



At the Well

Tim and Lisa Beckendorf, LBT missionaries in Botswana



Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

John 4:13, 14 (NIV)

We've Moved!

Greetings from soggy Shakawe. That's right, it is soggy here! In our last letter we were noting how dry things were and were praying for rain. Well, the rains arrived and we've had record amounts so far. Usually this part of the country receives about 19 to 21 inches a year and since November we've already received over 42 inches. Everything is green and lush and the bush is tall and overgrown. It is beautiful, except for the roads which are under water most of the time and generally a mess!

And yes, we finally made it up to Shakawe to live but it took some effort. As my dear friend and mentor, Rev. Gary Trowbridge would say, *What a Quest!* Back in the middle of January we found a house to rent and for the next three or four weeks we tried to move. We had several dates to move all set but then they all managed to fall apart for one reason or another. Finally we hooked up with a couple who had moved from Shakawe to Gabarone and needed a truck to go up to Shakawe to pick up their belongings. This would work fine, we needed to get our stuff up north and they needed to get their stuff down south. Things were going rather slowly trying to find a truck as they were all too expensive. Then the phone rang on a Tuesday night and the couple said that they had a truck lined up and the price was good so it would arrive on Friday morning at 2am to load our stuff and head up to Shakawe. Ok, so now we got in gear to get our things packed up. We still had some banking in Gabarone to take care of that couldn't be finished until the next week, so Tim would go to Shakawe with the hired truck and come back on Monday and then we would move the rest with our pickup later in the week.



Loading up the truck and covering our things with tarps.

So, Friday morning arrived, but as of 8 am still no truck. Finally it showed up at 8:30 and we loaded up all our stuff, covered it well in tarp (it is the rainy season) and off we went. The truck was a 7 ton flat bed construction truck owned by a friend of the couple. It had sides that were about a foot high that could flip down. There was only room in the cab for two people so two of us rode on the back of the truck for the two day trip to Shakawe. Riding on the back in the open air gives one a different perspective of the view. It was actually quite nice riding back there as you could stretch out and sleep or just enjoy the view. People often ride on the back of trucks here, but it must be unusual to see white people on the back of a truck because we had lots of waves and thumbs up from people.

We made it to Shakawe safe and sound and without too much rain. We arrived back in Thamaga Monday evening, tired but relieved that everything went so well.

On Thursday, the 16th, of February we loaded our pickup and headed back toward Shakawe. We stayed at another missionary couple's house about half way up there for the night and then headed out on Friday morning. Lisa came down with some symptoms of malaria so she started taking treatment right away. She was not feeling very well or energetic for the next few days but thankfully that was the worst of it.

So, now we're settling in, and busy fixing stuff on the house. It took us about a week to get the water working properly. Lisa was not willing to go down to the lagoon behind the house and haul water with a bucket on her head like the local ladies; the crocodiles we see cruising by the shore may have something to do with that.

The house has a nice view of the lagoon and one of the channels that come from the main river. We see an incredible variety of birds, including a fish eagle that is fun to watch as it dives into the water to snag a meal. We also see men in their mokoros (dug out canoes) poling them through the water as they check their nets for fish. We also have watched some spectacular storms come across the delta.



We moved from near Gaborone in the south up to Shakawe in the north.

We also now have a gardener. When Tim was here to unload our stuff on the first trip, a man asked if he could have a job working outside on the grounds since he had been a grounds keeper for another lady who had now moved away. The yard is large so we agreed to have him come and work on it in the mornings. So far he has planted 15 fruit trees and is clearing a sizable plot for a vegetable garden. We are anxious to have the trees and the garden as it is not easy to find fruit or vegetables up here.

Speaking of food, the grocery store in the village looks something like this: the first row is cleaning supplies, the second row has more cleaning supplies, tobacco, and some hand lotion. The next row has a long stretch of ketchup and mayonnaise with a good amount of space allocated to canned sardines and canned corned meat. Then there is the usual stretch of flour, sugar, sorghum, and corn as well as ingredients for traditional home brewed beer. The last row has some irradiated milk, some soda, and a small freezer with some "frozen chickens" that look like they've been frozen, thawed, and refrozen many times. In order to get "exotic" items like eggs, cheese, or shampoo we have to go down to Maun, which is 4 1/2 hours away. Maun is also where we have to go to access our bank to get cash to pay for rent, etc., so about once a month we'll drive down to Maun and also stock up on cheese and other niceties.

Presently we are working to find language helpers. Tim had a two hour session with one of the guys who is on the language development committee to learn some of the sounds of the language and a few basic greetings. It was quite challenging but we are very anxious to learn and are really looking forward to finding someone who can work with us on a daily basis.

Prayers and Praises

It has been quite a journey to get here and we thank all of you for your part in making it happen. We couldn't do this without your prayers and support.

Join us in giving thanks:

- * for a safe and uneventful move
- * for wonderful colleagues and friends here
- * for all of you, our partners in this ministry
- * for good health

Please pray:

- for us to find the right language helpers
- for the ability to learn this difficult language
- for continued good health and strength

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Your servants in Christ,

Tim, Lisa, and Aaron Beckendorf