



# Far Trekkin'



News from Rob and Eshinee Veith

Volume 4, Issue 1

January/February, 2008



the dancing sni

excerpts from Eshinee's blog

## View from a tent

by Eshinee

*"Now, we all know that it is harder to build a house on rock."*

Suddenly, despite the 2 hours we had just spent sitting stickily in the heat of that morning in the ELCB church in Francistown, Rev. David Titus had my full attention. We all know what? He continued. "It is much easier to build on sand. You just dig a hole in it and build there."

This was a twist on Matthew 7:24-27 that I hadn't heard preached before. The parable that Jesus gives here, about not just hearing what he has to say but doing it, is one that I've always taken to be speaking about being smart. As in, duh; if you're smart, you build somewhere where your house won't disintegrate. Therefore, if you're smart, you'll do what Jesus says to do. Seems like he wouldn't really even need a parable for that one, right? Spoken like a true person from a place where people don't have much experience building on sand! But if you know that building on rock is actually harder, then deciding to do so is to not only think about the future of your house but to accept that you will face difficulty because of your location choice.

Once again, God shows a knack for telling me what I need to hear, when I need to hear it. We had just spent the past week with Jim, our LBT supervisor, working on a future plan for our ministry in Namibia.

I was presented with 2 potential translation projects, which I will call Project A and Project B. Project A is pretty straight forward; they have a solid church presence,

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More dancing sni at <http://eshinee.blogspot.com>



Rob recorded congregational singing in Kalanga for a potential Kalanga hymnody revival project. Many congregations which are primarily Kalanga do not use their mother tongue for worship because they don't know the tunes to the songs.

## Dreams may come true

*Opportunities to help a pastor realize a vision for reviving Kalanga hymnody*

by Rob

I had been in Botswana only a few weeks when a local Kalanga pastor approached me with a dream. He wanted to develop a professional recording studio in Francistown. There are many choirs here who are developing Christian material who, if they want to record, must go to South Africa or Zimbabwe, he told me. He was not, himself, a recordist or producer; he's an administrator. He told me he wouldn't know how to start up such a project and he has been hoping that someone would come along to help him. The Kalanga community, specifically, has a need for materials recorded in their language, to:

ethnically Kalanga churches use English or Setswana for church. Access to more recorded Kalanga material may encourage Kalanga use in the churches for which Kalanga is the mother tongue of the majority of congregants. We want to record both sermons and songs.

- *revive the Kalanga hymnody.* A Kalanga hymnody was produced 50-60 years ago, consisting primarily of translated European hymns, though adapted to an African rhythm and harmony. According to a missionary colleague who works in the Kalanga community, the hymnody is largely unused because

- *encourage the use of Kalanga in church.* Currently, many

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# DANCING SNI

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a large language community, good literacy and church interest in a translation effort. The project would involve review of the already published gospels and continuation on to the rest of the New Testament.

Project B is a little less neat and tidy; low literacy, a small language group and unknown interest in vernacular scripture. A full Bible was translated but cannot be published until it is checked. It cannot be checked and approved for print until the heirs of the copyright of the text (the exegete and mother tongue translator are both deceased) release it for checking, which we aren't sure if that will ever happen. This group is considered to be one of the least evangelized in Namibia.

Now, Project A appeals to me because it seems less problematic and with an immediately receptive audience for a published Bible. But Project B tugs at my heart, knowing that a Bible sits on a hard drive, waiting to be available to a group that needs it, no matter how small the group.

That's where I need to learn to be smart, God-style. Coming from a Western culture, I want timelines, schedules and solid goals. I want to dig in and start throwing up my four walls. Given how long it's taken us to get here, especially since we've only come as far as Botswana, I'm tempted to just pick a project that looks like the path of least resistance and run with it, hoping the locals will catch up. But who is in charge of building houses, anyway? Psalms 127:1 makes it clear that building houses is God's

business, that it's with God's involvement or it's a waste of time. I need to respect the process of the local language communities and wait until they are ready to begin work on their Bible translation. It will be, after all, their Bible, not mine. I'm just the hired help.

So, what do I do until I can get started on that God-built house? I pitch a tent, wherever I can. It's something we've done a bit more in the last bunch of years than we generally like but we can do it longer, if that's part of the Building Plan. In the meantime, I'm camping out on other construction sites. LBT, as a part of their growth plan, will be expanding the work in Botswana. In preparation for that, they've asked me to catalogue and make accessible the language data and printed materials for Botswana, to assist planning for project development. I'm also working on exegesis of some Bible stories in one of the local languages. They were translated a few years ago but need checking to be ready for publication. Being the only LBT exegete in-country who doesn't have their hands full, I'm a prime candidate for this task. I finished a rough check of the backdraft last month and plan to connect with the original translators in the north at a writer's workshop next month. Frankly, I'm just glad to feel useful, however short term these campsites may be.

I mean, even God lived in a tent, from Moses' ministry until Solomon's kingdom. What's a year in Botswana?

# KALANGA

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most Kalanga speakers do not know the tunes to the songs; only words are printed in the hymnal. The pastor knows several churches which still use the songs; he wants to record them as a way to help the Kalanga-speaking churches relearn their hymns.

- *aid in the development of Scripture-based minority language programming.* Recently, the government of Botswana approved the development of minority language programming. For the first time in many years, speakers of minority languages such as Kalanga can create radio programs. One of the biggest challenges of minority language radio programming where none has previously existed is to develop quality content. He hope Kalanga hymn singing and preaching can be adapted for radio programming.

His dream falls right into my expertise, I told him. We've been talking about what we'll need to get started, in terms of equipment, facilities, and personnel. I will probably do some initial recordings myself, but will have a goal set to train a permanent recordist by the time I leave the area. I will use my own equipment initially, but once things get moving, my colleagues hope to acquire grant money to purchase their own equipment in order to be completely self-sufficient within about a year.

We have made a few test recordings (as seen in the picture) to help us decide how we want to produce the final recordings.

Please pray for God's hand to be active and His will clear in this exciting endeavor.

## Contributions & Correspondence

*in the US:*  
Rob & Eshinee Veith  
c/o LBT  
PO Box 2050  
Aurora, IL 60507-2050

*in Canada:*  
LBT of Canada  
Box 934  
Kitchener, ON N2G 4E3

Write in check memo line: *Veith ministry*

**Email:** REVeith@LBT.org

**Weblog:** <http://eshinee.blogspot.com>

**Website:** <http://web.mac.com/reveith>

