

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Tuesday, November 30, 2004

Friends and Family,

Life in Mozambique continues to be a mix of surprising events and occasional monotony. We enjoyed our trip to the district of Gile in Zambezia where we visited several of over fifty Churches of Christ, some of which are more than forty years old. The churches were very glad to see us and asked that at least one of us stay and work permanently with them. It is challenging to see so many Christians who desire to learn more about God but have limited access to Biblical teaching. We enjoyed visiting and sitting and talking with people. We had just learned the names for parts of the face in Metto, so we tried pointing and saying what they were with a group of kids. The kids found it very entertaining and would repeat after us all the words in their language (Lomwe) which is fairly similar to Metto. The part the children enjoyed the most was when Amy said teeth and pointed to my teeth and then I covered my teeth with my lips and she said "mahonka" the Metto word for toothless; every time we say the word toothless we get a big laugh.

After we got back to Nampula, I had a very good visit with the Bible translator for the Metto Bible. I asked him some grammatical questions about Metto and for some tips on language learning in general. Since this conversation we have tried to shift the focus of our language study to more listening and comprehension than speaking. We started by flipping through some old Newsweek magazines and having our language teacher describe the pictures. Sometimes his interpretations of certain pictures were funny; he thought Michael Jackson was a woman and he was thoroughly confused by a group of people meditating (he couldn't figure out if they were Muslims or Christians!). Since then we have assembled several collages with similar pictures; we have pages with women, men, children, animals, and foods. In class we will try to point to the pictures that are being described. This has been a good method because now we are not translating Portuguese sentences to Metto, rather we are hearing Metto in its own natural word order and phrases. We have also just received a CD with a new recording of the Gospel of Mark in Metto and are looking forward to listening to it for our language practice.

Last week we had a break from language study in order to attend our organization's annual retreat. In order for us to work here in Mozambique we have to be part of an organization, and the name of the organization we are a part of is called Boa Nova Para Africa (Good News for Africa). In all there are twelve families working in four of the ten provinces in Mozambique. The main purpose of the retreat is for each team in the organization to submit and review the goals for the coming year and to be able to become familiar with each group and their ministry. Some of the families in our organization have been in Mozambique for over ten years and it was a blessing and an encouragement to hear all the wisdom they have gleaned from their experiences here in Mozambique. At the end of the retreat we enjoyed a delicious Thanksgiving dinner together which included small rations of turkey stuffing and cranberry sauce!

On Friday I was in a very minor car accident, when a truck stopped and then rolled back into my pick up as I was trying to pass him. Thankfully it was very minor and really the only damage is a big dent above the tire that impedes opening the passenger door completely (whenever I try to get in the passenger door Amy calls me the human pretzel!) What has been most interesting is seeing the whole legal process which has included me spending many hours at the Police Station during the past few days while trying to sort out paperwork. Right now things are on hold until after the elections which will be held on December 1st and 2nd. Like many other countries, Mozambique is a relatively new democracy and these are only the third elections since the war ended. We are all praying that this month will pass in peace. Happy Holidays!

Please Pray For:

1. Peace in Mozambique during the elections.
2. God to raise up missionaries to work with the churches in Zambezia.
3. Our return to Montepuez.
4. Our progress in the Makua Metto language
5. God to work in our hearts filling us with love for a people very different from ourselves.

Praise God For:

1. A successful trip to Gile.

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2. Safety in the car accident on Friday.
3. All the work that God is doing in Mozambique through Good News for Africa.
4. Continued health for our family.
5. An encouraging and refreshing organization retreat.