



<p><i>The Basotho of Southern Africa</i> October 2003 Part 02, Ch. 28 CRF Media Chronicles</p>	<p>Final: 3/17/13 Time: 12:02 © 2013 Carl and Arline Ryan</p>
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Carl: It is September 30, 2003 and I am in Bethlehem, a small city in Free State, South Africa. Only two days ago it was late summer in a hot and dry land but now, it is early spring with moderate climate and enjoyable to walk around and visit with the people.

For the most part, this is a fruitful farm area with a variety of grain and vegetable crops.

While the farms are productive, the wages for the Basotho are very low. Homes near the croplands are little more than shacks. Things are worse near the city with an endless collection of buildings constructed with whatever materials that could be found. Children are often seen playing near a garbage dump. Not far away is a vendor selling potatoes. Water for drinking and laundry is free.

About half of the 6-million Basotho live in the Free State. The remaining are still in their homeland.

It's not all bad. On the edge of the squalor, a welcome sight is new houses constructed of brick and mortar.

Across the border in Lesotho is Maseru, {ma-SAIR-oo}the capital of the Kingdom.

It is much different here in this big city. The main employment for the Basotho is the garment industry. In the late afternoon, thousands of workers make the long walk home. Sometimes "home" is a small brick house and other times it is of concrete block with a tin roof located on the hillside.

Overlay: Wes Gestring

Arline and I had been working with missionary West Gestring for over a year as sponsors of the Basotho missionary web site. By this time, Wes had prepared outlines of potential video chapters and selected "Breaking Down Barriers" as the general theme.

The barriers the missionaries confront are not exactly what one would expect. The usual items of poverty, lack of education, government sanctions, and folk religions are all here, but there is much more. There are many, many churches; ... all of which claim to have the truth and some consider the others to be cults. There are the wildly charismatics to the staunchly formal – the Pentecostal to the Catholic ... the Mormon to the Muslim. Mixed in with all of that are the witch doctors, known as sangomas, and the sorcerers.

The scariest barrier is the one going up in Bethlehem. This is because of what it stands for. With the huge funding from Mid-East oil, this MAJOR Muslim training center will have a dramatic effect in the next few years.

Overlay: J.P. Mayfield

J.P. Mayfield, a short term missionary working with Wes, was my constant companion during the two week visit. Our first few days was in the lowlands in and around Maseru. The visit to the grave of King Moshoeshoe {ma-SHWAY-shway} on a high hill overlooking the countryside was inspiring. The small pile of rocks with the simple marker says a lot about the humble but brilliant and resourceful man that founded the Kingdom in the late 1800's.

Saturday was an unusual day. October 4th is Independence Day for Lesotho and we attended some of the festivities. We saw several cultural exhibits and watched a variety of traditional dances and chants.

But, there was another regular occurrence that took center stage for some. Every Saturday is funeral_day.

There has been a significant increase in funerals in the fast few years. It has become difficult to find burial plots! Sound strange? Well, ... it is typical for much of Africa. AIDS is devastating the continent. Lesotho is Number 4 in the world for AIDS prevalence. 31% of the population lives with HIV or AIDS.

The consequences of this epidemic are staggering. An estimated one-fourth of the children will be orphans by 2012.

Leaving early in the morning, the trek to the Maluti Mountains takes us over a narrow road winding its way along the mountain sides and down in deep canyons.

Overlay: Orange River

Along the way I could better understand the Basotho. They are a people who have developed a self sufficient lifestyle through hard work, dedication and respect for others.

Children at the age of six take the responsibility of watching the family's herd of sheep. Women work hard in their small gardens – often carrying sacks of manure for fertilizer. Men, using a team of cattle, plow the soil along the steep hillsides. Modern tractors are few. Road construction is by hand with crews of both men and women working side by side.

While in the mountains, J.P. and I stayed part of our time with August and Anita from the Reformed Dutch Mission of South Africa and the remainder with Terry and Robbie of Africa Inland Mission. August teaches more efficient farming practices.

Overlays:

- Family moving to a new home
- Two loads of firewood
- Missionary August's truck
- The general store
- Walking home from school
- A Helpful friend
- Climbing up the hillside
- A view from the top
- Freshly ground flour
- The sheep shearing waiting pen
- Laundry
- Roofing – will last all year

This is a place for adventure. The trails, the mountain vistas and the remote villages beckon those in other parts of the world to experience the new and unusual. The people are friendly and there is no concern if one wishes to spend the night under the stars.

Flying high above is another escape to the Drakensberg Mountains. From the Missionary Aviation Fellowship airplanes, you can see the small villages and terraced fields reaching from the valley floors to the hill tops. Many of these villages cannot be reached by even four-wheel drive vehicles. Getting to them often requires hours of hiking or riding a Basotho pony.

Overlay: Near Maseru

When we travel to distant lands, it is a real joy to join in on worship services. Sometimes in large buildings; ... other times in small structures or someone's home. The real excitement is that God's Word is spreading among the Basotho.

During my visit, Wes and I were able to complete some of the scripts and the narration.

Arline: While Carl was in Africa, life continued for me on the farm. There were chores to do, cattle to feed, a yard to mow and apples that were ripe. Dad and Mother came for part of the time to help me. We picked apples with Alec, Sydney and Julie's help and made applesauce as well as packed some away for eating later. The time went by quickly for us all and we were happy to welcome Carl home after a great trip.

