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Pray, Live, Serve ... But where do I belong?

By Naomi Reid

Saturday's Sydney Morning Herald (26/2) ran an article on "expatriate stress." It quoted official studies, saying that foreigners (in any country) were more vulnerable to stress and more prone to mental ailments than the rest of the population. Various descriptions followed and most of them were linked to a loss of social networks or loved ones or a sense of belonging. A Sydney-based psychologist said that expatriate stress should be elevated to an official psychological syndrome because it is so common and its negative impact can be so severe.

I'd have to agree with her. Having lived long-term in Nepal—a country which was not our passport country, I know that it is physically exhausting and chronically stressful. Every day we would get out of bed and struggle with the need to decipher a foreign language—to gauge real meaning behind words and to work out

whether offense was being taken through our behaviour. Then there was the aching awareness that we never fully belonged as well as a constant, energy-sapping need to assess the situation for cues and hidden assumptions. Even worse than that, was the ever-present longing for the smells and memories and people that made up our other "home," the place where we were born and raised and known and understood.

Over the course of time it grew easier, but the underlying stresses were always there, even when our language improved and our cultural cues became more instinctive and our relationships deepened to a tearful honesty. The relationships we had were deep and wonderful, but we were still not fully at home. We still felt temporary and incomplete. We still needed to work hard.

But then, years later and surprisingly, the problem turned into something else.

In 2006 we returned to Australia and still felt like that! We were back in Australia, but we missed dear friends and memories and very significant places in Nepal ... in exactly the same ways that we had missed our life in Australia. The only difference was that the smells were different—it was *dal bhat* instead of eucalypts, and paddy fields instead of autumn and crazy tut-tuk drivers instead of a smooth ride and Lalu instead of Linda.

So I'm sitting here today, reading the article and wondering whether the state of being an expatriate merely exacerbates our normal human condition. Wherever we are, we don't fully belong. We aren't wholly complete and we need to work very hard at understanding the world around us. Perhaps being an expatriate merely causes us to face those feelings rather than run from them. It causes us to look them in the eyes and agree that in any country or city or relationship, we

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are still waiting and searching and groaning. We are still aliens and strangers on earth, people longing for a better country, a heavenly one (Heb. 11:13-16). So instead of running from those feelings, perhaps we need to face them and say, "Yes Lord, this is my official psychological condition . . . I'm not at home, I'm not complete, and I don't truly belong . . . but I thank You for the cost You bore to make me complete and for the place You're preparing for me where I will truly and utterly belong.

Naomi Reed is a returned missionary, author, and speaker. Her four popular books and an audio book (The Promise) are available at Christian bookstores. For more information, go to www.NaomiReed.Info or join "My Seventh Monsoon" on Facebook.

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FROM THE EDITOR



From the Past, Through the Present, For the Future

Simroots' motto has driven the content of this magazine over the years. But it suddenly occurred to me that it reflects my own journey as well. Sixteen years ago when I agreed to take over as editor of this magazine, my focus was mostly on "From the Past." I was still pining over what was. I wanted to keep the memories alive of Mt. Sanderson, Sunday Walks, Singspiration, kuka trees, and mangoes. If someone asked me as a child what I wanted to be when I grew up, I'd say, "A missionary of course." I wanted to live and die in Africa.

Slowly I made somewhat of a transition into American life and determined to enjoy winter days, Thanksgiving turkey, and apple pie. I let go of my pride and memorized "The Star Spangled Banner" (though in my heart, I still sang the Nigerian national anthem). I was curious about what my classmates were doing, wanted to find out who was married, how many kids they had, what career path they'd chosen. In the days before email, I set aside one day a week to correspond with my classmates. And when opportunities for reconnecting came, I was at the front of the line. One foot in America and the other in Africa. I discovered that "Through the Present" did not mean I had to forget the past.

On the other side of my half-century mark, with both my parents in heaven, I began to realize the importance of "For

the Future." I'm watching the excitement build as our classmates are returning to their roots to build into the next generation. We're going back to ELWA and Egbe and Sudan and Ethiopia (See the Ministry Ops section in *Simroots*). We're ministering to internationals who cross our paths (check out the Reconnecting section). And I found myself asking the question, "How can I build into the future? What's the point of having all this knowledge, time, and talent if I don't do something with it?"

And that's how I arrived at a way to meld all three: From the Past, Through the Present, For the Future. It's a very long story, which I'm happy to share if you have the time to listen, but about 10 years ago, I finally discovered what I wanted to be when I grew up. My passion is to help Adult MKs make the transition from the struggles and hurts in their past, so they can be freed up to move into the present, in order to leave a legacy for future generations. If you want to know more, check out our website at

www.mkministry.org.

What in your past is unresolved?

How can we help you move into the present?

Will you join the force that is pressing into the future?

Sai an jima (until a little while),

Karen (Seger) Keegan (KA, HC 72)

<http://simroots.sim.org>

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Simair landing near the volcanoes. Year?



SIM and Child Safety

In the past 18 months, SIM leadership has heard concerns from some SIM Adult MKs about how SIM responds to child safety issues both past and present. Some of those concerns have been expressed in social media settings. We have received reports from SIM missionaries who have either read Facebook forum comments, web blogs, or comments posted elsewhere on the Internet that characterize SIM as uncaring, unresponsive and/or indifferent to the reports of child safety.

The leadership of SIM International takes very seriously all reports of abuse, neglect, or endangerment of children in the SIM community whether current or in decades past, including but not limited to MKs who attended SIM-related boarding schools and who submit reports of abuse suffered in those settings. We assert unequivocally that any type of abuse is contrary to our beliefs, values, and policies.

The following measures are in place to address prevention, intervention, and follow-up care:

SIM is a member of the Child Safety & Protection Network (CSPN), a consortium of 51 mission agencies and overseas international schools that share a commitment to very high standards of response to child safety reports. Based on Best Practice Standards formulated through our affiliation with the CSPN, we have developed a very thorough Child Safety and Response Policy which guides us through an investigative (verification) process from initial report to final outcomes. In addition, SIM is working with networks in Europe to develop awareness of the need to have policies that are applicable in different cultural and legal contexts. In every case SIM desires to honor the Lord by pursuing justice for the victims and seeking redemptive outcomes through professional follow-up care for those involved.

In addition to working with the CSPN, SIM has made a further commitment to child safety by creating a full-time role

for an International Child Safety Coordinator whose responsibilities include helping each Sending entity develop child safety policies and materials designed to equip our mission families to understand child safety issues, to teach their children how to identify and respond to anything or anyone who may attempt to threaten their personal security, and to know what to do when instances of abuse or neglect are discovered. **If you have any questions about how SIM responds to child safety issues, please contact Liz Eberling at liz.ebeling@sim.org.** For SIM missionaries currently on the field, reports of abuse or neglect should be made to your field leadership who will pass them on to Liz. Every report is handled discreetly and with a strong commitment to confidentiality.

If asked to make a public statement concerning SIM's stand on child safety, the following statement would be issued:

SIM acknowledges that pain and personal struggles have been experienced by a number of children of missionary families. We unequivocally affirm that any type of abuse of children is contrary to our beliefs, values and policies.

In the 1990s, SIM leaders became

aware of cases of abuse. We listened, investigated, and confirmed openly that these incidents had taken place. We moved quickly to offer care and recovery support for those who suffered abuse.

SIM values all of the children in our missionary families as individuals created in the image of God, and we have committed significant resources of personnel and finances to the education and care of missionary kids (MKs) for many years. Our selection, screening, and supervision policies are constantly being reviewed, and we make every effort to investigate allegations of past and current abuse according to our Christian values and in compliance with a child safety policy that is based on Best Practice Standards adhered to by many Christian mission agencies and overseas international schools.

We deeply regret and, indeed, grieve any occurrence of abuse, and we stand ready to respond if we learn of any current abuse or anyone else from the past for whom we could help bring a measure of justice and healing. We also protect the right of confidentiality for those who have made reports."

*Malcolm L. McGregor
SIM International Director*

FROM THE KA ARCHIVES



Leola McElheran in blue dress, center next to her mother, Alma, and brother Alister in striped shirt

The Lies MKs Believe: #5 I'll Never Belong

By Michèle Phoenix

Writing on sensitive topics has its advantages and its disadvantages. The advantages can be seeing eyes opened and thinking broadened. The disadvantages can be vitriolic responses by readers who disagree. In a lifetime of writing, I've seldom received the kind of feedback engendered by my series of articles entitled "The Lies MKs Believe."

As stated in many of my articles, I know that most missionaries do it right and that most MKs are enriched and blessed by their experiences, as I was. But some MKs truly view themselves as victims of ministry, and it's for them that I write. Every email and letter I get from missionary parents who have changed their thinking as a result of reading my articles is confirmation that speaking truth is worth the controversy. And every comment I receive from MKs who never knew how to articulate their pain and recognized themselves in what I said prompts me to write on. With that in mind, here is lie #5 from the series, one I believe a majority of MKs believe, either consciously or subconsciously.

