



Close Connections Partner's Meeting

November 1 and 2, 2010

Host: South Tampa Fellowship, Craig Rees, Senior Pastor

Attendees: Donna Chisam, Norman Schaefer, Gabi Schaefer, Modise Mokgwathise, Jeff Williams, Brad Ken and Renate Galyean, Brad Thomas, Steve Peterson, Terry Herald, Craig Rees, Todd Roberts, Kelly and Beth Green, Clay Smith, Nathan Waganer, Jock Hendricks, Jeff and April Sukup, Jennifer Clark, Ron and Mikel Pritz, Glen Norman, Chris Underwood, Brent Crowe, Jay Strack, Kenneth Balootja, Henri Robert, Mark Roberts.

November 1, 2010.

Craig Rees...Welcome and Challenge. We are all here having different perspectives on ministries. What will live on? It is easy to focus on the experience, but we need to focus on the Word. Let's look at the Transfiguration story. Each Gospel writer shares a different perspective.

Luke 9: 28-36. Luke uses Greek calendar, other Gospel writers use Hebrew. Staying awake = faith and belief. There is a struggle going on to believe. If we tell the story...there is fusion, confusion, Father corrects/rebukes Peter, We want our people to get involved in missions, but we need for the Word of God to come forth.

Mark 9:2-10. Focus on resurrection. Transfiguration is about Jesus' death and resurrection. This is what unites us.

Matthew 17: 1-9. Peter was speaking. When the Father spoke, saying My son in whom I am well pleased, Peter was touched.

2 Peter 1:15-1. Peter got it. Eye witness. Used Matthew's version. This is the version where Jesus touched Peter. Peter remembers the voice of God. We are here because we believe that God is doing something remarkable in Botswana. Pray for an increase in the Word of God.

Prayer.

Jeff Williams.

Thanks to Craig and STF. Review of Close Connections. Save physically and spiritually. Botswana is a gateway to Sub Saharan Africa.

What binds us together?

1. Purpose.
2. Projects and strategies and
3. Priorities.

To optimize the power of the partnership we must be **cohesive, communicative and collaborative.**

Ministry criteria review:

- 1) Sustainable,
- 2) empowering,
- 3) measurable and
- 4) fruitful, replicable.

Norman Schaefer. Modise Mokgwathise, April and Jeff Sukup, Gabi...OBC Team. A word of thanks to all for being at the meeting. I hope that by looking at the partnership you will see the value of partnerships. A word of testimony – there are hoards of Chinese entering Botswana and because of the partnership and this meeting we have a connection that may lead to a Chinese missionary.

2 Corinthians 5. Paul in defending his ministry...were are not trying to boast about what we are doing, but are giving you an opportunity to Praise the Lord.

OBC video.

See ministry highlights handout.

See Accomplishments and Priorities handout.

Introductions.

Jeff Williams.

Strategy Update. PPT will be added to www.closeconnections.org. **Need to pray for the government to buy into the Red Leaf system.**

\$175,000 needed. 75% short in FTN funding.

Norman Schaefer.

See 2011 Calendar of Partnership Opportunities. Jeff Sukup reviewed the Opportunities for Partnership in Church Planting and Church Revitalization.

Ken Gaylean...Call to Africa. Mosojane. The opportunity for partners is to work toward community transformation.

Gmail account holders can have access to the Botswana calendar.

Jeff and April Sukup. Testimony. Logistics. Try to not double book teams. Working to develop ability to go mobile...adding supplies as needed. Teams need to prepare in advance.

Dinner.

Prayer Groups.

Dismissal

November 2, 2010

Welcome.

Steve Peterson, Fresh Start for All Nations. Devotion. Matthew 12...take my yoke. The message and the messenger, a message that matters. Meekness, God tamed; humility, agreeing with God. Closed with prayer teams.

Modise. Face the Nation 2010 Reports.

Partner commitments for 2011.

TRADITIONAL AFRICAN RELIGIONS:

Modise Mokgwathise, Senior Pastor at Open Baptist Church, GWest, Gaborone, Botswana and Director of Face the Nation led an insightful session on Traditional African Religions. See summary comments and highlights below. Thank you, Modise, for this enlightening presentation!

- There is no one African traditional religion.
- There is no conversion in African traditional religion. You cannot convert from one African traditional religion to another. You must be born into the religion.

- It is impossible to separate the secular from the spiritual. For example, pouring some from a drink before drinking is an offering to the ancestors, a thank you. In African traditional religion, you must wake up before sunrise. The sun is viewed as the eye of God and you should be awake for God's blessing.

Who is God in African traditional religion?

Modemo is God in Botswana. In some cases there is a pantheon of Gods. In Botswana there is only one God, Modemo. This is the same God of Christianity in that there is one God who is the Creator. In Botswana, ancestors are mediators between man and God. When the Catholics came they did not make things better...they continued the practice of praying through the ancestors. Their concept of Priests was like a Chief who oversees the community. In some cases, the father in the house is the chief. Some are gifted to speak, they are the prophets. The prophet is believed to be "called." There are "signs" that they are set apart. The individual exists for the community and the community for the individual...it is a "we" environment. There is a belief that God likes noise...this is the reason that singing is a part of African traditions. Americans need to be expressive in their worship to connect with Africans. In English there are cousins. In African culture there is a different relationship. There is a difference in paternal relationships – cousins from the father's side are brothers, uncle is the "small" father. Maternal relationships are casual and are not as respected. In some cases there are acceptable sexual relationships within the maternal relationships.