Carl: The continued help from Wes and J.P. was outstanding. We produced nine chapters for the Basotho DVD titled, "Ke bona leseli" {Kee BONA LEH-sell-ee} ... "I have seen the light.". Over 1, 000 copies were distributed.

Overlay: CRF Media Chronicles
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I Have Seen the Light

Ch. 29 (5:14) Filmed October 2003

The Drakensberg Mountains of southern Africa. An imposing range of spectacular mountain peaks, rivers and valleys. It is here nestled in the foothills and mountains of this majestic range ... that a unique people live ... the Basotho.

The Basotho of southern Africa number 5.5 million 3 million of who live in the Free State Province of South Africa while another 2.5 million live in the mountain Kingdom of Lesotho. This fiercely proud and peaceful people are usually seen with colorful wool blankets and conicle-shaped hats. They are the one people in Africa who are accustomed to living in cold, snowy winters.

The Basotho nation owes its existence to the wisdom and leadership of one man. ... King Moshoeshoe. Amid wars which ravaged southern Africa during the 1800's this one man chose the path of peace rather than of war. Rather than fight, King Moshoeshoe formed alliances with other tribes through marriages and then gathered his people to the safety of the mountain stronghold of Thaba Bosiu. Here the Basotho nation was formed.

Today, the Basotho are divided into three distinct groups.

The Basotho of the Free State Province of South Africa ... who lived under the reign of apartheid the policy of the separation of the races. They now find themselves living in the poorer parts of towns or as workers on white-owned farms.

Then there are the Basotho of the Lesotho lowlands. Many live in the capital city of Maseru. Some are educated and work in government or professional jobs .. driving cars and living in nice homes while others come to the city to find work in factories or as laborers. Their life is hard and those who cannot find work scrape together a living through setting up shops on the streets. Those living in the lowlands find themselves caught between their traditional Basotho culture and modern western influences.

And there are the Basotho of the Maluti Mountains. Those who still live life the way their forefathers lived ... in isolated villages ... scattered throughout the Maluti Mountainsholding fast to their traditions. Their daily life is one of survival working in the fields gathering fuel for cooking ... tending their livestock ... and riding horses along mountain trails. "They are the real Basotho," as one Mosotho living in Maseru exclaimed.

But although geography and slight differences in their Sesotho language may separate them they all find themselves linked together through a common heritage and culture.

A heritage that emphasize the role of the family, the ancestors, and religion. But this culture and religion is also a barrier to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Christianity was introduced to the Basotho many years ago. Most would say they are Christians; however, few have a personal relationship with Jesus. Many are trapped in the works oriented practices of the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. They have a religious zeal that is dependent on what they do in order to please God.

The teachings of the church seem to have little influence of the lifestyle of the people. Today, nearly one-third of the population has AIDS.

The Basotho know about Jesus, but they need to know Him as their Lord, Saviour and friend.

Those who have made this decision are often ridiculed and scoffingly referred to as the “bapaloso” or the “saved Ones.” Consequently growth among evangelical churches has been slow.

The lovely greeting of the Basotho says it all ... Khotso, Pula, Nalawhich means: Peace , Rain, Abundance. Our prayer for the Basotho is ...

That they will discover peace with God through a relationship with Jesus.

That God’s Word will fall like rain on their hearts and produce a rich blessing in their lives.

That they will truly experience the abundant life only found in Jesus.

It is said that at the dawning of each new day ... King Moshoeshoe would emerge from his hut and exclaim “Ke bona leseli” ... “I have seen the light.” Please pray that this would proudly be proclaimed by all the Basotho concerning Jesus

“Ke bona leseli”

**Jesus spoke again to the people,
he said, “I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life.”**

John 8:12



The Basotho of Southern Africa **History ♦ Heritage ♦ Hope**

Ch. 30 (16:13) Filmed October 2003

October 4th is Independence Day for the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. This day provides an opportunity to celebrate the rich heritage of the proud and peaceful people known as the Basotho.

Some of the celebrations reflect the history of the early 1800’s in which much of South Africa was in turmoil with fighting among the various clans and tribes. King Moshoeshoe, ... through his wisdom and leadership skills, ... brought these warring factions together through alliances and marriages rather than fighting. In 1824, King

Moshoeshoe moved his people to the mountain stronghold of Thaba Bosiu where he was able to consolidate his power base and bring into being the Basotho nation. From the top of this mountain fortress, King Moshoeshoe could easily see Hat Mountain. This mountain has become the symbol of the Basotho People and is the model for the hat worn by many.

Today, ... all that remains on the Thaba Bosiu plateau are the ruins of that infant nation and the graves of King Moshoeshoe, his family, and subsequent leaders ... but the nation continues to live on in the hearts and minds of the people.

Maseru is the capital city of Lesotho and it is here in the lowlands that most of the Basotho of this mountain kingdom live and work. In the distance, rise the Maluti Mountains ... the pride and joy of the Basotho. The rugged mountains constitute about two-thirds of the country with peaks rising to over 11,000 feet. It is a beautiful sight to see these mountains green with

new growth in the summer or blanketed with snow during the winter! Consequently, Lesotho is often called ... “the Switzerland of Africa” ... “the Kingdom in the Sky” ... and the “Roof of Africa.”

Travel into the mountains has always been difficult. Some villages are only accessible by 4-wheel drive truck ... others may be reached by small airplane if an airstrip has been carved out of the hillside ... while others are only reached by horseback or on foot. The sure-footed Basotho pony is dearly loved by the Basotho and provides transport to trading posts or towns for collecting supplies. Most often, donkeys carry the burden of transporting bags of maize to the village for grinding into meal.

