



The Vanderkooi's Ministry in Review

November 2005 to April 2008

Inside this review:

Translation: Still #1	2
Training & discipleship	3
The voice of Chageen	4
The next Generation	6
The medical clinic	8
The Kwong church	10
Financial reports	12
Project reports	14
Prayer	15
The Kwong and our gratitude	16

Dear friends,

We are back in America, and in this special edition of our newsletter, we reflect on these last 2½ years that we have lived and worked in Chad.



They were in many ways difficult years – we struggled with political insecurity and war, seemingly unending health issues, and overwork.

But as is so often the case, those difficulties fade with time. Looking back, it is with a great sense of satisfaction that we see the hand of God at work and our dream of an enduring Kwong church coming ever so much closer to fruition. We have prepared the following pages in the hope that you will share our joy and pray all the more that the kingdom of Heaven would indeed come to the Kwong in all its glory.

Your fellow servants in Africa,

Mark and Diane

Bible translation: Still #1

We believe in the primacy of the Word of God. That's why we both trained to be Bible translators, and that's why we still call Bible translation our flagship ministry. Unfortunately, between the radio, medical work, and the departure of Laurent, our main translator, we did not accomplish as much Bible translation as we might have wished this past term.



Nevertheless, we finished I Peter, Colossians, most of Ruth, and a substantial part of Luke. We have translated about 7% of the whole Bible to date (that in addition to our opus-magnus—the 400 pages of the Kingdom of God discipleship materials which we finished several years ago.)

Challenges and changes: The translation team

Laurent, our finest Kwong translator, informed us in September 2006 that he was leaving the translation team to become a missionary to another unreached tribe in Chad - the Ndam. This left us wondering what the future of the translation work would be.

Joseph, the faithful and guileless, nearly died from a burst appendix. July 29, 2006 Mark drove him to the hospital in Bere just in time, saving his life.

Luke, who is hopeless as a translator, but just about the finest pastor around, was moved to the new role of training other Kwong pastors and elders.

François, who we *thought* couldn't translate, joins Joseph on translation and does a fine job.

*“We believe
in the
primacy of
the Word of
God.”*



Colossians and I Peter are approved by SIL consultant Ruth Leinhard



Diane works on stories of women in the Bible, including the book of Ruth.

Discipleship and teaching

It has always been a great concern to us that the materials we write and translate get “out the door” and into the hearts and minds of people. Given the illiteracy of the Kwong people, this was always easier said than done. In fact, it was so difficult that we questioned the usefulness of further translation when what we had already produced was still moldering in a box. Suffice it to say that **the radio station has changed the equation completely.** The logjam of discipleship and teaching has been broken and has set us at liberty to pursue further translation—secure in the knowledge that it *will* get out the door.



The Kwong Church needs a spiritual foundation in order to endure for generations to come.

A handful of women

To teach adult women to read in the hope that one day they will study the scriptures for themselves is a noble goal, but, at least for Kwong women, an unrealistic one. We have regretfully concluded that most of them will probably never learn to read, and that even those who do seldom understand what they read.

So a new goal emerged: to disciple just a handful of women who can assume leadership roles. The idea was to teach the capable ones to read, and help those who can't to memorize. So it was that In January 2006 Diane began the first ever Kwong women's Bible Study and prayer meeting.

Anywhere from 2 to 12 women have been meeting for over 2 years now. And, as we hoped, the core group of 4 or 5 women are indeed becoming leaders—most notably in the production of Bible teaching especially for Kwong women which is broadcast on the radio station.



FM 95.2—The Voice of Chageen



**“Even if
people can’t
READ the
Word of God,
they can
HEAR it.”**

Radio was, of course, the first “really big, new thing” of this term. Motivated by the problem of illiteracy, we sought a means by which people could **HEAR** the Word of God. Radio, as it turns out, was the answer.

Thanks to God’s generous provision, FM 95.2 “The Voice of Chageen” was constructed in early 2005. On January 10, 2006 the first broadcast went out over the airwaves.

A station run by the Kwong

Theodor Popa from Romania (right) helped train 4 Kwong men to run the station. They learned to run digital recorders, computers, CD players and the transmitter to keep “The Voice of Chageen” on the air. So successful was this training effort that the station now runs with only minimal supervision by Mark and Diane—which is quite a contrast from the early days when it appeared the station would swallow our ministry whole. David (right) did best in this training and is now our chief engineer and head DJ.



