

# Westerholm's e-Mail News

## Wednesday, March 2, 2005

Friends and Family,

February has been another month of language and cultural studies, trips to Cabo Delgado, and taking care of business items that take much more time here than in the States. Things just go slowly here in Mozambique.

We are still waiting for a response from the government regarding our return to Montepuez. We had hoped to have a response last week, but we are still waiting. So we continue to wait with patience.

We have been looking forward to March, because our teammates, the Roland's and Smith's will return to Mozambique with their new babies. We have said for a while that when March comes, our team will have to make some decisions regarding our return to Montepuez. If when they return we have still not been approved, we will begin talking about working with the Makua in another area of Northern Mozambique, most likely in Niassa or Nampula province. Our desire is to return to Montepuez, but it may be that that door will be closed for us. We are still hopeful that we will hear something soon and we continue to wait, but we cannot wait forever.

Despite the uncertainty of being able to return to Montepuez, we are continuing to study Makua Metto. This month we read through several Bible stories in Metto, including "Abraham and Isaac" and the "Death and Resurrection of Jesus". It has been fascinating hearing David (our language teacher) explain his way of interpreting the stories. David is not a Christian, but he has seen the Jesus Film, and has been to Catholic Mass before. David thought that when Jesus prayed that God forgive the people, that he was only referring to the two thieves. However, according to his interpretation, he thought that Jesus had already been killed and resurrected when he forgave the thieves. He also thought that the soldiers divided up his garment because they wanted to be lucky like Jesus was. He thought that the sign above Jesus was thrown up on the cross and just happened to (magically?) stick to the cross. It is amazing to realize how poorly most people understand the basic elements of the gospel story.

Even after being here for over a year, it seems we are constantly learning various cultural insights. We continue to learn more about how to be better and more relevant ministers in this country and to the Makua Metto people. We learned this month that many Makua are afraid of rainbows, and often will not walk in the direction of one. They think that the rainbows somehow absorb the water from the ground and cause crops to fail. What for most westerners is something beautiful, and for Christians and Jews a sign of God's covenant, for Makua is something to be feared. We are consistently reminded of our ignorance and our need for wisdom as we learn to interact with a culture very different from our own.

Please Pray For:

1. Our return to Montepuez.
2. God will lead our team in this month.
3. Continued progress in learning Makua-Metto.
4. The judge to sign the papers so Chad won't have to go to court.
5. The Smith's and Roland's as they arrange passports, etc. for their new children.

Praise God For:

1. The positive meetings we have had with the Minister of Justice.
2. Our good health.
3. Cultural insights we have gained.
4. Safety on our trips to Cabo Delgado.
5. Continued perseverance through this time of waiting.