

SERVING WITH THE SHEAS

SERVING WITH SIM AND SIM-TEC

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New Traditions

Christmas is a precious time of remembering Immanuel, "God with us." In addition to the common Christmas traditions, every family also develops unique traditions of their own. When I



Shea Family Christmas, 2005

was growing up in Liberia, my sister Robin had a Christmas tradition of getting dad to the beach for his "annual swim!" Cheri and I are anticipating our own first Christmas together and starting some new family traditions of our own. Cheri has said several times that she has not been this excited about Christmas since she was a child.



Laughing together with Cheri's Grandpa Wiederkehr

It has also been exciting "playing house" as we arrange our new home, find and finish furniture together, and decorate – that is mostly Cheri's department! Choosing pictures and artwork to hang up from Sierra Leone, Liberia, Switzerland and elsewhere has been great fun for her. We've finally begun to feel "at home" – although taking *this* many months to get settled is one tradition we hope we don't keep!

As well as continuing to work with SIM-TEC from home, I've also taken a few short, "contract" jobs installing computers from time to time to help ends meet. Cheri is putting in a lot of extra hours this year teaching second grade, as she has several

children with special learning needs. Together, we enjoy teaching the teen-age Sunday School class and spending time with the teens.

We are looking forward to two trips to North Carolina planned in January: The first, January 12-14, is a SIM-Start weekend, which is part of the continuing process for Cheri to become a member of SIM. The second, January 22-26, is a retreat and meeting for the entire SIM-TEC team.

Who is SIM?

SIM (Serving In Mission) began work in 1893 as the Sudan Interior Mission in what is now northern Nigeria; today it is an interdenominational mission organization with more than 1,400 full-time members from 37 nations. These missionaries are serving in over 40 countries on five continents and two islands in the Indian Ocean. SIM is truly a community of God's people who delight to worship Him and are passionate about the Gospel, seeking to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. We are excited to be involved in this ministry. If you want to know more about SIM, just ask! Or you can read up on *Who We Are* at www.sim.org.



As we continue in this process of Cheri becoming a part of SIM, we are hoping to have our support level up to the point that Cheri will not need to sign a contract for 2007-2008 at Lakewood Park Christian School. This way we will be free to travel and speak about the ministry we are becoming involved in.

We also want to take a vision trip of several weeks to Liberia this coming summer. This trip

Alan installing email system at ELWA, December 2004

will be an opportunity to encourage our brothers and sisters in Liberia and will allow Cheri and me to see specifically how the Lord can use us to help ELWA Ministries (Radio ELWA and the ELWA Academy). It will also give Cheri a better sense of how to plan for setting up house permanently in that country.

Please pray with us as we transition to full-time missionary service: We are right at the half-way mark to our needed \$3,200/month to move to Liberia. There we can make a long-term contribution to the ministries of ELWA in its strategic role in strengthening the church in Liberia.

Questions we've been asked about support...

- ▶ ***If I send \$10 to SIM, how much of it do you and Cheri receive?*** ▶ All of it – either as salary, housing allowance, medical insurance, retirement, or to help cover the administrative costs we incur to SIM.
- ▶ ***Where does the money go?*** ▶ Upon receipt of a response from you, Cheri and I will send you a “Gift Form” to send directly to SIM with your gift. SIM issues tax-deductible receipts for all donations for our support or ministry.
- ▶ ***How much is a “share” of support?*** ▶ SIM doesn't use “shares”; contributions can be made in whatever amount the Lord directs you to give.
- ▶ ***What is the difference between “ministry” and “support” donations?*** ▶ “Support” covers the salary, housing and other regular expenses previously mentioned. “Ministry” is a fund that we can use for ministry-related expenses (i.e., for specific expenses related to our ministry and approved by SIM).

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Write us if you want more frequent updates by email.

Praise & Prayer

- ▶ Praise for our wonderful home, where we really feel “at home”
- ▶ Loving family and friends – an irreplaceable treasure
- ▶ Christmas! God's son Jesus!
- ▶ Praise God and pray for Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, elected in peaceful Presidential elections last September, and for the reconstruction of the country that she is overseeing.
- ▶ Pray for our vision trip to Liberia this summer – praying, planning, funding
- ▶ Travels to SIM-Start and SIM-TEC in January
- ▶ Cheri's grandfather, Ralph Patton, has been diagnosed with cancer for the second time. He will be receiving treatments over the course of the next several weeks.
- ▶ For our support needs

We regard your partnering with us in ministry as crucial: Through your prayers and support, you are serving right alongside us in ministry!



Then, and now...