When I was little, I'd snuggle up to my mom in the evenings and listen to her reading "Are You My Mother?" to me. Do you remember the children's book? In the story, the baby bird, a rather pathetic figure with giant, hopeful eyes, wanders from cat to tractor to cow and car, repeating his increasingly urgent question: "Are you my mother?" As a child, I felt the pain that brought cartoon tears to his cartoon eyes and identified with the tremors of defeat in his feathered chest. The sensation of lostness was all too familiar to me, even at that age.

I am an MK, you see. And looking back from the vantage point of my 44 years, I wonder how much of my life I've spent wondering if new places and people groups would be my "mother," my place of belonging and sameness.

"I will never belong" is a sentiment I've heard expressed with various degrees of rancor and drama in my 20 years in MK education. Of all the traits Third Culture Kids and MKs share, I think

this one is among the most common. It is born of multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-experiential backgrounds that serve both to expand our worlds and limit our full adaptation to any of them. One of my first conscious thoughts about my TCK identity came at a young age, when I realized while on furlough that I'd never be fully American, and that the French would never consider me fully French, either. Weird in America. Weird in France. Weird pretty much everywhere, really.

Multi-cultural dwellers face three distinct options in their quest for belonging. The first is to conform. The second is to intentionally unconfound. The third is to straddle the cultural divide.

Let's look at CONFORMING first. In some ways, it's the easy way out. MKs are fairly good at it, at least on a surface level. We're observers by nature. Whether it be trying out a new fast-food restaurant or voting in American elections for the first time, I still live by the old motto: watch first, then act. I'll relinquish my place in line as often as I need to, until I've figured out how "normal" Americans do it and can proceed as they do. That method of adaptation or conforming is harmless and practical. But an onlooker may not recognize it as an observe-and-act tactic. It can look like indecision or reluctance, sometimes causing frustration among mono-cultural peers.

A more dangerous version of the classic MK ability to adapt is a full, seamless conformity. In this case, we'll either consciously or subconsciously discard those parts of ourselves that link us to other cultures and modes of life in order to be fully American, fully European, or fully Asian. We'll pick the culture we like best—and some MKs have five or six of them to choose from. Most of the time, the winner will be selected for comfort level, exotic appeal or being "forced" to live within it. You'll see it in the Swiss MK who refuses to return to the States and stops using English—thereby losing contact with his North American family. You'll see it in the sarong-wearing coed on an Oklahoma campus and the USA-bashing American speaking perfect Ger-

man at a beer fest in Berlin.

This response to unbelonging has obvious downsides. In order for me to have fully and uncompromisingly adapted to my French culture, for instance, I would have had to restrict my appearance, my political views, my gender-role opinions, my culinary tastes, and my social behaviors to what that culture expected of me. Once I was finished erasing the old and embracing the new in order to conform, there would have been very little left of the richness of a multi-cultural upbringing: the broadened understanding, worldview and artistic/social/political pallet that is so unique and so prized. Conformity would have cost me every good thing that can come from being an MK, but it would also have earned me a sense of belonging and sameness. For that sense, some MKs are willing to sacrifice a lot.

UNCONFORMING is another common response to feeling one will never belong. It goes something like this: "There's no way I'm able to look or act like I'm supposed to. I haven't lived here long enough, I'm not willing to become mono-cultural, and even if I tried, there's a good chance I'd fail. People on both continents tell me I'm weird. Well, I'll show them weird." Whereas being the victim of our "difference" may be painful, being the architect of the difference gives us a sense of control. So we exaggerate our weirdness in order to call it a choice, not an affliction. It's a self-defense mechanism that has serious backfiring potential.

I could give you a long list of student names from my years at Black Forest Academy, young people who knew that they wouldn't fit in anywhere, therefore decided to go all out. Sometimes it was strange clothes, sometimes it was eccentric behavior, sometimes it was threatening attitudes, strange tastes, or social misconduct. On some, it was endearing, on others it was off-putting. But these MKs whose identities had been shattered and rearranged without their volition were finally in control of how the world perceived them. And when someone's expression said "You're weird," they could pat themselves on the backs and consider

it mission accomplished, because they'd made it into a choice, not an oddness imposed on them. But . . . they had made that illusive "belonging" even more impossible to achieve in the process.

STRADDLING is probably the healthiest of the three responses to an MK's lack of belonging. But it's certainly not the easiest. It requires that we settle for "mostly-belonging." It also allows us to retain all those facets that lend depth and breadth to our identities. In order to successfully straddle cultures, we'll have to understand each of them, retaining those other-culture quirks that are acceptable in the place where we are and disengaging those that might be jarring or misunderstood by the "natives" around us. It isn't a repudiation of those aspects of our identities—it's a temporary, selective display that allows us to connect in the culture where we live without major impediments. As relationships deepen and our friends know us better, we'll be able to broaden our expressions of multiculturalism without alienating them. An initial carefulness and adherence to social norms will usually yield a more successful integration than, say, waving a Greek flag and refusing to eat anything but olives and feta!

This straddling will also require that we learn new ways of life, not a rejection of what we've known before, but an expansion of our cultural arsenal. This is also a means of honoring the culture in which we've been planted. Moving to Germany and not alienating our neighbors may require that we regularly sweep sidewalks that don't need sweeping. Living in France may require that we allow friendships to develop at a snail's pace. Living in Turkey may require more modest dress for women. You get the drift. An MK who wants to belong will have to be okay with learning some new cultural behaviors in order to better fit in and not offend. All this while retaining the good and valid aspects of his other cultures, because that's what makes us unique, broad-minded, tolerant, chameleon-like, and prized members of society.

In a sense, this last option brings us back to the book "Are You My Mother?" That little bird did it all wrong—hopping from cow to tractor in the hope of complete, uncompromising sameness. I'd like to suggest that the complete belonging he sought is not necessarily what we should be hoping for as MKs. Neither is a life spent in deliberate difference . . . But "mostly-belonging"—that's the approach that allows for uniqueness AND relationship AND a fulfilling life, whatever the culture.

As MKs, I think we're healthier when we accept that we won't ever be completely one or the other of our natures. The goal is to straddle them in a healthy manner, to acknowledge and celebrate those ways in which we can fit in, and to set out to live enthusiastically in that space between belongings. Once we accept a culture-straddling existence, selectively displaying our "otherness" (at least initially) and seeking points of sameness, we'll be able to belong without disowning our pasts, without alienating others, and without losing the rich legacy of being multi-cultural.

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<http://michelephoenix.com/mk-tck-resources/>

Always Longing

By Amandalee Arnold, college-age daughter of Elizabeth (Godbold) Arnold (KA 79)

Written her first day back in America

It's hard to not look back—
 Not to long for
 What's no longer mine.
 It's depressing to think
 Of all the happy things—
 Of what I want,
 But can no longer have.
 I wonder why,
 It has to happen this way—
 Why I can't return
 To what I once had.
 I long to go back—
 To be where I belong—
 To be home.
 I just want—
 To be surrounded by family,
 And friends,
 And home.
 If only I could return
 To where my heart longs—
 To where my soul yearns—
 To Africa.



Front: Miss Gladys Beavington, Marilyn Kliewer, Helen Hay, Carolyn Wallace, Judy Reimer, Judy Isaacs, Jerry Healy, Bob Black, Tom Fellows, Joe Harding, Bill Harding, Dick Ackley, Brian Isaacs, Mark Middleton

Middle: Lynn Emmel, Jacque Konnerup, Judy Healy, Raymond Jones, John Kayser, Phil Maxon, Lorne Bishop, Howard Black, Stephen Donald, Peter Wallace, Phil Ackley

Back: Chris Waldock, Ruth Fellows, Laura Jacobson

MINISTRY OPS



Are you interested in joining a three-week team of skilled AMKs (Adult Missionary Kids) to volunteer at Egbe Hospital for two weeks, then travel to Jos/Miango for one week?

In 2010, SIM, ECWA, and Samaritan's Purse joined together to begin to revitalize Egbe Hospital—a 33-acre hospital compound in Egbe, Nigeria. The 60-year-old hospital serves thousands in a 100-mile radius of villages and small towns, providing compassionate medical care and bringing hope to many people who may have nowhere else to turn for reputable health care, surgery, or maternity needs. The 100-bed Christian hospital is also a teaching hospital with a Nursing School, Midwifery School, and a Family Practice Residency program for Nigerian doctors.

After 60 years in service it is time for this Christian hospital to be remodeled, the buildings updated, the water and power supply enhanced, medical equipment updated, and staff trained to result in a self-sustaining hospital serving thousands for many more years into the future. SIM has partnered with Samaritan's Purse in the recruitment of volunteers to help with renovation and maintenance projects. We need to re-roof buildings, repair electrical

lines, upgrade water sources, install new plumbing, renovate missionary homes, clear brush, and construct several new buildings. Samaritan's Purse is asking for volunteers with many different skills to make the revitalization a reality. **Opportunities for electricians, masons, carpenters, builders, landscapers, painters, and other skilled trades are now available.** Round-trip airfare to Nigeria will be subsidized by Samaritan's Purse by \$1000, in addition to the cost of food, lodging, and in-country transportation for all volunteers while volunteering at Egbe.

