

# Roland's – e Mail Newsletter

Tuesday, January 31, 2006

Hi everyone,

I thought to write a little update to let you know what is going on in our lives at the moment.

The Howell's just returned to us from the states with a new baby girl, Ellie. It is so good to have the Howell's back again. We are still waiting for the news from the Westerholm's. Their baby's due date was the 27th of this month. They are ready, and we are ready to have yet another little teammate as well! The Smith's are doing well. Two guys from their sponsoring church are here for 3 days (they are going around Africa visiting all of their missionaries). We had dinner with them last night and talked about the work and how things are going.

The final touches on our furlough proposal are underway. We are so excited to see all of you! It will be a lot of traveling around, but we think it will be worth it.

The Famine Relief project is going well. The second round has finished this past week. It is truly amazing how God has blessed this whole process. Things are going more smoothly than we ever imagined! Thanks for all your support and prayers. There will be more pictures and stories coming about the relief soon.

We have started working closely with a church in a village called Mitali. The church consists of a couple, the couple's wife's mom and a young man whose father was a preacher there before he died. Aaron started preaching there about 3 weeks ago, starting in Genesis. He said that he wants to go through the major themes of the Bible so that they can have a basic understanding of the Bible. They do most all of their service in Makua and that has been helpful to our listening comprehension. There are a lot of kids at this village, and Josiah is a big hit! There are just crowds of kids that follow where Josiah goes. Most of these kids don't speak Portuguese at all so I have no doubt that Josiah is going to be fluent in Makua.

Speaking of language study, we are slowly moving forward on the Makua language. We have a language teacher who teaches us in the mornings, and we try to use what we learned throughout the week. We are currently working on a "Josiah" module, where we learn vocabulary and sentences related to him, since that seems to be an initial big topic. We are learning things like "He is one year old, he likes to walk around, he can eat and likes cassava, he is trying to sleep so would you please play a little ways away from him?... etc. There are days that we think "oh, we get it!" and there are days that we think "how are we going to be able to learn this language??" We appreciate your prayers for perseverance, good memory and quick recall!

People around us seem to have started to get used to having us around. They started to tell us some interesting things... like measles will be cured if you drink the water of boiled dried octopus; Makua ladies are not supposed to get pregnant before the child before starts to walk, or your child will die (this doesn't apply to white people, they say); children and pregnant people can't see the dead body, or someone in your family will die, etc. We have started to get into their view of the world and things around them and that is interesting to us. We pray that people will keep on opening themselves up to us as we try to open ourselves up to them.

We have started our "bonding". Bonding is something that we did during our internship at Harding where we stay in the village to learn about how people live and do things. We spent just one night at a village about 30 minutes away. This is a village that Aaron visited frequently before we were asked to leave 2 years ago. They know us quite well and we felt comfortable being there with them. We explained that we are here to learn how they do things and we don't want them to do anything special for us, and they did really well!! They showed us around their farms, and told us how excited they are that the corn is growing strong this year. Some ladies showed me how to get the leaves from the trees/plants, pick them, pound them and boil them on open fire. People had a great time watching Josiah chase around chickens. We sat out side their houses at night under beautiful stars and talked a lot about how we met each other's spouses and giggled like little kids. We also asked them about how things have changed in the villages and its customs since the colonial time, war time until now. We are so ready to have this kind of conversation in Makua, since there are a lot of older people and ladies who couldn't participate well in this chit chat because of the language barrier. Some of the questions and comments got translated and that was great. Though heat, dirt, mosquitos, lack of privacy (especially when need to use the bathroom) and Josiah's eye trouble afterwards, were hard on us, we have really enjoyed being there over night. We'll try to see if we can do a more extended stay in a village soon. Please pray for health of all of us as we do bonding.

Also we are writing this e-mail from our new computer!! We are so thankful that the Howells were able to bring this back to us. Though it will take awhile to get this computer configured in the way that would be easy for us to use everyday, it has been so nice to have a computer that doesn't require a personal table top fan! Also it has been strange to hear a sound come out of a computer (when we start the computer, etc) since our old computer was deaf and mute since over a year ago.

Again, looking forward to seeing you in a few months!

Aaron and Mika