Here, isolated in the mountains, Basotho live as they have for many years ... in round, stone huts with the minimum of furnishings ... getting water from streams or using spring water piped to the community faucet ... collecting cow dung and then drying and storing it to be used as fuel for cooking and heating ... milking their cows by hand ... fixing the thatched roof of their home. New technology is rare but it is slowly expanding into the rural villages. This preschool obtains electric power from solar panels on the roof. Even a satellite receiver dish may sometimes be found in these isolated mountains.

In the midst of these new influences the Basotho strongly hold onto their culture, tradition, and religion.

The Basotho have a patriarchal society. A woman becomes a part of the husband’s family. This takes place when lobola, or bride price, is paid by the man to the girl’s family. This may be 20 cows or the equivalent in money.

The traditional Basotho religion involves the worship of the “balimo” ... the ancestor spirits. They believe that the deceased can bring misfortune or illness to their life if the laws and customs of society are violated. So they go to a witch doctor to find out what to do to please their ancestors. . The beads around their necks identify the village witch doctors. Some people wear amulets to protect them from evil spirits.

The crocodile is the symbol of the royal family of Lesotho. The government is based on a hierarchy of chiefdoms with the king of Lesotho ... a descendent of King Moshoeshoe as the paramount chief of Lesotho. Each village has its own chief. A visit to any village requires greeting the chief and an explanation for the purpose of the visit. Disputes within the village are brought to the chief for mediation. The land is considered community property and its allocation and use is under the control of the chief.

Livestock, ... sheep, goats, cows, donkeys, and horses, ... represent the principle wealth of the Basotho here in the mountains. These animals also represent the major source of income for the village. Each year the owners pay a small fee when they register their livestock with the village chief.

The village chief records the ownership of the livestock but herd boys care for them on a daily basis. These young herd boys may begin this difficult work when they are only 5 or 6 years old. Starting at sunup, they guide the livestock to forage places on the treeless slopes, hills, and valleys. In the evening, they return to a place where the animals are confined in stone kraals. These herd boys may be gone from home for months at a time as they journey through the mountains. Winter is severe at times and the herd boys are occasionally left stranded by snow storms.

In the spring, sheep are brought to the shearing barn. Shearing the sheep is done entirely by hand. The docile nature of the sheep and the skill of the workers make this process seem routine.

****On camera comments, Terry, re inspection ---** *“These folks are trained by the government to grade the wool based on quality, the length, and the thickness and so on. They’ll put it in the bins to the left behind there by different grades and then the owner of the sheep gets paid a higher price per kilo for the better grade wool as opposed to a lesser grade.”*

****On camera comments, Terry, re income ---** *“Annual sale of wool from someone’s flocks is a major annual income maker for some of the families ... quite a few of the families.”*

When the job is finished, the sheep wait for their return to pasture.

The white plastic bag flying outside a home indicates another source of income ... home brew. Making the alcoholic beverage starts with grinding the grain, mixing with water and then cooking over an open fire. After cooking, it is allowed to cool and ferment. The drink is filtered and the mash is squeezed by hand to get as much alcohol as possible. The resulting alcohol content is somewhat low and it may take all day to get drunk. ... At the end of the day, these participants gladly demonstrate the success of their endeavor.

Repairing mountain roads provides an additional income for many of the village residents. The work is hard and men and women work side by side to improve the roads connecting remote villages. The construction of paved roads connecting some of the larger towns is making travel much easier.

Significant improvement in the mountain roads was made during the construction of the Katse Dam and the Mohale Dam. These dams now provide electricity for Lesotho and much needed income from the sale of water to South Africa.

Subsistence farming and working at odd jobs makes life hard for the Basotho who live in the mountains. Pastures always look greener on the other side of the fence ... and, in this case, ...on the other side of the mountains, ...in the Lesotho lowlands. So ...with a hope of finding a better life, many Basotho have journeyed to Maseru. Those who have sewing skills may find work in one of the many foreign-owned garment factories ... working 10 hours a day ... 6 days a week. Their meager salary of \$3.75 a day means that most workers will walk to and from work in order to save the daily transport cost of 60 cents. Others may find jobs as house-workers or gardeners ... or ... try to make ends meet by selling fruit and vegetables along the road. Yet, ... at the end of the day ... many people find no work at all! Men who do not work sometimes waste away their day drinking alcohol at local houses flying white plastic bags on long poles.

A clear disparity in living standards is evident throughout Maseru. While some homes are very nice with gated entries, ... others just provide a shelter with no electricity or water. While some people wear suits and ties, ... others wear their only set of clothes. While some people drive nice cars, ... others walk.

Basotho desire a better life and place their hope for this in education. Schooling is only free for the first few years. After that, families struggle to pay for school fees, books, and uniforms. Their sacrifice rests on the hope of providing a better future for their children ... as well as for themselves ... since children are expected to care for parents as they become elderly.

At the National University of Lesotho, just 30 km from Maseru, the “cream of the crop” of Basotho students live and study. Their hopes are poured into their education ... hopeful that it will provide the way to a better job and standard of living. In reality, when these students graduate, they find that there are very few jobs available jobs in Lesotho. ... So, many then, ... place their hope in finding something across the border in South Africa ... where the pastures look even greener.