The local community in the small town of Egbe is assisting wherever possible and are overwhelmed with joy to see the hospital revitalized for another 60 years of medical care, training and evangelism. Volunteers will experience humid 85-degree weather, most everyone speaks English, the region is politically peaceful with hilly savanna vegetation, and is known for farming and trading. Electricity and water are intermittent, but there is reliable Internet and cell phone coverage. To learn more about the project, we invite you to watch three videos at www.youtube.com/egbehospital or visit www.egbehospital.org. Following two weeks at Egbe, you will travel to Jos for one week.

If you are interested in joining a team of AMKs to Egbe and Jos, see details below. This is an exciting opportunity to partner with the Revitalization Project, SIM, and SP to rebuild, re-equip, repair, and revitalize Egbe Hospital, and return to Jos to explore ministries there. Arrangements would be made to visit Hillcrest, KA, and other ministries in the immediate surrounding Jos area.

Trip Details

Purpose: To volunteer your skills at Egbe Hospital, then travel to Jos/Miango

Team Leaders: John and Beaj Reed
Trip Length: Two weeks in Egbe, one week in Jos/Miango

When: October 18 - November 2, 2012 inclusive

Who: AMKs residing in Canada/US, skilled in the trades

How many: 8-10 volunteers per trip
Your cost: Approximate cost of \$1,500 which includes:

- Remaining portion of your airfare not covered by Samaritan's Purse
- Transportation Abuja-Jos return, transportation, accommodation and food in Jos/Miango

Application: Advise Beaj Reed of your interest (**application will be made as a group**)

Application Deadline: August 15, 2012

For further information:

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John and Beaj Reed
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beaj.reed@sim.org
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www.egbehospital.org
www.facebook.com/egbehospital
<http://blog.egbehospital.org>

KA Ministry Continues

By Linda Crouch (KA, HC 69, Staff)
crouch.jim@gmail.com

It was an interesting procession heading out the KA gate: Kent Academy fifth and sixth graders and 10 staff setting out to visit and encourage widows in the Miango community. Sharing is a lifestyle that is often better caught than taught! Why wait for Christmas to model giving? As the teams split up, kids took turns carrying bags of rice, shifting it from their heads to shoulders and backs as they went. They'd leave them with the women we hoped to meet. Some of the KA students had contributed to the project with rice from home.

As we wound our way down the dusty path, two ladies sitting under a shady baobab tree stood to welcome us. Knowing they probably didn't speak Hausa, we were glad to be with David, a teacher and native Miango Irigwe speaker. He spoke to the ladies in their dialect and told them we came from the school to greet because we cared about them. One lady made happy clicking noises with her mouth as she danced around us! She was so pleased to have visitors. She thought God had forgotten her, and yet, here we came, showing her He still knew about her and loved her. We stood in the shade and sang a few choruses together. As we prayed with her and gave her the bag of rice, she made more clicking noises—this time with tears. We all noticed the depth of her gratitude and were glad we had come.

We stopped at three other homes that afternoon. One blind lady, radiant with the joy of the Lord, didn't know the choruses we sang to her, so she proceeded to sing a couple for us! Another older woman we met had been a well-respected leader of the Women's Fellowship some years before. It was good for the kids to see how God could use us to encourage her. Our arms and hearts were lighter as we returned to KA. The teamwork of staff and students was a good witness. Going and giving together was much better than just admonishing kids to give. Even though we make a living by what we get, we actually LIVE by what we give.

Bingham Academy Needs

An English school administrator
A kindergarten teacher
A science teacher
An economics/business studies teacher
Three elementary teachers

Hillcrest Needs

An elementary schoolteacher
A high school Bible teacher
A math teacher
A school chaplain
A recruitment and development director

KA Needs

Funds to purchase a DVD series used for staff in-service teaching
Funds to buy teacher aids
Need lots of kids' books for each grade
Funds to help with Pancake Suppers for students and staff children

KA Bookmobile Needs

Share children's read-aloud picture books
Provide funds for roll-up plastic mats and donkey feed
Buy children's tracts to give out after reading aloud together

Send kids' books to:

Jacque Spencer (labeled "Books for Linda Crouch & KA")
1543 Tienstra Ct.
Homewood, IL 60430

Financial gifts can be sent to
SIM USA, PO Box 7900

Charlotte, NC 28241

Attn: Linda Crouch's Ministry Acct.

Sahel Academy Needs

Sahel Academy is now offering single-level classes for the first time in its 25-year history. But the need for teachers for the next school year is critical because many are not returning for a variety of reasons.

SIM Sebring Need

Sebring Manager and Hostess for Sebring Retirement Village. This is an urgent request.

BOOKS

Attention:

We have lists of books that might be of interest to our Simroots readers. Would anyone like to receive a copy of the list, order and read a book, and submit a review?

Amazing Experiences in Africa

By Johannes (Hans) Hagen
joh.hagen@gmx.de

Johannes Hagen has experienced the guidance and protection of God's care throughout his life. He experienced this especially during his three and a half years as a soldier in Russia during World War II. He also experienced God's help during his two studies as an electro engineer and teacher.

After working as an engineer with the Siemens company and teaching in different schools, he became head master of the largest school for factories of electrical products in East Berlin. While leading a youth camp with his wife, he received a call into mission work in Ethiopia. On his flight from communist East Germany with his wife and three children between four and eight years and his uncommon way to Ethiopia, he experienced again God's amazing dealings. God again proved His guidance, protection, and help to him and his family as he worked in Ethiopia and between the Somalis in the Ogaden and in Sierra Leone and while visiting a number of other countries until he was 84 years old.

This book is now available in English. Published by the Fromm Verlag. You can order it at www.morebooks.de.

RETURN TO HOME



Our Nigerian Experience, October 3-23, 2011

By Gene Thamer (GH) ethamer@sympatico.ca

CHAPTER 1, Sarnia, Ontario, to Ibadan, Nigeria

I must begin this diary with praise to our Lord Jesus Christ for enabling Ann and me to make this trek to Isanlu and Egbe, Nigeria. I've thought about the possibility of this for many years and now it is complete! Or is it just a beginning? It has been truly a journey of many surprising blessings.

The first blessing the Lord gave is our acquaintance and friendship with Dr. Ayo and Mrs. Jumoke Jegede of Sarnia. Our acquaintance began back in the fall of 1988. In conversation with them earlier this year, they extended the offer to be our sponsors (required by Nigeria) and to have us travel with them to their home in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Without the invitation of the Jegede's, we would not have taken on this trip.

Now to our story:

It begins with visits to the local Health Unit to find out what we needed in shots and meds—yellow fever, malaria, tetanus, polio, hepatitis, etc. I was glad that my Baptist health insurance covered most of my meds.

Next, calculate how much and what kind of monies to take with us. U.S. dollars work everywhere, but we bought some UK sterling as well. Nigerian Naira would be bought with U.S. dollars in Ibadan.

A visit was made to a friend who had tourist info for London, UK, and small appliances like 220V/110V transformer, hair dryer, and shaver. The transformer would also help with charging our camera and video batteries.

Finally, a stop at the local Canadian Tire store to pick up some tools to take and leave. I found that the manager was away, but the Lord timed it so that the storeowner was there instead. I've always had a good rapport with Peter Aynsley, and again we had a good chat. Having told Peter what I was doing, I asked if there

might be a discounted price for the tools I wanted. He told me to go and get what I wanted—a rechargeable drill set and a pack of accessories to go with it—and bring them to him. When I returned to

Peter with these items, he said, "I'd like to donate them." Of course I turned him down. No way! I thanked the Lord for putting this into Peter's heart and mind.

Monday, Oct. 3, we headed to Pearson International Airport in Toronto with our allotted two carry-on bags each, plus three 50 lb. bags for Ann to check and 3 large boxes (for Jumoke) to check on my ticket. (We were allowed the three checked items each because of an agreement between British Airways and Golden Rule Travel regarding persons traveling for the purpose of mission—for us, that was the volunteer project at ECWA Egbe hospital.) Leaving the car at the Park-n-Fly, we met Jumoke at the airport about 3:30 for our 8:30 p.m. flight. We had pre-printed boarding passes. Our check-in and security checks went smoothly.

Tuesday, Oct. 4, we landed at London/Heathrow after a little over 8 ½ hours in the air. We tried to sleep during the flight but were not very successful. Coffee kept us awake for the three hours until our flight to Lagos, Nigeria. We were met in Lagos about 6 p.m. by Jumoke's relatives who drove us to the home of Bim, a lovely lady and long-time friend of Jumoke. What a blessing it was to be warmly welcomed, fed, and directed to an air-conditioned room for the night. That ride from the airport to Bim's house gave us the first glimpse of "Nigerian roads and



Ann, Headmaster of School, Gene

driving" which will ever be a major topic in our Nigerian experience.

