

Hello Dear Friends--

Wanted to get us all up to speed ala the Reeds on this frigid Thursday morn. Some of you know that we have left Liberia to begin new, regional responsibilities in Ghana. Our work in Ghana will allow us to continue working with our friends in Liberia, as well as people in six other West African countries.

Renita will be the West African partnership manager for Partners Worldwide.(PW) She will support the existing work in Liberia begun by LEAD, and assist a group in Côte d'Ivoire (pronounced kote di-vwar) as they begin the same kind of work. Partners also plans to work in Ghana eventually. The successful model for developing businesses that Renita helped to make work in Liberia has garnered interest in other West Africa nations, so being centrally located in the region makes sense.

Yers Trooly will be working with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee as the Justice Education Coordinator for the West Africa Ministry Team. I'm still trying to figure out how the position will flesh out, but it at least means acting as a resource person for CRWRC field workers and partners in areas like good governance, conflict transformation, reconciliation, family and gender-based violence. The countries currently included as CRWRC West Africa Team nations are Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone. I think both Renita and I will be traveling around the region as part of our work

Hannah and Noah, currently doing great at The Potter's House, will attend one of several fine schools in Accra, the capital city. We probably will be living in Accra or very close so our school commute will be reasonable.

The Reeds-- at least Renita, Hannah and Noah-- will likely be in Grand Rapids for the next six or seven months. Renita is applying for US citizenship, and the kids will be able finish the semester. I will likely leave for Ghana a it earlier, but it looks like I'll have to hang around at least until US Immigration interviews Renita. So we hope to see more of you this time. It is a bit weird ironic being here, in a place so familiar and at the same time wanting to go to a place we've never been to make a home. But we have plenty to do as we ready ourselves for new responsibilities in Ghana.

We want to thank you again, especially those of you who have been so active with us in this work. We love your questions, and every email we get from you is an exciting event. Many of you pray for us regularly-- just knowing this gives us strength and energy, and we have sensed His protection and "road work." (You know, making the crooked paths straight and the rough places plain.)

Here is the deal regarding funding, because more than a few of you have asked. Both PW and CRWRC require field staff to participate in fundraising, but both organizations are involved in fundraising on our behalf. If you wish to support this effort with your money, think about the work Renita does-- economic and business development, helping tiny to medium businesses grow, and think about the work I'll be doing-- promoting

equity and fairness in families, between groups or within government. You may wish to support Renita's work by donating to Partners Worldwide on her behalf, or you may wish to support my work by writing a check to CRWRC. Whatever you decide, be certain of this: your support, in whatever form it takes, makes the work possible and has already impacted hundreds and perhaps thousands of men women and children in Liberia. Now we get to expand the work, create linkages between old and new efforts, and who knows how He will transform it?

As you pray, pray that all of us remain focused on the work and not allow ourselves to be distracted by a poor economy. As people react to the slump, efforts on behalf of the poorest of the poor sometimes are the first to suffer. We mentioned in our last email that CRWRC/CRWM was planning to put staff in Liberia; however these plans may be temporarily shelved as CRWRC adjusts to a reduction in gifts. For most, the money is there-- its a matter of priorities. And if we only give to these great causes when times are good, we miss out on the great spiritual deepening that comes from sacrificial giving. So pray that people will not be too afraid to give, and pray that we can see staff in Liberia.

God Bless you. Hope to see you soon.

Bob for the rest 'O the Reeds-- Renita, Hannah and Noah