

River of God

"for the healing of the nations."

On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Revelations 22:2

Second Edition

March 2007

C
O
U
N
T
I
N
G

T
H
E

C
O
S
T

Timothy and Keiry's daughter, Rebekah, was 1 of 75 students accepted into the Public University of Costa Rica Dental School. We have asked her to share with you, her dreams of the future, and the cost of pursuing those dreams.

A WORD FROM... REBEKAH JONES

Thank you for being so supportive about my school. I'm really excited about it; but also a little scared. It's going to be a big change for me and my family; although I believe that it will work out smoother than we think possible. The Lord has really been with me this last year and I've had so much more of a relationship with him, because of the trust and faith I've had to have. I know that this is only the beginning because the harder part is yet to come. I'll need more wisdom, faith, determination, and discernment than ever.

I guess I'll tell you all how this began:

When I was in third grade, we lived in Tsipiri, a missionary friend of my parents from Colombia came to give a dentistry course to the public health workers. I was home schooling and my mom was taking it as well so I would tag along. I took it very seriously and learned a lot. I liked it so much that ever since then I've wanted to study that. Last year I had some doubts; but they were just lies from the devil. So I went through the whole process of applying. I had to do the normal test and another one just for dentistry. Thank the lord I was able to do very well on both. After a very long wait I'm now officially enrolled in the Public University of Costa Rica. This is the oldest, biggest and pretty much the best college in CR. It is situated in San Jose, the capital. It is a 6-year program, longer than most private schools but that's ok. The last year is to practice in different poor places of the country. My vision is to use this degree on the field, to help Indians and whites at the same time; or in any other part of the world. So I'll start school March 5th; I'm going to live in SJ with three other girls very close by. I have two semesters this year and I'll start by taking around seven classes. I found this verse a few weeks ago and it was encouraging:

"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". Jeremiah 29:11
Blessings,



"Rebekah has a lot of love for the kids and wants to bless people that are in need." - Keiry Jones

A WORD FROM... RIVER OF GOD BOARD

Dear River of God Family,

A vision has crystallized in the hearts of the Jones' brothers...to finish the work the Lord has put before them. Each of them shares a renewed commitment to complete the translation of the Bible into the Cabecar language.

We wanted to better understand what it takes. So, we asked them. What will it take to do the job? What will it cost you? As we read their responses, our eyes were opened to the cost.

We want to share their words with you.

Your brothers and sisters in Christ,
Lisa and Robert Beihn,
Blane and Chris McMichen,
Jay and Amy Shultz

Rebekah's Monthly Expenses:

Rent	\$200
Cell phone	\$30
Bus tickets, taxi (transportation)	\$50
Food (eat out and bought to make)	\$150
*School (books, photocopies) per semester.	\$100
*Tuition	\$500

****Next year's instruments will be around \$750-1000**

A WORD FROM... PHILIP JONES

It was a beautiful sunny morning as I bumped along the gravel road towards the translation office in Grano de Oro. The office is only six miles away, but due to the condition of the road I knew it would take the usual 45 minutes. I had just picked up Felipe, a disciple who has donated time to work on the revision of the New Testament. I was looking forward to working with him and Timothy, going over fine points of grammar and meaning that I had found checking the book of John. Hopefully, if things went well, we could finish John 13 and 14.

About halfway to Grano de Oro, the road comes down out of the woods into a big open pasture, where there is usually a good cell phone signal. I decided to stop and make a phone call, as our home phone had quit working for no apparent reason. A few days before on a trip to San Jose, our truck, an '85 Toyota Land Cruiser, had been stolen off the street in front of Saukeen's parents' house. While this was a great shock and loss to us, we were glad we owned another vehicle, a well-used '91 Nissan Patrol, which we had lent out. However, when it was brought to us so we could return to our house in the mountains, we discovered it needed a major repair and would need to stay in the shop. Thankfully, we ran into a friend who owns our old Trooper, and he offered to lend it to us until we could get the Nissan repaired.

Under the circumstances, I was just glad to have wheels. Now I needed to phone the mechanic to find out how the repair job was going with the Nissan. But I couldn't get a signal. Then, when I got in the car to continue on my way, it wouldn't start. I tried roll starting, only to end up at a standstill on a rickety bridge at the bottom of the hill.

"What is going on?" I thought as I opened the hood. "Our truck is stolen, our Nissan is in the shop, and now I am broken down in a borrowed car. Our home phone doesn't work, I can't get a signal for my cell phone, and help is an hour's walk away." More than anything, I felt frustrated. It is not easy to coordinate schedules for me and Timothy and Felipe to spend a day together, and I had already had a late start. Right then I remembered that I needed to write a section for this newsletter. "THIS is the cost of translation!!" I thought.