But, life is also hard here for the 3 million Basotho living in the Free State Province of South Africa. Some live and work on white-owned farms ... as their forefathers did for generations. Others live in the “locations” or “townships” ... the poorer, less developed parts of towns. The fortunate men find work in the coal, gold, and diamond mines of South Africa. Their earnings support their families back in Lesotho. But, ... unable to find work, ... there are many who return to Lesotho without hope ... and daily visit the flying white plastic bags.

Sundays will find many Basotho attending church. In Lesotho, many people are Roman Catholic and look back to the 1988 visit of the Pope. Some attend the Catholic Cathedral in Maseru. Others attend the nearby Anglican Church or perhaps the Lesotho Evangelical Church. For the most part, church attendance is a cultural practice in which traditional religions are sometimes mixed with Christianity. Most of the grave markers include a cross of some sort indicating their Christian affiliation.

Those who have a true relationship with Jesus are scoffingly referred to as the “bapaloso” ... the “saved ones” ... Some lack depth of Biblical teaching and rely on experiences and feelings. ... Some teach a prosperity gospel and give people a false hope.

Christians who are not well grounded in their faith are easy prey for cults and false religions. Groups such as the Mormons and Jehovah’s Witnesses are present as are non-Christian religions such as the Bahai and Islam. The Islamic influence is growing in both the Free State and Lesotho.

The ineffectiveness of the people’s religion in influencing moral standards is seen in the HIV prevalence among the Basotho. One out of every three adults in Lesotho is infected with HIV. The hope of the nation seems to rest on AIDS education based on the use of condoms. Billboards spread the message ... use condoms to prevent AIDS! Yet, ... the numbers keep rising and more people keep dying. Funeral homes, coffin makers, and gravediggers are kept busy.

King Moshoeshe became convinced that the Christian teachings would be of great value. The tree (**pix 9765**) planted on Thaba Bosiu by the first missionaries invited by the king continues to grow ... as does the Christian missionary community in Lesotho.

“Youth with a Mission” operates the Beautiful Gate Child Care Centre for abandoned and HIV positive babies. “Scripture Union of Lesotho” ministers on the school campuses. “Life Ministry,” also known as Campus Crusade for Christ, builds disciples on the university campus. “World Vision” works in rural development projects while presenting the Gospel. “African Inland Mission” works in the mountains building disciples in villages while incorporating some agricultural ministry. “Mission Aviation Fellowship” provides transport for the Lesotho Flying Doctor service as well as for missionaries to remote mountain villages.

The Baptist work among the Basotho echoes the words of Jesus "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." The focus is to equip lay people for ministry in evangelism and discipleship and to develop leadership ... resulting in the planting of new Baptist churches.

The Basotho have a rich history and heritage. The foresight and wisdom of their first King ... Moshoeshe ... opened the door for the Gospel. The present hope of the Basotho for a better life is still to be found in the Gospel ... through a relationship with Jesus Christ, ... the living hope.

"We have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men."
... 1 Timothy 4:10 (Read: First Timothy, chapter 4, verse 10)



The Little Brick House Near the Graveyard

Ch. 31 (4:12) Filmed October 2003

Flying over the northern outskirts of Maseru, one can hardly tell the little village of [Ha Faso](#) from other villages. People work the gardens in their yards in order to supply extra food for their family. ... Water, ... when available, ... is pumped from shallow wells or obtained at the community faucet. ... Women wash their clothes in colorful plastic basins. ... Children play with the few toys that they have. ... Men visit the home flying the white plastic bags showing the availability of home brew. ... And, ... the graveyards are getting fuller by the week because so many are dying of AIDS.

In a small house near one of these graveyards, live Mr. and Mrs. [Molemo](#). By sewing in her home, Mrs. Molemo is able to make some extra money. ... Her husband drives his truck to deliver building supplies to homes. Feeling the call of God to ministry, they visited a Baptist missionary in Maseru ... and began several months of training in Baptist beliefs and the basics of the Christian life. Eventually, the Molemo's left the Baptist church that they attended in Maseru and started the Ha Foso Baptist Church in their home ... in the little brick house near the graveyard.

The church continues to expand. Recently four new Believers wanted to be baptized ... but where? ... There was no water and no baptistry. Such details did not deter members of this small congregation. ... A long trench was dug in the front yard of the church, lined with plastic, and water hauled from a nearby rock quarry to fill it ... thus creating a perfect place to be baptized.

As the people started singing, the four new Believers came to be baptized. First was Mr. [Teboho](#), a local builder, ... next came Alice, a young student, ... followed by [Mrs. Teboho](#), and, ... finally, '[MemaRethabile](#) stepped into the cold water.

The believers of Ha Foso Baptist Church are excited about what is happening. They crowd into the little house each Sunday morning praising Jesus! ... They generously give money to support their church as well as saving money for a church building. ... They have approached the local chief and asked for a plot of land. ... And, ... they eagerly desire to be trained in witnessing.

God is working...and, ... here, ...on the edge of the darkness of a graveyard in Ha Foso ... is a light to the Basotho. Pray for your brothers and sisters in Jesus who ARE the Church at Ha Foso who worship in the little brick house near the graveyard.

**"We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so,
because your faith is growing more and more,
and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing."**

2 Thessalonians 1:3



Worth Far More Than Rubies

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Worth Far More than Rubies

Ch. 32 (7:17) Filmed October 2003

In southern Africa ... deep within the Drakensberg Mountains of Lesotho is a treasure. It is not the treasure of diamonds that were once mined below these mountains. It is not the treasure of gold for which South Africa is famous. But it is a treasure Worth Far More than Rubies ... the treasure of the African Basotho woman.

