



# MISSION TO THE MAKUA

*Cultivating Christian Communities*

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## Leprosy up close

**Jeremy, Martha, Luke,  
Andrew and Joshua Smith**

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### Contact Information:

**Write to:**

C.P. 140, Pemba,  
Mozambique, Africa

**Phone:**

(011) 258-82-028-8800 -cell  
(011) 258-272-51119- home

**Email:**

[smithsinmoz@hotmail.com](mailto:smithsinmoz@hotmail.com)

**Web site:**

[www.makuateam.org](http://www.makuateam.org)

### **Prayer Requests**

Physical and spiritual health  
for all on our team.

Leadership seminars  
Teaching on marriage – that  
the Lord would  
transform homes here

That there would be a  
movement of women  
dedicating their lives to  
the Lord

That God would give us  
wisdom about how to use  
the land we have  
purchased

The Westerholms – that they  
would get all the funds  
they need and have a  
safe return

The Rolands in the U.S. – for  
strength and peace while  
there

That we would have a good  
experience with our  
interns this summer.

Having read about leprosy in the Bible and joked about it when I was younger, I had many misconceptions about the disease. Now, living in Mozambique I frequently interact with people suffering from leprosy.

About once a week we have a married couple come to our home with many needs. The husband is blind and the wife has had leprosy for some years. She has lost most of her fingers and toes. Because leprosy affects the nervous system, she has lost feeling in her skin to the point that she cannot feel pain. While many suffering from painful diseases wish they could not feel THEIR pain- the loss of pain for the leper means that they do not know when something is wrong. They could pick up something that is too hot and burn themselves without knowing it



or have a sore get infected and never know. The other day this same lady was showing me what she had learned about her disease. She carefully checked her whole body for fresh bumps, scrapes, burns, or sores. Upon her inspection she found that a thorn had found its way through the sole of her shoe and was poking into her foot. She was having a hard time removing the thorn (since she has lost most of her fingers) and so I pulled out my trusty leatherman and removed the thorn. She inspected the bottom of her foot where she found a hole caused by walking through town

without knowing the thorn was poking her. This sore could easily get infected in the conditions here, and she is going to have to visually inspect the small sore to know if she needs to go to the hospital for treatment. This story repeats itself over and over with many people here in our town.

On the brighter side, leprosy does have a treatment that leads to stopping the progress of the disease. While the treatment may not reverse what has already been done (fingers and toes don't grow back)- it offers some hope to the people. I am not sure of the stats this year but when we first surveyed Mozambique it had the second highest incidence rate of leprosy in the world.

Daily, we are faced with illnesses - both physical and spiritual. While leprosy sounds horrible- many times the spiritual diseases are far worse. The real hope for a leper is that they can get a new body from our Lord. It is our job to show them the One! JS



## "Healthy" Choices

I would not put living in Mozambique as one of the healthy choices you could make in life. Health care here is very poor and unreliable. The contrast between healthcare in the United States and here is HUGE! It is for this reason that we have to more fully put our faith in the Lord, rather than in doctors and medicine. This is one of the most challenging aspects of living in Mozambique.



The entrance to the Rural Hospital of Montepuez.

One of the biggest differences in the healthcare of the U.S. and Mozambique is the condition of the hospitals. There is a hospital here in Montepuez that serves several districts all around us. We have gone in to visit friends on several occasions. On entering the building, we are met with a terrible smell and dirt everywhere. There are a few very ratty beds with several people lying on the floors, some even in the dark halls. If one stays any time at all he will see cockroaches and other critters crawling up the walls and around on the floors. It is a wonder that people actually get better there. Many patients *are* hooked up to IVs, mainly to rehydrate them. Also, lots of people are given the appropriate medicines to cure malaria. In many cases, however, people are given medicines or shots and are never even told what they are sick with or what medicine they are being given. An exception to this is that there is a good system here for curing tuberculosis and for giving medicines to patients with AIDS.



Often patients share one of the five beds in the emergency room.

We only know of a couple of missionaries who have been treated in a Mozambican public hospital. Our friends, the Gardners, had to visit due to emergencies on two different occasions. While there they experienced the extreme apathy of the nurses, when they weren't willing to help or even answer any questions, but instead made fun of and laughed at them. They also had very little help from doctors since the doctor to patient ratio is so low. Even basic things like pain medication, oxygen, and other supplies are often not available. For this reason most missionaries here in the northern part of Mozambique choose to have medical evacuation insurance. In case of an emergency a fully equipped small jet with medical personnel on board would fly to get the patient and then fly them to South Africa where there is excellent health care.

A medical issue here that greatly affects us is delivering babies. Having a baby in the northern part of Mozambique is not really an option due to the extremely poor birthing conditions. Once when I was in the labor and delivery ward here in Montepuez I saw a woman be rushed in to deliver her baby on a vinyl table. When she was done, the nurse got a cold bucket of water with a rag to quickly wipe over the table to prepare for the next mother. There was no sterilization or even soap used. After being witness to that I promised myself that I'd never deliver a baby here, if I had any choice in the matter. Women and babies die regularly here during childbirth due to complications and lack of medical resources to handle them. That is not a risk we are willing to take. This means that we have to leave the country for an extended period of time when it is time to deliver one of our children. Missionaries usually choose to either deliver in South Africa or the U.S.



A patient in the adult ward receives a visit from family members.

I have faced many fears about health issues living here in Mozambique with my family. I am reminded over and over again, that our lives are fragile no matter where we live. We can take wise precautions, but ultimately our lives are in the hands of our Father! Our trust has to be in Him, rather than in a good health care system. Oh, that I would remember and trust Him more fully! MS



# South African Travels



During the month of March we took a break from our normal routine to travel to South Africa for our annual Good News for Africa (GNFA) meeting. As president, I am expected to chair the meetings we have on policies for our organization and we also have times of fellowship together. Even though Mozambique borders South Africa we are still a 36 hour drive away on mostly paved roads. So we spent three days in the car traveling to a town

called Nelspruit. Before our meeting we spent a few days at Kruger National Park where we saw many wild animals. A highlight of the trip was a trip to an endangered species park where we were able to pet baby rhinos.

One of the big to do items for our trip was to get our car serviced. It has put in 5 hard years and needed some maintenance and new parts. This is virtually impossible where we are and so we were glad to have the opportunity to do the work while we were in our week -long meeting. Most of the work surrounded our suspension (“can you make it so our car can hit a pot hole and we won’t feel it?”) and our transmission (“can you make it so our car can move without making a



Kevin and his father quickly replace the gear box out of the back of their small pickup

racket?”). A courier strike delayed the parts necessary to fix our car but we finally got it back. So we crossed the border on our trek back home and saw that we were making great time the first day. On the second day however, we started experiencing a major malfunction in our gearbox. We barely got to a hotel when we our gearbox gave out completely. God took care of us, however, and the same mechanic we went to in South Africa came to our rescue, driving all night, and replaced the gearbox for free and even paid for our accommodation (unheard of in Africa). So after what could have been easily a month or more of delays we were back on the road in 5 days. Thank you Lord!



The rest of the trip, thankfully, proved uneventful barring the few traffic police fishing for bribes. The boys did marvelously-reading kids magazines, coloring in their books, and of course listening to the hours of children’s songs on tape. The kids couldn’t wait to get home, and neither could we. Which brought me to the age old conclusion- There is no place like home. JS



Our family stops at a lookout while driving through Blyde River canyon in South Africa