Pastor Batein, president of the Evangelical church, speaks at dedication ceremony.



Youth choir adds their enthusiasm and cheer.



**We
broadcast
2 hours a
day, 4 days
a week.**

**Bible
teaching
goes out in
4 languages
each week.**

Radio far exceeds our most optimistic expectations as tool for ministry...

The radio station has exceeded our most optimistic expectations as a tool for ministry. As the only audible station on the entire FM dial in Kwongland, and the only media of any kind in Kwong, the station has become a pillar of the entire Kwong community.

Besides quality Bible teaching and tasteful music, any information of any consequence is transmitted over the Voice of Chageen – announcements from the chief, reports of lost or stolen cattle, obituaries, and school exam scores. Quite literally, everybody listens. We have 100% market share!



Recording and production

What's a Radio station without something worth hearing? At the close of 2005 we knew we needed to begin recording and producing, but really didn't anticipate how much time and effort that would require.

Mark revised the 6 Kingdom of God Books into 107 Radio Bible programs. Diane recorded every man, woman and child who was willing to tell a story or sing a song. She also wrote and recorded 44 programs for women covering development topics and Bible teaching.

Finding there were no Christian songs to address the topics of many of the Bible lessons, Diane organized the first Kwong Song Writing Workshop (right). 20 new Scripture songs were the result.

- 107 Bible lessons*
- 185 Christian songs*
- 44 Women's lessons*
- 36 Folk songs*
- 69 Folktales*
- 30 Kingdom Kids*
- Plus other languages*

Diane enables Naomi to teach other women.

Mark records a "Kingdom of God" lesson with Luke and Joseph.



The Next Generation

The second “big new thing” this term was beginning a ministry to children—an acquired skill that we didn’t think we could master. Some of you have heard Mark spout off, “We don’t do kids.” We recognized, however, that nothing was being done in the church or within Christian families to train up the next generation and that unless this changed, all of our efforts in this generation would come to naught in the generation to come. So we took the plunge...



“All of our efforts in this generation would come to naught in the generation to come.”

We DO kids: Taking on Sunday school

We began working with Jonas, an elder in the church and respected leader in the community. Mark teaches Jonas a new Bible story each week. Then on Sunday morning, Jonas lets it rip in his finest story-telling fashion to around 80 kids at our local church.

We record each of these stories, edit them on the computer and add songs and introductions to create a weekly radio program called “Kids of the Kingdom.”

These programs are proving a hit not only with the young, but also the young at heart. Most adults in the church—including the pastors and elders— have never before heard these foundational Bible stories.



First Kwong VBS And the start of girls clubs

In July 2007, two missionary colleagues, Mary and Miriam, helped us put on the first ever Kwong Vacation Bible School. Up to 150 kids packed into the church each morning to sing songs, learn a memory verse, play games, and listen to Papa Jonas tell the story of Joseph.



Those afternoons with Mary and Miriam spawned a teen and pre-teen girls club which continued until we left Chad in April. Young girls in the church are throwing their lives away with ungodly men. A few of the goals of our weekly meetings are to raise their self-esteem, to challenge their minds to think, perhaps even learn to read, and to encourage purity and holiness because we are created in the image of God.

“To encourage purity and holiness because we are created in the image of God.”



But what about us?

The boys desperately wanted their own club. When we were finally able to start a Friday club for boys, they came in droves. Reading Kwong books occupies most of club time. Then Mark comes in with some words of wisdom. And then we send them out with a ball or Frisbee.

Pray for both Mark and Diane, as coming up with those particular words of wisdom for a pre-teenage mind is not yet a mastered skill.



Medical clinic closed

The third “really big thing” of this term was the medical clinic. In March of 2007, the bureaucracy which oversees our clinic, as well as 40 or so others like it, decided to close the facility on the grounds it was not financially viable – a point of view we did not share. All the personnel of the clinic were transferred away and the doors closed. This meant that the nearest medical care for 8000 people would now be more than a day’s walk away. All eyes in the village turned on us to solve the problem. We couldn’t just sit back and watch our friends and neighbors die on our doorstep, so we took over the clinic ourselves and began the process of rebuilding it—first administratively, then structurally.



“We couldn’t just sit back and watch our friends die on our doorstep.”