Yes, a dollar will pay for a photocopy of one book of the Bible. Seven dollars will pay for a photocopy of the partially revised New Testament for distribution while we complete the full revision. Six dollars will pay a days' wages for part-time translation helpers. \$140 dollars will cover a month's salary for the young man who enters changes on the computer. Another \$140 will pay the salary for the other full time translation helper. A further \$500 a month could enable another qualified brother to leave his government job to join the translation project.

But how much does it cost to replace our stolen truck? How much is it going to cost to pay for the repair on the Nissan? What about food, phones bills, bottled gas and

fuel for the generator? What about the cost of living at the end of a bad road with no public services?

Every day that I go to work with Timothy in the office means a long day for Sao at home alone with 4 little kids. It is not easy for her if I get late and I'm not there by dark to crank up the generator. Or if it is raining heavily she worries I'm having trouble crossing creeks or getting through mud holes.

It costs more than dollars. It costs us our LIFE. We don't "get through" a crisis to "get on with life." This IS our life! And far beyond stolen cars, mud and phones that don't work, is the cry in our hearts for the Kingdom of God to come to these mountains.

By the end of day, we did get a few hours in reworking several verses, ending with John 14:6 — "Jesus said: 'I am the way, I am truth, I am life. No one can come to the Father, if he does not come by means of me.'" No matter how much it cost or how long it took, the New Testament revision had inched forward that day.



Hungry for the Word in his language, a Cabécar pours over a newly printed Scripture.

A WORD FROM... TIMOTHY JONES

One day in 1986 I realized it was almost my father's birthday. I decided to translate some of Genesis for him as a birthday present. He and my mother had spent much of their lives translating the New Testament into Cabecar. For a change one day they worked on a translation of Genesis 1-3. It met with quite some resistance from their Cabecar co translators who found the content a complete challenge to their beliefs.

At that time I was living in the mountains. The family I was with lived in a hut with no walls, dirt floors and an open cooking fire. Chickens, dogs and pigs wandered in and out. Without a table or a chair, I began to translate Gen 4 and 5. The only resources I had were a Spanish Bible an English Bible and an old hard-shell suitcase for a desktop. I wrote by hand, and my host helped me to express the ideas as clearly as possible in the language. My parents had always prayed that some of children would take up their vision but we had an aversion to sitting at a desk all day. The translation work was slow and tedious. So it was a pleasant surprise to them when I gave him a small stack of pages for his birthday.

TIMOTHY CONTINUED...

Soon I was working on the story of Noah and the flood. Since the language has different kinds of number classes, I was challenged by which word for "two" when the animals came "two by two". And what in the world did it mean that the sons of God had children with the daughters of men?

Now many years later we still struggle with many issues. But we have come to the conclusion that the only thing we will leave behind is our faith in a real Jesus, based on the written word of God. We will pass away, but translation of the Word will be bring forth faith in the hearts of many people we do not even know. Yes, we need to continue to make disciple. But we cannot adequately make disciples apart a translation of the Word. We want them to find their purpose in Christ as kings and priests. But to walk in that, they will need to search the Scriptures.

I have struggled a lot to come to that conclusion. Since Abraham only had a few verses worth of the word of the Lord, and he is a giant in the faith, can I really claim that an entire Cabecar Bible is necessary? No, because the amount information is not a key to faith. So why am I such a wimp that I can't just make do with the same? Because I see Jesus, rebuking the two on the road to Emaus doubting his resurrection. "How slow of heart you are to believe what the prophets said," he reprimands. He didn't give them a break and say, "Hey look, it's me!" He expected them to have pondered on rather obscure passages and come to the conclusion that the Christ would both physically suffer and be raised from the dead. It is said we are entering fullness in Christ, perfection in Christ. And having the breadth of the Scriptures is very key to coming to that place.

We are thankful that now we have skilled Cabecars to help with the translation work. We have a nice building to house the office. We have computers and printers process and produce the information. Yet there is a cost. Sometimes it feels that we enter into the very struggles of Abraham and Sarah as we travail to Christ formed among these people and his Word be birthed in their language. And I long that others will be able to draw strength form the word of the Prophets that keep giving me hope. What would I do without Isaiah, and Micah, and Hosea, Zechariah, and Jeremiah? I probably would have collapsed years ago.

What is it going to take to get the job done? We need the miraculous provision of many skilled people to do the work. The people who spend their time working on this book have to provide for their families. We have made a temporary version of the New Testament while we complete the revision. It only takes \$7 to print one. But it takes \$10 to buy a used blanket, \$15 for a roll of temporary waters line, it takes beds and boards for housing, pastures for horses, barb wire to build fences, banana fields to provide starch for the soup pot, trucks to get supplies, and loads of gravel to keep roads open. . . Workers have to be paid, school books printed, meetings organized, books sold, lumber cut, questions answered, and phone calls taken while people are waving little letters in their hands, asking for the book of Daniel,

which isn't even translated, or if "you can come fix a huge fight in our church?" Sometimes there is little strength left to go on. As Paul said, "Brothers, please pray for us."