Most African religions believe in eternity. There is a passage to a similar life. This is why people are buried with their belongings. The departed are considered responsible parents. They watch and discipline, sometimes they discipline an entire community. For example, one cannot cut a tree before harvest time. If you do and a hailstorm comes, it will be caused by the improper tree cutting. People are sensitive.

What qualifies one to be an ancestor?

- 1) They must be a parent;
- 2)) dead;
- 3) must have received proper burial. They must have died without any wrong doing; they must have died with moral integrity. There is a process to overturn the wrong doing. If they are thrown out to the animals they cannot be an ancestor.

There are various names that we refer to Modemo as: First, Modemo is an IT, not male or female. There are many praise names that teach about the attributes. Names of children reflect about parent's thinking at time of birth. A Motswana learns about God from the sayings. In Botswana there are no objects that teach about God.

How do you bridge the gap from a neutral reference to God to a masculine reference?

This is difficult. For example, when a Face the Nation student accepts Christ the family may reject them because the family wants the ancestral tradition to carry on.

The Water Church. What is it?

These are indigenous churches that have sprung up in Botswana. They take the Bible and merge it with the African traditional religion. They merge Modemo. They continue with their mediators. A lot of Africans believe in seeing. They must have something to carry home, an idol. They will take herbs and plants and mix with water and use for healing. Some consult and use the Bible. Some use tarot cards. Some use uniforms. Some wear charms. They have a lot of rituals, especially healing rituals. They connect with nature, astrology, baptize three times...

Modemo. IT is seen as absolutely one, not Triune. How does this connect the African religion with Islam?

This does in some respects make Islam attractive to the African. The Modemo is also so close to the God of the Bible that Christianity makes sense to many.

How are the women received?

Traditionally women have a role to play. Basically, Africa is a patriarch society. The problem is that as fallen men, they hid behind culture and women are not respected. Traditionally the men were to respect women. But, men have misused their power and have abused women. Sin has consumed the society, including the church.

If a female dies, can you pray through the female?

Yes, but usually through the Father.

Given the HIV/AIDS crisis the family has diminished. How has this impacted the culture?

The coming of industrialization has had a huge impact on the family and traditional religions. Family values have been badly impacted. Many fathers went to the mines in South Africa. The women took the entire role of parenting with an absentee father. We've raised men that don't know how to be fathers. They learned how to have multiple wives or partners. This became accepted in the culture. There is a saying – don't ask a man where he has been when he comes home late. A man is like "moonshine" passed from one to another. AIDS is a by-product of the breakdown of the traditional family.

How has the church addressed the deterioration of the family?

At Open Baptist Church over the past 3-4 years there has been an emphasis of teaching family values. Just recently we did a two month course on family life. 100s are coming on Sunday evening to receive this teaching.

Men at the point of puberty would be taken away from the family and spend time with family men who took them aside and taught them values. As missionaries came in and stopped some of the traditional schools. This was the beginning of losing traditional values. There is an effort to bring these back, but it is beginning with ancestral worship.

Is there an issue with the bride price?

Bride price is a huge problem in African. Initially it was an exchanging of gifts between families. The labola has increased. It was initially a communal thing. Now the burden weighs on the couple and it is a stumbling block to marriage. There is no standard for the labola. Leadership is talking about standardizing. ◆

Jeff Williams. Wrap up. Our desire is to be communicative and collaborative.

Six Pray Requests:

1. It is clear that God is doing far more through us collectively than He could ever have done individually. Give thanks. Plead with God to continue. We have only scratched the surface.
2. One of the challenges is to adopt an area. Relationships help build continuity. Pray about how you can do more; pray about adopting an area.
3. Pray about how to make sure that Face the Nation continues. There are questions about sustainability. We need leadership. Pray for where God wants FTN to go. God only reveals His plan a piece at a time.
4. In any area that we will be constantly listening and be willing to move forward.
5. Praise and pray for what He has allowed us to be a part of.
6. Thanks for Norman and Gabi and for their stamina. We will all be focused.

What have you learned? How do you feel?

- Kenneth Balootja. Word of Life, Dominican Republic. I want to see this partnership and its programs duplicated. It is about the Word of God and what we can do for Him! We need to do a *Face the Caribbean*.

Note: HIV & AIDS statistics

The statistics show that at the end of 2008, an estimated **240,000** people were living with [HIV](#) and [AIDS](#) in the Caribbean. Some **20,000** people were newly infected during 2008, and there were **12,000** deaths due to AIDS.

In the Bahamas more than 2% of the adult population is living with HIV. Higher prevalence rates are found only in sub-Saharan Africa, making the Caribbean the second-most affected region in the world. Half of adults living with the virus are women. <http://www.avert.org/caribbean.htm>

Norman. Many thanks to STF and the partners.

Kelly... Challenge and Prayer.

Dismissal.