



# Far Trekkin'



*News from Rob and Eshinee Veith*

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## Raiders of the lost archive

by Eshinee

Rob and I are, as you may know, technophiles. If it runs on electricity, has its own brain and does something cool, we either own it, want it or know something about it. Probably an extreme overstatement but you get the idea. We are well suited to this digital age. This means that we are also well suited to one of our major tasks at hand; digital data recovery.

LBT has nearly two decades of history of work in Botswana, some of this work taking place prior to the common use of personal computer. For example, there is a large box of cassette tapes in the LBT resource inventory, most of these being more than a decade old and stored in a country typically known for bouts of extreme heat. Cassettes are not famed for their longevity under the best of conditions and, while Rob has tested them to be currently playable, whether or not the contents of these cassettes would be retrievable much beyond the next few years is anybody's guess. They contain many hours of language survey data and represent many years of work on the part of both LBT and Batswana missionary workers. So, Rob is currently in the process of making digital versions of these survey sessions, one cassette at a time. When he's finished, the



**Yes, Eshinee couldn't help but feel like a famous intrepid archeologist from mid-80's cinema as she discovered a treasure trove of linguistic data needing to be preserved for future generations.**

resulting data will be in a format easily useable by linguistic researchers and language program workers.

I came across a similar treasure while going through language program files; a folder full of handwritten Scripture, translated into one of the local languages by a mother tongue speaker. Is it publishable? Not knowing the language, I have no way to tell. Linguistic software is invaluable for checking a translation but it can't be used until the translation is entered into the computer. So, I am typing the translation, one book at a time, so that it can be both preserved (some

of the pages are already beginning to discolor) and checked by a consultant for its use in a future publication. Then, I will make an interlinear version of it in the Bible translation software, Toolbox (probably more information than you need), to speed back translation into English, part of the checking process.

We have these treasures in boxes of cardboard and need to make them treasures on chips of silicon (to sorely misuse 2 Corinthians 4:7). Pray that God will empower people to make wise use of these resources once they have been reclaimed from their dusty origins.

# Found in... data entry?



Above: Eshinee attends a Yeyi writers' workshop in Gumare, Botswana. Around her, Yeyi writers are editing manuscripts for publication. Photo by Lydia Nyati-Ramahobo.

by Eshinee

If you got received our September 2005 newsletter, you may recall the article I wrote “Found in Translation”, on who benefits from Bible translation. If you didn’t get that issue and would like to read it, let me know and I’ll send you a copy. The gist of it was that the three beneficiaries are the receptor language group, the world-wide church and me. What I didn’t consider when I wrote that article was how quickly some of those beneficiaries could begin reaping the benefits of Bible transla-

tion. For me, it began last month.

One of my tasks over the next year is to set up a digital language database that can be used for Shiyeyi Scripture translation in the future.

To start, I’m entering words and their meanings from the recently published Shiyeyi dictionary. As a result, I’m beginning to appreciate the beauty and complexity of this language at an accelerated rate. I love it when a language has a single word for what can only be expressed as a complicated concept in English. When a language has such words, it tells you something about that culture and its common experiences and values. Some of my favorite Shiyeyi words are the following verbs; *ncukuna*, *ncamina* and *sindisira*. *Ncukuna* means “eat while removing bones at the same time”. *Ncamina* means “bigger calf milks instead of a younger one”. *Sindisira* means “walk with someone for a distance and then come back”—this one is my favorite. Too bad these probably won’t be needed for a Bible translation, eh?

But some words that I’ve encountered which will be needed for translation have given me an exciting foretaste of the Word to come. Like other languages, some Shiyeyi words have multiple meanings that

allow for a richer translation than I experience in English—this is where I benefit. One such word is *maropa*. When I read that word and its English gloss, I got chills. This is the kind of thing we exegetes live for. Now, I considered just telling you why this word is going to be exciting to anyone who takes my database and works on Scripture translation. Instead, I decided to give you the two meanings and a list of Scripture references so that you can experience these passages afresh, as the Wayeyi will when they read them for the first time—this is where you benefit. You get to be a part of that moment when the world-wide church gains a richer expression of God’s Word, even if only in part. I can’t tell you how excited I am for you, just thinking about it.

What about the Wayeyi themselves? How do they benefit? This is where you and I can give back. I can spend the sweet hours at my laptop, language data in hand, building a foundation for translation. We can pray that God would inspire the Wayeyi to fully take hold of the task of Bible translation into their mother tongue, Shiyeyi. We can provide funding and personnel until the cows come home (and there’s probably a single Shiyeyi verb for that) but we also need God to raise up mother tongue speakers to the task.

To see more pictures from the Writers’ Workshop (and our low-key Christmas in the delta area), see <http://gallery.mac.com/reveith/100062>

## Shiyeyi Show-stoppers

Maropa means both “money” and “blood”. Check out these passages to discover the richer understanding we gain from God’s word through translation into the Yeyi language.

