

# Jarred and Megan Etheredge

Allie, Jady, Slade, Christopher

South Africa

jarred.etheredge@yahoo.com

The Etheredge family serves in a rural area of South Africa, approximately four hours north and slightly east of Johannesburg. Their ministry focuses on both community engagement and church development, with the goal of spreading the gospel and equipping local believers for discipleship and leadership.



## Ministry Approach

Their work is centered around two primary aspects. First, they engage with the local community through agriculture and skill-building training. These initiatives serve as practical tools while also providing opportunities to teach biblical discipleship principles and share the gospel through real-life applications.

Second, they partner with a network of local churches through the pastoral fraternal. Their role is to come alongside pastors and lay leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and resources to evangelize, disciple, and strengthen their congregations. This collaboration has led to the planting of their first church in a nearby village—an area that previously had no Christian presence.

## Goals for 2025

The Etheredge family has set several key goals for the coming years:

1. Training Center Development – Completing the initial phase of their training center, which will allow them to hold monthly on-site training for up to 100 people and provide housing for 25 trainees.
2. Church Plant Establishment – Finalizing the church plant and appointing a local leader to shepherd the congregation.
3. Pastoral Conferences – Hosting three annual conferences in partnership with the pastoral fraternal to strengthen biblical teaching and encourage sound doctrine within local churches.

## The Community They Serve

The Etheredge family primarily works among the Pedi tribe, the third-largest tribal group in South Africa, comprising approximately 10% of the national population. The Pedi maintain a traditional kingship structure, with local chiefs overseeing individual villages. Their customs closely resemble those of the Zulu people. Historically known for their strength and militancy, the Pedi today are largely peaceful and community-oriented.

## Challenges

While cultural and language barriers are inherent challenges in cross-cultural ministry, the greatest difficulties they face are spiritual. One of the most significant challenges is addressing the aftermath of mass evangelism movements from the late 20th century, which emphasized conversion without discipleship. As a result, many people in their region practice a form of syncretism, blending biblical teachings with ancestral worship.

A dominant force in the region is the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), which claims about 85% of the Pedi population as followers. Despite its name, the ZCC does not recognize Jesus as the Son of God but instead venerates their bishop, Le Kanyane, as their mediator to God. Ancestor worship is a key aspect of their faith, and reports suggest that human sacrifice is practiced during their annual pilgrimage to their main compound, Moriah.

Additionally, many churches in the area focus on healing and deliverance ministries, emphasizing performance-driven worship and pastoral idolatry. Apostolic movements, along with small Muslim and Hindu communities, are also present.

## Spiritual Landscape

Biblically sound churches make up less than 10% of the faith community in their area. True evangelical believers are similarly scarce. However, approximately 35% of the population has been exposed to some aspects of the gospel, though many lack a full understanding of biblical truth.

Despite these challenges, the Etheredge family remains committed to their mission of making Christ known, strengthening the local church, and equipping believers to stand firm in their faith. Through agricultural training, pastoral development, and church planting, they continue to serve as faithful witnesses in South Africa