



THE SCHLEHLEINS

Missionaries to the Tsongas of South Africa



ALONE BUT NOT ALONE

Indigenous Church Plants are Exasperating and Exciting

For the first time in nearly five years, our family will be returning to the US on furlough. We fly out this Wednesday, will visit hoards of friends and family, preach in several churches, take some classes, and find ways to eat ice-cream at least once a day. We return to South Africa in mid-August.

Left behind will be our dear brothers and sisters in Christ from Mbhokota Village and several hamlets nearby.

They now must carry the task of preaching and pastoral oversight. They must guard the church from svengalis in the village and shield their own hearts from Satan's devices.

Please pray the church would thrive in our absence and be content to remain that way when we return.

MACHAVELELANA

Funerals are by far the most common social event in sub-Saharan Africa. It is not unusual for adults to attend a burial ceremony nearly every week.

I recently finished a Tsonga/English funeral handbook in hopes it could be of some help to our church people. It includes dozens of sermons, prayers, and verses of comfort.

It came out just in time. Last week, the sister of one of our church members drank paraffin, poured it over her body, then lit a match. All week our church held prayer

services at her home. The real heartbreak came Saturday morning as I watched her two little children pay last respects while a torrent of tears rolled down their cheeks.

I have to learn to accept these lurid scenes as a way of life in the village and to embrace funerals as the supreme opportunity to give the gospel before a broken audience who would otherwise never listen to me preach.

COME SEE US

Our vocabulary is inadequate to describe how excited we are to return home. Our schedule is packed with a healthy mixture of ministry, rest, and activity. We've been humbled by the number of old and new friends who are eager to connect with us.

If you'd like to get together, please email us. We'd love to see you!

Deo Volente, see you soon,

Paul & Melinda

Audrey, Nate, Lawson, Owen, Julianna