New management and personnel

First we enlisted the help of Lambert (below, left), a retired nurse (which in Chad means “doctor” for all practical purposes) who had worked for many years for World Vision. He was supposed to help us *find* new personnel, but in the event, became the new personnel himself. We also recruited a talented young woman, Leah (below with Mark), to be the new cashier and book-keeper, as well as a young chap Jeremy to oversee the pharmacy. Mark spent most of July in 2007 working with this new team to get the clinic going again—reorganizing the financial procedures of the clinic, setting up a workable inventory system for the pharmacy, and refurbishing the old structure to the extent possible. Lambert, meanwhile, was saving lives every day.



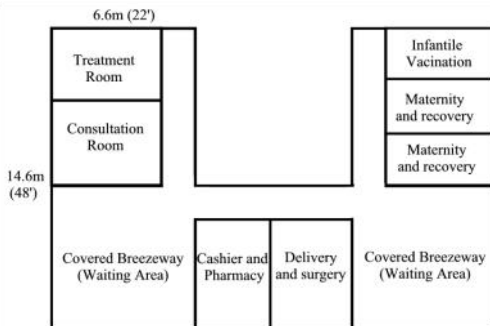
The long-awaited new facility

Alas, we could only do so much with the old structure (picture on opposite page, also right). The building was literally crumbling and we were obliged to abandon half of it. It was time to build a new building.



Never imagining that we could raise the money it would take to build a really good building, we drew up a proposal for a minimalist structure and crossed our fingers. The Lord had other things in mind, however, and as the financial report on page 14 shows, we received considerably more than we asked for and so were able to

begin construction of a top-quality building of the size we thought we really needed all along.



Construction of the new facility began in January of 2008, and occupied Mark full-time until our return to the States in April. The masonry superstructure has been completed, and we hope that a couple work teams will accompany us back to Chad at

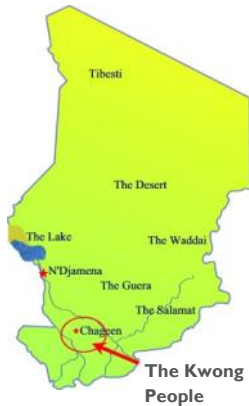
the end of 2008 to put the roof on, install windows and doors, and do interior finishing. Already, the construction of this facility has done much to enhance the honor of the gospel among the Kwong people and the surrounding tribes. We trust that it will continue to do so for decades to come.



The Kwong Church

With all the activity we have described in the preceding pages, it is easy to lose sight of our overarching objective in Kwongland, which is **to assure the long-term viability of the Kwong church.**

There has been a church among the Kwong for about 20 years. It was planted in the mid-80's by Chadian evangelists from other tribes working in tandem with the Evangelical Clinic of Chageen. Today, there are something like 400 believers in about 25 congregations scattered over the length and breadth of Kwongland (an area about 80 miles long 40 miles wide and comprising about 15,000 inhabitants).



Not to overrate our ourselves, nor to underrate the power of God, but it is not likely that this young church would long endure if left to its own devices. The chronic lack of discipleship, the absence (until recently) of Scriptures, illiteracy, and tribal tradition would probably assure its swift demise. It has already happened in at least one other tribe. And did we mention that the Kwong are the last non-Muslim tribe as one moves north through this part of Chad, and that chief Luba of Chageen is the last non-Muslim chief for 50 miles around? We want there to be a Kwong church 100 years from now, and we work to that end.

We want this church not only to survive, but to thrive. We dare to pray almost every night (and ask you to join us in this prayer) that the power and beauty of the gospel would be so evident in this little group of believers that the church, now numbering in hundreds, would one day be numbered by thousands—that the Kwong would be known as a “Christian tribe.” The translation, clinic, radio, wells, children’s work, and all the teaching we do are driven by no less a vision than this.

The church building at Ngam



The elders at Surine

The biggest challenge we face...

We have, over the years, done just about everything you can imagine to see our dream of an enduring Kwong church come to fruition – discipleship classes, pastoral training, translation, song-writing workshops, women’s seminars, literacy, preaching in churches and town squares, prayer meetings, and now, of course, radio. You name it, we’ve done it.

We wish, after all that, that we could say that the Kwong church is growing, but, to be honest, this is probably not the case. For such a thing to happen (or not happen) on our watch is a matter of considerable distress for us.

The reason, so far as we can tell, (and not to play a blame game), is that too many of the 20-odd Kwong pastors are, in the words of Pastor Pierre, “flimsy”. Put another way, the pastoral corps in Kwongland is proving to be the Achilles heel of the whole enterprise. Some of them are quite a sorry lot and they manage, however unintentionally, to undo our best efforts. They make the church unattractive and disreputable, and people vote with their feet. Pastor Pierre and Old Moses share our concerns in a big way (since it’s their watch, too) and we are thinking and praying together about how to address this delicate issue.



