



## Steve & Kim Holtrop CRWM Missionaries in Nicaragua

I (Steve) am primarily working with a Nicaraguan organization called the Nehemiah Center ([www.nehemiahcenter.net](http://www.nehemiahcenter.net)). As a group of North Americans and Nicaraguans we work to help individuals transform their lives, institutions and communities to be more of what God would have them be. We do this in the areas of Health, Education, Youth at Risk, Arts and Media, Business and Churches and Families.

I work in the overall leadership of the Nehemiah Center as Sub-director and also serving on the steering committee. I oversee a variety of North-South serving and learning interchanges; groups for two weeks, individuals for three months, and even two semester programs with Trinity Christian College and Dordt College. We look at how the visitor can best serve the community, under their leadership, and also what the visitor can learn from the community that might be transferrable "back home." This coming year we are looking at how to be part of a movement sending Nicaraguans overseas as missionaries. One exciting destination is perhaps Iran, given the political friendship forming.

As a family we will be in North America for much of April, May, June and July visiting churches and individuals, sharing what is happening here in Nicaragua.



(from left) Elise, Kim, Alia, Steve, Nathan



*Steve & Kim Holtrop*

### The Nehemiah Centre—A New Initiative

This past year, Henry Cruz, supervised by the director of the Nehemiah Centre - Daniel Boniche, and an advisory council of pastors from various evangelical denominations in Nicaragua began working on a pilot project to research, recognize and develop healthy church growth.

Cruz began by studying many different approaches to



Staff at the Nehemiah Centre

the dimensions of healthy churches. While Cruz was doing this work, an anthropology intern from Wheaton (a Christian university in Illinois known for its high academic level) was also doing studies of

evangelical churches in Nicaragua. Using Cruz's work, the research by the Wheaton intern, and the experiential knowledge of the advisory council, a list of indicators were agreed upon to evaluate the health of a church and the areas it could grow in.

Currently the Nehemiah Centre is working on implementing the results of the research. Boniche, along with the advisory committee, will select twelve churches to participate in the pilot project. During the

next year, the Nehemiah Centre will partner with the churches to take steps towards building healthier churches.

Initially, the participating churches will be evaluated according to the research done so far. Throughout the year, fifteen leaders from each of the twelve churches participating in the project will be invited for monthly training in several areas: (1) exposition of the Bible; (2) servant leadership; (3) evangelism; (4) worship; (5) healthy relationships; (6) organization and administration; (7) exercise of gifts and inclusive ministries and; (8) steps for development. At the end of the year, the churches will be re-evaluated according to Boniche's research and will develop a mission, vision, and a strategic plan. They will be followed for at least one more year with another evaluation happening at the end of the year. During the second year the project will begin again with a new group of churches.

Our prayer is that this pilot project will promote healthy churches that demonstrate the love of Christ to its neighbours - in word and deed.



The Nehemiah Centre



## **Cheryl de Jong** *CRWM Missionary in Guinea*

Last year a friendship with another missionary in Guinea, Dale Ramsey, blossomed into a courtship. Cheryl and Dale married a few weeks ago on January 3rd. Following their honeymoon, they returned to Guinea where they resumed their ministry among the Fulbe and the Maninka, both staunchly Muslim people groups.

Cheryl de Jong has served with World Missions in Guinea for the past 14 years. She travels to various Fulbe Muslim villages to tell them about Jesus Christ. Cheryl wrote in her last newsletter, "It is my prayer that the Holy Spirit will convict the hearts of the Fulbe, the largest unreached people group in Guinea, and that they will believe the truth that God reveals in his Word." Lately she has also been involved in literacy and translation work to get the New Testament printed into Arabic Script.

Dale works with a smaller mission called Ripe for Harvest World Outreach. In 2006, he went to Kankalabe (where Cheryl serves) at the request of another CRWM missionary couple in Guinea, the Hoflands, to do a bit of survey work and to see how many Maninka people lived in the surrounding area. It became evident that there are many Maninka who also speak Pular.

Cheryl writes, "Our current plan is to spend the dry season in Kankalabe when people are more available in the rural areas. We will spend the rainy season in Siguiri (where Dale serves). I will focus on computer work, but will also have the opportunity to interact with the many Fulbe who live in Siguiri. However, people do seem to be much more open to the gospel in the rural area, so we see Kankalabe as the place where we will end up more permanently."



*Cheryl de Jong*



(from left) Renita,  
Noah, Bob, Hannah



## **Bob & Renita Reed** *CRWRC Missionaries in Ghana*

The Reed family is very excited about their new positions and plans for moving to Ghana, West Africa, in the near future.

Bob has accepted a position as the Justice Education Coordinator in West Africa with CRWRC. "We will find new and creative ways to integrate our calling to do justice, in all facets of our work. It is our desire to see that staff in five countries in West Africa will become more aware of how their work can fulfill God's command in Micah 6:8 that we do justice and love mercy. In addition, I hope to be able to provide CRWRC field staff with tangible tools to answer that call."

Renita has accepted a position with Partners Worldwide (continuing the work that she was doing in Liberia) as the West African Partnership Manager, working in Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria: "The potential impact that Christian business owners can have as they carry out their calling is something I find very exciting. Teaching people that business is a mission and a calling, and being allowed to spread that teaching over several countries in West Africa — this is the vision that I have for this position. In Liberia, I worked with a number of churches, helping pastors and members come to this understanding of business as mission, which in turn strengthened the church. Economic development has a direct impact on peace, health and education. When people are able to work, there is less conflict and they are able to provide for their family's health and education. My prayer is that God will open the eyes of West African pastors, churches, and business owners to embrace this truth, and work together to strengthen their region through economic development.

*Bob & Renita Reed*