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Prayer/Praise Requests

Continued health 1
for Ruth Pierson.
She had another
good check-up!!

That the Lord will 2
protect and watch
over the shipment
which is leaving Lou-
isiana this month.
May the arrival go
smoothly with offi-
cials.

Understanding as we 3
learn to live in a new
culture and the heat.

The Sierra Leone 4
Wesleyan Church

Comfort for Marc, 5
Mimi and Chris and
other family mem-
bers that we have
left behind.

God will work in 6
Matt's friend's life.

- To become a financial or prayer partner in our ministry [Click Here](#).
- Asher family fund WM04-0332 or Start Up fund WM06-1272. (solar)
- We also need 400 people willing to continue to pray for us
- We currently have 98% of our support budget pledged.
- We currently have 98% of our start up budget donated.

Ashers In Africa

Volume 1 Issue 8

Newsletter Date January 2009

We Arrived Safely in Kamakwie, Sierra Leone

We can hardly believe that we have been in Africa for a month now. We arrived safely with all of our baggage. None were lost in transit! We praise the Lord for this. It is very unusual for all bags from one person to make it, but we had an enormous amount of luggage. We had missionary tickets so we were allowed to bring three 50 lb suitcases and two carry on bags each.

We arrived in Freetown without any problems. The church had sent two vehicles to get us and the ferry was running so we made the ferry that night. We stayed in the apartment below the church office this time. They are kind enough to let us use it without a fee and thus we can save the hotel fees. (hotels in Freetown are about \$100/night) The only drawback is there is no running water so you have to dump a bucket over yourself for a shower and fill the back of the commode after every flush. Well, you can't have everything! We were quite comfortable there.

While in Freetown we had to take care of business items that we can not do up country. Tom got his drivers license (Karen wasn't quite brave enough yet). We all had to register with the U.S. embassy, and do some banking. The country has started a new registration for physicians coming into the country. We had to fill out many pages of application, attach photos and copies of all

our diplomas and certificates. Unfortunately, at the time of application we found out that we need our original documents to take to an interview with the ministry of health. Some friends from home are digging through our attic to find them now. Then they will be brought over in January by a group of pastors coming from the East Michigan District. I know the work they do here with the Jesus film is much more important than our documents but isn't it nice that He had us covered anyway? More about that later.

The church and the staff at Kamakwie Wesleyan Hospital went out of their way to make us feel at home. The house got an "extreme makeover". New paint inside and out, electric wiring, new floor tile, repaired windows, and a kerosene refrigerator. (if you would, please pray about that, there is no kerosene in the town and we are running low. They say it will come "soon".) They set up the beds we had ordered and got mattresses for them. We moved in and unpacked all those suitcases and have been quite comfortable. Mrs. Pierson also did a lot of work, collecting and filling water bottles, cleaning and letting us borrow or purchase items that we need until the shipment arrives.

Speaking of shipment thank you to all of you who donated items, or sent bandages down to Louisiana. I understand that the shipping costs went down,



and due to this there were more shipments going out so the shipment is scheduled to set sale next week!!!

And now for what many of you are wanting to know. We started seeing patients in our first few days here. The census is low during the holidays, as it is at home, but the cases that are here seem more serious. We have seen cerebral malaria (brought in early enough and she is doing fine), meningitis, liver abscesses, congestive heart failure, typhoid, and many other cases. We are ever thankful for the dedicated staff of nurses and midwives and nursing assistants. The hours are long and the work is hard.

Speaking of nursing assistants, the first class (since the war) of new graduates just completed their year long training and have started to work at the hospital. This has increased the number of hands significantly. They were fortunate enough to have Hope Graham, RN here who is a nurse educator and assisted in their training. We came just in time for the graduation ceremony. We are so proud of them and their achievement.

Learning to do new things in Sierra Leone

I can't believe how hard some very basic parts of daily life are here in Kamakwie. To show you an example below are pictures of some of the steps to preparing millet.



←First we pound the millet to make the granules finer.

Everyone including Dad tried it.

→Then you sift it. We let the more experienced do it.

↓↓↓

And finally you wash it, dry it, and parch it all before you cook it. It took 2 days!



Below are some of the kids getting a drink, Abdul showing us how to open a coconut, Christmas carolers who came to sing for us and a little bit of home, our traditional Christmas cookies. Matt and I made a plate up for all the pastors and missionaries in the area. Some families needed a lot of extra sheep and donkeys so all family members could have a cookie!



So how is Matthew doing?

So many of you have written to ask how Matt is doing that I thought I would give you all a little update.

Matthew is doing a home school program on his computer and we thought he would have to do it without the aid of the internet. Upon arriving we found that we were able to get an unlimited modem to plug in our computers that works quite well. (Well but VERY SLOW! To download a printer driver so we could print took 26 hours) In addition to this he will attend the Kamakwie Wesleyan Secondary School. They have so many students and limited classroom and seats so he will go to school every day at 12:30PM. He will be taking bible, English and Limba with the school. The rest of his work he will do at home with us.

As you can imagine the "white man" boy is quite the talk of the neighborhood. For the first few days there were many children here all the time. Now the novelty has worn off and he has a few good friends and some smaller children that come in the afternoons to play football (soccer) with him in our front area. Matthew has become very close with a Muslim boy who has begun attending church with him. He eats with us at least once a day. He told us he wanted to go to school but could not afford it as his father had died this year and his mother could not pay the tuition. We asked him if he would like to earn his tuition and he was quite interested. We needed to have sticks cut for our fence to be built. (I wasn't sure I wanted a fence until I awoke for the first few morn-

ings to small faces pressed up against my screens, saying 'hello white man'. It is not considered improper to peep in any window that is not fenced off.) He organized all the children and cut many of the sticks himself. He paid them and made change and settled quarrels and we now have all the sticks we need for the fence builder. And he has the money he needs for school for this year and the next. You can see some of the fence in the above pictures. Please pray that Matt is a good influence on this young man. Also, please pray for Matt as he starts school. He has heard some stories from the boys about corporal punishment and grading policies and I know he is a bit worried. He is to start school on Monday and his uniform isn't done so he worries about that too.

Last month I told you that packages could be sent by DHL. After I sent my newsletter out I called them and checked the price. A 10 lb . Package is \$354. So I guess we won't be receiving packages that way! We are happy that we will be having some mission trip teams as guests here at the hospital. In January we will be having a group from the East Michigan District and in February we will be having a team from World Hope of Canada. If you have something that needs to get to us urgently (i.e. before we come home in June) let me know and perhaps it can hitch a ride with a team member. In the meantime our phone number has changed to 232-76-280-788 and we love to get your emails. Every day Tom and I thank the Lord for all of you, our prayer and financial supporters. We are very aware that none of this would be possible without you and we are so very thankful. God bless you! Tom, Karen, and Matt Asher