Pastor Pierre, here with his wife Naomi, shares our concerns

On the bright side...

Notwithstanding the drag some of the pastors are proving to be on the progress of the church, there are at least 3 factors which bode well for the future growth of the Kwong church:

- There are 4 pastors in particular who are top-notch guys. Even more encouraging, there is a core of at least 10 laymen and women who have appropriated our teaching in a big way, and who are showing leadership in the church. We regard these men and women as a really solid base to build on.
- By joining forces with Papa Jonas (page 6) to teach children, we have set the stage for a new generation of Kwong believers who are growing up with spiritual advantages their parents never knew. If even half of these kids stick with the church in Chageen, it will double in size – not to speak of lasting well beyond the life-span of either Jonas or ourselves. These kids might be the best thing going for the Kwong church.
- The *Voice of Chageen* never goes on the air without a message from the Word. As a result, there is a familiarity with the Christian faith which is extending across the whole of the tribe in a way it never has previously. Similarly, the radio station has afforded the gospel a respectability which it has not previously enjoyed. This, too, bodes well for the future of the Kwong church.

Contributions During Term

November 3, 2005 - April 13, 2008 (29 months)

	Monthly average	Yearly average	Total over term
Regular support contributions	\$5,072	\$60,860	\$147,079
Received for special projects (radio, clinic, wells—see page 14):			\$51,177

Personal Salary and Benefits (averages over term)

	Monthly average	Yearly average	Total over term
Personal Salary (<i>this amount represents about 80% of our allowable salary</i>)	\$2,079	\$24,943	\$60,278
Housing	\$368	\$4,415	\$10,670
Health Insurance	\$466	\$5,596	\$13,523
Pension	\$160	\$1,920	\$4,640
Other taxable benefits	\$167	\$2,007	\$4,849
Total personal salary and benefits (64% of regular support)	\$3,240	\$38,880	\$93,960

Administrative Expenses (averages over term)

	Monthly average	Yearly average	Total over term
TEAM Home office services (<i>This is a fixed fee, not a percentage - something we appreciate about TEAM</i>)	\$436	\$5,232	\$12,644
TEAM-Chad field operations	\$241	\$2,892	\$6,990
Total administrative expenses (13% of regular support)	\$677	\$8,124	\$19,634

After personal benefits and administrative expenses are paid, this amount of money remains from our regular support for the real business of missionary work. Its disbursement is detailed on the following page:

\$1,155 \$13,856 \$33,485
(23% of regular support)

Ministry Expenses During Term

Funds available for ministry

Ministry fund balance remaining from our last term:	\$8,345
Available from regular support (previous page)	\$33,485
Special gifts for ministry	\$3,744
Total funds available during term for ministry	\$45,573

Ministry Expenses (totals over term)

General work expenses

Chadian residency visas	\$262
Medical evacuation insurance	\$2,106
On-field travel by car and plane; airstrip maintenance:	\$9,595
Furlough travel funds (round trip airfare)	\$5,698
Postage, newsletters, office, conferences, etc	\$3,201

Support of the Evangelical church of Chad

(on both local and national level) \$5,421

Kwong translation project (salaries, printing) \$2,517

Radio Station

Salaries and government taxes	\$4,732
Maintenance & computer purchase	\$2,419

Evangelical clinic of Chageen

(temporary operational subsidy to get it going again) \$2,008

Total ministry expenditures \$37,958

Credit remaining of ministry funds

(to be used for ministry during our next term) \$7,615

The Bottom Line

We have not lacked any of the resources necessary to the pursuit of the ministry God has called us to among the Kwong. For this we are very grateful—both to the Lord and to each of you.

Notwithstanding the healthy state of our support, **we are hoping for an additional \$600 per month of support** as we return to the field. This will be necessary to make up for some of the 30% fall in the value of the dollar against foreign currencies during recent years.

Special Projects

This chart details the disbursement of the \$51,177 in special project monies received during this term. As the radio project in particular straddled both our last term and this term, the amounts here add up to considerably more than \$51,177.