Wednesday, Oct. 5, saw us driven from Lagos to the Jegede home in Ibadan where we met Keeton (Jumoke's niece and house keeper) and Bridget (Keeton's helper and the manager of Jumoke's shop). Again, the roads and the driving kept our full attention. The cities of Lagos and Ibadan have potholes and speed bumps on all the streets. This is actually good as it keeps the speeds down and gives pedestrians a chance to cross. Paving is scarce and mostly broken up and not repaired. Dirt streets show no evidence of a grader being applied. Drivers pick and choose the smoothest part of the road, regardless of which side it is on. If you get there first, you take the right-of-way. When the road is smooth, you drive as fast as you can without hitting a chicken, goat, dog, child, person, or motorbike, all of which are vying for the right-of-way. For about 24 hours afterward, I felt like the floor was moving under me. I even asked Ann if she felt it. At the Jegede home, Ann and I were given a nice big room upstairs.

Thursday, Oct. 6, began with a relaxed morning so we/I could get over the ride. Breakfast was barely over when the first of many visitors arrived to greet Jumoke and to meet the two *oyinbos* (o-een-bow = peeled skin) with her. All of Jumoke's family and friends whom we met let us

know how pleased they were that I was born in Nigeria and that we had thought enough about them to return now. The almost universal comment was, “Welcome home.” That afternoon we experienced a wonderful tropical downpour for an hour or so. Then the skies cleared again and we enjoyed the cool.

Friday, Oct. 7, we had a wonderful tour with Jumoke’s friend, Comfort, and her driver. We saw many market areas and stopped at the currency exchange. (At 158.5 Naira to the USD, \$300.00 bought us N47550. Now we had the fun of doing the mental arithmetic for all our expenses.) Our tour continued to the Nigerian College Hospital School of Nursing where Jumoke’s friend, Mrs. Ogunde, was the principal. The class of Occupational Health students presented Ann with a first-issue copy of a magazine, which they have started, to promote safety in the workplace. Then we saw Albert’s (a friend) cobbler shop and Comfort’s beauty salon. The afternoon ended with another short downpour of rain. The evening concluded with us being invited to sit in while Jumoke “interviewed” Keeton’s boyfriend, Olu, who wants to marry Keeton. Keeton had specifically asked us to stay for the interview, and we prayed for them before leaving.

Saturday, Oct. 8, started with a short walk out of our gated community and across the four-lane boulevard to the Foodco store where I purchased a cheap pair of cuff links (about \$3 USD) for my one Nigerian suit. One really takes his life in hand when trying to cross the traffic of cars, taxi-motor bikes, buses, and trucks. Most of the trucks spew out black diesel smoke. They obviously haven’t had a tune-up for years. Wow—the smog it all creates! The afternoon was spent on a tour of Jumoke’s shop and other consignment customers with another friend, Funmi (silent ‘n’) and her driver. On the way home, we were introduced to Funmi’s husband.

Sunday, Oct. 9, another friend drove us to Jumoke’s All Souls Anglican Church, Ibadan. The service was three hours, 10 - 1, with the last 30-45 minutes being given to announcements. There were about five different offerings received, and having not read the bulletin, we put all of ours in the first one to come along—for the main-

tenance of the building. I guess the Lord knows they need it, and by the looks of things, they are doing a good job of keeping up the facility. It is a large building with a sanctuary that would seat about 500 people. We were impressed with the 30-minute, interactive Bible Study in the early part of the service. They had mic-runners so that people could respond to the leader’s questions. Music was provided by a choir, foursome song leaders, organ, clavino, drums, trumpet, and flugal horn. Another thing I was quick to notice is the movement that comes with every song. Nigerians don’t sing without

moving to the beat. Great!

Rice and beans (a small, white bean) were the food staples. They usually were accompanied by a hot, red, tomato and pepper sauce with fish or chicken in the sauce. Ann and I had to have the pepper reduced some for our taste. Bananas were plentiful—small but very good. We had tastes of fresh pineapple, oranges, tangerines, sugar cane, papaya and ground nuts (peanuts). Grapefruit and mango were not in season. (At the Egbe Hospital, we had a taste of pounded yams—very bland.)

... To be continued.

ELWA Burns

Around 10 p.m., November 8, 2011, the radio station of the ELWA (Eternal Love Winning Africa) went up in flames. Although no cause has been officially established, initial reports say that an electrical fault is not likely. Being a religious broadcaster with no political affiliation, it may be only coincidental that the fire followed the intense activities of the days leading to the November 8 presidential run-off election in Liberia. Late Tuesday night, ELWA staff, along

with the Liberia Fire Service, fought hard to contain the fire. About two-thirds of the station’s collection of CDs and tapes and a sound mixer could be rescued from shelves after the entire station was doused with water by firefighters. Everything else was a total loss. The radio’s managers have continued to broadcast from a small satellite room.

See photos at:
www.elwamausa.org/blog/



Sally (Thompson) Moore, Judy (Thompson) Koci, John & Beaj (Lacey Beacham) Reed, Dan Snyder, Nancy (Thompson) Molenhouse, Robin (Miller) Zook, John Schindler, and missionaries Louisa & Don Nelson

Many of us MKs used to be on kids’ radio shows when we were growing up at ELWA. In March 2011 we were interviewed on a call-in ELWA radio show, “A blast from the past.”



Unexpected Connections

By Karen (Seger) Keegan (KA, HC 72)
simroots@sim.org

In the process of maintaining our *Sim-roots* database, I hear from MKs from around the world, so it was no surprise to receive an address update from **Wolf-Dieter Kretschmer (KA 73)**, living in Germany. The surprise was when he mentioned that he planned to attend the National Religious Broadcasters' Convention in Nashville, TN (just 45 minutes away from me), the weekend of February 25. I, too, was planning on attending the convention! It had been over 45 years since we'd attended KA together, but the MK bond is strong enough that three of us MKs who live in the area arranged a time and a place to meet with him. Of course we had to exchange photos by email since we weren't quite sure we could translate our second grade memories into gray hairs! His mother, **Erika Kretschmer**, taught the German children at KA when I was there.

And then while visiting the expo center, imagine my surprise and delight to discover another SIM AMK. **Deborah (Tuck) Templeton (KA, HC 78)** and her husband Darryl were manning a booth for Megavoice (www.megavoice.com). It had been some 25 years since our paths had crossed. Small world!



Erika Kretschmer



Wolf-Dieter Kretschmer



Wolf-Dieter with Minna Kayser, Karen (Seger) Keegan,
Cheryl (Cooke) Sivacek

A Friend in Deed

This is the true story of a son of western missionaries who returned for a brief visit to the remote African village of his childhood some six years after he and his family last lived in the village on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert. The author wishes to remain anonymous.

Strolling through the village one morning, I heard someone calling my name from behind a wall surrounding a native compound. A woman approached me, repeating my name. I turned to greet her, and then it struck me—I knew this woman. I had known Hasina as a 12- or 13-year-old girl when I last lived in the village. She was still a teenager, I figured, but she now had the stoop and gait of a mature, tired woman.

Hasina came from a dark-skinned, low—perhaps the lowest—caste of her rigidly hierarchical tribe. Her father had settled in the area many years ago after a brief stint in the French colonial army. He had little formal education but had found work as a jack-of-all-trades for the government administrators stationed in the village. He was neither one of the officials for whom he worked nor accepted by the locals. He had a reputation for avarice and cruelty. He beat his children severely. Even the village dogs cowered in his shadow.

Years before, my mother had taken an interest in Hasina. She taught her small things about personal hygiene, sewing, and cooking. Hasina beamed when Mom gave her an old blouse or undergarments to replace her tattered clothes. My mother paid her to do odd jobs around the house. These were small chores Mom devised to give her a brief reprieve from an oppressive home environment.

Hasina and I had been playmates. We were not yet teenagers when I introduced her to ice cubes. What were these objects, hard as rock, but in a moment under the hot desert sun reduced to nothing more than drops of water? I remember how, at first touch, she jumped unexpectedly, unable to distinguish the extreme cold from the sensation of extreme heat. I gave her a first taste of soda, a rare treat in our isolated village. She giggled when the effervescent bubbles tickled the tip of her nose as she sipped this strange nectar.

Leaning over the low fence, I inquired as to her health and well being. I presumed she was married—perhaps a second or third wife—and this was her husband's encampment. No, she said sadly, she was not married. She was a "servant," she murmured, using a euphemism in the local dialect for "slave."

She was a slave? Her eyes, which once sparkled, were dull, even dead. This playmate from my childhood was a slave! Her cruel and greedy father—her own flesh and blood—had sold her into slavery. She was more than a

slave, I was sure; she was a concubine—a sex slave.

Shackles and chains are not always features of modern slavery, but their absence renders the peculiar institution no less cruel. Slavery means long hours of forced labor, subject to intimidation and violence and violation, for little or no pay.

I was speechless. How does one respond to an acquaintance, a friend, a fellow human being who is enslaved? I made a quick calculation in my head. How much does a slave sell for—a young, apparently strong and healthy woman of child-bearing age? How much cash did I have in my money belt? How much more could I readily get my hands on? I wondered if the master would be willing to sell her to me. Would my bid—a white man’s bid—inflate the purchase price? There was no time to consider the ethics of buying a fellow human being—even with the best of intentions. Would engaging in the trade only stimulate more of this dirty commerce?

