated between the kids who could go ahead and head home, and the kids who would receive one of the orphan Christmas bags that had a pair of black shoes for school, a shirt, shoes, underwear and a few other items. The kids who headed home got their quart sized ziplock bag gift from First Burk and then headed home. The rest of the kids stayed by the Church and playground and they eventually received the

small gifts we brought, and then the orphan Christmas bags with essential items then need. This group was the largest by far of the trip, but was also the most well run because of the involvement of Pastor Neo and the women who are the mobile moms.

When we give out the bags with the shoes and clothes, it is a process to make sure it gets to the right kid, and then the kids try on their shoes and check sizes on their clothes. We have some suitcases with extra shoes, shirts, pants and undies so things can be traded out for the correct size. If we don't have the correct size on hand, Stan and Angie write down what is needed and get the correct sizes to the pastor the next day or two so they can get it to the correct child. The planning that goes into this ministry is immense, and Stan and Angie do a tremendous job leading this and involving the local Basotho churches as well.

One thing that has often been repeated is that life in Lesotho is very hard and every person has stories of tragedy in their life and family. We were reminded of this at the end of the outreach, because of a woman with 7 children was there and began to talk with Pastor Neo about some very big needs she has. First and foremost, they didn't have any food in the house, she was a widow and she had 7 children. So, we sent her with lots of apples and peanut bags, but Stan made preparations to secure food for her and get it to Pastor Neo so the church can give the food to her. Stan's compassion and the Lord's love is evident in situations like this, as he is not inconvenienced, but truly being the hands and feet of Jesus.



We ended up leaving Matsoku Baptist Church around 3:30pm. On the way back , Angie and her crew stopped to get the correct sizes at a store in Ha Sheshote, and then headed back to the house, where Stan's crew was busy unloading. After arriving back at The Gathering Place, Mike and Lyn started working on Supper and a few of us started getting things ready for tomorrow. Speaking of getting things ready, when was the last time you washed a small paper cup out to reuse? Probably never, but in Lesotho, getting the most use out of an item is essential, which is why part of our evening routine is washing paper cups to reuse the next day. Believe me, that job is not quite as glamorous as it sounds!

On another note, the gospel being in Matsoku Valley is a great testimony to the faithfulness of FBC Perryton and God's work in bringing them to invest there long term. They adopted the valley in 2013 and have been diligent to get the gospel to the people. Often we want to see instantaneous results in our ministry fruit, but that's not how it happens. We plant and water the seed of the gospel and God gives the increase. Our role is not to produce fruit, but to remain faithful to the Lord and trust that he will bring the harvest in his time, and allow him to produce the fruit. God has, and still is, working in this Church in the Matsoku Valley and it is evident through Pastor Neo and the work of the Church.

### **12/23/2025. Christ and Compassion**

Today was similar to the past few days, as we began the day loaded up for a couple of Christmas outreaches in Ha Mikita and Ha Nseli. Today, not all in our team went to the outreaches, but Lyn stayed at the house to work on cooking and preparing for Stan's Birthday meal later in the evening. Lyn was such a blessing in staying back working on things at The Gathering Place as the team went out.



The first village was up in the mountains quite a ways and the children were happy and excited when we arrived. While playing with the kids, one of our translators, Lucy exhibited her gift for engaging the kids, not just in playing games, but in worshipping God and ministering to the kids. This was a joy to see, and even a time of a few surprises, as her playlist with the kids included a Forrest Frank song. The children were very attentive in the gospel presentation, and very engaged when we reviewed the story with them. This location only had a few of the adults from the Church there, and they were a blessing to meet and encourage. Before going to the next village we dropped off some of the orphan bags to a pastor in a nearby area, who would get them to children in his

area, and we bought groceries for a lady we met the previous day. The second village we went to was a little different because there was rain you could see coming across the mountains. This meant we didn't spend time playing with the kids, but jumped into the gospel, snacks and gifts pretty quickly. Our time at this stop was shorter than the others, but God had a plan for the rest of the day.



On the way back we stopped by Pastor Neo's shop to drop off quite a bit of food for the widow with seven children we met the day before. Her situation was pretty dire, and getting the food to Pastor Neo allowed him and Matsoku Baptist Church to get it to the widow, and minister to her. Not only was the food some that was picked up from the store, but also about 40 lbs of corn from the fields at The Gathering Place. This was the last of the corn from last years crops and the large amount of food will be a blessing to this widow and hopefully she will come to

know God through the Church ministering to her. After Neo's shop, there were stops at the shop in Ha Sheshote to gather the missing shoe sizes from today's outreach, and a little time for a few in the team to buy the traditional Lesotho blankets.