Many Basotho men are absent from their homes and communities. Some work in jobs far away from home ... in other towns ... or in the mines and factories of South Africa. Other men have shirked their responsibilities as husbands and fathers and have abandoned their families. In the midst of this, Basotho women have stepped forward to become the

strength of the family ... of the community ... of the nation ... and the strength of the church!

Living in the mountains is especially hard for women. The Basotho woman rises early in the morning when the first rays of dawn peek over the mountains. Often, she starts her day working along side the men taking her turn with the plough. ... or ... caring for the family vegetable garden.

The basic necessities of life must be found and gathered. She journeys along rugged mountain paths seeking fuel for heating and cooking ... and then carries the discovered sticks or cow dung back to her home.

Her hard work continues throughout the day ... preparing meals for her family in the traditional cast iron pot, ... getting her children ready for school, ... washing clothes in a nearby spring or stream, ... getting water from a well or pump and carrying it on her head back to her hut.

In awe of the strength of Basotho women, ... a missionary recently remarked ... “The Basotho woman has the strength of a 4 by 4 Landrover truck. She can carry anything on her head.”

Mountain stores or “trading posts” have a meager supply of food items. To pay for these expensive necessities, Basotho women must work at odd jobs such as sorting wool at the shearing shed. ... Others make crafts such as weavings from mohair, ... the hair of mountain goats. ... Some weave the traditional basotho hat out of straw and sell their wares on the streets. Still others sew ... making dresses such as this traditional Shoeshoe dress worn proudly by Basotho women. This enterprising Basotho woman uses a hand-cranked sewing machine to make a jacket out of the traditional Basotho blanket.

When roads need to be constructed or improved, the local residents are hired to work on the section near their village. Using picks and shovels, women join in with men ... working side by side in this backbreaking work.

When one Basotho woman was asked, “Why do you work so hard?” ... Her answer was a firm, ... “I work hard for the future of my children!”

A Basotho proverb speaks of this love and commitment that the mother has for her children. It says, “A mother will grasp the sharp edge of a knife to protect her children from attack.”

The life of Basotho women in the lowlands of Lesotho and in the Free State of South Africa can be equally as challenging. Those women who are skilled at sewing may be fortunate to find employment at one of the many foreign-owned garment factories ... working 10 hours a day ... 6 days a week ... and earning \$3.75 a day. Most of them will walk the several miles to and from work to save the daily transport cost of 60 cents. Others set up stalls on the streets to sell fruits and vegetables or to cook food to sell during the lunch hour.

Those fortunate ones who are educated and attend the National University of Lesotho have the greatest opportunities for finding jobs in government or with private companies in the capital city of Maseru.

Since Basotho culture is patriarchal, ... the woman becomes part of the husband’s family through marriage. A lobola, or bride price, is paid to her family. This may be 20 cows or the equivalent in money. Once the lobola is paid, all children become part of the man’s family.

The tragedy of AIDS has become a heartbreak in the life of Basotho women. Many husbands who worked in the mines of South Africa returned to Lesotho with more than money. ...They returned with HIV/AIDS. It is estimated that one out of every three adults in Lesotho has the virus. Saturday is the day for funerals ... and funerals are becoming more and more common because of AIDS.

HIV/AIDS affects Basotho women in many ways. They are more vulnerable to HIV. ... They can pass the virus to their children through childbirth and breastfeeding. Also, when both parents die because of AIDS, orphaned children are left behind ... many times cared for by an aging grandmother.

On any given Sunday, a visit to the churches will show the spirituality of the Basotho woman. Whether it be the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Lesotho Evangelical Church, a Pentecostal Church, or a Baptist Church, ... women make up the vast majority of the adult congregation. In fact, men are scarcely found in church. Sundays will find more of them watching soccer or passing their time at homes flying white plastic bags on long poles indicating the sale of home-brew.

As women gather together in church and sing praises to Jesus, ... their beautiful harmony brings to mind the words of Proverbs 31:30 ... "a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised."

Yes, the treasure of the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, ... the treasure of the Basotho people, ... is the Basotho woman. She holds the family and society together. In her spirit, she seeks to praise Jesus. She is worth far more than rubies.

"A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies."
Proverbs 31:10



What are You doing This Saturday?

CH. 33 (3:55) Filmed October 2003

The sun rises over the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho the dawn of another day for the Basotho.. It is Saturday A day of shopping and rest. A day to watch or play sports. A day to enjoy. Well, maybe for you ... but not for many Basotho.

Saturday is the day for funerals! And funerals are becoming a much more common event among the Basotho, because of AIDS.

Recently a church leader had funerals for her sister and her sister's husband. They died one month apart. As an integral part of a Basotho funeral service a family member explains

how the person died. On the surface the explanation is always TB, or pneumonia. Below the surface ... it is AIDS! These deceased parents left behind three young children all now being cared for by an elderly grandmother.

And this is not an isolated story! Many families are barely making ends meet for the necessities of life then a death occurs. Their family size has suddenly doubled overnight ... as have the expenses for school fees, medical bills, food and clothing.

AIDS is devastating southern Africa. Five people die very minute from AIDS. The first case of AIDS in Lesotho was reported in 1986. Now Lesotho is now #4 in the world for AIDS prevalence. This means that 31% of the population lives with AIDS ... almost one out of every three persons. But these numbers represent people. Sometimes ... the innocent wives of unfaithful husbands babies who receive the virus from infected mothers ... children who are left as orphans as parents die from AIDS.

