

By Richard and Renee Cook



Sharing the Hope!

Volume 11, Issue 1

Dateline January 27, 2005

New Strength: Returning to Botswana.

Furloughs are long journeys with many hours and miles spent on the road. Having traveled over 30,000 mile through 16 states in 2004 we were built up for our return to Botswana. Thank you for all your encouraging words. How wonderful to be strengthened by God's people for God's work.

The journey back to Botswana in November seemed long. Flying from Dallas, Texas through Frankfurt, Germany, the family was temporarily split up. Renee and the three younger children (Dallas, Laura and Peter) returned directly to Thamaga to restore the house to a livable condition. After four nights in our guesthouse they finally had enough unpacked in the house to move back in. Also, they had evicted the numerous lizards, geckos, spiders and ants that had

moved in during the vacancy.

Ah, what a relief to be awakened by the familiar sound of the village cock crowing or the neighbor's donkey making a fuss. The opportunity for the four of them to work together was a bonding time for them to exercise their hearts as servants for the family.

When we separated in Frankfurt, Richard, Sarah, John and Emory took a detour to Italy for some time to do intensive history and art study. For two weeks in Italy Richard showed them the sites that he had studied 30 years before when he was with his class from Concordia Senior College. They all savored the time together learning as young adults

under the tutelage of the family scholar. With college ahead for the boys in the near future, this time of bonding strengthened family loyalties to tie us together all the better for our work in Botswana.

Reunited and settled in Thamaga, we returned to fulltime home school on January 3. Richard is back working with the many language associations around the country with many journeys ahead of him [see our report and plans on page 2 & 3].

We thank the Lord for the safe journeys of 2004, both around the US and back to Botswana. Praise God for His gift of renewed strength with which we serve in His kingdom. ☸

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For I have
given new
strength
to the tired
soul and
to every
sorrowing soul
in full measure.
Jer 31:25
Bible in Basic
English

While returning home is always good, one may not look forward to the journey. Hours on foot, in a car or even a plane are exhausting, not only to the body but also to the heart. God's promise in Jeremiah to the children of Israel in their Babylonian captivity was for strength not only for the body but also for the heart. The new strength in their souls when they return is strength to carry on the new tasks that God will have ready.

Please remember
In your prayers

✿ Praise ✿

- thank the Lord for a safe journey back to Botswana and renewed strength for His service.

- thank the Lord for Reteng and it's desire to carry on the work of language development and Bible translation

-thank the Lord for committed supporters who abundantly met our needs last year.

✿ Prayer ✿

- seek the Lord's guidance and support for the Yeyi and Khwe as they await the arrival of the Beckendorfs to assist them

- seek the Lord's timing and direction for the Setswana Concordance project

-for the success of our vehicle mission project so that we have the needed transportation to carry on our work.

*Prayer
Requests*

Moving Ahead with New Strength

With the beginning of a new year and with new strength, we long to report to you, our colleagues, what is being achieved through your support. Here is a summary of progress made, predicaments faced, plans proposed and prayer participation needs in bringing God's Word to the unreached people of Botswana.

Yeyi

Progress - The Yeyi have produced a primer and other material for use in a future literacy program.

Predicament – Shortly after the beginning of 2005, Regent D.K. Samagabadi died. [He had been installed as regent to provide interim leadership following the death of their paramount chief, Shikati Kamanakao, in 2003.] Once again the Yeyi must begin the process of identifying a new leader.

Plan – Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf are assigned to begin work with the Yeyi in 2005. After their June arrival, Richard will assist them for a smooth transition into the project. Publication of several new booklets and further training of writers and translation workers is planned in 2005.

Prayer - Seek the Lord's guidance and support for the Yeyi as they appoint a new interim leader. Please pray for Rev. and Mrs. Beckendorf as they progress into their work with the Yeyi.

Khwe

Progress - *Voices of the San** was recently published through efforts of the Khwe and other San people as a compilation of thoughts and expressions of the San and their lives. The book offers an insightful look into their views of their current world.

Predicament – The Khwe are resident throughout Botswana and Namibia making access for development difficult. A 4x4 is necessary to reach them to help them to move into the next phase of development toward Bible translation.

Plan – Once Richard has the necessary transportation, he will begin Key Terms and Principles of Translation workshops with the Khwe in preparation for the arrival of Rev. and Mrs. Beckendorf, who will assume responsibility of the work in 2006. A music workshop is tentatively planned for 2005.

Prayer – Please pray for a peaceful setting and hearts open for training among the Khwe.

* *Voices of the San* is available for purchase in the US from Barnes and Noble.com or Amazon.com ISBN No. 0795701926

Reteng

Progress – As a multicultural coalition of 13 language and cultural associations in Botswana, Reteng has taken over the work of the former Botswana Language Use Project (BLUP). Reteng is assisting the various language associations with organization and motivation toward language development and Bible Translation. Now that LBT is helping fund this project, Richard will represent LBT's interests on the committee without having to plan all the meetings. That is progress!

Predicament – New relationships always takes time to build trust and acceptance.

Plan – Workshops are planned with three language groups in March, April, and June to further organize and establish active language projects with the Kgalagadi, Subiya and Tsiretsire language groups.

Prayer – Please pray that the adjustment goes well and the work moves ahead in spreading the Gospel.

!Xoo

Progress - Dave and Ginny Long of SIM have settled into this project and have built both a house and office in the village of Ukwi. Language learning and enculturation are well under way.