References:

- Romans 5:1-11
- Ephesians 1:7-8
- Ephesians 2:11-13
- Colossians 1:15-20
- Hebrews 9:11-14
- Revelation 1:5-6

# Opportunity knocks at Music Camp

by Rob

My job description includes items so basic and straightforward that I had accomplished my objectives even before arriving in the field (“Establish and maintain a portable vernacular media production studio”), and some so far reaching and complex that I couldn’t accomplish them in a lifetime. One of the latter types of directives, “Study and document indigenous music and changes in style as it applies to making informed Scripture use/music decisions” saw some progress in December, when I attended Botswana Music Camp.

Botswana Music Camp allows students, aged 16 and up, to study classical, pop, and traditional music in a rustic



**My friend Cooper, right, plays segaba and sings a traditional Nama song accompanied by marimba. Cooper says he is one of the few Nama in Botswana of his generation who still speaks his language and he is working to preserve his language and culture. We have talked about how our goals are compatible and how we might work together in the future if the Lord is willing.**

setting. Each student chooses an area of specialty, while also participating in other areas.

As a budding ethnomusicologist, I spend the whole week in an adrenaline rush. I studied a traditional instrument called the segaba under “Captain”

Sight Mongweotsile, arguably the greatest living player of the instrument for four hours each day. The segaba looks strange, but sounds amazing. I hope to eventually get my own instrument so I can practice my skills at home.

I also learned how to read solfa notation, which is the way most people read music here.

As much as I enjoyed learning traditional music—it is a part of my job, after all—the highlight was the people I met. The camp drew budding musicians from all walks of musical life, from jazz guitar players, to traditional dancers, to gospel singers, to marimba and segaba players. I made contact with several people from diverse language groups who

are intrigued with the idea of bringing the Gospel to their traditional and contemporary art forms. Some of them are already doing this, but need my help to record and distribute the projects.

I hope and pray that this is the beginning of something big. I talked to the leaders of the music camp about including a song writing workshop as a part of next year’s camp... and they seemed to like the idea. I have also talked with several individuals about individual projects. I am



**Captain Sight Mongweotsile (far right) teaches three students how to play a new song on segaba. My new friend, Wonderful Modu (third from left), is a member of the Center for Indigenous African Music, Dance, and Art, something I hope will be a great resource for the ministry of LBT in the future.**

telling you now so that you can bring this potential ministry to the Lord in prayer, for, as we all know, there is nothing we can accomplish without him, but *with God all things are possible* (Mark 10:27).

- Pray that I will have opportunities this next year to teach Scripture song workshops (perhaps even at the Botswana Music Camp next December) and that I will be able to teach them well.
- Pray for the friendships begun at Music Camp, that the Lord would use them for his glory, via new songs written for worship, Scripture learning, and discipleship in this next year.
- Pray that existing dreams would become plans, and that I would be equipped physically, mentally, and spiritually to play my part in them.

To see more pictures from Botswana Music Camp, see our photo gallery page: <http://gallery.mac.com/reiveith/100066>

## Smart Trekking

These are words in Shiyeyi that were “borrowed” from English. Can you guess what they are in English?

**ifowuni** —

**ikhomputara** —

**impampiri** —

**irediyo** —

**iselefowuni** —

**ithelevishini** —

**iviisiara** —

Send us your answers with your name and mailing address and we'll send you a postcard to tell you how you did.

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## Dear friends and supporters...

As you know from our last few years of newsletters, we've tried to keep mention of our financial situation to a minimum in terms of page space allotted. Instead, we've focused on the work we do, the people we work with and ways in which God has impacted all of our lives along the way. We have come to realize that we probably haven't made as clear a statement of need as we could have, especially given the recent shortfall in our financial support level as 2007 drew to a close. In the months since we moved to Botswana, we have actually seen our support level decrease in a way that is concerning, both to us and to our supervisors at LBT. Our monthly financial support average for 2007 was \$3018. Now that we are living in Botswana, our ministry budget will drop to \$5475 per month for 2008.

However, if the current support trend that we've seen continues, this leaves us with a support level deficit of about \$2450 per month.

How important is it that we become fully supported? Beyond the potential long-term effect of lack of finances, it also effects our current ministry. For example, Rob can't develop a vernacular media plan that goes beyond our 1 year visa here in Botswana, making anything beyond one-shot recordings not feasible. While we have almost enough funds to buy a car—something we need because of our work locations which are usually at least a 6



hour drive from where we live in any direction—we can't actually buy a car because we don't know where we'll be in 10 months time. Last but not least, it is a constant source of worry for us, one that has the potential to detract from our focus on the tasks at hand.

For all of these reasons, we need to see God increase our financial support base by \$2320 per month to bring us up to the minimum budget set for us. We are praying that individuals, groups and churches who value God's Word and believe in making it available to all people in the language of their hearts will see that they can participate in the accomplishment of this task by participating with us financially. As God leads, this minimum target can quickly be exceeded.

Our goal is simply to let you know, clearly and succinctly, what's going on with us. If you have any questions about anything in this letter, feel free to contact us or Jim Laesch at LBT.

Grace & Peace,

ROB & ESHINEE VEITH

## Pray for us

- for *Safety* and *Health* as we minister in Botswana
- for *Increased Vision* for us and LBT as we determine where we will serve for the long term.
- for *Increase* in our level of financial and prayer support
- for contacts made in December to turn into *Opportunities*

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