

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Thursday, July 22, 2004

Friends and Family,

Life in Mozambique is always full of unexpected obstacles and opportunities. This month has not been an exception. We are still in Nampula awaiting approval to return to Montepuez. In order to facilitate our relations with the government, our team had to "elect" officials so that the government would know who was in charge. So Jeremy is now our team president (since he is the best Portuguese speaker) and I am the vice president.

Moving back to Nampula has been a surreal experience. It has felt like we have traveled back in time to our first months in Mozambique. At first, we stayed at the guest houses for a few weeks and then moved into apartments in town. Right now we are living with our teammates, Jeremy and Martha Smith. We have now lived in eight different houses since we arrived here in Mozambique in December. We are learning to make ourselves at home wherever we are!

In our time here we have tried to take advantage of several ministry opportunities. One Sunday I went out to preach at a church in the bush about an hour outside of town. Because of comments that were made, I really wonder if they understood the point of the sermon I preached. However, they were excited and encouraged by my visit and expressed their appreciation with the gift of a live chicken who rode home with me in the backseat of the truck. The chicken gave me a special gift of his own by filling the backseat with chicken poop.

Over the past few weeks, the missionaries here in Nampula received a visit from two interns, Joe and Amy, who are interested in doing mission work. Amy and I decided to take them to Nacala, Memba, and the Isle of Mozambique on the coast where we had done our first survey trip. We are burdened for this area and the few churches that are struggling to minister there, so we wanted to visit and encourage the churches and show Joe and Amy the need for mission work there. I taught two different churches a simple lesson on how evangelism takes place through relationships and not just preaching and telling people they are wrong. When I preach I try to use many illustrations, skits, and basically try to make one simple point multiple times. Despite this, the churches didn't seem to understand the lesson at all. For instance, as we were leaving, one preacher asked if the church could ride in the back of my truck through town singing because it would help them evangelize. Joe summed it up well when he observed, "These churches need a lot of teaching!" The primary purpose of the trip was to show Joe and Amy the need for mission work on the coast, and I believe that was accomplished.

Now we continue to wait. We are reminded continually that our ministry here is not short term. Our vision is to spend at least the next ten years working here. In light of this long term vision, the waiting is only a short time. One missionary reminded us that we are here to plow the soil and not just light a brush fire. Although we have setbacks, we have faith that God is being glorified in this ministry. We continue to seek the Lord's guidance in this time as our vision develops. We are also excited to receive a visit from our team mentor, Sam Shewmaker, this week and are sure God will use him to encourage and guide us.

Please Pray:

1. We will be able to return to Montepuez to get our belongings and pay bills.
2. Our documents will be approved.
3. God will lead Joe and Amy Flammer in their desire to serve as missionaries.
4. Our team will continue to be led as we develop our vision.
5. We will have wisdom regarding the best things to do for our ministry in the next few months.

Praise God For:

1. Our upcoming visit with Sam Shewmaker.
2. Our trip to the coast went well.
3. The churches in Nacala and Memba who stay faithful to Christ in a strongly Muslim area.
4. The safety of our homes this month.
5. Our fourth wedding anniversary this month.