

# Smith's e-Mail News

## Saturday, February 21, 2004

### Personal and Family

This month has been a month with a lot of variety. The reason being is that we have traveled so much around southern Africa this month. Toward the end of January we picked up our car in Maputo after we had flown there and then drove caravan style with all our teammates, who had gotten the same type of car, to the country of South Africa to get them outfitted for off-road travel. We spent a week and a half in Johannesburg, South Africa getting these additions and then we headed back to Maputo. From the capital of Mozambique in the south to Nampula in the north, where we live, it takes four days of travel. Sometimes the roads were good but many times they were bad. Luke did well on the first three days but on the fourth he was ready to be home, and so were we.

After a couple of days of rest we prepared for our survey trips which had been pushed back because we were waiting for our cars. Now the first part of the survey is over and as a team we will talk about what we saw and prepare for the second two week trip to another location. Martha and Luke were able to join Jeremy on part of the survey but because of the extended amount of time in the car we decided it would be better for them to stay at home for most of the trip.

Martha has been working hard on getting our containers ready to be shipped and as the person in charge for the team's containers she has spent many hours getting the necessary documentation ready for the shipment. Lord willing they will be loaded February 21st and then they should arrive sometime in April. Martha has also decided to continue her Portuguese studies for the time being so she has hired a teacher for three days a week. She is excited about this continuation of language learning.

Luke continues to get bigger and bigger. He is also getting faster as he has learned to run but still has trouble with stepping down from things. He is also learning to say a few words like Bye-bye, bird, mama, hot, dog, Abby (our teammates' daughter), and a few other sounds that sometimes sound like words but we aren't sure.

We have all been healthy and continue to yearn for the time when our team will decide where we will move to so we can get started with settling in and begin our Makua language learning. It has been hard to wait so long and not be able to tell people here where we are going to be living.

### Mission Work

This month has continued to introduce us to the many facets of ministry that we will find here. There was a Mozambican church leader conference lead by a missionary from Maputo that we attended. There we were able to meet and make many contacts for our survey trip.

On this first survey that we have conducted Jeremy joined the Roland's to explore the northern part of the Nampula province. Even though it is rainy season we did not encounter rain for the first half of the trip which enabled us to go into some pretty remote areas. We were impressed in some areas with how forgotten the people were. The poverty of some areas really struck us hard. At one remote village we asked where we could buy some bread and they told us there was none. But no matter how far out we went we were always able to buy a bottle of Coca Cola!

Most of the areas we visited had no churches of Christ. We have noticed that Catholic churches and mosques seem to be everywhere. Even so the traditional religions of ancestor worship and idols showed a blatant presence. Polygamy is a problem here but everyone we talked to said it is decreasing. Most of the remote areas are in desperate need of certain types of development work, the chief ones being water (drilling wells), health (some type of functional health system that offers medications), and education (an expansion of the existing system that generally ends at the seventh grade).

We noticed that at this point in time people are really suspicious of foreigners. An attitude that is very different from other areas of Africa that we have visited. Many people would not wave back at us and the children did not swarm us when we stopped. This kept happening even though we had some Mozambican brothers with us to guide us.

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On our survey we were also able to visit some churches and encourage the brothers that were there. It seems there are always invitations to preach and the brothers are always ready to host us and keep us for the night.

Starting at the end of February we will begin our next survey trip which will last for two weeks and then we will meet as a team to pray about the places we have seen. Please keep us in your prayers as this will be an important time for our team and for the ministry. We plan to make the decision by consensus so that everyone can be excited about where we are going to move.

Thank you for your support and prayers for our family and the team as a whole. We appreciate you so much.

With love,  
Jeremy and Martha Smith (and Luke)