

Roland's e-Mail News

Sunday, April 10, 2005

Greetings Everyone,

I hope God is blessing each one of you. God is blessing us here. I just wanted to let everyone know what we are up to and how God has been working here.

First, an update on our return to Montepuez. Last Thursday Chad, Alan, Jeremy, Martha, Luke, and little Andrew, went up to Pemba to meet with the Minister of Justice of Cabo Delgado. The meeting went fine, but there was not much progress. We had found out in recent weeks that our permission needed three signatures, the signature of the Minister of Justice, the signature of the director of "Support and Control," and then the Governor's signature. The Minister of Justice said that he would try to get the signature of "Support and Control," for us ASAP, and that getting permission for us to return would be a personal victory for him. However, that is about all that happened, and we agreed to meet again on Monday. So this past Monday, Jeremy, Alan, Chad, and I returned again. We met again with the Minister of Justice, and he said he had just met with the director of Support and Control, and that the director had actually signed our documents the day he had sent it to him. So it has been in the governor's office for over a week now. This was good news, but there was even more. The Minister of Justice had just received a letter from the Governor requesting that he come in for a meeting. The Minister of Justice said that he was surprised because the letter did not give a reason for the meeting, and he said that he didn't meet with the Governor very often. The Minister of Justice thought that there might be a chance the meeting was about our documents, but assured us that even if it was not, he would try to get us approved at the meeting either way. This meeting should happen very soon. I believe we are very close now to returning, and are actually getting excited about it again! Please pray that this will resolve very soon.

With each of these trips to Pemba, I have also taken the opportunity to return for the night to Montepuez. Last Wednesday was the first time I had been back in our apartment there in over nine months. It was quite a strange experience. I was a little concerned about going back. We had left Montepuez on about a 24 hr. notice, and did not expect to be gone for long. Since we left we lived in 8 different houses and had a child. I wasn't sure how I would feel about returning to the only home that we have, but are not allowed to live in. When I opened the entrance which goes right into the kitchen, a foul smell greeted me. I looked around and saw that the kitchen floor was covered with literally thousands of dead bees. I had known we had a bee problem when we left; they were getting in through the air vent above the stove. I suppose they couldn't get out once they got into the kitchen. The walls and everything else in the kitchen were covered with bee droppings. It might be a good time to mention here that Mika and Josiah fortunately did not accompany me on this visit. My guards, who had been very glad to see me, were very helpful in cleaning up the kitchen and then the rest of the house as well, which is outside of their job description. Our pantry was full of expired food and several large bags of rice and one small bag of flour that were now providing nourishment for moths. It was a poignant reminder of Matthew 6:19-20 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal." I sheepishly asked my guards if they were interested in the rice and flour, and they asked me if I was joking, because they were thrilled to have it (they sift flour and rice so that the contaminants are removed). The rest of the house was mostly fine, just very, very dusty, and full of dead cockroaches. It was clear that no one had broken into the house while we were gone, praise God! It was good yet sad to be in the house. It was nice to see all these things that I had in my possession at one point, but still sad that we were still not able to live there. We only had the stuff from our containers for about a month before we left Montepuez, so it has been nearly two years since I have looked at most of it. Also, since so many of you donated things to us before we left, there is still so much that we don't even know we have. Another reason I had been concerned about a return trip to Montepuez is that I only expected to deal with problems since I was only going to be there a short time. Problems such as cleaning up the house, and workers asking for money, and bad memories of having to leave. Fortunately this did not turn out to be the case, and I was able to have some nice conversations with people I had met during the two and a half months we lived in Montepuez. I especially had a good conversation with the preacher of the Church of Christ in Montepuez,

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Germindo. He was very encouraging and also informative since he had been on most of the trips to speak with the government officials in Pemba with the guys. He really thought we were close to receiving permission to return to Montepuez. I did hear some bad news from my guards, though. One of the guard's five year old daughter died in February from some sort of illness, and the other guard's wife has been diagnosed with leprosy (there are many different diseases that could

be called this, so I don't know exactly what this means, except that she is currently in remission). Please pray for their situations. Also the guards and many others informed me that the harvest would be very bad this year. After they planted corn this year, there was a very heavy rain and the corn all sprouted, however it did not rain for another month, which all but destroyed everyone's crop. Nearly all people in this area are subsistence farmers and corn is their staple, so we are expecting a partial famine. In the end God triumphed over my fears and the trip made me more excited to return again. There is so much need in that area, and it seems that many people are ready to learn, all they lack is people to befriend them, learn their ways and language, and teach them. Please pray that this will happen soon. I believe that the Makua-Metto are ready, but Satan doesn't want them to have the opportunity to hear. However, I know God will triumph.

Mika, Josiah, and I are doing well. Josiah is continuing to grow, and is a Joy to his parents.

God bless, and thank you for your prayers.

Aaron

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