

October 2002

Beginnings are important

We've been in Cuamba for almost three months now and we're beginning to feel settled in. Cuamba is a typical rural African town: dust roads, lots of people walking, mud brick houses with thatch roofs, almost all businesses owned by Indians, power outages, not a blade of grass to be seen.

For us and for SIM, Cuamba is a new start. Since SIM only returned to Mozambique last year, we're still in the process of setting things up. There is no permanent housing, no fixed church relationships, no established ministries. In some ways, this is great, as it allows us a fresh start to work wherever God wants. However, it does mean there is a lot of groundwork to be done, establishing a foundation for future ministry. This is what we've been doing: finding longer-term accommodation, visiting various churches and building relationships with church leaders. There is still much work to be done.

Praise for the fresh start that God has given SIM in Mozambique. Please pray that God will show us the ministries that He wants us to adopt, and the local churches that He wants us to work with.

House

Our home right now is a two bedroom flat close to the heart of town. We have running cold water and a good supply of electricity. However, in the coming months, both of these resources may evaporate as the dry season continues. Our medium-term goal is to have an SIM-owned property, which will be our permanent base here in Cuamba. We are currently looking at a big block of land with a half-built house that would suit us well. The purchasing process is a ticklish one. We are still asking God to work this one out for us in the best possible way.



Mud fights with the locals

Praise God that we all have good places to stay, and for the good supply of water and electricity. Pray that God will establish a base for SIM in Cuamba for our future work.

Family

Joshua has adapted well to the routine of home schooling. Like most active seven-year-old boys, he is easily distracted but is coping well with the work. We are using the distance education programme from the NSW Education department, and it is very good: well organised, interesting and easy to teach. Our colleagues from the

UK also have a boy at the same school level as Joshua and so they do science and sport together once a week.

Drew is going to a pre-school every morning. He is really enjoying this now. It's a great opportunity for him to learn more Portuguese and for us to have uninterrupted school time. He has two loose teeth at the moment, of which he is very proud.

Making friends is the key for our kids settling in here. They have quickly gotten to know the other missionary kids. They have also started to build friendships with local kids who live in the houses or flats nearby. The fact that the boys don't speak much Portuguese does make these friendships a little more difficult, but they still all manage to find ways to play together.

And us? How are we doing? We're in the early stages and that always involves lots of ups and downs, emotionally speaking as well as health wise. Phillip has had a few bad tummy bugs. We've both had some bouts of homesickness. But we've been encouraged by seeing the eagerness of the local churches to learn more about the Word of God. And for us too, making friends is the key to feeling at home, and God has already begun to develop some good friendships for us.

Praise that the boys are adapting well and that they have begun to form some good friendships. Pray that we would all continue to improve in our Portuguese, and that God will provide friends and mentors for each of us.

Car

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to or prayed for the provision of setting up costs and the purchase of our car. Our car's not a lot to look at, but it's built like a tank – perfect for northern Mozambican roads. We have had some initial teething problems but we're sure they will all be sorted out soon ☺ We drove it from Lichinga to Cuamba, and that was our introduction to rough-road driving: it's only 300km but it took 9 hours to drive.

Praise God for the generosity of so many people. Pray that our car would be an aid to our ministry here. Pray that the few remaining teething troubles would be sorted out.

Following His Path

At a recent conference, we were taught by Dr. Sherwood Lingenfelter, head of Missions at Fuller Theological College. He talked about partnering with local churches, but stressed the importance of working with the right churches. In contrast to the idea that "A bad decision is better than no decision", Dr. Lingenfelter insisted that a bad partner is much worse than no partner. Our job is to work and pray and listen for God's leading to find the partners that He wants us to work with.

Please pray that we will be listening for God's guidance and following His lead day by day.

With much love,
Phillip, Nicola, Joshua and Drew Piper