Mother Theresa once said "Whenever I look into the eyes of someone dying with AIDS, I have an eerie awareness that Jesus is staring back at me."

Children are the future of a nation yet they are the innocent victims of AIDS through infection and through abandonment.

In Lesotho, in 1990 less than 100 children were orphaned from AIDS

..... in 1995 there were 4,000 orphaned children

..... in 2001 there were 73,000 orphaned children

..... by 2010 it is estimated that one in four children will be orphaned because of AIDS.

Jesus said *"I will not leave you as orphans, I will come to you."*

Many efforts are being made to educate the Basotho about AIDS...But most of these lead to a false hope. They lead people to trust in condoms and not change their lifestyle. And the numbers keep increasing ... the people keep dying.

The true answer to the AIDS crisis is found in Jesus Christ. The only true hope is found through a relationship with Him and the love and compassion experienced through the arms of believers.

An AIDS worker in Lesotho recently said, "I cannot say I love Jesus and not embrace those who are dying."

Will you pray for the Basotho people as they daily combat the AIDS crisis?

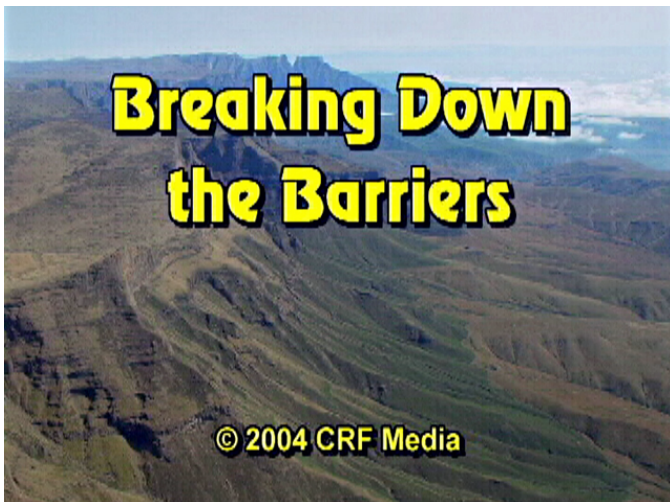
Will you intercede for those children who have lost one or more parents due to AIDS?

Will you ask the Lord of Hosts to come and offer hope to the Basotho?

Will you be the feet that brings this good news.showing true compassion and mercy to those affected and infected with AIDS.

**What are you doing this Saturday?
Why don't you use it to remember to pray for the Basotho
... living with the effects of AIDS!**

"I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from whence shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord." Psalm 121:1,2



Breaking Down the Barriers

Ch. 34 (6:25) Filmed October 2003

The Drakensberg mountains of southern Africa. A stunning range of mountain peaks which has been the Basotho home for hundreds of years. The sight of these towering peaks and beautiful vistas calls to mind the familiar name for this nation "The Mountain Kingdom in the Sky!"

King Moshoeshoe, the founder of the Basotho nation, used this majestic and formidable range as a natural fortress to protect the infant Basotho nation against incredible odds. In the mountain stronghold the Sotho clans survived the attacks of cannibals, Zulu warriors and Boer settlers. Legend describes the mountain fortress as growing larger at night as a defense against their enemies, thus the Basotho called their fortress Thaba Bosiu or Night Mountain.

The Basotho people owe their existence to the wisdom of their first king and the mighty barrier of Thaba Bosiu and the Maluti Mountains.

Today these mountains still constitute a barrier. Most of the Basotho living in the highlands have not heard the gospel. Travel into these villages is difficult—only accomplished by plane, horses or four-wheel drive vehicles on perilous roads. Some mountain villagers walk 8 hours to reach the nearest store to buy supplies while others walk for hours to see a nurse at

a remote medical clinic serviced only by a small plane.

Recent dam construction high in the Maluti Mountains has improved roads and travel to mountain villages; however, the creation of lakes has resulted in the separation of villagers that once were neighbors. As well, many Basotho, such as herdboys, still remain isolated from the gospel as they trek through the mountains tending their sheep and cattle.

How will the Basotho hear the gospel behind the barrier of geography?

In the midst of isolation the Basotho have held fast to their traditions and culture. Richly colored blankets are still routinely worn by large numbers of people, as are the distinctive conical shaped hats. As well, the Basotho love of horses has endured over the years.

But the rich tradition of the Basotho has also encircled them with cultural barriers to the gospel. They need to hear the gospel in their own language ... Sesotho, which is a difficult language to learn and master! They need to be able to read and study the Scripture in their own language but presently very few Christian materials are available in Sesotho.

Choosing to follow Jesus means turning away from cultural practices such as worshipping the ancestors ... such as at this high place in the southeastern part of the Maluti Mountains. Here, the people looked for a place up high one which was fertile ... where there are springs ... or where rivers meet. Here, they made covenants with their ancestors.

How will the Basotho hear the gospel behind the barriers of their culture and traditions?

Finally the Basotho are surrounded by an almost insurmountable religious barrier. Though many profess to be Christians only a small percentage truly have a relationship with Jesus. Many continue to follow traditional religious customs. Many are also trapped in the works oriented practices of the Roman Catholic and Anglican traditions. They have a religious zeal that is dependent on what they do in order to please God.

Still others have been raised with a Christian influence either in the home or in the school but have no real knowledge of the gospel or their need for Christ. They remain ignorant of their need to repent and trust in Christ.

