



Far Trekkin'



News from Rob and Eshinee Veith

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Flood, feast or famine: successful workshops and cultural events

by Eshinee

It's the usual mode of operation here in Botswana: feast or famine. And when I say "feast", I do mean "feast". April is the month of the Wayeyi cultural festival but, this year, there was also a writers' workshop and a *kgotla*¹ meeting. So, despite news of recent flooding in the Okavanga Delta, we packed up and drove north-west for the events. The road to the camp that we usually stay at in Sepopa was flooded but the staff found a workaround so that we could still stay there: when we came to a lake which used to be a road, a *mokoro*² would meet us and ferry us across to... well... less wet ground. We stayed in the only building that had not been partially submerged the week before. When we needed to get back to our car to drive to Gumare, the *mokoro* poler (usually a guy named Fish) took us back. Even though we had been looking forward to trying out the new wheels on those sandy back roads to the camp, I certainly appreciated

the peaceful compulsory *mokoro* trip, twice a day for the whole week. We also appreciated the prayers of our i'Trekkin'³ prayer team, for safety from displaced river animals and for no further flooding.

I spent the first two days at the writers' workshop. The main goal of this workshop was translation of some Setswana hymns into Shiyeyi, adding to the growing Shiyeyi hymnal. The newly completed Bible stories in Shiyeyi were distributed to the workshop participants. On the last day of the workshop, Rob recorded 10 of the new hymns. Lydia, who was leading the workshop, was pleasantly surprised to receive a mastered copy of the resulting CD just 2 days after the workshop.



Eshinee discusses a hymn translation with writers' workshop participants.



Eshinee and Mr. Hakudze read *Bible Stories Retold in Shiyeyi*.

a speech this year as I did last. But I had a great opportunity to meet with the Wayeyi that I hadn't seen since the last festival, especially the ones from Namibia. The highlight for me was finally meeting

Next, we went to the Wayeyi cultural festival. I didn't give

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Notes:

1. *kgotla* = traditional court of Botswana, held in each village under a large tree
2. *mokoro* = canoe traditionally made by the Wayeyi of a hollowed tree trunk
3. *i'Trekkin'* = our ministry update group on Facebook (www.facebook.com), a social networking website

Learning Setswana

While most people in Botswana have at least a working knowledge of English, Setswana is very much the heart language. That is to say, English is used for business and in the government, but when someone wants to say something really important, they switch to Setswana. We decided that we needed to take a few months this year to get at least a working knowledge of the language. For Rob this is mostly so he can participate in church services. For Eshinee, learning Setswana is more important because, as she works in the Shiyeyi language, she will need to be able to recognize borrowed words and grammatical constructions.

We haven't been able to locate a regularly available teacher in Maun. Instead, we've been working from a book put out by the Peace Corps. Friends have come by our house to record words and phrases so we can practice saying them properly.



Our friend Rev. Unazo coaches Eshinee in pronunciation of Setswana words.

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*Our current website is in desperate need of an update. The blog is a better source of current information.

Your New Car

by Rob

Eshinee and I wanted to give a big thank-you to everyone who contributed to our car fund. We purchased the Jeep Patriot pictured here. It is a compact car with 4-wheel drive and good gas mileage. It is a great blessing to be able to drive across the country to an event or workshop in much greater comfort and reliability. After several expeditions were nearly ruined by vehicle reliability issues with the previous vehicle, it is enough



to know we will arrive!

Whenever we drive, whether to a recording session in the remote village of Kapatuta, a writers' workshop in Gumare, or a business meeting in Gaborone, we think joyfully on all of you who contributed to this purchase for our ministry.

Events

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the Shiyeyi New Testament translator from Seronga, Mr. Hakudze. At last! We haven't been at any of the same gatherings for this whole past year. His nephew, Moqaho (one of the workshop participants), pointed him out to me. Hakudze was gracious and encouraging. I gave him a copy of the Bible stories as well, which he immediately began to read out loud to me, starting with *Giso ma Pakwa* (Jesus is Born).

On Monday, we went to our first kgotla meeting. Gathered under the trees, the community and some government representatives discussed issues of chieftainship and tribal status. Unlike what comes to mind for me when I think of a court, the goal (at this particular gathering, at least) did not seem to be to make a decision but to make sure that everyone was heard. From what I understand, the meeting was a success.

Pray for us

- for *Wisdom* as we learn a new language and balance our scheduled language learning with other work projects.
- for *Eshinee's language study*, as she begins to recruit teachers for learning Shiyeyi in the next few months.
- for *Increased Support*, in prayer and finances in 2009.