

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Saturday, April 2, 2005

Friends and Family,

We are excited to now have our entire team back together for the first time since last August. We have enjoyed the two newest additions to our team, Andrew Smith and Josiah Roland. Aaron, Mika, and Josiah drove up from Maputo (a three day drive!) and we received a text message saying they were only three hours away from Nampula. However, after seven hours they still had not arrived, so at 10:00 at night we went out to look for them to see if they were okay or needed any help. They had hit some heavy rains and slid off the very muddy road and gotten one flat tire on their truck and blew both tires on their trailer not to mention losing their roof rack. The Mozambicans who saw them run off the road filled their tires with grass, but tires are made to be filled with air. At about midnight we met up with them and were able to load everything in the trailer into Jeremy's truck as the trailer's tires were basically obliterated. We all arrived back in Nampula at 3:00 AM!

With our team back together we were able to make some decisions regarding Montepuez. We have found out that our documents need three signatures in order to be approved; we already have one of those signatures. We have had the opportunity to get to know several people in high places who are really going to bat for us. Things are continuing to move very slowly however, it seems now that it is not a matter of "if" we will be approved but "when" we will be approved. Having said that, we cannot wait forever. We are beginning to pursue a "plan B", while still trying by all means to get back to Montepuez. As in many times in our lives, it is not very clear how God is leading us through this, but we know He is with continually with us.

Otherwise, things continue to go well here in Nampula. Working with the Intxotxa church has been as always a good learning experience. A few Sundays ago I was teaching about how Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35) I asked the whole church repeat that phrase several times and they did so enthusiastically. Memorizing phrases and repeating them is a popular style of learning here.) I then asked, "So who is more blessed? The one who..." Everyone said unanimously, "Receives!" On the other hand, many times I am encouraged when I hear others in the church referring to lessons that I have taught. I had taught about the rainbow being a sign of God's covenant a few weeks ago (some Makuas are afraid of rainbows) and the sermon didn't seem to go too well. However, the next week someone else referred to what I had taught about the rainbow and it seemed to be well received and understood. So we never know when God is speaking through us and using us! Another exciting event was helping with a church "work day" as the church did some renovations on their building.

It is amazing what you can do with mud! It was a good learning experience and time to get my hands dirty with these brothers in Christ.

Language learning has been encouraging this month. We have had a breakthrough where it seems we can understand a lot more than ever before. We recently finished reading through the story of Noah and the flood, entitled "Ocara Wo Maasi Mwiilaponi" (or "The Filling of Water in the World"). We still can't say much, but we constantly hear familiar words and understand aspects of grammar more and more. At about 4:00 in the morning on Easter Sunday, Amy awoke to the sound of people in the streets singing in Makua, "Hallelujah, our Lord is risen!"

She was excited to be able to understand the words they were singing and to be reminded of Christ's resurrection first thing on Easter morning.

One day, our guard Nelson, asked us to take his uncle to the hospital because he had been in a motorcycle accident and had injured his leg. Since the "chapa" or (taxi van) doesn't go near his house he had no easy way of getting to the hospital. A few days later our worker David, showed up at 9:00 PM and told us that his girlfriend (who I learned a few weeks ago is pregnant) was having stomach pains. He asked if I could take her to the hospital. After asking him a series of questions I realized that she was having stomach pains because she was in labor! Since it was nighttime the chapas weren't running, so she needed a ride. When we have a medical emergency in the States we are able to either call 911 or hop in our cars and head to the hospital. Here in Mozambique if you don't know someone who has access to a car, you are miles from the nearest public transportation point or you can't afford the twenty-five cents it costs to catch a chapa you either walk to the hospital, find someone to carry you or stay at home. Each day presents itself with new lessons to learn as we become more accustomed to life here. There are

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many differences between life here and in the States, and it seems we are gradually beginning to understand these differences.

Please Pray For:

1. Our documents to receive the necessary signatures for our return to Montepuez.
2. Clarity and wisdom for our team.
3. Continued progress in learning Makua-Metto.
4. Our lease on our house in Montepuez will be renewed and the rent will not be raised.
5. The Intxotxa church as they are continuing to grow in Christ.

Praise God For:

1. Chad's court case (regarding the fender bender) was finally resolved.
2. Our progress in language learning.
3. Protection of our house when a group of thieves tried to break in.
4. The two new healthy babies, Andrew and Josiah.
5. Protecting the Roland's in their three day drive from Maputo to Nampula.