How will the Basotho hear the gospel behind the barrier of their cultural Christianity?

For nearly two centuries the Basotho have lived behind these barriers. Once they served to protect them from annihilation by man but now they serve to blind them to their own true condition before God. Whether it be the barrier of geography, or the barrier of tradition and culture, or the barrier of religion the Basotho need your prayers.

Will you pray that God will breakdown these barriers and strongholds so that the truth of the gospel can reach all the Basotho?

Ask that God remove the physical barriers by sending missionaries to come and live in the highland villages of the Basotho modeling the Christian life for these people.

Beseech the Lord to break through the barriers of culture by opening eyes blinded to the truth that Jesus is the only way.

Entreat the Father to break down the religious barriers raised up against the knowledge of Christ. Pray that the strongholds of traditional religion will fail and that the Basotho will come to trust Christ for their daily needs. Intercede for those trapped in the fortress of false Christianity. Pray that as they hear the word of truth they will be set free.

The barriers look insurmountable; the fortresses impenetrable.

“But we do not wage war according to the flesh for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses...and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God”

(2 Cor. 10:3-5).

Please join us in this war through your prayers.



Just Over There

Ch. 35 (3:55) Filmed October 2003

My name is Lindiwe. I live in a village in the Maluti Mountains of Lesotho. It is not far. It is near. Please visit me in my village. It is just over there.

You must first cross over my beautiful mountains the Maluti Mountains to find my home. It will be a journey you will never forget. We are proud of our mountains. They are the most beautiful in all the world. They are the mountains that are nearest to heaven. That is why we call my land the Kingdom in the Sky!

Your journey will take you on many mountain roads that can be very bumpy so you will need to come in your bakkie.

Please be careful because the roads can be very dangerous but you will soon come to my home which is just over there.

As you come you will enjoy the hospitality of my people the Basotho whose smiles will warm your heart. Your stomach will never be empty in one of my villages since there is always food for guests. And your bones will never feel the cold of winter or of night since there is always a place for you to sleep.

If you desire, you may wish to spend some nights sleeping on the ground and looking up at all the stars in the night sky. You will see the stars as bright and glorious as they were created to be. And in the morning you will wake up to the cold, clean mountain air.

You may decide to enjoy riding one of our Basotho ponies whose feet can walk on even the steep sides of our mountains and they will know the way to my home ... which is just over there.

I have seen small planes in the sky go to other villages where they land on strips of dirt and grass that sit on top of our hills or sit in our valleys. Maybe you will come like that but the final part of your journey will have to be on foot.

This may be hard for you as you follow the path that winds between the rocks and boulders of my mountains. The sides of the mountains are steep and the climbing is hard so some people find it hard to breathe way up here but please remember to keep coming.

As you walk stop and restand listen to the quiet of my mountains. You will be able to hear people talking in that valley across from you, and if you open your ears very much ... and listen very carefully you will hear my voice encouraging you to keep walking because my home is just over there!

When you begin to tire, the children of Lesotho will help to renew your strength. They will walk with you as you travel to visit me and they will give you the courage to make that final climb. My home is just over the next mountain ... just over there!

You have made it. This is my village. This is my home. You are very welcome. I am waiting for you to tell me and my family about Jesus.

***There are Tens of Thousands of Lindiwes
waiting for you***

.... just over there!

***“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who announces peace,
and brings good news of happiness.”***

Isaiah 52:7



The Adventure of a Lifetime

Ch. 36 (6:57) Filmed October 2003

High in the Drakensberg Mountains of southern Africa lies the Kingdom of Lesotho. This land-locked country of 2 and ½ million people lays claim to many different names ... the Roof of Africa, the Switzerland of Africa, and the Kingdom in the Sky.

These majestic mountains provide the perfect backdrop for this adventure of a lifetime.

Do you like hiking, flying into remote areas in a small plane, 4 by 4 driving, and pony-trekking? then journey with us to this mountain realm to discover the adventure God has in store for you.

Our trip begins in the lowlands of Maseru, the national capital. Here, lifestyles are very western in terms of clothing, homes and transportation ... but you will notice a disparity in living conditions in the city. Many Basotho have come to Maseru seeking jobs. The fortunate ones find work in garment factories or in shops or as security guards ... while others make a meager living selling fruits and vegetables on the streets. However, many others find no work at all! Those who have been educated in the nearby National University of Lesotho will most likely have the best success in finding jobs.

As we leave Maseru in our journey to the mountains we continue past smaller towns where we see people selling fruits to other travelers making a similar trek into the mountains.

Our first visit is to Thaba Bosiu ... a national monument of Lesotho. Here, King Moshoeshoe ... the founder of the Basotho nation ... gathered his people atop this mountain fortress as protection from invading enemies. Our climb to the top of this rocky plateau shows us the difficulty the enemies had in scaling this fortress. Once on top you glimpse the nearby Hat Mountain that is the model for the ever-present Basotho hat ... proudly worn by people throughout the country. We also see where the King and his many wives lived. No one lives here now and few make the steep climb to visit the piles of rocks marking the graves of King Moshoeshoe, many of his descendents, and of all the succeeding Basotho kings.

Looking around at the ruins marking the beginning of the Lesotho nation and pondering the graves, ... we can't help but wonder where they are spending eternity!

Continuing our journey, looming in the distance are the beautiful mountains. We leave the comfort of smooth roads and begin this chapter on gravel roads. But the comfort left behind is more than made up for by the breath-taking scenery of the Orange River valley. We are now in the midst of the Maluti Mountains.

