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C.P. 140, Pemba
Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

Westerholm Family News

Ministry in Mozambique

We hope that all of you have had a merry Christmas this year. We had a pleasant Christmas with our teammates, the Howells. We were blessed with an overcast Christmas day and light rain, so it actually felt kind of cool for a change!

The rains have brought us some pleasant relief from the heat and dust. For the Makua, however, the rainy season is the most difficult time of the year. Most people live off the land depending on this one growing season to work the fields. Many will spend several weeks in their fields breaking up ground, planting, and weeding. If after doing all that work, the rains stop for a couple of weeks, it will be necessary to replant all the seed and replace the plants that died.

Not only is there a lot of work to do, but there is little food as well. Harvest time does not begin until March, so the little one has, must stretch until the harvest. With increased humidity food spoils more quickly, leaving families with only moldy corn or cassava to eat. The rains can cause houses to fall down due to strong winds or softening the mud walls. Abundant rain also leaves the ideal conditions for breeding malaria carrying mosquitoes. One friend once told me that there were so many mosquitoes in his house that if he walked with his mouth open he would be sure to swallow one! One blessing is that it is mango season. Nearly everywhere you look you will see mangoes being eaten however, mangos alone are not sufficient for good health and nutrition. How does the church respond to this yearly cycle of suffering? We cannot escape this question, though effective answers are often elusive.

I am continuing to work on the hymnal for the next few months. I taught another worship seminar, although this time it was a week long intensive workshop. I invited church leaders from villages outside of Montepuez, and we were blessed to have one of the members of the Metto Bible translation team participate. We were able to compile 30 new songs.

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Two church leaders examining the words to a hymn at the worship conference

Praise God For:

- ◆ The work done toward the Metto hymnal
- ◆ New believers at the church in Nanjua
- ◆ A pleasant Christmas
- ◆ Good rains in the fields
- ◆ Healing Amy's scars and her hair continuing to grow back well



Enjoying Christmas dinner at the Howells

Some may be wondering why it is so important to develop a hymnal, since a church doesn't need a hymnal to worship God. In an oral based society, songs play an important role in teaching Biblical concepts since the majority of Christians don't know how to read. Of course that also means that the majority of Christians won't be able to read the hymnal that I am printing. Those church leaders who are able to read, will be able to teach the songs to those who can't read.

I have seen five major weaknesses in the songs that the churches sing here that I hope to address through the work of the hymnal. First, many hymns are sung in Portuguese (the official language) rather than Makua (people's home language). With over five million Makua speakers in the country, a Makua hymnal has potential to be used widely in Northern Mozambique. Secondly, many hymns do not use the local melodies and styles of the Makua culture. This hymnal will include songs that use Makua music. Thirdly, there are many songs that do not communicate God's truth. Sometimes Biblical facts or doctrines are confused, so a hymnal will allow us to change some words to certain songs in order to be more true to God's message. Fourthly, many songs are not edifying. For example a song may say something like, "Dads you need to leave your drinking", then "Moms you need to leave your adultery", "Youth you need to leave your stealing" etc. There is an unhealthy preoccupation with sin. I am encouraging new songs to be written that focus on the positive aspects of the Christian life, such as love, life, peace, respect, and liberty. Lastly, the majority of the songs that are sung are actually sung to other people and not to God (like the example given above). There are very few songs that praise God's attributes and works. This hymnal will hopefully be a tool that will direct people's thoughts toward God and worshipping him. In this sense I hope that this will be used powerfully by God to help the churches mature.

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

Cordova Community Church
PO Box 4435
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Westerholm Family News



Margarita's Mundo

Hi everyone! This month has been really fun! I have been working on greeting Mozambicans in Makua and I can now say "Salama" (how are you?) "Kihavo" (I am fine), and "Aye" (okay/sure). People really like it when I speak to them in Makua. I also did my first somersault this month and I started giving high 5's! There are so many fun things to learn to do. I am also working on jumping and I have it all down

except the getting off the ground part, Mommy encourages me to just keep practicing. At the beginning of this month Mommy and Daddy and I set up Christmas tree in our living room. I got to help put the ornaments on. It is very pretty especially when Mommy turns the lights on.



Maggie and Ellie playing together

Last week I got to go to Abby & Ellie's house to spend the night and boy did we have fun! When we got up the next morning Mommy said it was Christmas! I got to unwrap and play with lots of fun toys. My favorite was a baby doll! When I opened the box and saw the baby inside I exclaimed "Baby!" and then I gave her a big snuggle and a kiss. I also got some new puzzles and a fun new bubble set. I hope that all of you had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Maggie looks in her stocking

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Maggie snuggles her new baby doll

Please Pray For:

- ◆ Plans for church planting and evangelism in 2008
- ◆ Our car repairs to be completed this month
- ◆ Sufficient rains to produce a good crop
- ◆ The believers in Nanjua and Nanhupo to continue to grow in their faith
- ◆ Wisdom as songs are edited and chosen for the new hymnal

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