

Howell – eMail News

Friday, December 1, 2006

Dear Friends and Family,

We hope this email finds you well. We wanted to send a quick update to let you know what we've been up to recently.

God has continued to broaden our relationship network here in Montepuez. In the last email we mentioned being invited to a wedding of some Muslim friends here in town. I have been praying for an opportunity to continue to get to know these friends better and to show them the love of Jesus. So, when they invited me to fast for the month of Ramadan with them, it seemed like a great way to participate in their lives and understand more about the influence that Islam has in this area. The fast finished a few weeks ago with a big party. Overall, Ramadan was a very interesting experience, though I'm not a big fan of this way of fasting! It is a 30 day fast with an extra 6 days on the end. You can't eat or drink from sunup to sundown (the first few days were really rough especially with the no-drinking part – though it has proved to be an effective weight-loss method!). It has been good to mix-up people's categories of what Christianity is all about – it has surprised many of our Muslim and Christian friends! I was invited to the mosque and have been able to have some great conversations with some of the leaders and others here in Montepuez.

We've been grateful to see some significant improvement in language learning lately. It is getting easier and easier to preach and teach in Makua – though I still making many mistakes. We're getting more and more comfortable and it feels like we're starting to "turn the corner" and be more "at home" in the Makua language.

The Cabo Delgado province has about 16 or so Churches of Christ with between 300-400 members in Cabo Delgado, and a few weeks ago they had their annual conference. The church here in the city of Montepuez hosted the conference and our team helped a lot with transportation and supplies. The conference had over 150 people and it was really neat to see our friends from churches far away from each other together and worshipping in the same place. Though I was anxious about it, I was able to teach my session in Makua. It was tough making the jump from teaching the 15 or so patient people in Chipembe who interact with us every week, to speaking in Makua to a large group of people from all over Cabo Delgado! Our interactions with the churches here are filled with all the ups and downs of working with groups of new believers. We've been going most every week to work with the new church in Chipembe for about 9 months now (teaching about the story of God in the Old Testament, moving through the book of Mark in Makua, and now looking at what it means to be a church). In December, we hope to start worshipping weekly with a different small church in the area (in the village of Nekwaya). We've offered to go through the same material with that young church (though this time all of the teaching would be in Makua). My hope is that by the middle of 2007, we'll be able to ratchet back our time doing language learning and concentrate most of our time and efforts on being with these people, encouraging a "church planting movement" here among the Makua-Metto people. That would mean spending time in villages that do not have churches during the week and working towards developing a body of believers in those places.

We have enjoyed having some visitors lately here in Montepuez. Our friends from Lichinga, the Caldwells and Holtons, made the 9-hour drive across rough roads to

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join us for Thanksgiving. We had a big potluck complete with turkey, stuffing and pumpkin pie! Abby had a blast with her buddies Hallie, Asher and Eli, and we enjoyed sharing about what is going on here and getting some great new ideas from what they've been up to on their side of northern Mozambique. We also have enjoyed welcome a young couple Russell and Shannon Vaughn for a few weeks to do an internship with our team. They're with us right now and they've been going through our daily routines with us and trying to get a feel for whether God may be calling them to work here in northern Mozambique.

Thanks for your prayers for health. Abby and Ellie have been really healthy lately. We celebrated Ellie's first birthday on November 17th and we've enjoyed watching her get closer and closer to walking on her own every day. Abby has been showing a lot more openness to language lately, which we are grateful for, and she has been picking up more Makua and asking lots of questions ("What does that word mean?" and "What did she say?"). She especially enjoys playing with her friend Priscilla (the Portuguese pronunciation is "Pree-see-la"); they are very cute playing together.

Sunday we are headed down to South Africa for a family vacation (as much as we love what we do here it is very important to have some time away for rest!) and for Rachel to see a dentist. The town of Montepuez has been having multiple electricity problems in the last month or so, and one night in early November when Rachel went to get another candle in the dark, she tripped and fell and chipped her two front teeth and banged her knee pretty hard. Her knee was pretty swollen for awhile but is now completely healed, and we are very thankful that the injuries to her teeth did not apparently do any damage to the nerves or roots. Also while we are in South Africa we will take advantage of fast internet connections and upload a lot of pictures to the team website, so keep watch!

Thanks for loving us and being a part of what we're doing in Montepuez!

In Christ,

Alan, Rachel, Abby and Ellie

Please pray for...

- God to raise up a church planting movement here in Cabo Delgado
- Us to learn to speak Makua-Metto well (including Abby)
- Continued growth in relationships with our Muslim friends.
- The churches in the villages of Chipembe and Nekwaya
- God to bless our team with health

***Special Prayer Request:

Our teammate, Chad Westerholm has been having a lot of back pain lately and he and his family are exploring the possibility of going to South Africa for treatment. Please pray that God would heal Chad's back.