On the way back to The Gathering Place, an essential need was for more diesel in the trucks. Unfortunately the station that provides diesel had been out for a couple of days, and the next closest option is two hours away. Thankfully the tanker arrived and the



trucks were full again. It seemed that the evening was to be one of celebrating Stan's birthday, but Stan got a call from Pastor Sekete that his wife has been in pain and the local clinic said she probably needed to go to the hospital. They didn't have a car, so Stan and Angie drove her an hour to the hospital, stayed with her and brought her back home after the hospital treated her and sent her home. They got back home around 10pm.

In thinking about Stan and Angie's care for the Basotho around them, whether it is the hours long excursion to the hospital, or providing food to a very needy widow, I am reminded of a conversation Scott and I had with Stan earlier in the week, regarding being available and attentive to the Spirit's leading and opportunities when they come up. It's not that there aren't opportunities around us, but often we get busy, distracted, or indifferent to what God may have for us and we miss out on caring for others and being the hands and feet of Jesus. Stan and Angie exhibit a Spirit filled care and love for the Basotho in their relationships with the people in so many ways, and give so willingly of their time for the Lord's glory. They give willingly, joyfully and with the grace of Christ as the Lord leads and gives the opportunity.

### **12/24/2025 Happy and holey kids**

Today was the final day to do a Christmas outreach and it was at Ha Maphike, just a few kilometers down the road from The Gathering Place. Since it was so close we didn't leave until around 9:30am. By that point we had a great breakfast together with our group. These breakfast times have been a tremendous time of testimony, prayer and encouragement in the Word as we get ready to move out for the day. Today's outreach was different than previous days because it would just be our team and our translators doing the outreach. Stan and Angie were needing to catch up on a mountain of things and prepare for a team coming in after us. We were more than happy to do this outreach and there were around 50-60 kids who came. Since this was our only outreach today, we were not in a rush. One God moment about today was in regards to the small quart sized bags we brought from Burk Burnett. In total we bought 488, and we only had 61 remaining. Today at the outreach, 61 bags was exactly what was needed! Praise God for his exact provision for how many we would need on the trip!

In ministering to the children this week, two things really come forth. First, they are so happy to have people loving on them and giving them attention, especially during the recreation time at the beginning. Not only are the kids happy to have people caring for them, but as they sit down on the ground when it is Bible time, it is also clear that their shoes are often holey because





they have worn a hole through the bottom of their shoes. Their clothes also exhibit holeyness as they are worm through. Although the extreme poverty in Lesotho is foreign to us, it is the reality of life here, especially for the kids. The gift bags and orphan bags they receive would be way less than impressive to kids in the states, but to these kids, they are so thrilled and excited to get them.

Did I mention it is Christmas Eve today? Yes, we missed the Christmas Eve service back home at Church, but we had our own Christmas Eve service with Stan and Angie, Walter and May and our group. Walter and Mary Norvell are on a three year missions assignment with the IMB that is designed for retired people. Yes, they are retired, and yes they are now on the missions field. The ten of us gathered in the classroom, and Stan lead us in a time of focusing on Jesus through the Lord's Supper, testimonies and candle light worship. It was a simple time together, but one that was such a tremendous blessing. It was also a reminder that life on the mission field is a sacrifice. Instead of Christmas at home with family, they are thousands of miles away in the Lord's service, and right where the Lord wants them to be. As we celebrate Christmases in the years ahead, may we also remember those on the mission field, pray for the the Lord's abundant grace upon them and look for ways to encourage them. Another blessing tonight was the rain and the thunder while we were worshipping. It has rained quite a bit while we have been here, but thankfully the rain has been at night. This means it did not interfere with the Christmas outreaches, and the rain is essential for the people's corn crops to grow so they will have food to eat. God's grace has been evident this past week, and we praise Him for it and give him the glory!



### **12/25/2025 Merry Christmas from Lesotho**

Christmas started out as a beautiful, sunny morning that followed the rainiest night since we have been here. We were excited to spend Christmas in Lesotho, because it is a day of ministry opportunity. The men went up to one of the village churches that was about 10 minutes away and took part in a tradition this Church has celebrated since 1928.





The shepherds come to the church for a short Christmas service and a quick meal, followed by the traditional cattle drive down the main road. The cattle drive is more of a parade, as they decorate the cows and ride on some of them. The village church was a pretty big church in comparison to other village churches. The building was around 100 years old and in its history it functioned as the school at one point

in time. When it was time to begin, the shepherds gather into the church building and there was a service of about 45 minutes. During that time Stan did have a part of the service and shared an amazing Christmas message to the shepherds. The men listened so attentively! After the service the men on our team handed out candy canes to everyone there. After the service for the shepherds, then the children came and had a similar service, and then after that was done, there was a service that was mostly the women. The final service expanded as



time went on as men and boys from the Church also joined in, and the praises in this service were so inspiring. This service was a little longer than the other ones, but it was filled with more singing and more people shared from the word. It was a joy to be a part of the Christmas worship service!



