



MISSION TO THE MAKUA

Cultivating Christian Communities

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Growing Up...

The months of December and January hold a lot of initiation ceremonies for the people here. This entails taking young boys and girls, giving them a lot of counsel and then graduating them to maturity. For boys this ceremony can last about a month and involves circumcision. For girls it only lasts about 5 days and involves training them in the ways of women.

I was invited to participate in two Christian initiation ceremonies, along with some ladies from church. I was delighted to be able to go and be a part of those all-day affairs. First the girls were taken into a house with very little clothing on. Then they were asked to sit on the floor while all the women present gave them counsel one by one. Since these were Christian, rather than pagan ceremonies, the counsel was godly. After the time



A young girl receives counsel from the older women of the church.

of counsel the girls were taken and bathed. They then put on nice brand new clothes to signify that they have passed through the ceremony and are now considered adults and should no longer do childish things. They are then taken out and presented to the whole group, including men. People then give gifts to the girls.



A lady gives a present to the newly initiated girl

Participating in these ceremonies has been eye opening, although I'm sure it's very different than a traditional ceremony. We are still learning all that is involved in these ceremonies and what they mean. It is obvious that they are a HUGE and very important part of the culture here. I was impressed by the similarities between the ceremonies I was at and someone becoming a

Christian. First a person is sinful and immature. Then they receive teaching and counsel from others who know the Lord. They then decide to be baptized and are clothed with Christ. Afterwards they are presented as a new person and should not return to their old way of living and acting. How great it would be to take something that is an integral part of the culture here and use it to teach the Lord's truths, as well. MS

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Prayer Requests

Please keep the following things in your prayers:

1. Spiritual and physical health for everyone on our team.
2. Wisdom as we teach, mentor, and love people here.
3. Strong leaders in the churches we are working with.
4. That a powerful women's ministry will begin among the Makua-Metto.
5. That we will become completely fluent in Makua

More Flooding



A village surrounded by water. The pictures were taken by a pilot friend of ours who was helping in the area.

Flooding is not new to Mozambique but it is always met with shock and confusion. This year we have had plenty of rain. The crops are growing well and our grass stays green. But sometimes it rains too much.

Just the other day before Valentine's we experienced our biggest storm yet. We had heavy rain for about two hours with heavy gusts of winds (I am starting to sound like a weatherman). It was truly an awesome sight. What was so awesome about it? It was awesome to see the wind blow down our whole fence around our house. It was awesome that little pellets of water coming out of the sky could combine to form great rivers and sever roads with a two foot deep cut.

Our neighbor who lives a block away was watching TV in his house when his whole roof was lifted off and carried two doors down. He was suddenly soaked and started running around the house to salvage what he could.

The hospital and other houses were also badly damaged. But then again our area wasn't hit hard at all.

To the south in Beira (a two day drive from us) we hear news that the great Zambezi river has risen 21 feet above flood stage forcing thousands to evacuate their homes. Many people in the states are asking about this development but it seems you may know more than we do. News agencies around the world are gathering information while relatively few people where we live even mention the goings on in Beira.

Yes, we are safe. Our fence is back up. And our neighbor got some help to put his roof back on. But we do ask you to pray for the people suffering from the flooding. Unlike the response of people to the Katrina storm in the USA, people here have very little to look forward to from their government. Your prayers of intercession are needed for them. JS



Mud huts up to their roofs in water. Eventually the houses will dissolve.

A Little Humor



Our friend Alemina.

One of the customs here among the Makua is to take a gift when you go visit someone. We often take rice, soap, sugar, or oil to people when we go visiting.

The other day we were visiting Alemina, a good friend of ours, and her husband. She is an older woman with great grandchildren. Her daughter, Maria, also went with us. That day I decided to give Alemina some curry powder (Rajah - a common spice here) still in its original box.

Later Maria told me that her mom hadn't known what the Rajah was. She had asked her husband who told her it was laundry detergent. Alemina washed her clothes with the curry powder, turning all of her clothes yellow. She took the box of Rajah to her neighbor to ask what it was. She was so embarrassed to find out it was for cooking with (Oops!). I'll give her another box of Rajah someday. MS