Your brother, Timothy

A WORD FROM...DAVID JONES

The following is an excerpt from an email sent in January:

In early December we had an abrupt shift in our work and focus here. A Guatemalan man that works with a ministry there which specializes in scripture recordings in tribal languages visited us. He came to organize the recording of the Bribri New Testament. I took him to meet with the Bribri scripture translation committee in order to organize the recording. At the meeting it was decided that the recording would begin mid January and would take one and a half to two months in order to complete. This man chose our house as the place to do the recording.

This meant we had a good bit of work ahead of us. We needed to finish a room that we had begun building on the ground level of our house. The recording would be done in this room. The room needed to be quiet and include a small sound booth. It also needed to be air-conditioned. We needed to organize cooking, meals and housing for those involved in the project. These would be two Guatemalans that would be recording, the missionary (a good friend of ours) that recently finished translating the Bribri New Testament and Bribri readers. The other big job was to find Bribris that could read well in their language. These needed to be encouraged to practice reading and most of them needed training.

An excerpt from a February update:

Presently the project of recording the Bribri New Testament is being done here at our house. Two Guatemalan men...are using local Bribri speakers. They are producing a multi-voice, dramatized recording. This means that a different voice is used to represent each person in the New Testament. When the recording is completed and edited, background music and sound effects will be mixed in. The recording began on January 16th and the deadline for finishing is March 9th.



Bribri New Testament recording and editing in the house meant that Andrew and Levi had to learn to tiptoe up the stairs!

DAVID CONTINUED...

Lucy and I worked hard in preparation for the project. The main job was finishing a special room where the recording would be done. We have also been taking care of the logistics involved in this project. I have helped find and train readers. For us it's a joy to see this project advance and it's a blessing that our facilities, resources, talents and skills are being put to use in this way.

The people groups here, like many other places, didn't used to have a written language and have always been oral cultures. So having the scriptures recorded is a huge blessing and a valuable means of spreading truth. Pray for a powerful anointing on this recording when it reaches the ears of those who will eventually hear it.

Our latest update from David:

PTL the recording went very smoothly and finished on Feb. 22. God worked in so many ways and made it all happen. The project was a big blessing. Now we are adjusting to a normal routine and are trying to be quiet for a few days before I start hiking around.

Be encouraged in Jesus, David

COSTA RICA MISSION TRIP CALL-OUT

DATES: April 22-29, 2007

ESTIMATED COST: \$900

WORK: Water system for Timothy, computer/network support for translation effort, carpentry and other trade work as needed.

FOR MORE INFO:

Blane McMichen at 317-769-7266

www.riverofgodcostarica.net

STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS ABOUT A SEPTEMBER TRIP...

If you have unused frequent flyer miles, please consider donating them to Jones' families' USA trips, which provide times of rest and family time.
CONTACT: Chris at 317-769-7266



A MISSION TRIP EXPERIENCE

By Jack Folden

Costa Rica was my first mission trip. I was asked by another member at New Hope about one month before the trip to go. I had always wanted to go to Costa Rica to the Jones' but didn't think I knew enough about the Bible or had been a Christian long enough. Oh how wrong I was! I had all kinds of reasons for not going, money, my wife was 5 months pregnant with our third child! I took that step to go and have never looked back.

As soon as I arrived in Costa Rica I knew God had something special in mind for me that week. By taking that first step in faith I learned so much about my God in one week. The way that the Jones' teach is so simple, but so effective. Just to truly witness a family living by faith was an eye opener. The way the Jones' witness to the Indians and the locals is truly by faith.

The way this trip changed my life is to truly open my heart to the Lord with everything I do. I was able to witness to everyone I know and everyone I didn't know. I couldn't stop thinking about the Bible everywhere I went either at work or at home. I am not a very sociable person but when I got back from Costa Rica I was giving devotions in front of the congregation and speaking about my mission trip. I have learned I can rely on the bible and prayer for every situation I'm involved in. I thank God for the Jones family and the witness they share to everyone they meet. They are truly followers of Jesus Christ. I will always have a special place in my heart for the Jones'.

River of God, Inc.

P.O. Box 406, Zionsville, IN 46077-0406

Contact Info: Chris McMichen

Phone: 317-769-7266

E-mail address: chris@riverofgodcostarica.net

WANT TO STAY CONNECTED?

Sign up to receive new prayer requests and/or electronic newsletters at:

www.riverofgodcostarica.net