



Far Trekkin'

News from Rob and Eshinee Veith

Volume 17, Issue 2

September, 2021



At the Concordia Mission Institute: LBT missionaries and office staff (Eshinee second row, center).

Marking the Moment

By Eshinee

In early July, I flew to Concordia, MO for the Concordia Mission Institute. This was both my first work trip since early 2020 and the first time that CMI was held in-person since July 2019. CMI had been entirely online last year, using the Zoom and Canvas platforms. This year, given that there were still many people who were unable to travel to the US, we decided to hold a hybrid event; all sessions were simultaneously attended in rooms and broadcast online as Zoom meetings, with the presenter's laptop acting as the camera for the broadcast. It was a wild idea that (mostly) worked, though not without both the challenges one would anticipate... and many that I

did not. Still, by most reports, the event was a success.

A highlight for me was narrating and directing the Rocky Soil Scripture Show, a live reading of the entire Gospel of Mark. This 2-hour event involved twenty or so people, each reading the recorded speech of a person (or two) from the Mark narrative. The reading was intended to be playful rather than reverential, giving people permission to interact with what they were hearing in new ways. This included things like making animal noises whenever animals were named, shaking any body parts that were mentioned, and clapping their hands whenever anyone said "Immediately". But

Continued next page.

Not a Doctor

By Rob

Things still haven't returned to normal for us, but in recent months, we've had a few experiences which suggest a potential return to our ministries as they were. In July, Eshinee went to Concordia, MO to help in the coordination of the Concordia Mission Institute (CMI), Lutheran Bible Translators' annual gathering of missionaries and staff (she talks about her experiences there in the other article in this newsletter). I did not attend CMI this year because it coincided with the Global Consultation on Arts and Music in Mission (GCAMM), a biennial gathering of those of us who work in the field of ethnodoxology. While CMI met in person this year, GCAMM occurred online, with participants "zooming in" literally from all over the planet. I last attended GCAMM in Nairobi as a presenter. It was great to be able to attend with no responsibilities.

I have a screenshot from a plenary session. The faces are so small that you wouldn't be able to recognize anyone if I put the picture in this newsletter. But zooming in on my computer, I see it full of colleagues and friends: Paul with whom I co-ran workshops in Kosovo and Albania, Peter and Stephanie with whom I co-taught a seminar in Tanzania, David with whom I led a session at a previous GCAMM in Nairobi. It is always powerful when a group like this gathers!

LBT leadership has encouraged me to begin doctoral studies towards a PhD in World Arts. I have joined the second cohort at the Center for Excellence in World Arts at Dallas International

Continued next page.



Eshinee having all the feels as she holds Mareko in her hands for the first time.

MOMENT

Continued.

participants were also encouraged to make any response that came to them. This may have included an impromptu performance of an excerpt from Jesus Christ Superstar by “Peter” at another point in the reading.

Another special moment was being presented with my own copy of the newly printed Gospel of Mark in Shiyeyi by LBT’s regional director who serves Botswana, Sarah Esala.

Some fun links

I had no involvement in Sereetsi’s recordings, but they’re worth a listen at sereetsiandthenatives.com.

Some songs I recorded in this genre, but a more folky style (and with biblical lyrics) can be streamed at ethnocloud.com/

Xoon_Music_Project. Check out the Creation story “N||wahtan Qaqa Kole Ne N!ole Tu≠’e N!ari.”

Even though we can’t be there in person, our partners continue in their respective fields.

Shtepia Records continues to develop professional recordings of songs we composed in workshops in Albania and Kosovo 2018 and 2019. Everything they do is free to listen to (and most free to download) at shtepiarecords.bandcamp.com.

DOCTOR

Continued.

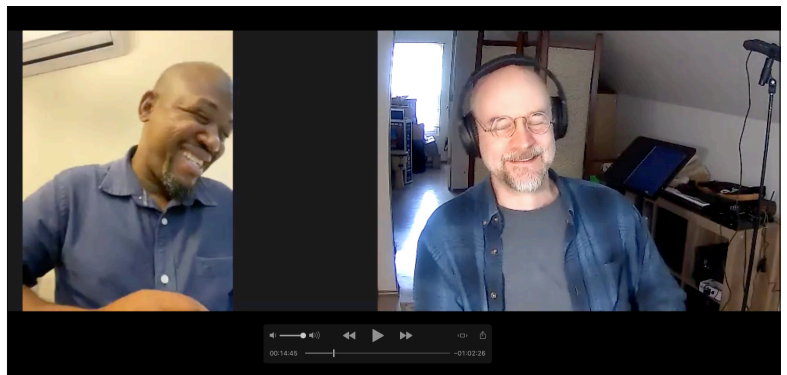
University. I am provisionally accepted at this point, taking leveling courses. Towards the end of 2021, I will take a qualifying exam which will determine whether I can continue.

Study does not come naturally to me. I find the hours of academic reading draining. On the other hand, this program has given me excuses to delve into areas of interest. For example, you may have seen me play a four-stringed lute instrument from Botswana. I have been an enthusiastic fan of this instrument and the genre of music associated with it for more than a decade now and have even recorded a few great players. I met Tomeletso Sereetsi sometime around 2015 online through a friend. At that time, Sereetsi had recently published a book on the instrument. We met in person sometime later. He subsequently became a recording artist of international renown (do an internet search for Sereetsi and the Natives to hear some of his music; it’s great stuff!). For one of my classes, I needed to write

about a form of creative expression. I messaged Sereetsi and he agreed to be interviewed for the paper. We talked for hours about this style of music we both loved, about the various players we knew, and about this elusive idea of “traditional” art.

In the next class, I got to engage with the idea of biblical worship. That is, much of what we do as worship is not found directly in the Bible; rather, it is contextualized to our own culture so as to be meaningful to us. When the gospel takes root in a new culture, what biblical, extra-cultural principles can be applied to contextualize worship which is meaningful in that culture?

Two years ago, I would have said I don’t know how many more years I can spend 3-5 months each year overseas. These days, I miss the trips. I’ve had communication in the past few weeks which suggest that international cross-cultural ministry trips may start up again in 2022. In the meantime, ministry continues to happen through the computer screen.



Rob having all the feels talking Botswana folk music with one of his favorite Botswana folk musicians.