

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Saturday, May 28, 2005

Friends and Family,

It is hard to believe that I am writing this newsletter from the States! Our last week in Mozambique was somewhat hectic as we tried to tie up a lot of loose ends. As usual, we made a trip at the end of the month to Montepuez in order to pay our workers and bills. We also needed to renew our lease for our house in Montepuez, and we weren't sure if we would be able to. We were blessed because we were actually able to sign a two-year lease, so we won't have to worry about needing to renew this time next year or a raise in rent. Since we will be back in the States until September, we decided to move out of our Nampula apartment as well. So, we also packed everything in Nampula and took it up to Montepuez. We had originally planned to go to Montepuez on a Friday, but we then heard on Thursday that the following Monday was Mozambique's Labor Day. Since we were leaving on Tuesday, this meant all of our business items needed to be taken care of on Friday! So, after a very busy Friday we ended up not traveling until Saturday.

We got back to Nampula Saturday night, since we didn't want to miss our last Sunday with the Intxotxa church. As usual, on our way to church, we caught the public transportation or "chapa". About half way to church we were stopped in traffic. When we looked up we realized there was a parade in front of us celebrating Mozambican Labor Day. The "floats" were all flat bed trucks with people on the back holding banners or doing different sorts of activities that reflected the business they represented. One float for a hotel had beds and maids; the maids would make and unmake the beds repeatedly! We were also impressed by the telephone company that had constructed two telephone poles on each end of the truck bed and had workers "fixing" each side. Finally, after waiting for about half an hour and seeing that no traffic was passing, we decided to get out of the chapa. We crossed to the other side of the parade on foot and then caught a second chapa to complete the trip.

Once we finally got to church, we were only there a short time when two people stood up and announced that they wanted to be baptized. The church then walked to the nearest river for the baptism...a forty five minute walk! As we walked through the neighborhood we turned a lot of heads as the whole church sang. It was really neat to see the public nature that baptism takes in an African context. Since we had just taken most of our things to Montepuez that also included our suntan lotion and water bottles! After the forty five minute walk back to the church building we looked a little more tan!

We were blessed to be able to leave Mozambique on a flight with Missionary Aviation Fellowship. MAF flies missionaries into and out of remote locations, so we and our teammates, the Howells, were able to fly with them on a fifteen passenger plane to South Africa. We had a great flight until we hit turbulence for the last hour, but fortunately we all kept our lunch! Since it had been over a year since we had been in a developed country several things really stood out to us. One of the first things we enjoyed was walking on a grassy lawn; it felt so soft under our feet! Our rental car ran so softly (compared to our diesel engine trucks) that all of us had to listen closely to tell if the engine was even on! Cars drove quickly, and we were amazed that all of them actually stopped at the red lights. The next morning, we drove on the smooth roads to McDonalds and I was amazed that I could drink coffee in the car without risking serious injury.

Once we arrived in the USA I kept telling myself when driving, "Stay to the right! Stay to the right!" It has been wonderful to see many family and friends who have been praying for us regularly over the past two years. It is really encouraging to be reminded how many people are a part of this ministry through their prayers and giving. Spending time with family members has been very special, since the most difficult aspect of living in Mozambique is being away from them. We have spent some time in Memphis and Hot Springs visiting family. Currently Amy is visiting some old friends from college while I am taking a class on Folk Religions in Abilene, TX. This is a very helpful class as it deals with issues in relation to magic, demon possession, and spiritual warfare. Afterwards we will visit supporters in Texas and family in Arkansas before heading back to Memphis. We will stay in Memphis most of June, and can be reached by cell phone at 901-828-0435.

On the Mozambique side, things continue to go well. Our teammates the Roland's and Smith's have had a great opportunity in the past few weeks to participate in a language class on

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the Makua language that is offered once every two years. It is a different dialect than what is spoken in Montepuez, but many of the words and much of the grammar is the same as Makua-Metto. Last week they were also able to meet in Pemba with a new government person that we have not had direct contact with before. The meeting went well and they sensed that God is working and is continuing to open doors for us.

Please Pray For:

1. Our safety and health as we travel across the country.
2. The Roland's and Smiths as they study in the Makua class.
3. God to work through the new contacts we have in Pemba.
4. The Howells as they travel back to Mozambique next week.
5. Chad to learn things in school that can be applied in Mozambique.

Praise God For:

1. His continued presence during our first term in Africa.
2. Our safe travel back to the States.
3. Being able to renew our lease for our house in Montepuez.
4. The two new Christians at the Intxotxa church.
5. The ministry of Missionary Aviation Fellowship.