I had to wonder whether purchasing this woman’s freedom would do her any favors. Where would she go, what would she do? She had lived her entire life in this remote village, and she lacked the skills to cope outside this community. She was barely literate. If she returned to her father’s house, she would undoubtedly be sold back into slavery. Unattached women of marriageable age in this culture were assumed to be prostitutes.

I doubted I could scrape together the resources to purchase her freedom. Moreover, I was without means to care for her; I was only a teenager barely able to care for myself. Even if I could bring her safely to a city or to America, could she adapt to and survive in a foreign environment?

What was the humane response, the moral course of action? There are injustices beyond the ability of a teenage boy to rectify. Perhaps this was one of them.

I made inquiries in the village. Slavery was an accepted, if illegal, arrangement in the community, and there was no doubt that she was, as she told me, a “servant.” And, yes, the price of a slave was beyond my modest means. Her master beat her, I was told, but so had her father and so, too, were many wives in the village. Life in this community could be harsh for both the free and the slave. Hasina’s current existence may have been less brutal and bleak than life under her father’s roof or than that of many other women in her society ostensibly free of bondage.

My last day in the village I dropped by Hasina’s compound. I discreetly handed her a small package across the mud brick wall. It contained a new blouse, soap, a box of sugar, and a bag of sweets. This was the very least my mother would have done for her.



By Dave and Janet Brown
reconnect@gmail.com

Our connection with *Simroots* is that we were at Bingham Academy 1990-1993. Having evacuated from Liberia in 1990, we returned to Liberia in 1994. We were asked to join SIM UK staff in 1999 and worked at “the Manor” in Wetheringsett for a couple of years, Dave primarily involved in “Partner Missions” and Janet involved with TCKs.

We left SIM in 2002 and that summer started up (at the request of Global Connections—the UK inter-mission networking organisation) **reconnect**—a five-day, action-packed, and fun-filled residential re-entry holiday for TCKs aged 6-12 years old. Since we started in 2002 with 16 kids attending, we have seen the numbers grow year-on-year, with 39 kids benefiting from **reconnect** in 2011. In addition, we have seen the launch of “reconnect NI” for kids in Northern Ireland and “reconnect-for-teens” for TCKs aged 13-18 years old. It was great to have 25 kids in this older group in 2011.

We have had kids from 59 countries and over 35 mission agencies attend **reconnect** over the years. Some kids are back in the UK long-term; others just here for Home Assignment time; some kids just back a week or two; others who have been in the country over 12 months. We find that this mix of kids works well and they learn so much from each other.

We spend time looking at the lives of Naomi and Ruth—one going home, the other leaving home: a situation paralleled in the lives of our kids. We look at the joys and hardships they each faced and the God who was there with them in it all. We see some of the cultural changes each had to make and can apply that

to the challenges of going to school in the UK, making friends, etc.

One of the highlights each week is our WOW sessions (Window On the World) as our “resident experts” (be they 6 years old or 12 years old) tell us about their country. It’s a great opportunity for these kids to tell their story and share their love for a country so dear to them, to an audience keen to hear what it is like, to learn how to say “hello” or know what the people eat or how they dress. In between, we have lots of fun together, with crafts and games, an early morning trek down to cross a river by stepping stones, a late night video with popcorn, outings to a nearby swimming pool and ten pin bowling—for some their first time in an indoor pool or bowling alley, s’mores and a “night market” bringing reminders of “home” elsewhere.

It is a great privilege to be involved in this ministry. We have a great team that we have worked with over the years as well as each year having “young leaders” developing their own understanding of what it means to be a TCK and growing in their ability to share and lead sessions, as well as doing a fantastic job just getting alongside the young children as “older brothers and sisters.”

In the UK we have seen mission agencies gradually becoming more aware of the need to debrief their kids as well as their adult members over the past 10 years; but even so, most agencies are not able to offer this debriefing “in house.” This is where **reconnect** can help work in partnership with a wide range of missions to make the transition for their kids as smooth as possible.

For details as they emerge for **reconnect 2012**, go to:

www.globalconnections.co.uk and
www.oscar.org.uk

Nigeria has come to Sarnia, Ontario

Submitted by Gene Thamer (GH 58)
gthamer@lafrentz.ca

In a land of many nationalities, what does one do when one sees a group of four young “black” men in the mall?

Well, if you are Marilyn Rough and married to an MK, **Don Rough (GH, HC 55)**, from Nigeria, you walk right up to them and ask them from where do they come. And that’s what Marilyn did here in Sarnia. She learned that they had all just arrived from Nigeria to attend the local Lambton College, had been billeted in



Ann Thamer, 4 Nigerian students, Marilyn Rough, Rev. Robert Roe, Don Rough

the college residence for the week, but now had to move out to an apartment obtained for them by the college. However, the apartment was totally empty—no furniture, linens, dishes, pots and pans, cutlery—nothing.

No problem; never fear, Marilyn is here. She borrowed my truck for hauling furniture from Salvation Army and St. Vincent DePaul thrift stores, and groceries that she emailed people to bring to church. Roughs picked up two men, and we picked up the other two for church and then took them out for lunch.

Marilyn has since learned of other Nigerians who are studying at Lambton College and is hoping to establish some sort of Christian network for them. Most of them are strong believers. This is truly the Lord bringing Nigeria to Sarnia for our stewardship.

DALLAS REUNION JULY 5-8, 2012

Registration and Information: www.hillcrest.myevent.com

ATTN: NEW ADDITIONAL DATE

It has been requested that we begin the reunion on Thursday, July 5, rather than Friday, July 6 to allow more time for those traveling in for the event. **Registration and welcome activities will begin at 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 5.**

We have received word that several different groups are planning to attend, including a Bingham Academy group, in addition to the traditional Hillcrest/KA group. Anyone interested in getting together other groups, such as ELWA, ICA, etc. are more than welcome! Please contact us for more information.

NEW FEATURE!

This year we are going to be providing an opportunity for various ministries, in which Adult MKs are involved, to showcase their ministry, share opportunities, and gather prayer support, etc. One highlight will be a presentation by the **EGBE HOSPITAL REVITALIZATION PROJECT** led by Betsie (Campion) Smith and her brother, Don Campion. It is amazing to see how God has rewarded the faithfulness of this family as they caught the vision to rebuild the hospital at which their parents had served during their childhood years in Nigeria. Following their presentation we will have a Round Robin event in which a variety of ministries will be showcased. You will be given the opportunity to hear a 15-minute briefing on

at least two of these ministries.

If you are involved in a ministry, particularly back in the “homeland,” and are interested in participating in the Round Robin event, please contact Nancy (Ackley) Ruth to secure your spot in this exciting activity!

Where: Dallas (Westlake) Texas at the Marriott Solana
www.marriott.com/dalwl

Approximate cost:

- Registration and one African meal \$75 per adult (estimate)
- 3 nights’ lodging - July 5 - 7 (Includes full American breakfast buffet)
Single \$99 Double \$109 Triple \$119 Quad \$129 (per night)
Book directly with the hotel (link will be sent via e-mail)
- Other meals on your own

Contacts:

Steve Ackley steve@ackleys.us, 214-536-5458

Nancy (Ackley) Ruth nancyhrsolutions@ymail.com, 972-672-2328



www.facebook.com/events/269320239757662/

GSS REUNION 2014

Contact: Judy Peterson japeterson@apu.edu

REMEMBER WHEN



Smiles from the Field By Dan Elyea (KA, HC 59) wyfrmail@yahoo.com

These little stories all involve SIM missionaries in Nigeria (or their children). Tip of the hat to Mom and Dad: They told most of these stories, and the stories are mostly from the 40s and 50s.

Dad's great love for pie was well-known in Jos. **Mac McElheran**, too, was very fond of pie. One morning, **Soddy Soderberg** (SIM pilot) came to where Dad and Mac were working at the Jos Mission garage and rubbed it in like a true champ. "Hey, you guys! Oh, boy! Alice made the nicest cherry pie, and we're going to have the last two pieces for tea this afternoon!" (The Soderbergs lived quite close to the Mission garage.) As they were working on a car, neither one observing Rest Hour, Dad and Mac plotted sweet revenge. Knowing that the Soderbergs would be sound asleep during Rest Hour, and that the house wouldn't be locked, they slipped in, got the pie out of the fridge, ate it, and left a taunting thank-you note behind on the table along with the empty plate. Soddy related to them afterward that he and Alice laughed themselves to tears to think that two missionaries would have the nerve to pull off a stunt like that. In later years, when Mrs. Soderberg would write, she'd say, "Come and see us, Harry—I'll make you a pie."

Some of you older MKs will remember **Dr. Helser**. A man of similar girth to myself. (I've heard this little story since I was a boy—Dad told it again during a visit a couple years ago.) Dr. Helser liked to say that his doctor had advised him that he really must watch his waistline. "So I got it out there where I could see it!" says he.

Dad told about a missionary—**Joe Mooney**. As he was kick starting his motorcycle, it backfired, and the carburetor caught fire. The entire machine burned up, including the tires. Dad had to repair it—a real tough job. "Patch it back together," was the way he put it. Dad said that, with sufficient presence of mind,

Mooney should have kept kicking it over until it started. That way, the carburetor fire would have been sucked right back in as the engine started and avoided the wholesale fire. I commented that, unless a person had great confidence that the machine would start, he'd be unlikely to kick it over very many more times while a fire burned directly below his body.

Mom and Dad told a story about **Bill Williams** (father of Ann and David). When he had to leave the classroom of Nigerians that he was teaching, he'd tell them that, although he was leaving, he'd still be there, and they'd better be good. Then he'd proceed to take out his glass eye and his false teeth and place them on his desk before he went out. Reportedly, the students were awed into perfect behavior.

Some of the family were visiting over at **Mary Haas'** place. She served up a cake. Young sister **Lorna** ate the cake but left all the icing. Mary asked, "Don't you like frosting, Lorna?" Lorna replied, "I like good frosting."

Bill Crouch gave several Nigerians a ride from Miango to Jos in his car. This was back in the days when that road was really bad. Riding in the back seat, the Nigerians got carsick. As they exited from the car in Jos, one of the Nigerians was heard to say, "*Wannan, shegin mota ne!*" Loosely translated, that comes out something like, "This is an accursed car!"

In Jos (when sister **Fran** was under six) she was outside with a Nigerian woman and her toddler. As they played, the child was eating some hibiscus flowers. When the mother saw it, she thought Fran was

responsible, so she said to her, "*Zan mari ki gobe!*" (I will slap you tomorrow!)—the strongest way she dared to convey her displeasure back there in the 40s. Telling this story reminded Mom of an incident at Staff House in Jos (they ran the mini-apartments/dining room for a while). Some singles and busy big shots took their meals there, rather than each preparing their own meals in their small quarters. **Dr. Stirrett** (a wonderfully eccentric older missionary) would always have a plate of cut up tomatoes for one of his meals. One day, some missionary sitting next to him (and not realizing the deal) took some tomatoes off the plate and passed the plate on to others at the table. So much for the good doctor's meal!

A very young sister **Lorna** was giving the Gospel to a Muslim Nigerian man (Dad had amputated his cancerous toe). Lorna's clincher was something along the line of, "... and if you take Jesus into your heart, you can live in a nice house like ours!"

Softball occupied many recreational periods at KA. At one memorable game, I played second base. **Alan Shaw**, a big, strong man held down the catcher position. The sun glared blindingly in my eyes at the moment when Mr. Shaw made a mighty throw to second. With a bit of a misjudgment on my part (and me having no glove), the ball impacted right smack on the end of my middle right hand finger. It promptly swelled up like a sausage and remained immobile, straight out for several days. Luckily, it didn't happen in the States or I would have been razzed mercilessly for sustaining a naughty gesture!



Retired Teachers of Ontario publishes a quarterly called Renaissance which has lots of travel items. I thought you might be interested in my answers to their questions.

Tell us about your travelling trials and triumphs. We want to know what inspired you to travel and the lessons you've learned along the way.

Allow me to clarify the setting which centres on the land-locked East African country of Ethiopia. In January 1956 my wife Frances and I, North Bay, Ontario educated teachers embarked for Ethiopia with our two pre-school children. Permanent teaching certificates were our qualifications. Sea, land, and air adventures awaited us. We were novices. Our North Bay British friend assured us there was nothing like Sea Travel. "First you are afraid you are going to die. Then you are afraid you won't." We sailed by way of New York.

Eight days in crossing the rough Atlantic our tiny Dutch freighter provided our first sickness. The ancient, unpressurized DC3 provided the second as we flew from Aden over the Ethiopian Danakil Depression late in the turbulent afternoon. Frances, who was expecting our third child, was violently airsick. But the rest of us were sicker! Our final four children are all Ethiopian born.

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, lies more than 8000 feet above sea level. We had to wait while an airplane employee sprayed insect repellent above our heads. Then we had to adjust to the thinner atmosphere!

In 1967, Canada's centennial year, now as a family of eight, we flew home to Canada. The Six-Day War scotched our plans of visiting Israel. However, we were able to visit parts of Europe. Two years later only six of us returned to Addis where we both continued our teaching ministry. In 1973 we eventually came to reside in London, Ontario. My retirement as a teacher for the London Board allowed us to return to the "Land of Burnt Faces" in 1989-90 for another school year. Frances

was promoted to heaven in June 1999, six months short of our 50th, and the new millennium.

When I was turning sixty, two of our children took it upon themselves to contact former students and staff of Bingham Academy, a school on the outskirts of Addis where I formerly was acting principal for several years. Cards, letters, and phone calls came in abundance. We had such a party! I wanted to expand that celebration further by visiting former students, who by this time were on every continent except Antarctica. And I have been able to follow that dream.

Since I now teach English to adults, my travels have taken me to Europe and the UK; once to Chile and Bolivia; twice to Korea; to Thailand, the Philippines, Australia, and New Zealand as well as the length and breadth of Africa. I have twice traveled literally around the world, once in each direction, trawling for former students and staff. And I have found them. Lots of them.

I have been back to Africa numerous times, the latest being October-November of 2011 to Ghana and Ethiopia, specifically to Awassa in southern Ethiopia to help establish Panafric International Academy. At my age I often said I did not want to return to Ethiopia alone. Coming back is not so dramatic.

My Ethiopian counterpart is an educator of great vision, passion, and practicality. His name is Mesfin Atlaye. At age eighteen he escaped the clutches of the communist cadres, who were looking for cannon fodder. He made his perilous way to Nairobi, Kenya. Over four years he became fluent in English. Eventually coming to Canada he earned an engineering degree, then a degree in Theology. Here in London he has opened a thriving coffee business. He has put his doctorate on hold, deliberately deferring it in order to be with his family. He is the father of five, all born in Canada. They are twin boys, a third son, and two loving lively girls all under the age of ten. His wife is more than 100% behind him as he pursues his vision of "establishing a quality school in Awassa, south central Ethiopia." With

highly trained staff and diligent teaching, the dream can become a reality.

Phase 1 will be from K through 6. Phase 2, mid-elementary. Phase 3, upper grades to graduation from Grade 12.

Weeks together we were in Awassa plodding through bureaucracy. Mesfin had previously prepared a file with the municipal authorities. On any given day it appeared to be stagnant. However with much diligence and persistence, on 11-11-11 we dedicated the property designated for Panafric International Academy. www.devxchange.org/AwasaSchool.html

A crazy adventure?

In Italy we lost one child in the hotel when she slipped away thinking she knew where our room was. She locked herself in a fourth-floor bathroom. Next door the building was too close. No room for a ladder! In Greece we lost our youngest boy when Frances and I each thought the other was responsible.

Unexpected pit stop?

Travelling south on a bus designated as a "comfort bus with a washroom," we were victims of false advertising. In the first hour of the ten-hour ride I tried the door only to discover the washroom was bolted shut, "because that is where we store supplies for sale." They stopped the bus at that point. I didn't join them, but about a dozen men held the bus hostage for a quarter of an hour as they relieved themselves beside the road! For me at least, it was a lengthy day! How long can one cross his legs, especially with Montezuma's revenge? Later, travelling north from Awassa, we met a young Dutch lady doctor who commented that the squat toilet holes made her envious she was not a man!

Did your travels make you see the world differently?

Poverty on any continent reveals and highlights basic needs as well as the versatility and ingenuity of folk to survive. Even the poor as opposed to the rich, show more contentment when the layers of life are peeled away.

Did you learn tips and tricks to travel more comfortably?

At the top of any travel list is TP. Spare rolls in your carry on, spares in your pockets. I have needed them all. I carry an emergency supply of almonds. I also carry a small drinking glass size purifier, an emergency water treatment device which is “good for 1000 safe drinks”; active ingredients IODINE. [PentaPure Incorporated] Water, if left in the African sun in clear plastic bottles for the whole day will be very safe to drink. Plan ahead.

Try something you never thought you'd do?

Yes, eating several kinds of wild African fruit and food, including meat, such as crocodile, zebra, wild pig. On the mantelpiece of my gas fireplace in London there is a small hog tooth just short of ten inches long. Years ago in a taxidermy shop in Addis I held in my hand the record tooth—a full 18 inches. Are you envious? Also, I was greatly privileged to photograph His Majesty, Haile Selassie (“Might of the Trinity”) the Emperor of Ethiopia of whom I have a number of personal pictures.

Crocodile Cookbook

Remember how our parents had to make everything from scratch and find creative substitutes for various ingredients? Check out this 220-page cookbook. Might just bring back some memories! It's entitled *From the Crocodiles: Recipes from the International Women's Club, Kaduna, Nigeria*. “Kaduna” is the Hausa word for “Crocodiles.”

Besides the numerous recipes, you'll enjoy the extra pages, including British-to-American equivalents and Hausa words for various foods.

To find a free download, go to www.sim-nigeria.org/index.php and click on the recipes tab.

Boarding School Cookbook

Submitted by Jeanette Wall
walledoux@optusnet.com.au

How many of us have tasted a dish over the years that brought us back to our time at boarding school? Food, with its fragrant aromas and tantalising tastes, is imbued with the power to bring back vivid memories, both good or bad. How bad I discovered recently when I (perhaps overly optimistically) unleashed some Limburger cheese onto my unsuspecting family. “That smells

like the pigpens at KA!” complained my brother (quite rightly).

What dishes do you remember fondly from your days at boarding school? For me, it's Sticky Buns from KA. I went for years trying to recreate Sunday morning's justly famous Sticky Buns. Still haven't managed it. KA kids might remember the silence that fell over the dining hall on Sunday mornings. (And those of my era may just remember a couple of brave souls trying to inject some humour into the solemn Sabbath ritual by calling out “Silence Reigns!” Sadly, the rejoinder “And nobody got wet” was never heard. . . .)

And, conversely, what dishes make you shudder when you think of them? For me, it's a close call between the liver dish, the chili con carne and those slices of avocado that some of us had to cut into pieces and swallow with water. Does anyone else besides me find yourself explaining your dislike of dishes with “I was forced to eat it at Boarding School”?

I remain passionate about food (sometimes I wonder if it was all those hours spent with a growling tummy with the wonderful smells emanating from the kitchen) and have ended up married to a French chef, so my days of starving between meals are definitely over.

I'd love to try to put together a collection of favourite recipes from SIM's different boarding schools and sell it, giving the profit to each of the schools. Anyone care to contribute?

BULLETIN BOARD

ELWA HISTORY

Mrs. Draper has put a lot of time and effort into writing up a history of the beginnings of ELWA Academy. If anyone wants to enquire about it, her email is fellowshipd@aol.com.

TCK COORDINATOR

Lorna Jacobson (BA 71, Staff) has taken on the role of SIM International TCK Coordinator alongside her current role in the SIM Canada MK Care Program.

MR. BENDER MEMORIES

I am collecting stories and memories about my dad, Mr. Bender (Southern Baptist), who taught Math / Algebra / Geometry at Hillcrest. Since he has now been gone for 31 years, the memories have faded. I am asking anyone who knew him to send me their favorite memory or two. I would love to hear them. Submitted by Angie Bender angies@ccfedmonds.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Photo Corrections

Simroots Vol. 28#2, Page 10

Who are they? Dave Megahey is on the right and Morris “McElheran” on the left. This picture was taken at the McElheran’s station in the summer of 62. Submitted by Joanne Megahey.



Responses to Lies MKs Believe

Dear Karen Keegan:

I really enjoy getting my copy of *Simroots* and seeing photos and reading articles of people from the past. I particularly enjoyed Beryl Kirk’s article about her mother as I knew Beryl and Marian Kirk from my years at GH. I loved seeing the photo, in the middle of page 11 of the recent issue, of my sister Margaret, front, third from the right. She died in 2002.

I don’t think it is time to shut down the paper copy of *Simroots*, but I understand your concern about younger readers being more interested in electronic news.

I would like to respond to Michèle Phoenix’s series of articles entitled “The Lies MKs Believe.” While Ms. Phoenix begins her first article by saying that her statements don’t apply to all MKs, she then states that she will discuss a lie “most MKs seem to believe” and that is that “All Americans are stupid.” Her evidence to support that statement seems to be all drawn from her own experience growing up in France. Most MKs who read *Simroots* did not grow up in Europe; they spent their childhoods in far less developed countries. For my part, I never heard such a statement or even any remotely connected idea from any MK either during my years at KA or GH. My classmates at KA were primarily from the U.S., Canada, and Great Britain, and we were all proud of our home countries even though in many cases we knew little about them, having lived very few years in our home countries. My recollection is that we spent very little time discussing our home countries. My only connection to the U.S. was when I got interesting toys sent to me at Christmas from aunts in the States. Those of us who were Americans and lived at Gowans Home never

discussed what countries were “stupid,” and as an American I felt very accepted by Canadians. I can only conclude that Ms. Phoenix’s experience in France was very different from that of my childhood years spent in Nigeria and Canada.

In Ms. Phoenix’s second article on Holy Hypocrisy, she again generalizes from her own experience to conclude that missionaries on furlough are hypocrites, manipulating people to get money from them, and that their children are taught to be insincere and dishonest. If that were true of her family, it is shameful, but it was certainly not true of my parents. They genuinely believed in their calling and presented an honest view of their work in Nigeria to churches which supported them. I certainly was never told to behave in any way to impress people. The good behavior that was expected of my sister and me was simply what would be expected of any child of a pastor or teacher or someone in any position in the church. I wonder how many MKs Ms. Phoenix interviewed before writing her articles. Using one’s own personal experience to make broad generalizations about the beliefs of MKs and the attitudes of their parents does not make for a very accurate or truthful representation of the MK experience. Instead Ms. Phoenix is exposing her own prejudices and her family’s hypocrisy in writing these articles.

Sincerely,
Carolyn (Christensen) Nelson
(KA, GH 62)
cnelson2@wvu.edu

Dear *Simroots*,

It is unusual for me to write to the editor in response to anything I read, but once in a while there is an article or issue so inflammatory that holding my silence would be wrong. As I read the article by Michele Phoenix entitled “Lies MKs Believe . . .” I was deeply disturbed by the over-

all message that all missionary families were “selling themselves for God” and that, apparently all interaction between missionaries and their supporters was insincere, was based on ulterior motives of greed, and was carefully formulated to present a righteous and super-spiritual image to all. If this was Ms. Phoenix’s personal experience, I feel sorry for her.

I am an MK. In my experience with my immediate family, and the other missionaries in my extended family (two currently), our connection with supporters was first and foremost based on friendship and developing relationships. The financial aspect of “raising support” was always secondary to relating to people, making friendships, and building a solid and genuine prayer support base. In fact, I don’t remember “raising money” as ever being the primary goal for my parents; in fact, they never mentioned money. There was always an understanding that we, as a whole family, let people know what we did, and God would move people to pray for us and/or support us financially. It was not up to us to “raise money,” it was up to us to have faith that the God who called us (ALL of us in this family), would provide for our needs just as He promised in His word.

After reading the article, it seems clear to me that the heart of the issue is not actually the “Lies MKs Believe” but rather a continuing grievance and bitterness the author has against her parents. She made a statement regarding “when I was a cynical, hurting, and reluctant 16-year-old MK. . . .” Based on the tone of her entire article, engorged with underlying bitterness and anger, it sounds like the cynicism and hurt is not yet a thing of the past. Her choice of language is aggressive and angry, with an overall arrogance that somehow her parents’ support was completely dependent on her. I have not met **any** missionary parents who put the kind of pressure on their kids that Ms. Phoenix took upon herself regarding “selling yourselves for God.”

Ms. Phoenix talks about family fights behind closed doors, followed by smiling faces to their hosts. In my world, family

squabbles happen—and out of courtesy to hosts, they were not aired for the whole world to see. That’s not being hypocritical—that’s just good manners.

I believe that Ms. Phoenix should be addressing her own personal demons, rather than lumping them all together as an MK problem. I do not appreciate being included in her problem by virtue of my being an MK. She is free to express her opinions and describe her personal experiences, but please leave the rest of “us MKs” out of it. Such stereotyping and generalization, based on the poisoned experience of one, is not an accurate reflection of all MK experience in SIM. This is an injustice to the many missionary families who live lives of authentic faith and dependence on God.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the reality of hardships in missionary lives. This includes the family dynamic of being “missionaries.” It is my absolute conviction that God calls individuals to the mission field. When these individuals are married and have children, these children come from God and are included in His calling. They have an integral part in what the Lord has called their parents to do. What a privilege to be part of it! God never promised that following Him would be easy or without trials or difficulties, but He said that He would be with us to the end of the age. He never makes mistakes—not even the families we are born into! We have a choice to live beneath the circumstances to which we have been dealt, or we rise above and are true witnesses of Christ and His faithfulness in our lives.

Respectfully,
Colleen Ruten
cruten@gmail.com



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CONTACTS

To subscribe to a listserve (a chat group) for KA, Nigeria, or MK issues, log on to:
<http://lists.mknet.org/mailman/listinfo>

To subscribe to the **BA** group, go to: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/BA_alumni

To join the **Hillcrest** list, go to: <http://lists.mknet.org/mailman/listinfo/hillcrest-l>

To join the **CCS** list, write to: hub@carachipampa.mknet.org and place the words “subscribe alumni” in the body of your message.

To join the **ELWA** group, go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ELWAKIDS/American Co-operative School> www.acslp.org

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Charlie (C) and Irene (I) Rhine Diaries (KA Staff) . . .

Continued from last Simroots

Tues. March 23, 1948

I: Darned a whole heap of socks as there were so many in the box. Forgot to say that yesterday morning had **Dr. Chandler** look at all the children that had colds and coughs as **Mr. McElheran** went to Jos saying that **Marilyn** had whooping cough. Dr. C. found no whooping cough whatsoever.

C: About noon a truck load of wood and cement arrived. In p.m. the truck made a trip to the sand pile to bring up a trial load. We put on 120 pans which equaled about 3 tons. This gave a half ton to spare.

Wed. March 24

C: Truck brought up 6 loads of sand—about 18 tons. Masons getting on with walls and ditch diggers doing well.

Thurs. March 25

C: Truck made 6 trips with sand. Took 3 men off of breaking stone and filling in ditches with rock.

Fri. March 26

I: **Ann** and **Norman** awoke with the chickenpox. Then during the day discovered that **Marilyn**, **David John**, **Ian** and **Clinton** also had them. Was kept so busy that didn't even have time to inspect. Put stuff on the chickenpox, etc. **Jean** took sick again so called **Dr. Chandler** again. She had a terrific headache and in the afternoon, vomited four times. In the evening painted Easter eggs and then had peanut butter sandwiches. Didn't get to bed till after 10 o'clock.

C: Truck made 6 trips of bringing up sand; then went back to Jos. Stopped work at sand pit.

Sat. March 27

I: More chickenpox so dabbed with Lysol and powder. **Clinton** running a temperature so put him to bed. My fingers felt numb from dabbing with Lysol. **Bobby Morris'** birthday so had cake, etc. for him. After tea they hunted for eggs. During rest hour we hid them outside and af-

ter the kids went to school I hid some in the rooms. After they had found all the eggs we had games for them. Supper outside, and baths after supper.

C: In p.m. after school had an Easter egg hunt for kids; then games and supper outside.

Sun. March 28

I: Easter today. **Marvin** and **David Williams** broke out with chickenpox today and are they happy! **Clinton** is really broken out so his temperature is normal. **Ruth** in bed with a slight elevation so she will probably be breaking out good tomorrow. Am putting Potassium Permanganate on them now. Thumb started hurting yesterday and today it is a little worse. Didn't go to the evening service as we didn't think we would be welcome since we have chickenpox here, and there are a good number of children from Hillcrest School at the Rest Home.

C: Easter today! Irene and I had charge of writing the children's letters. After rest hour had tea and then **Paul** took kids on a walk. Rain this afternoon with very black sky, thunder and lightning. Rainy season is approaching.

Mon. March 29

I: Thumb very painful. Girls washed ribbons and doll clothes in the morning, and when they were finished they played robbers and bandits. Boys are building a house out of stone so they were busy with that. Swings put up during rest hour. Soaked my thumb several times. While dabbing chickenpox in the evening **Clinton** almost knocked our lamp stand over and in catching it bumped my thumb and it hurt like everything, so Charlie had **Dr. Chandler** look at it. He gave me ¼ gr. Morphine and I hurried to bed as I felt so dizzy. Couldn't get to sleep.

C: Easter Monday is holiday for masons. Proceeded with work on ditches using man with digger and man with shovel.

Tues. March 30

I: At 12:30 a.m. called Charlie for him to get me some A.P.C. tablets as I couldn't sleep. I was all shaky and I was sweating like everything. I finally got to sleep after I took them. I was so dizzy in the a.m. that I didn't get up. Just after Charlie had gone to breakfast **Dr. Chandler** came and boiled up his instruments. **Dr. Malherb** came and gave me chloroform. **Dorothy Krell** helped them. The next thing I knew I was coming out of the anesthesia vomiting and my thumb was all bandaged up. Did I feel miserable. Of course I stayed in bed the rest of the day as I felt dizzy every time I tried to sit up. The plane "The Evangel" flew over and the kids ran out of school to see it. The **Beachams** were in it. They dropped the mail by parachute. It must have looked nice.

C: Masons returned and continued with walls. Rather heavy rain in early afternoon but apparently did not harm walls too much.

Wed. March 31

I: Didn't get up for breakfast as I didn't know how I was going to comb my hair. **Gerry** helped me with it after breakfast. Inspected rooms, etc. **Mrs. Ostien** is helping to darn the socks, otherwise they would be piling up something terrible. **Dr. Chandler** came after breakfast to see my thumb. In the evening had ice cream. C: Cloudy all day; more like a day in August. Yesterday began a pagan feast in town. One of the purposes is to bring on the rains as this is held just before the rains begin. Among other things is held some horse racing on Thurs. which is the biggest day of the affair. Yesterday some old men went to the bush and did some juju.

Thurs. April 1

I: The kids were all wound up this morning as it was April Fool's Day. They pinned my napkin to my napkin ring, they turned the desks around, etc. Mended

socks, etc. Had to hang the socks in our bedroom as the boy had brought them all damp.

C: Proceeding with ditch. **Paul** and I decided to make the dining room 3 more feet longer. This then makes the cross of the "T" 100 feet.

Fri. April 2

C: Walls progressing: started inside hall wall. Ditches just about done. Over half of the ditches are filled with rock.

Sat. April 3

I: Darned socks until put **Johnny** to bed and then sat down to write a letter to my folks. Wrote about 4 pages. In the afternoon had a good bit of work to do so we didn't have anything planned except that we had supper outdoors.

Sat. April 4

C: Ditches completed. Had supper for the kids on the "lawn."

Mon. April 5

I: Washed girls' hair in the morning. Took care of supper in the afternoon and evening.

C: Almost completed cement floor on the new kitchen foundation. Rather heavy rain in the afternoon which hindered progress.

Tues. April 6

C: Worked about foundation and on some little wooden drawers for my drills, etc.

Wed. April 7

C: More rain this afternoon. Starting to fill in the b.g. (*bayan gida* = bathroom)

Thurs. April 8

I: A big snake was seen in the well, but when they went after, it disappeared in the water. Charlie said it looked like a huge one.

C: Started to fill in classroom as we hired 10 women. Hauled up some dirt in car for fill in. In p.m. put women on contract basis: 30 pans per day for 6d [6 pence]. Found large snake swimming around in well.

Fri. April 9

I: **Eleanor** and **Barbara Wiebe** broke out with chickenpox today. The snake was caught, but it wasn't as large as they thought it was, as the natives said that it had swelled in the water.

C: Adara killed snake in well as he found it lying on the cement inside. Over 4 ft. and grayish. Is poisonous according to Adara. Almost complete the fill in of the classroom.

Sat. April 10

I: **Audrey** had a couple of chickenpox marks but not much. We were planning on a picnic, but it looked so much like rain that we had supper outdoors instead.

C: Complete fill in of 1 classroom. Wall going up nicely. Some rain in afternoon so did not go on picnic with kids to top of Sanderson Hill. **Dr. Harris** came out to settle chickenpox palaver.

Sun. April 11

I: **Johnny** had a few pox marks. I wrote letters in the morning while Charlie went to church. Had charge of the letter writing. In the evening went to the service with the **Legg** twins.

C: Stepped on large black ant and shoe smells. **Paul** said the smell will remain about 1 day. Irene went to church in p.m.

Mon. April 12

I: **Audrey** is breaking out a little better and **Johnny** has a few more also. Did some mending, etc., in the morning and in the afternoon had charge of supper.

Tues. April 13

I: **Audrey** and **Johnny** are really broken out. Johnny is feeling miserable. **Audrey** developed a fever so put her to bed.

C: Work on foundation progressing.

Wed. April 14

I: **Johnny** was very restless during the night, and he was burning up with fever so had him in bed with me for a while. Kept him in the room all day so sat and mended and also played the Victrola for him. I got a lot of darning done. **Audrey's** temp quite high. She is feeling quite miserable also.

C: Heavy rain during night washed out part of foundation.

Thur. April 15

C: Work on foundation. We are hauling dirt in trucks to fill in rooms.

Fri. April 16

I: **Audrey's** temp normal today for the first time. **Mr. VanderSchie** appeared on the scene and said he was taking **Hope**

that afternoon so had to rush to pack her up. They left right after dinner.

C: Rained all afternoon so little was done on foundation.

Sat. April 17

I: **Paul** and **Gerry** took the children on a picnic, but since Charlie was sick I didn't think I could carry **Johnny** up the hill so stayed home.

Mon. April 19

C: Paul went to Jos with truck today so didn't haul dirt for fill-in until after tea-time. Bugs hitting roof in bright moonlight.

Tues. April 20

I: **Ann Williams** not feeling well in the afternoon, put her to bed as she had a fever. Then she started complaining of pain in her right leg. We thought it was just soreness in her muscle as she helped to kick an old dilapidated hut down.

C: Clear day so could work all day on foundation. "Evangel" plane flew over on way to Jos from Minna. Flew low and waved; then about ½ hour later saw it go over again toward Minna.

Wed. April 21

I: **Ann** called so many times today. Kept her doped with aspirin. Had a doctor come over from the Rest Home, and he thought she might have an infection in her muscles. Suggested we start giving her Sulfathiazole and also putting hot packs on her leg.

C: Work going ahead on foundation.

Thurs. April 22

I: Surely didn't get much done today as if I wasn't putting hot packs on **Ann** as she was calling me. Gave her Sulfathiazole, but the fever didn't come down. Gave her two aspirins every four hours, but the pain returned in about three or three and a half hours. **Dr. Elliot** decided that we better send her in to Jos the next day.

C: Masons working on sitting room foundation.

Fri. April 23

I: **Ann** went in to Jos with Charlie. It was a relief not to have her to care for, and I was glad she had gone to the hospital as she didn't improve.

C: To Jos: took **Ann Williams** into Nursing Home with sore leg.

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