Throughout our journey we are warmly greeted by smiling Basotho eager to help us in any way. A few will be able to speak English and say "Good Morning" even when it is evening ... or ask for some candy. But most will greet you in their language saying "Dumela" ... meaning "I see you."

You glimpse people fetching water for their daily needs. You see women washing clothes in the nearby stream. And you see children laughing as they play soccer on almost any place they can find a flat spot of land. As you see the busyness of the people on this Sunday morning ... fixing a thatched roof ... plowing fields ... and repairing roads ... you wonder about their spiritual needs and if they know Jesus!

It is one thing to see the Mountain Kingdom from the ground but another to experience it from the air. Missionaries are readily transported from one mountain village to the next through Mission Aviation Fellowship. These experienced pilots will take us over a mountain range in 15 minutes that would take several hours by 4-wheel drive. But beware ... the ride will be bumpy and you may get sick!

As you look down from the plane you make out isolated villages scattered on mountain ridges ... some with roads leading to them but many accessible only by foot or horse. You notice the terraced fields and cattle kraals dotting the landscape. Soon you realize that all the landscape is still brown and dead since the rains have not yet comebut you know that new green plant life will spring up everywhere as soon as it rains.. And this makes you pray that God's Word will fall on the hearts of these people and produce new life!

We are still not yet at our final destination and we may need to sleep under the sky of the beautiful African night ... in tents or in huts or simply on the ground. As you gaze upwards, you will see the moon, stars, and the Milky Way Galaxy as bright and glorious as they were created to be.

The final leg of our journey may be hiking over the last mountain range on rocky and steep paths. We may be fortunate to ride a horse over this mountain pass but if not, then the high altitude will challenge our strength to make it over the summit to our final destination ... the village below.

After many, many hours of travel ... by 4-wheel drive vehicle, by small plane, by horseback, and by foot ... our journey has now reached it's destination ... a mountain village deep in the Maluti Mountains where the gospel has never been heard!

To this hut ... to talk to these people ... about Jesus!

Do you want an adventure of a lifetime?

**Now, the adventure of a lifetime begins FOR YOU
... as you talk with them about Jesus.**

**And the adventure of a lifetime begins FOR THEM
... as they hear!**

**“How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news,
who announces peace,
and brings good news of happiness.”**

Isaiah 52:7



Basotho Kids

Ch. 37 (4:13) Filmed October 2003

Hi! My name is Jordan. I'm a MK a missionary kid living in the country of Lesotho. This is my sister Bethany with our Collie Cissie. And this is my other sister Michelle holding my hamster Nibbles. Oh yeh ... I'm 13 years old and have lived in Lesotho almost my whole life! My parents are with the Baptist International Mission Board. They teach and train pastors and church leaders in Lesotho.

I am in 7th grade and I go to the American International School of Lesotho. It is probably like your school only a lot smaller. There are about 80 kids in our whole school. My class is called the 7 ups and has both 7th and 8th graders in it. One of my classmates is Joel. He is also an

MK. His father is a mechanic for Mission Aviation Fellowship. Those are the pilots that fly missionaries into the mountains. I got the chance to fly in one of those small planes. It was fun seeing the mountain villages from the air. It can be a very bumpy ride and my father got airsick but I didn't get sick at all.

Another MK friend of mine is August. He lives in the mountains where he and his sister are homeschooled. Their father helps the Basotho people in the mountains grow better crops.

You know living in Lesotho is different than living in America for us MKs. But the life for the Basotho kids is even more different. Basotho kids get to go to school for free for the first three years, but they need to pay for their uniforms and books. We don't wear school uniforms at my school though. The Basotho schools are also very crowded with 40 or 50 kids in each class. Sometimes they come to school with their shovels because they need to work in the school garden.

A lot of the Basotho boys that live in the mountains don't get much of a chance to go to school. Their families need them to help take care of the cows or sheep. Some of these herd boys are as young as 5 or 6 when they start doing this.

I think that kids here have a lot more responsibility than we do. They help with getting water, finding wood and carrying it back to their homes. The girls are responsible to watch over their younger brothers and sisters, ... like this girl with her sister on her back.

What sports do you play? We don't get to play American sports very much here in Lesotho. At school we get to swim and play basketball. Most kids here like to play soccer. If they have a ball they are lucky. Otherwise, they just make a ball out of paper or something else. Fields are usually just dirt so soccer balls don't last very long!

The Basotho kids really know how to make things out of what they find. They can make trucks and cars out of wire. They even make them with steering wheels so that they can steer them on the dirt roads. My friend Dankie made one for me once.

They also like to play games like marbles, just like we do ... drawing a circle in the dirt and trying to knock the marbles out of the circle! And girls like playing a game that is like jacks but played with stones. I tried this game once and it is really hard!

What does an African guitar look like??? Well, you take a metal can ... a stick ... and some wire ... and put it all together. It is really a combination of a guitar and a violin.

Do you have your own room in America? Here in Lesotho we live in the Baptist Mission house and I have my room while my sisters share one room. But many families here live together in a one-room hut or a one-room house. The toilet is usually outside and they may need to heat the water if they want to take a hot bath.

Some of the Basotho kids are losing their parents to AIDS. If that happens then another relative ... like a grandmother or uncle or aunt will take care of them. But some are left alone and need to be cared for in an orphanage.

God loves the Basotho children as He loves you and me. Jesus said "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Will you pray that the Basotho children will believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior?