

# Westerholm – eMail News

Friday, September 28, 2007

Friends and Family,

“Ever since I arrived in Mozambique I feel like I have hit a brick wall.” That was what a missionary new to Mozambique recently told me. For some reason as soon as ministry begins to have some momentum there inevitably comes an interruption that knocks you off course or slows you down. So, here I am unexpectedly writing another newsletter from South Africa. (Since our laptop is in Mozambique, I am not able to use our usual newsletter format.) We trust however that God is active and working through the events that we see as interruptions.

Our month began with a very refreshing team retreat at camping site on the beach in Pemba. We discussed and evaluated our work in light of the vision to see a multitude of vibrant and faithful churches among the Makua-Metto. This is exciting to discuss, because at this point in our ministry we are beginning to see certain aspects of our vision becoming reality.

As you know it was shortly after the retreat that Amy and Maggie were in the car accident. Since I have already shared the events through prior emails, I would like to focus on some details in which we saw God's hand at work through all the events. First, it was a blessing that the accident happened with only two people in the car. It appears that there was some sort of mechanical malfunction which presumably could have happened at any time. Most days our car is full of people who have asked for rides. Even on our drive to Pemba for the retreat a woman and her baby were riding in the back of our pick up. We are thankful the accident happened when no one was riding in the back! Also, Amy had just stopped and bought a large cement potting plant that was sitting next to Maggie when the car rolled. We are thankful the Lord protected Maggie and she was completely fine. Even at the scene of the accident, one of the first people to arrive was a Mozambican doctor. The accident also took place at the very last section of road that has cell phone coverage. Even just a few kilometers down the road there would have been no way of contacting anyone. We were also thankful that despite Amy being cut up badly, the wounds were all superficial. She received no concussions or fractures to the skull despite a large laceration to the head. We are also grateful that our medical insurance covered the medivac flight to South Africa, so Amy could receive proper medical care.

Our teammates were an incredible help through the situation. When the accident first occurred Martha drove me to the health clinic where we would meet Amy. I borrowed Jeremy's phone for the first part of the day, since Amy still had mine. Alan and Aaron were already in Montepuez, but they drove to the site of the accident and spoke with the traffic police and helped arrange for my car to be towed to a garage in Pemba. In the meantime, Martha watched Maggie while I was with Amy at the hospital. Jeremy was busy calling people on the phone to South Africa arranging for the medivac plane to arrive. Late in the afternoon, Alan and Aaron arrived in Pemba and went to the airport minutes before it closed down for the day. They informed them of the air ambulance coming, so that the airport would stay open. In addition to everything else, Jeremy 'happened' to have a lot of US dollars with him that he let me take so we would have some cash in South Africa. In addition to all of our teammates' help our doctor friend Arie from the Leprosy Mission was a great blessing. He spoke with our insurance company explaining the situation, opened his home for our team to work out of, allowed us to use his fax machine, lent me his cell phone charger so my battery wouldn't die, as well as a multitude of things I can't remember. Even after we left, our teammates continued to help by filing the claim with our car insurance and working out many other details while we have been gone.

Amy has recovered very well. Her thumb is still in a cast and will be for another two weeks or so. Her head is almost completely healed. The doctor told her today that she doesn't need to wear the bandage on her head any more. She will need to wear a pressure garment on her elbow to help with the scarring for several months, but otherwise she will soon be back to life as normal. Since most of the injury to her head was in her hair she won't likely have noticeable scarring there.

While we are here in South Africa, we have been busy scheduling dentist and other doctor appointments, visiting with Christians here, and enjoying some comforts of the developed world. We have also had opportunity to spend some time with our colleagues, Shawn and Sarah Gardner who are missionaries in Nampula. Their baby son, Caleb, has been very sick and almost died in Mozambique. He continues to be in ICU, but after being on the ventilator for a month he is finally breathing on his own. The doctors are concerned that he has suffered brain damage due to lack of oxygen when he quit breathing at one point. It is too early to determine the extent of the brain damage now. Understandably, this has been a very discouraging time for the Gardner's.

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We hope to be heading back to Mozambique in a little over a week. Maggie has been enjoying it here and is as energetic as ever. She is talking more and more and some of her favorite words include: 'keys', 'cheese', 'door', 'pickle', and 'yogurt'. Thanks to all for your prayers during this time. Despite all the "brick walls" we run up against we know that God's kingdom is advancing and his Spirit is at work in the hearts of the people we minister to.

Praise God for:

1. Protecting Amy and Maggie through the accident.
2. All the details our teammates helped with after the accident.
3. Providing a free car and housing while we are here in South Africa.
4. The Christians here who have blessed and helped us in many ways.
5. Amy's healing.

Please Pray for:

1. Hope and healing for the Gardner family.
2. Amy's continued healing.
3. The churches in Nanjua and Nanhupo while we are away.
4. The details of the car insurance to work out quickly when we return.
5. The Rolands, whose car has been in the shop for close to a month.