

"Missionary Training!"



February was a time of snowball fights, sledging and snowman building. Spring was hot and green, and summer is... very British! We are finding a new wonder at God's creation - Sierra Leone was beautiful and sunny, with hot, dusty winds during the harmattan and awe-inspiring storms throughout the rainy season.

The last few months have been such a good opportunity to reflect on our experiences in Sierra Leone. We have learnt more skills that we will be able to use and have become more aware of our strengths and our weaknesses! I, Catherine, went out of my comfort zone to study Moral and Social Issues in the Arts. The fruit of that is that two other students and I had to perform our composed piece of drama about HIV/AIDS in front of 200 people -twice!

It's also been a very busy time. When not in college we have spent time travelling round the country speaking to supporters and groups about our time in Sierra Leone. It has been a real privilege to share about the way God is working out there. It's also exhausting as we were constantly on the move!

We have managed to visit Barley Hill church, Leamington Mission, St Mary's in Thame, Bradford Church, St Paul's in York, Tuesday Evening Fellowship, Harefield Church and a couple of other places as well! We still have a few people to visit but hope to get a break without any speaking over the summer!

God has been faithful throughout this year. We've not had the money to pay fees at college, and then, suddenly we've had it! We've had a flat that's been great, we've had good health, we've had safe travelling.

Recently we met with the WEC Regional Director for the area that includes DR Congo, about the possibility of working there. This is where our heart is and he was positive about us starting some sort of new work out there. With this in mind we are planning to join him and another WECcer on a trip out to Eastern Congo in February 2008. This trip will be

THE HIGHS AND LOWS

Highs...

- 1 Snow in Feb!
- 2 Spending time with family
- 3 Renewing relationships at the different churches
- 4 Speaking at Scarborough for WEC North-east
- 5 Finding a house in Harlow

Lows...

- 1 Feeling like we've always been on the go
- 2 Yet another virus laying Catherine low

an opportunity to ask questions, look for openings and give us a background for thinking about the future work. The idea is that over the next couple of years a team would be built up that we could go in with. There are still lots of questions about where we might be based as that region is still unstable, but there is time to work through this and seek out the right solution.

**PLEASE
PRAY...**

1 For the arrangements for the DR Congo visit

2 For a clear vision of our work in Harlow

3 For a good rest over the coming weeks (and that Catherine would finally feel fully recovered)

4 For wisdom as we 'enter' back into UK life and paperwork!

At the WEC UK Staff Conference over Easter, we had a really good chat with the UK Office. We believe that God wants us to remain in the UK for some time before going out to Congo. A church in Harlow (the one we are placed at through college) has asked if we would consider being with them next year. Together with a number of other people praying with us, we believe that this is the right thing to do. We continue to be members of WEC, part of our time working at the home end (possibly in resourcing, training and recruiting for Rainbows of Hope), and part of our time coming alongside the church in Harlow establishing a new work there. We believe this will be a time when God will prepare us for our future work with WEC in the Congo.

So, for now, we are based in Harlow, Essex. God has started to give the church and us a vision of the work, but we will spend some time listening to Him to develop this further. Harlow is a place of contrasts, with new housing developments aimed at City workers, yet high levels of deprivation and teenage pregnancies. We believe that God is calling us to do something new here, which will get churches working together more, to meet people's needs and bring them into relationship with Him. Please pray with us for clarity of vision over the coming weeks!

Last week we moved into a house in Harlow and although we're still living out of boxes, feel very much at home. We are excited about the next phase of our ministry and know that God will teach us a lot through it.

We really appreciate your continuing support. We really couldn't be entering this ministry without you. Thankyou for your friendship and encouragement. God bless, and if ever you are passing, you are welcome!

Stephen & Catherine