

Howell's e-Mail News

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Dear Family and Friends,

We wanted to keep everyone up to date on our situation - only wish we had more to report on. After meeting with the governor on January 4th and receiving his verbal approval to return to Montepuez to live and work, we returned the following week to meet with the Director of Justice to finalize our credentials. Overall that meeting went well, but we did not receive permission to move back to Cabo Delgado then. It was a marathon meeting where we met with the Director of Justice and a few other people for over an hour and a half. I think we cleared up some confusion and answered all of their questions, but he wanted to consult again with the governor about our situation. It was pretty disappointing; I think I had gotten my hopes up that we would have received approved paperwork at that visit. When he went around the room asking for final words and thoughts, I told him that I was sad that we weren't receiving approval yet but that we really want to work in Cabo Delgado for the long haul and be a blessing, so we will continue to obey and be patient for permission. Immediately after I said this he said that I should not be sad and that he thought we would be able to work in Montepuez for many years to come, but that he wouldn't/couldn't give that permission without presenting the details of that meeting to the governor.

Since then the Minister of Justice and I have been talking once or twice a week about our situation (ala "the hopefully not-too-overly persistent widow"). He has been presenting information to the governor and responding to his requests for clarification. I just got off the phone with the Minister of Justice and he said that he had delivered the requested information to the governor's office, but the governor is in Maputo until the end of this week/early next week. So...he will see those documents when he gets back and "should" dispatch them fairly quickly since he knows our situation. I arranged to call the Minister of Justice on Feb. 1, to see if there is any news.

Keep praying! Every conversation I've had with the Minister of Justice has been positive (he's seems like a pretty straight forward guy - as best we can tell) and he has consistently sounded confident that things will work out for our return to Montepuez (whether his hunch is on target or he's just being optimistic because he thinks that's what I want to hear remains to be seen). May God open the door for our return and strengthen our hearts until he does!

We'll keep you posted.

In addition, we are also excited to announce the birth of the newest member of our team, Andrew Benaiah Smith, born to proud parents Jeremy and Martha! Andrew was born on the 18th in Fort Worth, Texas. Mommy, Daddy, Andrew and his big brother Luke are all doing great. Abby can't wait to get to know her new buddy when the Smiths return to Mozambique in March.

God Bless!
Alan