Predicament – Our current vehicles do not allow Richard to travel to this project.

Plan – Richard will continue meeting with Longs to encourage and provide assistance as

necessary every 2-3 months when they come in from the desert.

Prayer - Thank the Lord for the successes that the Longs are experiencing as the project moves ahead.

Setswana Concordance

Progress - During our furlough this project again came to a standstill.

Predicament – The United Bible Societies (UBS) still express a vision of the concordance as a viable project, but insufficient local initiative remains a problem.

Plan – Richard hopes to visit with UBS leadership in South Africa to discuss what has taken place and plans for the future.

Prayer – Please pray that a God-pleasing resolution will come to this project.

Other Ministry Related Goals for 2004 –

Progress – From February to November, 2004 we traveled 30,000 miles visiting 418 supporters from Arizona to Connecticut and from Minnesota to Texas. Richard completed three courses at Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics, Dallas, Texas to equip him to do further research on the language situation in Botswana.

Predicament – In recent years we have been producing our prayer letter in Botswana for the sake of including numerous pictures and more timely reports. Alas, production and shipping

cost in Botswana have increased sharply and now prohibit us from doing so. Other technical difficulties beyond our control do not allow us to include pictures any longer. For the time being, to view the best pictures of our ministry and life, please visit our website at www.rcook.org.

You can also view pictures with our monthly email updates. To subscribe to the email update, just send us a note requesting it to our email address listed on the back of this prayerletter.

Budgeted Income 2004

\$ 99,025

Budgeted Expense 2004

\$ 94,710

Actual Income 2004

\$ 90,463

Actual Expense 2002

\$ 92,481

Projected Monthly Budget for 2005

\$ 6,630

Your generosity in caring for our needs strengthens us for service while motivating us to make the best use of those resources and reduce our expenditures. Were it not for the \$2,330 for repairs on our vehicle for 2004 just to keep it running, we would have held expenses below the income.

Prayer – Thank the Lord for committed supporters and prayer warriors like you who meet our ministry needs and carry our needs to the Lord in prayer, making our work possible. ☺

New Wheels for Long Journeys: A Mission Project

Upon returning to Botswana Renee retrieved our 1999 VW Caravelle van from friends holding it in our absence. They had driven it less than 500 miles in the nine months we were gone, because it was persistently breaking down. Renee took over on the repairs by having a new exhaust manifold installed before Richard's return. That, alas, was only the beginning.

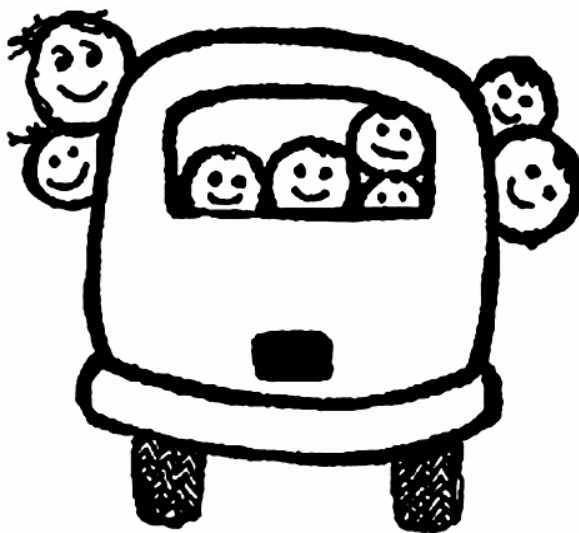
In the first weeks after Richard's return, the main alarm shorted out as well as the main fuse box, leaving him with the pleasure of being towed twice, once for over 480 miles.

Well, it was getting to the point we couldn't trust the van or the

repairs done on it to travel very far. We were even more perplexed, because it was our only vehicle. We had really hoped to postpone this problem until our next furlough. Unfortunately, the VW just wouldn't seem to cooperate that long. The repairs were getting too costly and frequent to be

- a Toyota Condor 4x4 Diesel TX that can hold four people and gear for remote trips. For more information about these vehicles you can look at www.toyota.co.za and look under the **Models** tab.

The vehicle project was approved with an unconventional twist.



Our transportation situation was so tenuous that we purchased the Toyota Tazz immediately with our own personal funds, funds that we had set aside for emergency travel use for returning to the states for a funeral or medical reason. LBT will reimburse us when the mission project is fully

good stewards of your resources. We began to examine our options and to honestly look at our needs. We noted that Richard is gone for several weeks at times leaving Renee and the rest home without a vehicle. Also, in assessing Richard's future travel we realized that the new language projects are remote and will potentially require a 4x4 to reach the villages.

With that in mind, we proposed and LBT approved that we replace the VW with two vehicles:

- a small Toyota Tazz 130 for running to the capital for weekly meetings (about 370 miles per week) and

funded. In the interim we can rely on the Tazz to take some of the burden off of the ailing VW and pressure off our frazzled nerves.

When the mission project is fully funded we will proceed with the purchase of the Toyota Condor. With the resale value of the VW figured in, **\$30,000** is needed to complete the project.

Would you, please, prayerfully consider helping us in this matter? If the Lord places a burden on your heart for us, contributions to LBT designated *Cook Vehicle Fund* will bring this all to resolution. ☸

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Cook Ministry /Botswana
Cook Vehicle Fund

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