

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Saturday, September 25, 2004

Friends and Family,

God has blessed this month in many ways and we continue to see his presence with us in many aspects of our lives. We have resumed our Metto language studies with a new teacher, David. He is from Montepuez and has been here in Nampula for the past few years studying to be an electrician. It has been good to find someone who is from Montepuez, because the Makua dialect here in Nampula is significantly different. Classes with him have been very good and he has seemed to catch on to the way we do class quite easily. One of the most interesting things we learned this month was the colors. To begin I took a set of 24 colored markers and drew a large multicolored prismatic blot. Then I asked David to circle the colors and label them and instructed him not to tell me the Portuguese words for the colors. He identified black, white, gray, yellow, red, and green. Colors were then further specified as "very" or "little". We then walked around the yard and pointed at various things asking what colors they were. A sample of some things we learned were: a light blue cord was considered "very green", a dark olive green truck was considered "gray", we were "white" and he was "black", a fluorescent green booklet was "yellow", and the sky had no color. Then David told us that really colors are only used in Metto to talk about clothes or dishes you buy in the store. This is quite different from the American view of colors, such as people who are red with anger, clouds that are gray, red apples versus green apples versus golden apples, and the hundred colors that women seem to see that men can't.

Another thing we are trying to do with our language is to incorporate some sort of weekly field trip to learn something about Makua culture. One day we visited David's house and met some of his friends and had a long discussion about why I would not buy his friend a beer. As we talked it became clear that they thought that there were only two religions in the world, Catholicism and Islam. Another day we went to an ethnological museum here in Nampula with David and he explained to us various artifacts and what they are used for today. Our next field trip will be a visit to David's mosque. We hope that these visits can be both good learning experiences and a chance to be a witness to David.

Regarding Montepuez, we have had some good news this month. We were given permission to return to Montepuez to visit our homes, although any "work" is still unauthorized. This was a blessing because we were able to go back to our home for a day or two and bring some things back to Nampula. It was a great visit because it really felt like we were at home there and we had a chance to see lots of people we knew and missed. The Holton's and Caldwell's were also able to return to get the things out of their houses so they could move to Lichinga and begin working with the Yao. We tried to get permission to move to Pemba (the provincial capital of Cabo Delgado), but were refused until our paperwork is approved. Moving to Pemba would have been better for language learning because they speak Metto there, but since that is not possible, we will be staying here in Nampula.

When we heard we couldn't move to Pemba, Amy and I began to look for an apartment here in town. We were excited to find one pretty quickly, but the day before we were to sign the contract and move in, we found the land lady had already given the keys to someone else who offered more money! We were then in a desperate search for an apartment because in two days the family we were house sitting for was returning from their holiday. What made it worse was we kept seeing apartments that were not very good and were over priced. Finally, Saturday night we found one and were able to move in Sunday morning before traveling to Montepuez to help the Yao team move. Not only was the timing an answer to prayer, but the landlady has been very good and she is a dog lover and has no problems with our dogs staying in the apartment. The new apartment has needed some work, but has been pretty easy to move into. We paid three months rent, so it is nice to know that although this is the tenth house we have lived in since arriving in Mozambique that we will at least be here for a little while.

In the meantime we are trying to make the most of our time here in Nampula. We have started to attend the Ntxotxa Church of Christ here and are looking forward to working with them over the next few months. When I was preaching there recently I told the church that Joseph had eleven brothers who were jealous of him and then asked the church what brothers did to Joseph. After a few moments of silence the pastor of the church finally answered saying they sold him into

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slavery. This reminded me that the average person in the church does not know even basic Bible stories.

We also spent several days this month interviewing various Non-Government Organizations to try to see what types of needs and development projects exist in this part of the country. Amy was really excited to visit a micro loan program that is very similar to the type of program she worked with in the States. We went out into the bush with two loan officers to collect loan payments from groups of small business owners. One meeting was in a dark smoky mud hut and the other was in an open air market in the dead fish section! It was so interesting to see how micro loan programs function in a Mozambican context and we learned a lot. God has opened so many doors for us this month and we have been so blessed by the ways He is providing for our needs.

Please Pray:

1. Language learning continues to be blessed.
2. Our work with the Ntxotxa church.
3. For Kevin and Mindy Beck, new missionaries to Nampula.
4. Peaceful elections in December.
5. The Yao team will be blessed as they begin their ministry in Lichinga.

Praise God For:

1. Providing an apartment just when we needed it.
2. Allowing us to visit Montepuez.
3. Providing, David, our Metto language teacher.
4. His leading us to work with the Ntxotxa Church.
5. The peace God has given us in all of our moves.