

Westerholm – eMail News

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

Friends and Family,

Africa is an unpredictable place in, oddly enough, a very predictable manner. Electricity in Montepuez is constantly fluctuating with surges and brown outs and sooner or later it has an effect on some of your appliances. One day we were having more problems than normal and lost a converter that runs our freezer. Since we had just gone to Nampula our freezer was completely full of food. Fortunately, our refrigerator has the same type of converter, so we put that converter on the freezer. We had lent a small refrigerator to the Howells that does not need a converter, so we borrowed it back from them and breathed a sigh of relief...until the other converter blew! Now we had a crisis. The Smiths and Rolands were not back yet, so I went to their houses and stuffed their freezers full of our food and managed to keep everything frozen. Thankfully, I had asked the Smiths to bring two extra converters back from the States just in case something like this happened, so now we have our freezer and fridge back up and running. The electric company finally got around to cutting a branch off a mango tree that was causing the surges. That took several days since the problem began on a weekend and there was a holiday that week!

Last month I moved the Bible study on the Gospel of Mark into town and I have been having four men showing up most weeks. We have picked up the pace and started studying one chapter each week. I have been experimenting with a different method of teaching. I do very little talking and mostly ask questions about the verses that we read and how to apply them to our lives. It has worked well because it is helping them to develop good reading comprehension skills. It is also interesting, because I have observed how Jesus used questions extensively in his ministry. For example in Mark 8:17-21, Jesus asks nine questions of his disciples. We have also had some good discussions come up as we study and I think that everyone seems to be really learning the material well. Eventually I hope to turn the questions into a study guide that can be translated into Makua and used by other churches.

A few weeks ago, while we were in Nanjua, I had an interesting discussion with an elderly man there. I asked him about how life was when he was younger and specifically the time when Mozambique was a Portuguese colony. He responded that the difference between then and now is like eating fish and goat, they are different but they are both meat. I realized at that point how very little life has changed in Nanjua and how much things continue in much the same way as they always have. In the States things change rapidly and we always talk about the way things used to be. This helps to clarify the fact that the work we are doing really is radical in nature. We are working to see change in the hearts and lives of people who are forming a community of faith and love.

We came another step closer to realizing that goal two Sundays ago when seven people in Nanjua were baptized into Christ. I was excited to see two couples baptized and also two spouses of believers. Those who were baptized have been coming regularly for several months and seem to be committed to the church. Two other men also expressed interest in being baptized as well as several youth, so we will probably have more baptisms in a month or two. Praise God for his work!

Last month I wrote about a sick man, who probably has AIDS, named Lazarus. I have continued to visit him in Nanhupo and I offered to take him to Montepuez in order to go to the hospital. I took him there and drove him back and forth between the hospital and where he was staying in town for three days in a row. The hospital then told him to come back in a week to get test results. He then went back to Nanhupo. On Sunday we went to Nanhupo instead of Nanjua because there were going to be several baptisms there. When we arrived at the church we heard that he wanted us to go to his house first. When I saw him Sunday, he was little more than a skeleton and did not have the strength to lift a cup to his mouth. He told us that the day before he called his family together and told them that he was becoming a Christian. He told us he wanted to be baptized with the others from the church and he wanted his nephews to be present for the baptism. We loaded up the truck with people and drove to a nearby dam and had the baptisms. Lazarus was so weak that his nephew and another person carried him out to the water where he was clothed with Christ. Afterwards we went back to his home and I taught on Jesus raising his friend Lazarus from the dead and how Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.

Amy had a really fascinating experience last week when she and the rest of the girls on the team were invited to a special pregnancy ceremony. A woman had just become pregnant for the first time and a group of women came to her house and they all went inside and sat down. This is odd because people rarely go into one another's houses; they usually just talk outside in the yard. They then proceeded to have some Bible teaching on Adam and Eve and explained that birth pains were part of the curse that

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was put on us for sinning. Then, each of the women took turns and acted out their labor experience with their first child. After all the Mozambican ladies had acted out their experience, they then asked Amy and our teammates to act out their birthing experiences. Overall, everyone seemed to have a really fun time and it served as an interesting alternative to American pregnancy classes!

Last month I asked for prayers for my back. I have been experiencing pain quite a bit in the past few months and it has been progressively getting worse. I spoke with an American doctor and got some advice that has been helpful. If my back gets much worse, I may need to go to South Africa in order to see a doctor and possibly have surgery. We obviously would like to avoid that, and we are praying that God would heal my back. Otherwise things are going well and Maggie is growing cuter each day. (See the latest photos on the website!)

Praise God For:

1. The ten people who were baptized into Christ in Nanjua and Nanhupo.
2. Blessing the Bible study on Mark.
3. Keeping our freezer and refrigerator functioning.
4. Our teammates safe return from furlough.
5. The opportunity for the girls to participate in the pregnancy ceremony.

Please Pray For:

1. Healing for Lazarus and continued testimony to his family.
2. Continued healing for Chad's back.
3. Our language learning, especially that our listening skills would improve.
4. Deepening of relationships with our Metto friends.
5. The upcoming provincial conference for the Churches of Christ.

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

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