

Roland's e-Mail Newsletter

Saturday, January 7, 2006

Dear Makua-Metto Mission Supporters,

I hope everyone is doing well and that you had a good holiday season. We did here and we also celebrated Josiah's first birthday on January 3. Last year was truly a blessed year for us and we have faith that God will bless 2006 as well.

Before I get to explain about how the famine relief work is going, I would like to tell you about this year's planting season. Usually rains come by the middle of November here, but this year, like last, they did not. Two weeks ago, many people told me that they had already planted their farms two times, and lost both crops. However, thanks to God, on Friday the 30th of December it began to rain. The rain was good on Friday, and there was a good rain on each of the next five days. In fact, it has rained here at least a little every day since that Friday. I have spoken with many people since that day, and they said that they were able to plant again, and they are very positive about this planting. I have been listening to the national news, and heard it reported that most areas in Mozambique are giving a very positive outlook for this year's crops. Praise be to God!

Now I would like to take some time here to tell you about how God has been blessing the famine relief that many of you have been involved in as donors and prayer-warriors. When we saw how much money people were willing to give to help out with this project, we realized that the distribution would be large enough that we would need to enlist the help of many people to distribute it well. Since the famine is affecting people regardless of religion we invited people from all Christian denominations in town as well as some mosques to take part in this distribution. This also helps build unity in the community, which is something badly needed in this area.

We called a meeting and told the religious leaders that we would be purchasing corn at the local price of \$16 for a 110 lbs sack, and would be selling it to religious organizations for about \$2 per sack. We chose corn because it is a staple here, and was hit the worst by last year's drought. We also knew that some amount of corn did exist here, but the price was nearly double of what was normal. We explained that there were several reasons we wanted to sell this corn, albeit at a nominal price, instead of giving it away. First, we believe that often things that are given away are not valued as much as things that people have at least a little stake in. Second, by asking churches and mosques to put up this nominal fee, they would be actually taking part in this work. Therefore the program is not just a program from our group or the churches and Christians in the States, but also from these organizations themselves. We wanted to challenge them to give as well to help out others, instead of only being on the receiving end. Churches here are very poor, a church of 50 may only have one member that has a paying job, and therefore they don't have the capacity to give away 20lbs of corn at the price of \$3, but they would be able to do this at a cost to them of \$0.40.

I wasn't sure how the religious leaders would receive this idea. To my knowledge they haven't seen any projects where they were asked to participate. However, they all accepted the idea and were excited that it was a project that they could take part in. We also explained to the leaders that we would not be able to provide any transportation for the corn, that they would have to come up with that on their own. We suggested that each organization should choose two people to run their side of the project, mostly to have more accountability, which they agreed was necessary.

The next problem I had was how we would get the corn from the warehouses that had corn in town to the churches. It would take too much time if we (at this time Jeremy and I) had to be present when each bag of corn was picked up. So I decided to write receipts for each organization that would authorize them to pick up the amount of sacks corresponding with their donation. When we went to the warehouses to pay for the corn, we asked if they would allow the corn to be picked up by churches using these receipts, and thanks to God, they did. At 9:00 a.m. on Dec 27 there were about 20 people representing 10 organizations at my gate ready to pick up their receipts. I was filling these out until 12:00. As I finished receipting the last organization that day, one of the representatives of the churches came by to show me that his church had already received all of the corn. I was so excited when they came. This meant that an idea that we had back in October, had come to pass and was feeding hungry people. It went from idea, to plea, to

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contribution, through plans, bank transfer problems, logistical issues, and God had worked through all of that to feed people and bring him Glory. As an added bonus, we have spent so little on logistics, that our team can cover all of the logistics out of our personal donations. That means that so far, every cent that has been donated from the states has been spent only on the purchase of corn! Nothing has been spent on transport or banking or paperwork, from the money sent to purchase corn! This has excited me even more. We have three more phases to go, and each month, the food shortage will be worse. But God has brought together everything to help needy people during this time, and it has been truly a blessing to see what God has done here! Thank you for being a part of this work and bringing glory to God here while helping people during their time of need!

Since we still have three more phases to go, we are still accepting donations. If you did not have a chance to give and still would like to help out, you can still send money to:

"Mozambique Famine Relief"
c/o the Church in the Falls,
837 Chestnut Blvd.
Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221.

To God be the Glory,
Aaron