



Far Trekkin'



News from Rob and Eshinee Veith

Volume 5, Issue 2

February, 2009

Sunday School song writing workshop

by Rob

Training is wonderful. Education. New skills. But I've found you don't really know what you've actually learned until *after* you've done it. I've felt that way a lot this past year, but never more than the night before my first song writing workshop as "leader." I took a course in conducting a song writing workshop. I've read the book. I watched LBT missionary Kedra Larsen (Ethnomusicology) in action several years ago. But my first was in November of 2008.

LBT missionary Melody Knight (Scripture Engagement) organized the workshop with the leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Botswana (ELCB) in Francistown. Melody recruited the participants, organized the venue, and even spent most of the weekend the week before

(including many of those hours wherein the rest of us were asleep) preparing large sheets containing Scripture verses written in two local languages: Setswana and Ikalanga.

In the one-day workshop, the participants planned to compose, rehearsal, and record new songs to accompany Sunday School curriculum. Over the course of previous workshops, 35 songs had been produced in Setswana. This time, because the Ikalanga New Testament and Psalms is due to be released sometime in 2009, they wanted to make some of the songs in Ikalanga. Rev. Mbukiso Nkanga, one of the translators of the Ikalanga NT joined the group, which included two other pastors, three teachers, half a dozen young people, and other members of the community and congregation with musical ability.

All in all, there were 13 singers and composers.

We conducted the workshop in a classroom on the church grounds. Melody



Above: Rev. David Titus (seated) teaches a song from Psalm 27 to Neo Montsho (left), Oteng Segojwa (playing bongos), and Oratile Segojwa.

placed verse sheets all around the room.

I taught briefly on the ministry of song writing, the value of putting Scripture into song, and various methods for making new songs.

Then, I turned them loose, praying that God would inspire them. I really didn't know what would happen.

Groups began to form organically. A group of young people who often sang together in church formed a circle around a verse page and began to improvise bits of melody and harmony with the words. A pair of pastors who both spoke Ikalanga sat in one corner, reading passages quietly, then began to sing them. Three older women who were Sunday School teachers took a favorite verse and tried the words with a variety of familiar tunes (over the course of the day, they would compose four different songs for this verse, one of which was chosen for the final recording).

Left: Rev. Mbukiso G. Nkanga and Rev. Mayfly Livingstone compose a song in Ikalanga.



continued as **WORKSHOP**, next page.



Bible stories published



Bible Stories Retold in Shiyeyi, the first Shiyeyi project on which Eshinee helped as exegete, is published in December, 2008.

Yes, the time has come—the *Bible Stories Retold in Shiyeyi* have been published! I probably don't have to point out how exciting this is for me. I mean, more than 11 years after the seed was first planted in my heart, to be involved in the task of Bible translation, I am finally getting to hold in my hand a fruit of that seed, something that I helped bring into being. Yes, it's a small fruit, a mere 26 pages of 11 Bible stories. But it contains a good selection of events from the New Testament, including Jesus' birth, ministry, teaching, death and resurrection. The best of the good stuff, right?

While esthetics aren't everything, I must say that it's a fine looking book as well. There are distinct advantages to having married a guy with years of experience in publication layout. I personally think that it's great if the publishing

quality of the first books in a newly written language can at least be on par with those of the national language. And this one, though small, is definitely professional looking. Kamanakao even had it printed in my happy color: green. And I didn't even tell them that I liked that color! God revels in the details, let me tell ya.

I'm thinking my first chance to see the book sales in person will be at the festival at Easter time, unless there's a workshop before then. I can't wait to see people while they're seeing it for the first time, buying it and reading it! And I can't seem to type without using exclamation marks! This is great!

"I will take delight in doing good to them. I will faithfully and wholeheartedly plant them firmly in the land."

—God, in Jeremiah 32:41

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

Workshop

continued from previous page

Two men worked alone. One used a notebook and a pencil as a metronome. Another asked me if he could borrow a pencil. He wanted to score the melody he had in his head in tonic solfa notation (a way to write music more common here than what we use in America).

The first song came to the young choir. They had composed a lovely song from James 4:10, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you." I recorded them singing it into a portable recorder.

By teatime, two hours into the workshop, I had 18 demo songs on my recorder. We realized that if we didn't start committing final versions of these songs to the recorder, there would have been too many to finish by the end of the day.

After tea, there was a time just where someone was composing while a group was arranging and I was in the office "studio" recording a final version. Eshinee helped by running the portable recorder and taking notes.

At 3:45 with 15 minutes left to go, we had 11 songs in final form. Four songs had been consolidated into one (the best of the four versions of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 had been chosen) and we discovered that two separate songs had been composed on one verse; the group picked the best. The group arranged and recorded the last two songs in the last few minutes.

We ended the day with 13 new songs composed and recorded.

It is our hope and prayer that these songs will enrich the Sunday School program, helping children carry the Scripture with them. We also hope the songs in Ikalanga will enrich the Ikalanga Scripture-song repertoire and inspire the creation of many more new songs which can be presented along with the publication of the soon-to-be-published New Testament/Psalms.

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>

