

# Westerholm – eMail News

Wednesday, July 26, 2006

Friends and Family,

It is amazing all that you can experience by spending a few days in an African village. This month, we spent several weekends in Nanjua, where we have been visiting a church there for the past ten weeks. Spending an extended amount of time in the village opens your eyes to many aspects of culture. We enjoyed walking around the village with Arlindo, one of the church members. We realized that Arlindo is related to a good part of the village as we kept meeting his numerous aunts and uncles and cousins. We were also followed by about 50 kids who had nothing else to do that day, so we were quite a sight as we walked around the village. It didn't take long for everyone in the village to learn Maggie's name and start calling out "Margarita! Margarita!" (here she goes by the Portuguese version of Margaret). I learned how to make a type of bed called "nkori", we went to the mill, saw lots of drunk people, and we also attended a women's dance with drums. Nanjua is actually pretty large and probably has several thousand people living in close proximity.

We put up our tent at the house of a Christian whose nickname is "Africa". Africa has lived in Nanjua for about ten years, but before this he was in a program where he lived in (East) Germany for ten years and worked in a mine. Since Africa speaks German fluently, he can really relate to us as we are learning Metto. He is very patient with us and helps us with our language learning quite a bit. The first night that we spent the night in Nanjua, we were about to go to sleep when the village discotheque got started. Someone cranked up a generator and soon a really bad electric guitar was sounding throughout the village. Amy already had a headache and it only got worse! We really didn't sleep well until the music stopped at about midnight, however Maggie slept through the whole thing sweet and sound!

It has been interesting to see how people respond to us as we visit the villages of Nanjua and Nanhupo each week. A number of people have expressed interest in joining "our church", but when I question them I find they have very little understanding of what the church is. It seems that many people see the church as a sort of club and have some vague sense of needing to join the church so they won't go to hell. They don't see sin as something which relationally separates us from God. Sin is categorized and the "big" sins (like drinking, stealing, and smoking pot) keep people out of the club (called church). When I recently asked two Christians why it is important to have their sins forgiven they couldn't tell me; they wanted me to give them "the answer" in case someone else asked them. So a lot of people want to join the church, but have no concept of following Jesus.

Recently, we found several cocoons in our yard. It has been a good object lesson in spiritual transformation. One butterfly left his cocoon rather quickly. Another one, has been in his cocoon for over a month. Sometimes we wonder if that butterfly will ever come out. Another cocoon has just started. Our friend told us that he once had a cocoon at his house, but when he played with it trying to get the butterfly to hurry up and come out, it died. Spiritual transformation can't be rushed. All we can do is provide the right environment for it, and God is the one who does the rest of the work. As we visit Nanjua and Nanhupo and as I reflect on my own life, I am reminded that transformation is tedious and God doesn't produce butterflies in microwave ovens. Rather God's kingdom works in hidden and yet powerful ways.

We have had many other opportunities to teach. I continue my weekly Bible study in Bandari with two guys, Felizberto and Antonio. Amy has taught another lesson in Metto on the Parable of the Lost Coin. I have also taught a class at a Bible school on worship. I worked with the students as they wrote a song about the parable of the sower. The four verses of the song were based on the four types of soil. It is a good reminder that as we teach different people in various places that God's word will produce a harvest, even if much of the seed seems to go to waste.

It is hard to believe that Maggie is almost six months old! She has two bottom teeth and has started eating solid foods. She is starting to sit up, but is not sitting by herself just yet. She is a great blessing to us and we are so thankful for her. As always, we try to keep our website updated with pictures and there is also a very short video clip of our family with greetings from MZ, so feel free to visit [www.makuateam.org](http://www.makuateam.org) for the latest pictures and for information on the upcoming Big MO retreat.

# Westerholm – eMail News

Wednesday, July 26, 2006

## Praise God For:

1. Good language and culture learning opportunities in Nanjua.
2. Giving us the ability to teach in Makua-Metto.
3. People in Nanjua who have been visiting the church.
4. The celebration of our six year wedding anniversary.
5. Continued progress in language learning.

## Please Pray For:

1. Wisdom as we try to explain that joining the church is about following Jesus.
2. Insights into the Makua-Metto culture.
3. Maggie's health as she has had a low grade fever for the past few days.
4. Perseverance in language study.
5. The upcoming Big MO conference.

Donations to this ministry can be written to Cordova Community Church with the memo "Mozambique" and sent to:

Cordova Community Church  
PO Box 4435  
Cordova, TN 38088-4435  
(901) 828-0435