

ALAN SHEA NEWS

SERVING WITH SIM AND SIM-TEC

No. 7 :: MARCH 2006

Two Evacuations and a Wedding

Some incredible events have been taking place both on the field and here at home! Of course, some of those events are less joyous than others, so we'll begin with the best, most recent, and most joyous!



At the International Conference on Computing and Missions (ICCM) in June, 2005, I met Leon Amstutz when we were both assigned to the same prayer group. When we shared prayer requests, I mentioned that I was praying for a godly wife. At the end of ICCM, Leon approached me and said that, although he is not a matchmaker, he felt the Lord prodding him to talk to me about his niece. Cheri, he said, had been praying for a godly husband. I was flattered that he would consider me and said sure, send us both an email and I'll write her back. Cheri actually beat me to the reply, and within a week we were spending hours on the telephone!

No Coincidences...

The fun part is that Cheri's mother, Karen (Wiederkehr), had been a missionary kid in Sierra Leone, which is right next door to my birthplace, Liberia. In fact, her parents (Cheri's grandparents) had been dormparents at the same

school my Shea cousins and brother-in-law Kevin McGee all attended a decade later. When Cheri and I started getting to know each other, her mom asked, "Do you think you would like being a missionary?", her immediate response was, "I could be a missionary in a heartbeat!" Cheri had often felt a desire toward missions, but the Lord had never clearly opened any doors in that direction until now.

Cheri and I have marveled at the Lord's ability to place two people together who were from totally different parts of the world. Moreover, our shared "roots" and desires towards ministry could not be coincidence. After meeting in person and then spending extended visits together, I gave Cheri an engagement ring in October, 2005. Our wedding date is now just around the corner – March 25, 2006. If you have internet access, you can see more pictures of us at <<http://tinyurl.com/8e7qn>>.

New Assignment: SIM-TEC

SIM-TEC is an SIM ministry devoted to helping African churches establish Christian universities with culturally relevant curriculum that is written from a biblical worldview.

My job will be to provide the technical organization and communication "glue", via the internet, that is needed to bring all this together.

There will be more about SIM-TEC in future newsletters – in the meantime, you can visit <<http://simtec.sim.org>>.

Cheri plans to teach one more year of second grade at the Christian school in Auburn, Indiana, where she has been teaching for

thirteen years. This summer we both plan to head to Candidate Orientation as Cheri joins SIM. Please join us as we pray about a future ministry in Liberia.

No Mistakes...

As I think about the transitions which the Lord continues to bring me through, I can see His hand continually, faithfully guiding me. Looking forward to life with my new wife and growing more excited about the new ministry unfolding ahead of us, I can't help but reflect on the other life-changing events which the Lord has brought me through.

When we last left our intrepid world traveler in August, 2004, I was on my way back to start a new school year as the Technology Coordinator at the International Christian Academy (ICA), in Bouaké, Ivory Coast. Because of the uncertain political situation, we had only 20 students. But we were unanimous in seeing God's clear leading to return and open school. At the same time, returning to live in a divided country, even in the "demilitarized zone", took a great deal of faith.

Evacuation Number Two

The morning of November 4th, the Ivorian government unilaterally broke their two-year cease-fire with the rebel "New Forces" by sending two Sukhoi Su-25 jets to strafe and bomb the rebel headquarters in Bouaké. Over the next three days, they bombed a number of military targets in Bouaké and other rebel-held cities in Northern Ivory Coast. When they "mistakenly" bombed a French peace-keeping base, killing nine French soldiers and an American aid-worker, the French Military retaliated by destroying both jets and four attack helicopters on the ground. There was a violent reaction to this by unofficial youth militias in Abidjan which were targeting anyone looking French, so when we left Bouaké on November 13, we drove north to Mali.

We will probably all continue to grieve most of all over the loss of our community at ICA, with friends scattered to five continents. The ICA School Board voted in February, 2005, to permanently close ICA and turn over the property to the local mission board.

The ICA Campus is currently being looked after by Rod and Angelika Ragsdale, who had been missionaries in the north of Ivory Coast before the first evacuation. The French peace-keeping force, Operation Licorne ("Unicorn") is stationed on campus and taking good care of things. You can read all about it at their website, <<http://ragsdalerag.blogspot.com>>.

Looking Ahead Toward God's Provision...

- ▶ I have been asked to join a group of pastors and mission agencies in Liberia May 20-28 (or longer) to present SIM-TEC's vision at a conference with Liberian churches. I am very excited about this future partnership of Liberian and North American churches. We are praying for the Lord to supply the funds that would make this trip possible.
- ▶ My financial support needs have increased significantly: in addition to a major increase in SIM's requirement, my support has dropped dramatically since the closing of ICA.
- ▶ Our wedding is such an exciting time! Please pray for us as we begin a new life together in the Lord's service.

Thanks for your prayers and support of this Technology Support Couple!

– Alan & Cheri

Tech Support Contacts

Alan & Cheri Shea
102 High St
Butler, IN 46721
USA

Alan Cell: +1 803-984-8422
Cheri Cell: +1 260-908-6818
Email: <alan@shea.net>
<cheri@shea.net>

SIM USA
PO Box 7900
Charlotte, NC 28241

Tel: +1 704-588-4300
Email: <webtalk@sim.org>
<http://www.sim.org>

SIM-TEC
CPO Box 1891
Houghton College
Houghton, NY 14744

Tel: +1 585-567-8902
Email: <sim-tec@houghton.edu>
<http://simtec.sim.org>

Email newsletter:

<alan.shea-news-request@listserve.sim.org>
<http://www.frangipani.org/>