



By Richard and Renee Cook

Sharing the Hope!

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Sizzle, Pop, Bang, Flash !

On December 21, we had gathered in the living room for a quiet family evening, but then it all broke loose.

Sizzle, pop, bang, flash!

When you hear the boom of the thunder before you see the flash of the lightening you can be certain you have experienced a direct strike of lightening. We waited for the odor of fire, but it never came.

When we checked the telephone in the living room we confirmed that the "pop" was from the jack taking the blow. The phone was out.

Not until the next morning did we find out the rest of the story. Upon entering the office Emory found shads of plastic and metal all over the room. It seemed the strike entered the phone jack in Richard's office and caused a desk clock

to explode into bits of shrapnel throughout the room. Even though the phone and all the electronics were unplugged from the phone line, the charge apparently entered by way of the jack and then arced eight inches to the disengaged plug laying on the desk, exploding the clock in its path. The charge evidently surged through the line wire to the fax machine and Richard's lap top computer, melting down the working mechanisms in both of them. The charge must have exited through the ground wires of both of those machines, as they were still plugged into the power socket.

Given the war-zone appearance of the room, we were thankful no one was present for the strike. Likewise, we were thankful that the charge found an exit through the ground lines of the electronic equipment. From the charred

marks on the wall and on Richard's desk, we shutter to think of what damage could have taken place with the unchecked power of that bolt of lightening.

We were very fortunate that the Botswana Telecommunication technician reported just hours later to repair the damaged telephone jacks. LBT's self insurance has covered the cost of replacements for the damaged items. A new IBM laptop computer is scheduled to arrive on January 18th with LBT recruiter, Peter Slayton. We are in the process of replacing the rest of the equipment. We should be able to return to a normal work routine before long.

Our God is very good. He continues to protect us and to provide for our needs. Our hope is fixed firmly in His providence. Thank you, Lord. ☸

The LORD
is good
to those
whose hope
is in Him,
to the one
who seeks
Him.
Lam 3:25

Looking back to the days of our catechesis, we remember the attributes of God. Those attributes tell us who God is, what He is like and how He acts. His goodness as one of those attributes reminds us He desires what is best for our welfare, for our safety, for our provision. Then in His deeds He carries out His desires and actually gives us more than we ever deserve. What better reason to seek His face, His presence. In Him our hope is fulfilled, our dreams meet reality. ☸

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The Lord Is Good in All He Does

Please remember
In your prayers

☼ Praise ☼

for committed supporters and prayer warriors like you who make our work possible.

☼ Prayer ☼

for open hearts and minds for the language development and Bible translation efforts of Reteng. Pray for peace and harmony among the people groups of Botswana.

that the office of societies allows us to make the appeal for NGO status for the !Xoo thus paving the road for raising funds and publication of materials.

for fruitful meetings with the pastors and leaders of the Bible Societies in Botswana and South Africa.

that the Lord continue His mighty work among the Khwe and Yeyi as they translate His Word into their languages.

Prayer Requests



Again with the beginning of a new year, it is good to reflect on just how good our Lord has been in fulfilling His promise of being with us and caring for us. As we have done now for several years, we yearn to report to you, our colleagues, what the Lord has achieved through your support. Below is the summary of the progress achieved, the predicaments confronted, the projections proposed and the prayers requested in bringing God's Word to the unreached people of Botswana.

Reteng

Progress – Under local leadership, Reteng conducted language workshops with the Bakgalagarhi and Subiya. Richard assisted in producing a small hymnbook with Bible selections of the Lord's Prayer and 23rd Psalm. Richard carried out a survey among the Bakgalagarhi to assess the orthography developed by Dr. K. Monaka and establish language development committees within the villages. Richard also produced the 2006/2007 pocket calendar that Reteng will use around the country for public relations and fund raising for further development.

Predicament – Progress in development of minority languages is moving slowly. While attitudes are changing in Botswana, time is needed for many to accept the idea that education in all minority languages will build a thriving country with ethnic diversity.

Projections – Richard continues to meet with Reteng on a monthly basis to plan workshops around the country. He hopes to meet with the leadership of Bakgalagarhi early in 2006 and with Subiya later on in the year.

Prayer – We ask you to pray for open hearts and minds for the language development and Bible translation efforts of Reteng. Pray for peace and harmony among the people groups of Botswana.

!Xoõ

Progress – Dave and Ginny Long continued their work among the !Xoõ with

Richard assisting with a survey in September to access the vitality of the language. Every other month, the Longs stayed with us when they came in from the desert to regroup and resupply. They are currently on furlough in the US until about August.

Predicament – Very late in 2005, we learned that the non-governmental organization (NGO) status for the project had been rejected. We had even missed an appeal date, because the rejection letter was misplaced in an office in Gaborone.



Richard checking Shekgalagarhi orthography.

Pastor AB, a strong supporter of the development efforts, is in need of a driver's license. Classes are not available where he lives, so he travels 700 kilometers to stay with us and takes classes at a local driving school.

Projections – We hope to work with the !Xoõ during the Long's furlough to assist with development as needed. Richard hopes to work with Pastor AB to appeal the NGO application rejection.

Prayer – Pray that the office of societies allows us to make the appeal for NGO status thus paving the road for raising funds and publication of materials.

