



By Richard and Renee Cook

# Sharing the Hope!

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## My Strength Through His Power

"I've called the doctor, and she can see you this morning at 11."

Those words were a goad for me (Renee) to admit my problem. I could overlook three evenings spent writhing in pain since it was only once a week stretched over three weeks. I could wait it out, but not Richard since he had experience similar pain about 8 years back. He tattled on me to the doctor, and I was obligated to go.

Frankly, Dr. Shams put me instantly at ease with her first words, "You look healthy." [Only in Africa can obese be labeled healthy.] I told her why Richard had made the appointment, about the repeated pain, and she instantly put her finger on my problem, literally, on my gallbladder. I nearly

jumped off the exam table. In less than 15 minutes I was next door at the diagnostic clinic to have an ultrasound. The incriminating test confirmed at least one nasty gallstone resting at the gallbladder exit. The floating offender was periodically occluding the exit, causing pain. In a blink, I had an appointment for the next day with the surgeon, who was keen to remove the offending organ as soon as possible. I was scheduled to report to the hospital in two days for check in.

Frankly, I do not recall much of the day of surgery, but I think I astounded the nurses on the first day after surgery. I insisted on taking a walk in the hallway, not a customary request from patients. On that same day the doctor seeing my progress and determination hinted that I might be able to be heading home the next day. "You are a strong woman", were his exact words.

On the second day after surgery, I was heading home with my lone

pecan-sized gallstone in hand. I still had much recovery time to spend but I could at least spend it at home being pampered by those who knew how to do it best. Believe me, it was like a taste of heaven to get home.

Looking back, the whole experience gave me a greater understanding of God's power and involvement in my life. It wasn't my decisions nor was it really even my power, but His and all according to His timing, too.

I thank the Lord that Richard was home at the time to "tattle" on me and to keep the family moving ahead. I thank the Lord that I was able to find a good surgeon to have the necessary operation in Botswana and not have to travel to South Africa. The entire family thanks the Lord that it is over, and we have another opportunity to work by His power in our lives. ☺

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And for this purpose I am working, using all my strength by the help of His power which is working in me strongly.

Col 1:29

St. Paul was acutely aware that regardless of how much energy he put into a particular endeavor, the success did not depend on his own strength or his own planning. Success depended on God's power!

Oh yes, we still have to exert ourselves with all our might; nevertheless, it is God working through us that accomplishes His great purpose - the saving of many souls. ☺

Please remember

In your prayers

❖ Praise ❖

for God's powerful protective hand and the surgeon's skillful hands during Renee's operation

for God's unique timing in bringing people together to accomplish His purpose of spreading His Good News

❖ Prayer ❖

that our vehicle mission project will continue to receive funding and soon allow us to replace our current vehicle

that doors continue to open for new translation projects to develop among the unreached people of Botswana

that the political climate of Botswana remain open to the development of the minority languages

*Prayer Requests*

## All According to His Timing

We never cease to be amazed as the Lord works for His purpose. Eight years ago, the Bakgalagarihi talked with Richard about translation, but nothing came together at that time. For 2005, Richard hoped it would take off.

At the end of 2004, Richard met Dr. Monaka of the University of Botswana, a Bakgalagarihi mother tongue speaker. She was enthusiastic about putting together a hymn book for the Bakgalagarihi, containing a few Bible verses and the Lord's prayer. Now the orthography (alphabet) can begin to be tested among the Bakgalagarihi, who live

in the western part of the country. Work is getting underway.

Another project planned to begin this year is also making strides forward. While initial work with the Tsoa of the central part of the country was started several years ago, progress had halted.

While in the states, we met a seminary student who expressed interest in working with LBT in the area of translation. He asked about doing his vicarage year in Botswana.

In December, Richard began working with the Lutheran Church in Southern Africa and the Seminary Placement seeking the approval

Committee of Concordia Theological Seminary in for this vicarage. Praise the Lord, everyone has agreed, and Christopher LaBoube has been approved for this placement. He will assist in one of the congregations here in Botswana as part of his assignment while he also works with Richard in the development of the Tsoa Bible Translation Project. Chris is currently finishing his second year in seminary. After his third seminary year he will be coming to Botswana in the summer of 2006.

Lastly, Richard is hoping to advance to a project with the Subiya of northern Botswana. We will tell you more about them next time. ☺



## Hospital Vernacular

In working through the hospital maze, we noticed that we had to learn a new jargon for key items in the hospital. Since initial development in Botswana was under the care of the

British, the medical system is fashioned after the British model. A person who trains to be a nurse is addressed as "sister" regardless of their gender.

Try to match up these other terms that kept Renee on her toes in trying to learn the British medical jargon spoken African-style.

### Botswana/ British term

1. Restroom
2. Theatre
3. Dust bin
4. Toilet

### American term

- A. trash can
- B. bathroom
- C. operating room
- D. break room

**Answers: 1 - D, 2 - C, 3 - A, 4 - B**