From the church, the men headed back to The Gathering Place, which was followed by an excursion to the Katse Dam for 5 in our group to see how much the water was spilling over. Back at the house, preparations were diligently being made for an amazing Christmas dinner, which was enjoyed by our team, Stan and Angie, and Walter and Mary. After lunch we played a few Christmas games, followed by an afternoon of visiting, resting and packing to head back home.

Getting to know Walter and Mary was a great blessing during this time. They are in their 70s, and both retired from a Williams Baptist University in Arkansas.

They are with a program with the IMB that places retired people on the mission field. Their connection with Lesotho began many years ago, and they are currently in language school and

their ministry focus will be on university students in Lesotho. Their testimony of faithful ministry is a great example to see, and they are such a blessing!

Once again, Angie's hospitality has been above and beyond and a blessing to all. As a part of our Christmas celebration, we did have 4 metal engraved bottles for the missionaries. Those were received joyfully and were a small way to bless them from First Burk. The rest of the day was spent cleaning up, packing and preparing to head out in the morning.



### **12/26/2025 The Journey Home**

By 6:15am we were pulling out of the Gathering Place and headed to the border. After three hours we arrived there, had a swift border crossing, and about 30 minutes after the border we ate breakfast in Clarens, South Africa. It is a quaint touristy town, and it was a great stop as we enjoyed a meal and perused the shops in town. We were dropped off at the airport around 4pm, the plane left about 10pm, and it is a 16 hour flight from Johannesburg to Atlanta. This flight was only about half full, which was a blessing as we all had extra seats around us. Also on

this flight, we met Charles and Maria, who are Independent Baptist missionaries in Zambia. He has been there 30 years sharing the gospel and it was an encouragement to meet them as they were on their way to the US. The flight to the US was smooth and then from Atlanta we flew to Dallas and landed around 1pm on Saturday. From the time we left The Gathering Place, to when we made it back to Burk Burnett, it was about 40 hours. We were all thankful to go and thankful to return.



### **We're there any decisions for Christ or salvations?**

On our trip we planted hundreds of gospel seeds as we shared the gospel at the Christmas outreaches. One thing we did not do was an altar call, have them repeat a prayer, or fill out a decision card, because we did not want to obscure the gospel message. Hundreds of people, mostly children, would have gladly prayed a prayer because they would not wanted to have disappointed us and because they might think they would get a gift. Our task was to clearly proclaim the gospel message, and the Church leaders we worked with and the missionaries are the ones who lead people through following Christ. In relation to this, we do praise God that spiritual fruit is being born in the mountains of Lesotho as in the past many year people have been turning to Christ and following him.

### **Mission Team Members said:**

“I didn’t know what to expect on this mission trip. I knew we had made bags to deliver to the children in the villages. I didn’t have a clue of what a true blessing those children are. They showed up in dirty clothes, shoes with holes in them or no shoes at all, but they were happy! Joyful! We were able to give each child a bag of small items, they were so excited to receive them. Thank you for your support as a Church to allow us to bless them.” **-Debbie**

“God showed me that there are believers on a different continent that serve the same God that we do, that shine the love of Jesus and showed me encouragement although I had come to encourage them. Seeing Stan and Angie at work and being apart of their ministry and handing out the clothes to the orphans was a true blessing.” **-Mike**



“I think the thing that registered to me first is just how well God was present in how our Team coalesced and gelled into a mission-focused unit. These trips are funny; people get tired and worn down, patience sometimes wears thin, on about day 6-7 everyone gets homesick, etc. I wasn’t “exactly” shocked at how tightly we grew, but it was a sweet, sweet sight. Beyond that, everything from the Spirit present in the room at Pastor’s Conference, to the weather for the village outreach affirmed that The Lord was totally in control.

As far as what God was doing in my heart, a lot of the heavy lifting was around being gone at Christmas. Much of my ability to stay focused is because of how God-honoring Donna was in encouraging me to even go on the trip. Christmas Eve was the first anniversary of her mom’s death, and that was tough. God is good, though, and gave her, and me the grace to be at ease with that decision.

Finally, beyond the obvious that under Pastor Brett’s leadership, First Burk is now poised to become a missional church in action, not just in name, I got to see that unmistakable look of realization on our team members’ faces that we had actually run TO THE NATIONS instead of just talking about it. The questions now are not IF we’re going to the Unreached, but WHERE, WHEN, and for HOW LONG”. **-Scott**

