



Missions Newsletter of John & Beth Reese

31 May 2009

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the renewed *Mustard Seed*, the newsletter for missions with John and Beth Reese. You may have wondered what has been happening on the mission front with the Reese family. We have been busier than ever, especially with World Bible School, of which John is now President.

Much of our reporting has been personal and through the pages of *Action!* We decided to revive the *Mustard Seed* for three main reasons:

- We have long needed to keep in better touch with our friends.
- *Action!* periodical has less space for some reports we might otherwise share. It used to have 10 issues a year, but now has only 6 issues. Those issues are attractive and packed with valuable insight, so please subscribe to *Action!* by emailing mickie@worldbibleschool.net or by phoning 1-800-311-2006.
- As you can see below, we are entering a new phase of mission work that needs its own reporting.

Beth no longer works with WBS on a regular basis although she travels with John on trips to promote and improve WBS. She still helps to get courses ready for printing from time to time. Beth is concentrating mainly on various forms of missionary care. Besides serving as the missionary care specialist on the local church's mission leadership team and caring for our own missionary kids, Beth is focusing on improving missionary care for missionaries around the world (see article on InterMission).

HUGE IMPACT ON ZIMBABWE

John and Beth have just returned from Africa to work on ways to expand WBS. With the help of Zimbabweans like those shown here, previous trips resulted in an 'explosion' of WBS in Zimbabwe because of the introduction of Business Reply Mail (BRM) for students to return their lessons. Zimbabwe now has between 300,000 and 500,000 students. To the right, **Beth** works with **Alice Mhlanga** and **Si Muraicho** on part of the 100 lbs of WBS student reply mail we brought back.



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All this progress is at a time when the country has been beaten down and oppressed. The number of WBS applicants is now approaching 5% of the entire population. WBS is also using BRM in Sierra Leone and Papua New Guinea, where we hope to visit later this year.



John with Zimbabwean coordinators Alice, Carolyn, Chris and Brian

We encountered a problem when Zimbabwe's government suddenly dropped using the Zimbabwe dollar. They are now using the US dollar and the South African rand as their official currency. Because Zimbabweans are not sure of the value of the US dollar, postage for BRM shot up to \$.70 per return. Our coordinator there, Alice Mhlanga, refused to pay such a precedent-setting price. Eventually she negotiated them down to 40 cents, and enlisted our direct help which further reduced the rate to 30 cents for an interim period. Please continue to pray that the poor have ways to correspond, that WBS' harvest in Zimbabwe will be reaped, and that similar seed-spread will saturate Zambia, South Africa and other nations.

QUALIFIED SUCCESS IN ZAMBIA

This most recent trip was to talk to the head postal officials in Zambia. Although John and Beth met with the assistant director of operations, we were unsuccessful in initiating the BRM program. The CEO there wants to charge an exorbitant rate, so John did not agree. Instead he is working on a modified plan to help students return their answers. The trip, however, turned out to be very positive in terms of contacts and relationships. We visited the missionary team in N.W. Zambia (Brian and Sondra Davis, Don and Rita Boyd and others), and they introduced us to the chief of that region, Chief Mumena (with wife right, and receiving WBS courses from John). He welcomed us for a wonderful two hour audience. We, in turn, introduced him to WBS, which seems certain to prove very beneficial as the Hillcrest church of Christ in Abilene begins systematic enrollments throughout that upper portion of Zambia. We also connected with the Gregersens and others at Namwianga, and placed ads in Zambian newspapers through our coordinator in Lusaka. We look for your prayers to be answered for this great nation that has so much potential.



SOUTH AFRICA: INTERMISSION HOSTS FIRST INTERNATIONAL EVENT

InterMission held its first international event at Wilderness, South Africa, March 30-April 3. Thirty-nine cross cultural missionaries met together from Zambia, Tanzania, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, South Africa and the U.S. for renewal, training, and encouragement.



InterMission is a ministry formed by John and Beth Reese, Clay and Cherry Hart and Kent and Nancy Hartman in 2006. As Clay explains, “InterMission is committed to giving ourselves to the task of equipping, encouraging, preparing, and appreciating those who are at various stages in their own ministry endeavors.” InterMission aims for holistic success in missions through experienced missionary families helping and encouraging other missionaries with healthy adjustment in: preparation, spiritual life, marriage, parenting, finances, third-culture kids, and re-entry. Team members do not claim to be professional counselors or therapists. InterMission members do “care—because we’ve been there.”

