

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Thursday, May 27, 2004

Friends and Family,

This month we have been working almost non-stop on fixing up our house and language learning. One of our first concerns was security from thieves. In the past month my carpenter has been robbed twice, my language teacher once, and a new Christian at church had everything stolen out of his house.

The first concern at our house has been extending the meter high wall that is around our house, since anyone could easily climb over it. The cheapest and simplest thing to do would have been to use bamboo all the way around the wall, but since I am on the main street of town the city would not let me use bamboo on the front of the house. I had several options, but the cheapest seemed to be to use wood. I did not realize how complicated this project would be.

First, I needed to have cement columns built to support the wood and bamboo. This required hiring welders to make a rebar frame and a frame for the gates. The welders didn't have the necessary materials, so I had to buy the materials they needed to work. Then the masons were ready to begin, but I needed to buy cement, sand, and small rocks before they could start working. Next I needed some small tree trunks to support the bamboo for the back side of the fence. I went out to the bush and hired five guys to cut down about forty small trees (which took less than an hour), then I had to buy the bamboo and cord to tie the bamboo.

The front part of the wall is a picket style wood fence. First I had to go out to the bush to buy some wood; my carpenter heard about some guys that had wood about twenty kilometers out of town just two kilometers off the paved road. The truth was the wood was TEN kilometers off the main road down a path that probably hadn't been used by a car in a few weeks. At some points the grass in the middle of the path was taller than the car. Finally I bought the wood, which was teak, for about \$2 a board (in the USA teak would probably have been more than \$50 per board). The wood then had to be taken to the industrial school here in town so my carpenter could use the power tools there (since he doesn't own any himself). The industrial school hadn't paid their electric bill, so they had no electricity. They did however have a generator, but no diesel. After I bought diesel the wood could finally be cut and then be prepared to use for the fence. (I repeated this process about four or five times!)

On the house itself, we had bars put on all the windows (which required many trips to and from the welders to finally get the sizes right). Amy was busy with cleaning, unpacking the boxes from our container, painting the house, getting a phone installed, hanging curtains, organizing closets, getting our water turned on, getting our internet hooked up, as well as daily chores.

In the midst of all this we have been practicing the Makua-Meto we are learning with our various workers. One of the most common questions that people ask is "Where are you going?" ("Nnorwa Vayi?") We have focused on this phrase for the past two weeks and have been building on it slowly. For example, we started learning "Where are you going? I am going to my friend's/brother's/father's house." Then we progressed to "Are you going to the field? No, I am going to my father's house." Next was, "Are you going to your father's house? Yes, I am going to my father's house." Most recently we learned phrases like, "Are you going to my mother's field? Yes, we are going to your mother's field." In this manner we are both learning new words and grammatical concepts, and also reviewing what we have already learned. We record our language teacher saying each phrase on a tape that we listen to throughout the day.

Overall the month has been very busy. Besides house work and language learning we have also had our containers arrive, team meetings, survey of villages in the district, and I was asked to preach. It has been a month of hard work, but we are beginning to feel more settled and in more of a routine. Thank you for all of your prayers and support during this transition time! God bless!

Chad & Amy

Check out new pictures from Mozambique on the web at www.makuateam.org

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Please pray:

1. That we will have a good relationship with the local community.
2. That our team will have wisdom as we decide where we are going to build houses and permanently settle.
3. For protection against thieves.
4. That God will continue to grow our vision for ministry here.
5. Continued growth in language and cultural studies.

Praise God for:

1. Our containers arrived and were unpacked safely.
2. Our language teacher Carlos (who is a Christian and speaks English) is a great help to us linguistically, culturally, and spiritually.
3. The fence is finished.
4. Our two new dogs have been great for security and they are a lot of fun.
5. The sermon Chad preached went well (despite only being told about it on Saturday night!)