

Howell's e-Mail News

Sunday, March 21, 2004

Dear Friends and Family,

We are excited to announce that we have a decision! We spent this last week as a team processing survey information, and after much prayer, the votes are in, and we are beginning the process as a team of moving north of the city of Montepuez ("mon-teh-pwezsh"). We will rent houses or apartments there in Montepuez while we build our homes along the road north between Montepuez and the town of Nairoto ("nigh-row-too").

The Makua-Meeto ("meh-tow") people, who number 800,000 in the Cabo Delgado and Niassa provinces of Mozambique, make up the majority of the population in this region north of Montepuez, which holds between 60,000 and 90,000 people. Also among the Makua-Meeto is a smaller people group called the Ngoni ("en-go-nee"), mostly living in and around the town of Nairoto. As we are targeting the area between Montepuez and Nairoto, we are keeping the possibility open as a team for one or two couples to focus on the Ngoni while the rest work among the Makua-Meeto. On the whole, this target area has very little Christian presence, with many villages without any churches at all. A majority of the people are Muslim, but with very strong animistic elements, unlike the more orthodox Islam on the coast. There are no missionaries anywhere in this area among the Makua-Meeto or Ngoni peoples, except for 2 SIL families who are working on literacy training and translating the Bible into the Meeto dialect.

Over the next few weeks and months we will be meeting government officials, securing temporary housing in the city of Montepuez, obtaining land, and beginning construction of our houses in the villages. Several of these tasks over the next few months may involve getting the blessing of the government officials for our work – so again, we pray that God would continue to "grease the wheels of bureaucracy." We have been blessed with men and women of peace at every step and we ask that you pray for that help to continue. Thank you for partnering with us in this ministry and lifting us up in prayer as we are in the midst of so many transitions. We look forward to keeping you updated as we get closer to being settled here Mozambique and beginning language learning and ministry.

God Bless!

Alan, Rachel and Abby

P.S. Our website is still experiencing technical difficulties, but you can view new cute pictures of Abby and pictures from the survey trips (including rough roads and bridges, colorful wildlife, stuck-in-the-mud shots, and some post-stuck-in-the-mud shots as well) at <http://photos.yahoo.com/africahowells>.