



Far Trekkin'



News from Rob and Eshinee Veith

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Lost and found

In our first newsletter, we invited you to ask questions that we could answer in upcoming newsletters. From some responses we've gotten, there was one question in particular that we thought should be addressed more clearly:

Won't your work endanger the culture you'll be working with?

It's true that we haven't had much in our letters about the culture we will be living in, partly because we didn't know what culture it would be until recently. The decision has been made and the article on the right details it.

Namibia is approximately 70-80% Christian and has been for nearly 200 years. However, early missionary efforts were not always as sensitive to host cultures as we try to be now. People were sometimes told that their music, their style of dress, even their language wasn't pleasing to God or appropriate for worship.

What Eshinee and I are being trained to do is, in effect, help the Christians in these indigenous societies seek out their own expression of faith in a way that will preserve and, if necessary, recover their culture.

We want everyone who wants to read the Bible to be able to read it in the language they love and understand the best. Eshinee hopes to work with a translation team, bringing her knowledge of linguistics and Biblical languages to help the team (made of local translators) create the most accurate, easy to read Bible they can. We also want everyone who worships to be able to do so in a way that resonates with their innermost being. I hope to encourage those who want to bring their own art and music back into the church, helping on a technical level (and training those who want to learn to do

Continued as GIFTS, next page.

Destination: Namibia

When we were first appointed to Lutheran Bible Translators (LBT), we said we were called to a job description and not a location. But at some point, we had to decide on a country in which to serve. In one of our early meetings, one of LBT's directors suggested Namibia.

Several other possible sites came up over the year we were in training. But we kept coming back to Namibia.

Now it's our official destination site. If everything goes according to plan (and "plan" includes things such as Invitation from an LBT partner agency in Namibia, Eshinee becoming a US citizen and all of our financial support money coming in), we hope



We looked all over the internet for pictures of Namibia. The best of them are some variation on this theme: a tree with desert in this distance (photograph by Tim "Timmo" Rogers. Used with permission. More of his pictures can be viewed at www.flickr.com)

to be leaving for Namibia in October, 2006.

If you're experiencing an internal blank stare at the mention of the country of Namibia, you're not alone. Given the tumultuous news coverage of many African nations, Namibia has remained a comparatively quiet place. Here's what we know about the country.

Namibia was originally a German colony, founded in the mid 1800's. South Africa claimed the region after World

Continued as NAMIBIA, next page.

Pray for us

- for *Safety* as we travel around the U.S., speaking with churches and individuals
- for *Grace* with immigration officials as we finalize Eshinee's U.S. citizenship process
- for *Peace* in our spirit as we adjust to our new lives of interdependency with the Church family

If you would be interested in receiving a sort-of-weekly prayer email, contact Rob at REVeith@LBT.org.

Us on the road

Much travel in the weeks since our last newsletter. Here's two pictures.

For more pictures from the road and stories of our adventures, check out Eshinee's blog: www.eshinee.blogspot.com



All of our possessions had to be packed into our Cavalier convertible for the drive from South Carolina to Washington. Rob demonstrates a new spiritual gift—packing cars.



Eshinee stands with our new display board at a missions conference in Redding, California.

New Website!

We have a new website. Behind hosted by Earthlink wasn't "LBT" enough for us. The new one is hosted on Lutheran Bible Translator's servers at <http://sc.lbt.org/users/reveith/>. There's links there to Eshinee's blog (which has more immediate news, such as the travelogue from our recent drive across the country) and our photo page. Eshinee has done a complete redesign of the site and added some new links.

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NAMIBIA

from previous page

War I. The country became independent in the 1990's. Just over two million people live there. It's mostly a hot, dry place. LBT missionary Rev. Shawn Boylan described it to us as "like California, only with Zebras."

English is the official language, though only about 7% of the population speak it. Other non-native languages include Afrikaans and German. According to the Ethnologue (<http://www.ethnologue.com>), nine regional indigenous languages are spoken as mother tongue languages in the country. The most predominant of these is Ndonga, with about half a million speakers.

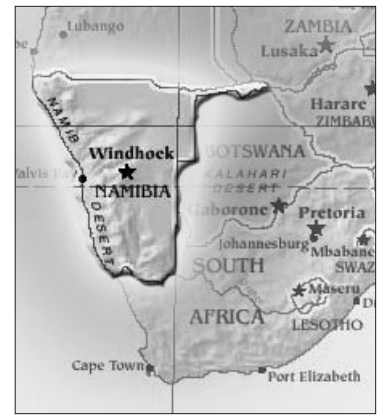
Depending on where you go for statistics (and how those statistics are determined), the literacy rate is somewhere between 16 and 84 percent.

LOST

from previous page

technical tasks).

All of the world's cultures are continually changing. Anthropologists who are studying the world's cultures realize this. There was a tendency years back to try to preserve minority cultures. This led to an idea of what came to be called "culture zoos." In other words, as you would with an endangered animal, the way to preserve the culture was to, in effect, lock it up from the rest of the world. I don't know how animals feel about being locked up, but people usually



Namibia, our target country, lies in the southwest part of Africa.

According to recent survey work, none of the regional languages have adequate mother tongue Bible translations. LBT missionaries are helping to produce a new translation in one of these languages. The other languages will rely on reprints of the older translation, until new workers (like us!) and resources are available.

Namibians are also very into radio and many of the DJs are looking for Christian indigenous programming.

So both of us have our work cut out for us.

don't care for it. I mean, just imagine. I've been listening to a lot of African music lately. What if the anthropologists told me I could only listen to "California" music? We have a responsibility, out of respect for the world's cultures, to allow growth and change in ways that they find beneficial.

There is a worldwide movement amongst Christians of indigenous and minority cultures to "take back" their cultural heritage while maintaining their Faith.

And that's what we want to be about.