

Howell's e-Mail News

Friday, June 17, 2005

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings again from Nampula, Mozambique! We arrived safely from our trip to the States, and are getting settled again. Our trip was wonderful, but it is also good to be home again here in Nampula.

This trip was a much-needed rest for us, and it was very refreshing to reunite and reconnect with family and a few friends. Our parents especially loving on and playing with Abby! Our time in the States was actually pretty busy, with a lot of travelling and visiting squeezed into our month there. We arrived in Dallas on May 6, and turned around the next morning and flew to Memphis for a week to see just about everyone on Alan's side of the family, which was a lot of fun. After a week in Memphis we returned to Dallas for a week before my brother's wedding down in Austin, after which we drove to College Station, and enjoyed worshipping with the church family I grew up with. We returned to Dallas, and then one day later Alan had to turn around and drive over to Abilene for a two-week missions class at ACU. The class ended on a Friday, and then we left Monday June 6 to begin our journey back to Mozambique.

My brother's wedding was beautiful, and I am excited to have a sister-in-law now! James and Kirsten were able to come back up to Dallas after they got back from their honeymoon to spend time with us for our last weekend before returning to Mozambique, and that was a special treat that we had not expected. Alan's parents and brother Aaron also drove over to Dallas for our last weekend to see Abby (and us, too, they say!) one more time before our departure. During this trip we were able to meet with Gail, a midwife in the Dallas area who will attend the birth of our second baby while we are on furlough in November, and we are really getting excited about that. We also really enjoyed hot showers, Starbucks, Blue Bell ice cream, fresh cold milk, and leaving Abby with her grandparents and going out on some "American" dates! (lunch at Chilis, going to see the Star Wars movie...) Add to that some time with special friends and church families, and some much-needed trips to Wal-Mart (now I have a sifter to get the bugs out of my flour!) and you have our trip in a nutshell. Since it was such a quick trip, we were unable to spend time with everyone we would have liked, so we are looking forward to catching up with the rest of you during our furlough in the fall.

Overall the travelling went VERY well - thank you to all of those who prayed for our travelling, especially for Abby to be able to sleep well on the planes. She handled the long plane rides (4 in all) unusually well for an almost-two-year-old, so we know that God was answering prayers. We are just now finally getting over the jet lag - since we got back to South Africa and then on into Mozambique, Abby had been waking up at 1 am, thinking she was still at Papa and Nana's house, and asking to go outside and play! But the last two nights she is back to sleeping through the night again, which is a blessing.

And it is good to be home and back in our apartment in Nampula. Our teammates the Rolands lived in our apartment while we were gone, and that was nice to have someone taking care of things, not to mention that the apartment was clean when we got here (it would have been unbelievably dusty and full of dead bugs if they had not house-sat for us!) We got tickled the first day or so back in the apartment at the sounds of living in Nampula that we had forgotten: the neighbor (and her kids) yelling up the stairs so loud that she sounds like she is in our living room, the call to prayer sounding from the mosque down the street, roosters crowing in the morning (people keep some livestock even in the city!), men riding down the street ringing their bike bells to let you know they have charcoal to sell; all very unique aspects to living inside the city of Nampula!

And we are ready to get back into the swing of things. We have met with a new language teacher that we will start with on Monday, and we are looking forward to that. We have decided to start working on the Makua dialect spoken here in Nampula instead of the northern dialect of Makua-Metto for now, and we think this will be much more productive and enjoyable. Despite the differences in the dialects, we have realized that it will be more productive to work on the Makua language that is spoken by nearly everyone here; working on the northern Makua-Metto dialect while living down here in Nampula had been quite frustrating since there was

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almost no one to practice with. We are considering different options for arranging someone to play with Abby during our class every afternoon, but have not yet decided what to do about that.

We have also enjoyed reuniting with our Mozambican friends - it was especially neat to see Abby remember them and get really excited to see them and hug them. This Sunday we will be back with the Embaixada churches - the small group of churches that we have been working with while living in Nampula - and they are excited for us to be back. They will be having a leadership conference the first weekend in July that we will be helping with, so we will let you know how that goes. One of their specific requests was to address the problem of weak marriages.

We continue to be in a paperwork process with the government of the Cabo Delgado province concerning our long-term goal of living and working there. Everything continues to look very positive with our relationships with officials in the provincial capital of Pemba, and right now they are waiting on some input from the Administrator of the town of Montepuez. The Administrator is one who has been unwelcoming to us in the past, so we are praying for God to soften his heart towards us. Our teammate Jeremy Smith is very active in calling the officials in Pemba to check on how things are going, and we will be making a trip up there to visit in the next few weeks.

Here is a list of matters we ask you to pray for:

- My health through this pregnancy, and the health of the baby, and a safe, uneventful delivery in November
- Health for Alan and Abby and our teammates
- Us beginning with our new language teacher
- Our decision of who to baby-sit Abby during our language class
- Our work with churches here in Nampula
- The hearts of officials in Pemba and in Montepuez to be softened towards us so that we may be able to return and work there for many years

We are so thankful for you, our family and friends, and for all of your encouragement and prayers. God hears and moves on behalf of your prayers, and we are grateful to you and we praise Him for all this.

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Rachel and Alan and Abby Howell

PS - You can see pictures at <http://photos.yahoo.com/africahowells>! Our team website, is soon to be under construction to change to a new look - we will be sure to let you know when it is ready. In the mean time, you can still view photos and newsletters on the current website or at our yahoo photos site. Enjoy!

Alan, Rachel, and Abby Howell africahowells@yahoo.com
C.P. 688, Nampula, Mozambique, AFRICA
011-258-82-640-0400(cell), 011-258-621-7065(house)