

Westerholm – eMail News

Wednesday, December 28, 2006

Friends and Family,

Being a missionary in Africa teaches you to never place too much confidence in your expectations for the future. I hadn't anticipated when we came back to Mozambique last spring that we would make an extended visit to South Africa at this time. It is strange because, although we left the States almost four years ago, we have only spent about 12 months in Montepuez. We spent nine months in Portugal, over a year in Nampula, and between furlough and Maggie's birth about 8 months in the States. Now we are in South Africa for about two months! As frustrating as it is to move around so much, we trust that God is using us wherever we are and we know that he is teaching us in all circumstances. His plan is bigger than ours and we know that his Spirit is at work.

We enjoyed a festive Thanksgiving with our teammates, our colleagues from Lichinga, and the Vaughn's who were interning in Mozambique. We managed to have a turkey this year and even got to watch a football game that was recorded on a friend's satellite TV a few days earlier. Although it was a lot of fun, I was also in quite a bit of pain and was spending more and more time on my back.

Once we decided to head to South Africa, we went one last Sunday to visit the church in Nanjua. They could tell I was in a lot of pain and readily agreed that I needed to see a doctor. (They also told me that they had old women in the village that could walk on my back and take the pain away!) We had a nice visit with the church and we encouraged them to stay strong while we are gone. In some ways the church seems very young and immature, but sometimes I have wondered if our presence there every Sunday is stunting the maturing process of the church. This will be a good opportunity to see what progress the church makes on its own. Perhaps this is all part of God's timing.

We ran into a complication before we left Mozambique. Every December we have to renew our work visas, which usually takes anywhere from several days to several weeks. We needed our work visas to leave the country, but if they expire while you are out of the country, it is a really huge hassle to get a new one. To make a long story short, we were able to renew our visa the morning we left Mozambique and got the visa just as the plane we were flying on was landing in Pemba. Wow!

We were extremely blessed with lots of help when we arrived in South Africa. Our friends from the Mozambique HUB, Malcolm and JB Russell, were an incredible resource. Malcolm picked us up at the airport and took us to where we are staying. They had also arranged a wonderful house for us to stay in that is an old parsonage. The church wanted the house to be open for missionaries who had come to South Africa for medical problems. The house has been perfect for us. Also, Malcolm called a friend who works at a rental car company and arranged for a free rental car for us to use for a month! Before we had the car, Malcolm and JB took us grocery shopping and to doctors appointments. We were especially blessed because JB is a nurse and has worked with various doctors in the area. She had actually worked in the operating room with the doctor who did my surgery and could vouch that he was an excellent doctor.

Since it was right before Christmas, many of the doctors were going on holiday until January. We were excited because we were able to schedule surgery with our doctor the day before he left for vacation. I am sure having the surgery in South Africa was different than had it been in the States, but since this was my first surgery (besides having my wisdom teeth out) I didn't know any different. The hospital was really nice and seemed comparable to most hospitals in the States. After four days of recovering in the hospital, I was able to go home. After the surgery, I immediately felt better and now I feel like I am a totally new person.

We celebrated Christmas with Malcolm and JB and got to experience some traditional South African dishes, such as: chicken pie, mince pie, red espresso (made from tea), yellow rice with currants and raisins, and fruit pies. Of course we also had some traditional American food, thanks to Amy. She made four pumpkin pies (although the only pumpkin she could find was frozen and not canned), pineapple casserole, asparagus casserole, and a cranberry jello salad. Though it was different, we were really glad to be able to spend the day with friends and we were thankful able to talk with family in the States.

Maggie is super mobile these days. She is mastering the art of crawling and learning to open cabinet doors etc. While I was in the hospital, Amy got a picture of her pulling herself up on the bathtub for the first time! She is making new sounds everyday, and is full of giggles and smiles (though occasionally she does cry). We will be staying here in South Africa for about the next month. I need to

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continue resting and healing before I will be up for the trip back. Thanks to all of you for your prayers and support in this time. May God bless you immensely in 2007!

Praise God For:

1. A successful surgery.
2. Providing us with a great place to stay.
3. Providing us a car to drive.
4. All the South African Christians who have helped us.
5. Being able to renew our work visas before we left Mozambique.

Please Pray For:

1. The church in Nanjua to remain strong.
2. Continued healing for Chad's back.
3. One of our good friends in Montepuez who just found out she has HIV.
4. Amy as she takes care of the Maggie and I.
5. Us to be aware of God's purposes for us while we are in South Africa.

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

Cordova Community Church
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