

SERVING WITH THE SHEAS

SERVING WITH SIM, SIM-TEC, & HCJB

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Sounds of Africa

It is not often that we think of the *sounds of Africa*. Naturally, many would be instantly recognizable. Sadly though, the sound of warfare often reverberates across the continent, and the cries of the destitute and hungry follow in waves and ripples.

Yet in the midst of all the anarchy and chaos the sound of the Gospel can be heard. God's good news is heard in many different forms and languages, in large churches and in small congregations under trees.

The Gospel can also be heard over Christian radio. Speaking in many languages, radio can reach across national boundaries and border patrols where missionaries cannot go, and it communicates even to the illiterate. In Liberia there is a saying, "There is a voice under every palm tree; all you need is a box to catch it!"



Radio ELWA - Liberia

You may have heard of the Christian radio station ELWA near Monrovia, Liberia, where Alan's parents were missionaries while he was growing up. We are thrilled that the Lord has miraculously provided for us to visit Liberia this summer.

ELWA
(Eternal Love
Winning

Africa) was started over fifty years ago. Before the Liberian civil war, its shortwave broadcasts covered an area of Africa larger than the continental USA, with programming in 46 languages. Over the years, its ministries grew to



include a hospital, school, and church built to serve the needs of the Liberians and missionaries.

On Christmas Eve 1989, just after Alan had left Africa to attend college in the United States, war struck Liberia. Charles Taylor attacked his own country using soldiers trained in Libya and supported by Kadafi. Over the next 15 years, tens of thousands of innocent people were killed, with over a million more becoming refugees. When the fighting neared ELWA in 1990, over 26,000 people sought refuge on its campus alone.

Tragically, the ELWA radio station was destroyed. Where before the war it had been broadcasting to potentially as many as 250 million listeners, it became silent. Forty years of



recorded programming was lost when the studios and tape library were burned.

Charles Taylor was only a tool of our enemy the devil to silence the gospel. But let us not forget the greatness of our Lord; God is not finished in Liberia. He is the only one who is greater than situations like this, and he is always faithful. He gives us reason to hope, for his mercies are renewed every day (Lamentations 3:22-23).

Although ELWA was silenced, it did not stay that way for long. After missionaries were evacuated again in 1996, the Liberian staff of ELWA organized themselves to manage the radio station and hospital. Current daily programming is eight hours of English and one and one-half hours in nine Liberian languages – some daily and some only once each week. Its broadcasting range is limited to Monrovia in FM, and only to Liberia on shortwave.

Liberian staff have also kept the ELWA Academy running with over 200 Liberian elementary students. Cheri is excited to get involved with this school. There is a tremendous need for education in a country which now has almost an entire generation of illiterate young people who have known nothing but war.

The political situation in Liberia has finally stabilized with the presence of 16,000 UN peacekeeping troops and the election of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf – Africa's first elected female president. We hear good things about her, and she seems to be doing a very good job.

Travel to Liberia

We want to be involved in helping the ELWA Management Association rebuild ELWA and hear the sound of the Gospel across West Africa once again. We are very excited to be going to Liberia ourselves from July 29 to September 15.

We have just learned that on June 14th, ELWA suffered severe damage from lightning to parts of the electrical generators, the radio control panel and transmitters. Alan has been able to locate a significant amount of radio equipment no longer in use at his alma mater, Houghton College, which have generously offered it to ELWA. Alan will be making a "quick" trip to Houghton, NY, to pick up this equipment by the end of June. The difficult part will be getting the equipment to ELWA in any kind of cost-efficient manner. Please pray with us about this!

Our goal for this trip is twofold: In addition to Alan assisting with lightning repair and grounding the electrical system to prevent future damage, we want to further assess the needs of the radio and school at ELWA. When we return home to finish raising support, we will be able to prepare specifically for our roles there. While there, Cheri will also be doing a little teaching and working with curriculum development.

On our return from Liberia, we will be moving to the Elkhart, Indiana, area. While we finish raising support to return to Liberia long term, Alan will join a mission radio project with HCJB Global Technology to digitize shortwave radio (more about this in our next newsletter). Cheri has been invited to join a project with SIM-TEC, called TEN3 - Transformational Education Network: Discipling to the Third Generation. She will be helping develop biblically-based curriculum for

Christian college startups in Africa and possibly Haiti.

We are thrilled that God has provided the funds for us to travel to Liberia this summer and nearly half our monthly support. In a step of faith Cheri has declined her present teaching contract in order to follow Alan to Elkhart as he works with HCJB, and to have more time for the curriculum projects being presented to her. We are trusting the Lord to provide the much needed \$2000/month increase to be able to live in the Elkhart area and from there to move to Liberia.

Among all the sounds in the world, one of God's favorites is the sound of his children praying. We praise the Lord for those of you who have committed to pray faithfully with us as we travel to Liberia this summer. Please join us in prayer for an increase in our support. And if you know of homes or churches where we may share about Liberia when we return, please contact us.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Alan & Cheri



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