	Received	Spent	Balance
Radio Construction (January 2005 - March 2006)			
Contributions from individuals	\$10,138		
Contributions from Back to the Bible (approx)	\$20,061	\$30,199	0
Water Well Project (Two 40m wells - one for clinic and neighborhood, one for us)	\$10,900	\$10,899	\$1
Construction of Evangelical Clinic (The amount spent here includes an 8% fee taken by TEAM for their expenses. Construction of the clinic is not finished yet).	\$36,343	\$22,611	\$13,732

Clinic Construction

You may recall that we asked for \$13,500 for the clinic. As the numbers above show, we received **much** more, enabling us to build the good clinic we thought we needed all along. Nevertheless, we will have a fair sum of money left over. We have designated these funds for a **scholarship** to train another nurse for the clinic, and for a solar powered **vaccine refrigerator/freezer**. (Vaccination of babies and pregnant women is a big part of the ministry of this clinic. It is the official government vaccination center for our region. The vaccines are free, but keeping them refrigerated has proven problematic.)

Water Wells

The clinic's water well, which serves us, as our well as our whole neighborhood, was drying up. In 2006, many of you responded to our \$8000 proposal to drill two new wells, one for the clinic and neighborhood, and a second for ourselves. We expected a rig to show up but instead got a truck-load of hand drilling equipment and some of the hardest working men you ever did see. In two days time they drilled the wells 130 feet deep — by hand!



Pray for us, Pray for the Kwong

1. **Pray that the church among the Kwong**, which now numbers in hundreds will be numbered in thousands. Thanks to the radio, the whole tribe is aware of Christianity like never before. Pray that this awareness would be accompanied by a movement of the Spirit of God – in his time and his way.
2. **Pray for a new dynamism among the Kwong pastors** (see page 11). Pray especially for Pastor Pierre who is their president and who really wants to see change among his fellow pastors. On several occasions we have heard him say to them something like the following: “We have a missionary among us, the Scriptures are being translated into our language, we have the radio station, and now a new clinic. Brothers: We have been blessed with every advantage a tribal church can have. Dare we take it all for granted?”
3. **Pray for the radio station.** Pray especially for David, our chief engineer and principle DJ. He is the only Kwong who is proficient on the technical side of things, so if he dies on us or is led astray by the devil, we will be in a really bad situation. Pray too that the equipment continues to work. One bolt of lightning can end the station for good. God is lord of the lightning, too!
4. **Pray for the Fulani people.** They used to be nomads, but have settled in several villages about 10 miles from Chageen. We broadcast in their language each Friday, and they listen to every word. They are Muslim. Pray too for Kaglo, a Kwong Christian who started a little Christian school among the Fulani about 10 years ago and is much appreciated by them. At least two of our local Fulani have come to Christ.
5. **Pray for our health.** This past term was marked by several serious health issues, any one of which would normally require the services of a physician and testing equipment. With effort, we were able to procure the services of missionary doctors, but they were severely limited in what they could do as there is no testing equipment. Nothing, not even warfare, causes us as much stress as being deep in the African bush with no health care.
6. **Pray that we would be able to make good progress on translation** this term. It is very difficult task which demands total concentration and a minimum of distractions. Unfortunately, the story of our life among the Kwong is one of juggling a multiplicity of ministries which makes concentration on anything as demanding as translation quite difficult.
7. **Finally, pray for our fortitude.** We estimate that at a bare minimum, we have 7 to 10 years remaining in order to finish “well” among the Kwong—the principle remaining task being the completion of the Scriptures. Pray that God give us grace to do just that—finish well.

Mark and Diane
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And Finally...

Thanks

It is only fitting to conclude such a review of our ministry in Chad with a word of gratitude to each one of you who have supported us, prayed for us, written us, sent us care packages, and thought of us in the midst of your busy days.

We are on the one hand profoundly grateful to each of you, and on the other hand are humbled by a deep sense of responsibility as we represent you in Chad. It is our hope that by the grace of God we discharge our responsibility in a worthy manner.

We might mention in this regard that it is with considerable pride that we remind the Kwong, as the occasion permits, that we are not among them on our own merits, but that we represent many hundreds of Christians in the USA and Canada who know the Kwong tribe by name, are concerned for their spiritual and physical well-being, and who give and pray sacrificially for their benefit.

And they do not take this fact for granted. Pastor Old Moses and Pastor Pierre (right) as well as others have on various occasions expressed their deepest gratitude for the believers "over there"



who have sent us to live among them, work with them for furtherance of the Gospel, and help them in their time of need.

To each of you, from both of us, and from our dear Kwong friends: Many thanks. May the Lord repay you ever so richly in this age and in the age to come.