

Westerholm – eMail News

Saturday – September 9, 2006

Friends and Family,

This month has had some unexpected excitement. Last month I had asked for prayers for Maggie as she had a low grade fever for several days. The several days turned into about two weeks. After several days we took her to get a malaria test at the local hospital and the lab technician said that she had a form of malaria that is difficult to treat. We immediately started her on a malaria treatment and called an American medical missionary who lives in Nampula. He told us that the way the labs do the tests is not very accurate here and that we should do another type of test that is more accurate. When we did the other test at home, that test said she didn't have malaria. Her fever remained for about another week without any other symptoms. Our doctor friend in Nampula said that as long as she didn't develop any other symptoms, she was probably okay. Sure enough, after a few days the fever went away. Praise God!

While Maggie was sick we decided not to spend the night out in Nanjua, but after she got better, we resumed our weekends out there. As always visiting out there is great language practice. I had fun one night trying to tell the story of the three pigs in Makua to an old couple who are members of the church. We ate dinner at their house and they decided to honor us by serving us meat for dinner. One of their relatives had hunted some antelope and they had prepared it for us. I was excited because one of my teammates had been served antelope a few weeks ago and said it tasted great! However, when we tasted this meat, it was well on its way to being rancid. We were both able to eat a few bites, but we had to stop eating it. We felt bad to leave so much, but we could not eat any more of it. For the rest of the night the smell of the meat was on my hands and I could not put my hands near my face without feeling sick.

The next weekend we went back out to Nanjua. Usually Africa greets us when we arrive, but he wasn't at home. We talked with his wife and several neighbors for about an hour, and then Africa stumbled out of the house completely drunk! Africa is the main church leader and the church meets in his yard, so this was pretty sad. We refused to acknowledge him while he was drunk and we spent the rest of the day walking around the village talking to other people while Africa stayed home trying to sleep off his hangover. Amy and I decided that we could not sleep at Africa's house that night since we did not know if he would be sober. We also decided that we definitely could not go on as normal and act like nothing had happened because the whole village knows that Africa is a leader in the church and the whole village knew that he was drunk. We decided to go home and I left a letter for the church saying that they needed to address what had happened with Africa and that we would come back on the following Saturday. I think we made quite an impression leaving early since everyone knew that we always spend the night.

The following Saturday, we decided to go out to Nanjua with Germindo, the preacher in Montepuez who started the church in Nanjua. When we got there we met with Africa and Arlindo, the two main leaders of the church. Arlindo told us that the church had discussed the matter and the consensus decision was that Africa could drink on Monday through Friday, but needed to be sober on Saturdays and Sundays since those are the days we are there. At times like this I realize just how little the churches here know and how few Christians really understand what Christianity is all about. Germindo and I told them that Africa was to be under church discipline which meant he could not be in a leadership position for the next four months and that the church was to stop meeting at his house and start meeting somewhere else. It was really neat to see Germindo interact with Arlindo and Africa and I really learned a lot from watching him. After the meeting we all went back to Montepuez.

On Sunday our family went back to Nanjua (without Germindo). When we arrived Arlindo pulled me aside and asked if we could meet in Africa's yard this Sunday since not everyone knew about the change. I consented (which was probably a mistake). At the end of the church service the whole church said that they wanted to reject the church discipline that had been decided the day before and they asked if they could continue to meet at Africa's house and if Africa could continue as the leader. I told them that I couldn't say anything different than what was already decided previously with Germindo. They then wrote a letter to Germindo making the same request. The churches here have the idea that to be a leader in the church you have to know how to read and write in Portuguese. In Nanjua that qualifies only Africa and Arlindo, but Arlindo

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is moving to another village in the next few weeks. So from their point of view Africa is the only qualified leader. There is an illiterate old man in the church, who has a lot of leadership potential, but from their perspective he can't be a leader since he can't read. There is also a strong sense that there must be a designated leader who is "in charge". In their eyes, Africa is the only one who is capable of being "in charge" and telling people how to do things. Any sort of Kingdom principles of leadership such as service and humility are completely foreign to them. Please pray that God will give us much wisdom as this learning experience continues to unfold.

Language learning and life here continues to go well. We have a bee hive that was built in our chimney and although we put a screen in the chimney to keep the bees out some inevitably have gotten through the screen and into the house. Amy got stung one day and apparently the bees have a little stronger sting than in the States. Amy's foot was swollen and itchy for about three days after the sting, but it is back to normal now. Maggie is doing great. She is picking up food (although getting it to her mouth is another story) and she likes to clap her feet. She seems to get fatter and cuter every day. We hope that some of you will be able to attend the Big Mo conference in Little Rock, AR this upcoming weekend. For more information see our website. Also on the website are some new pictures of Amy, Maggie, and I and the church in Nanjua. Thanks for all of your support and prayers!

Praise God For:

1. Healing Maggie's fever.
2. The wisdom and experience of Germino.
3. The teaching opportunities we have had in recent weeks.
4. His protection when a drunk guy on a bicycle pulled out in front of me on the highway.
5. These challenges and opportunities for growth in the church in Nanjua.

Please Pray For:

1. Africa as he tries to leave his drinking problem.
2. The church in Nanjua to mature in their knowledge of God's Kingdom.
3. The Big MO conference this weekend.
4. Perseverance and discipline in language study.
5. Those who are interested in becoming Christians in Nanjua.

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

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