Setswana Concordance

Progress – The Bible Society of Botswana has officially embraced the project as their responsibility. Richard is now a technical advisor only.

Predicament – The project has had numerous difficulties that leave people questioning the feasibility of the project. The Bible Society of Botswana also has financial concerns over project costs and how they will be covered.

Projections – In February, Richard plans to visit Bible Society offices in Capetown to discuss plans and gain technical knowledge in the production of concordances. Meetings are being planned by the Bible Society of Botswana to acquaint pastors and education leaders of the Christian community with the concept of the concordance and gain local financial support for the project.

Prayer – Please ask for fruitful meetings with the pastors and leaders of the Bible Societies in Botswana and South Africa.

Yeyi / Khwe

Progress – Rev. Tim and Lisa Beckendorf were assigned to begin work with the Yeyi in 2005. After their June arrival, Richard assisted them toward a smooth transition into the project. Publication of several new booklets took place at the end of 2005 including: History of the Wayeyi; Shiyeyi Scripture Calendar 2006; three coloring books on such subjects as totems, scripture verses and month names; and an insert of song lyrics for the most recent Shiyeyi music CD.

Now that Richard has the necessary transportation, he will work with Rev. and Mrs. Beckendorf in planning and conducting Key Terms and Principles of Translation workshops with the Khwe.

Predicament – While experiencing bittersweet feelings in letting go of these projects after working with them for many years, we rejoice in the blessing from the Lord in placing them in such capable hands as the Beckendorfs.



Dr. Kemmonye Monaka at Letlhakeng orthography workshop.

Projections – Richard will make himself available as the projects transition to the Beckendorfs and assist them with their relocation, but this project will no longer appear on our report as a regular duty.

Prayer – We ask that the Lord continue His mighty work among the Khwe and Yeyi as they translate His Word into their languages.

Other Ministry Goals

With the transfer of projects to other missionaries, Richard is able to begin work among other language groups. In 2006, he plans to evaluate the need for Scripture Use Media work among the Herero and Mbukushu by conducting a survey with Kedra Larson from LBT in mid-2006.

He has been asked to assist in assessing the developmental needs of lan-

guage groups in neighboring Namibia. An initial trip will be completed by the time you read this prayer letter.

This year Richard will also serve as the vicarage supervisor for Chris LaBoube. Upon completion of his seminary studies in Fort Wayne, Vicar LaBoube will assist Richard in the initial development work with the Tsoa people of the central Kalahari Desert while gaining parish experience in the Serowe congregation.

In addition to his regular work, the leadership of LBT approved Richard for studies at the University of South Africa in Pretoria (UNISA). At the writing of this letter, he is in process of making application for an MA in Sociolinguistics. Once complete, he will proceed toward a doctorate.

Finances

Budgeted Income 2005	\$ 84,227
Actual Income 2005	\$ - - - -
Budgeted Expense 2005	\$ 80,216
Actual Expense 2005	\$ 71,165
Projected Monthly Budget for 2006	\$ 6966

Unfortunately, at the writing of this letter, we do not have the final income figures for 2005. We were able to reduce our expenses by \$9,051. We also were able to reduce our vehicle mission project by the selling price of the VW Caravelle. Once we have these final figures we will report them to you. Your commitment to our needs encourages us to be faithful stewards to the resources the Lord provides through you.

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 this work possible. ☸

The New-To-Us Land Cruiser

Last year as we began raising funds for a 4x4 that would allow Richard access to the remote people groups in Botswana, we were considering a new vehicle. It soon became clear that would **not** be a possibility for several reasons.

We modified our expectations down for a used diesel 4x4 that could hold 8 people and still be within the projected mission project.

Little did we expect that the Lord would provide us with the following:

- 1996 Toyota Land Cruiser VX
- 4.2 Turbo Diesel
- cruise control
- power steering & brakes
- air conditioning
- sun roof
- automatic transmission
- seating for 8.

We had several mechanics check it out before purchasing. All of them agreed that this was one of the best vehicles Toyota ever made. It even meets all NATO standards for its military vehicles. Fortunately, this one had not seen that kind of action. It had not even been out in the bush very often.



With a trailer in tow, we have room for all our luggage and plenty of power to maneuver even the steepest grades of southern Africa's mountains.

The Lord has again provided far beyond our expectations and even dreams. Thank the Lord for His wonderful provision. We thank wonderful supporters, too, like you who made this possible. 🌿

Rondoval Improvements

By September, Richard will begin serving as Vicarage Supervisor for Chris Laboube. Chris is currently finishing his last year at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He then heads to SIL in North Dakota for courses to prepare for linguistic work in Botswana.

His vicarage assignment will include Word and Sacrament work with an English speaking congregation in Serowe under the direction of Rev. Christof Weber of the LCSA and project development work alongside Richard with the Tsoa speaking people of central Botswana.

Chris will live part time in Serowe and part time in

Thamaga in our rondoal. Before moving in though, we need to put a fence around the rondoal and build a latrine/bathroom within the fenced area.



The cost for the fence will be \$1000 and the cost for the latrine/bathroom is \$2000. If you are interested in assisting with this project, please, designate Cook Vicarage Improvements on your donations. 🌿

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