The Harts spent 20 years ministering in South Africa, in addition to the years Cherry spent being a missionary kid (MK) in Tanzania and South Africa. They have since worked with LST and are currently preparing themselves for future missions involvement. The Hartmans served 18 years in Australia and currently train the HIM workers at Oklahoma Christian. They lead an active program on campus for TCKs (Third Culture Kids). The Reeses served 16 years in Zimbabwe and South Africa, in addition to the years John spent being an MK in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia).



The South African InterMission was for a group of cross-cultural missionary families that were invited for the inaugural event. The Hartman and Reese couples, along with Fielden and Janet Allison (37 years serving Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania) formed the InterMission team that served 13 couples, 5 singles, and 6 children. Kent encouraged the group with devotional thoughts from Nehemiah about qualities of a leader that depends on God. John taught a series of lessons about the heart of a missionary from 2 Corinthians. The Reeses who specialize

in missionary families and the Allison's who train families throughout Africa to have better marriages teamed up for classes on marriage for missionaries. Janet (qualified in Marriage and Family Therapy) also taught a popular class on missionary stress. Kent discussed finances for missionaries. Nancy helped the missionaries to better understand their TCKs, and the Reeses talked about parenting and grand-parenting challenges for families who have a combination of cultures and countries. The Hartmans and Reeses teamed up to help the missionaries better prepare for re-entry to their home culture before leaving the field. The Hartmans also taught lessons for the children to help them in their cultural adjustments. Discussion groups, lots of free time and fellowship, and a refreshing outing to the Congo Caves and the Congo Ostrich Show Farm in Oudshorn added to the balance of activities and rest that helped the missionary to be renewed and recharged for the ministry.

The missionaries were enthusiastic in their responses. One shared, "it was a tremendous blessing to me personally – an 'oasis in the desert.'" Another said, "What a great and very needed idea. So often those who have retreats aren't really the experts on the topics – you all were!! (InterMission is) a much needed concept and done with sensitivity, kindness, and humor." Another said, "I received the practical help that validates my needs (I sometimes wondered if I was 'crazy,' 'self-centered,' or just inadequate in needing help!"

Thinking about a return of InterMission to southern Africa brought mixed responses. Most missionaries said that they would be very blessed if InterMission came again to their area, but they also wanted to be unselfish and let InterMission bless many missionaries around the world. Others said, "You have an open door to return here any time." Another was so impressed with the idea of missionary care that is "family to family, heart to heart" that they said, "We understand if you can't come back, but let us know soon. We need this. If you can't come back, we will still get together to care for one another." One missionary said, "It seemed God planned to provide through InterMission just what we needed to hear."

InterMission also conducts a Global Reunion InterMission for missionary kids, TCKs, and missionary parents each year at Oklahoma Christian. This year's InterMission will be July 29 – Aug.2. Contact Nancy@InterMissionministry.org for more details. The InterMission team has also hosted a re-entry workshop for returned missionary families and are available to help missionaries on an individual basis. They are also available to help congregations with their missionary care program.

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE THE REESE KIDS?

Marcus and Diane continue to serve the Lord in Alotau, Papua New Guinea. They have four girls: Hannah (9 ½), Hadassah (7), Rochelle (4), and Faith (1). His latest report suggests at least eight congregations have been started in his area. Over 12 have been baptized in the last month or two. Diane is helping to better her daughters education by helping the school they attend to increase their stock of good books. She has ordered thousands of books for them in the last month.





Tammy and Lewis (Short) are in their 9th year of working in Milan, Italy. They have three girls: Michela (6), Rebecca (2 ½), and Deborah (1/2, on left). Their congregation has grown from a handful of Italian Christians to a truly international Italian-speaking group that includes members from Albania, the Philippines, Ghana, Ecuador and the U.S.A. In addition to their local work, Tammy and Lewis both serve to help the church in greater Italy via campaigns, ladies' days, and other venues.

Danny and Katie have moved to Austin, Texas. They have one daughter (right): Eliana who will be one in September. Katie graduated with a M.Ed from



Freed-Hardeman in December 2008. Danny graduated with a Master of Divinity from Harding Graduate School of Religion in May 2009. They are working to help their team and to finish all the details so that they can move to Portugal in January 2010. They plan to spend a few months studying Portuguese before moving to Angola as the first full-time missionaries from American churches of Christ. Angola, on Africa's western coast, has suffered civil wars for 40 years, and is ready for the Good News of Peace.

David and Jenna have moved back to Searcy, AR. David is working with a building company and Jenna is working for Harding. Their main goal is forming a team to move to Tanzania. Their team is traveling to Tanzania this summer to choose the people group where they will work. They are expecting their first child at the end of the year.

We love and appreciate you, our partners in missions that reach around the world, quite literally.

John and Beth Reese

