

September Prayer Points

Those who do not have time to read the stories may get the prayer items and main points in less than three minutes by scanning the bold italicized print and looking at the photos.

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Woodrow's in Nampula.

This report is an update on the hospital ministry since we returned from furlough in March 2012.

The good news is that we completed the interior work on the hospital several months ago, thanks to the prodigious labors of Mike and Hilda Stolk and a generous gift of \$200,000 from a Christian donor in Brazil.

As mentioned previously, the gift came while we were on furlough and was a complete surprise to us. It resulted from a visit by a young Brazilian couple who helped with the 2011 Fiel Conference for church leaders that we host each year. While staying in our home the Lord put it on their hearts to arrange this bountiful contribution. We had no inkling these friends could provide any help at all, much less that a mere word from them was sufficient to release so great a blessing.

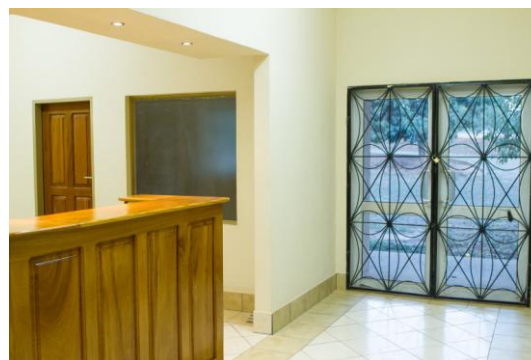


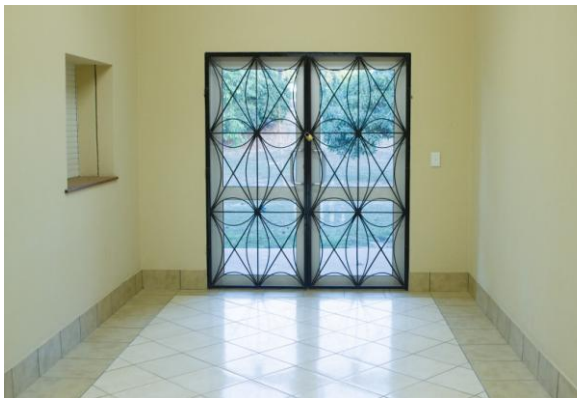
Mike and Hilda – a couple sent from God



The nurses' station by the main entrance of the hospital

a much-neglected people group in a remote part of southern Africa. These people had been a burden on Mike's heart for many years, and they needed the Stolks even more than we did. But while the request would have been inappropriate for us, it was not inappropriate for the Lord. When Mike and Hilda learned of our plans to complete the hospital, both were convinced God wanted them not only to purchase and ship all the needed materials, but to uproot themselves again from their family and now their ministry in order to finish the job in Nampula.





Clinic main entrance

Portuguese in language school. That seemed the most time efficient way to complete the remaining tasks. But with Mike and Hilda becoming available, we had to postpone recruitment and build while the opportunity existed.

The results are better seen than described. Mike supervised all the interior work, from plumbing to plastering to painting, and Hilda made all the window furnishings and many mattress covers. As usual, besides the assistance they gave the mission, Mike and Hilda were a constant blessing to our family. Only when Mike is here can Julie count on everything being ship-shape in the home repairs department. She may have to wait a year for me to tackle a malfunctioning washing machine or refrigerator, but Mike's motto is never to let the sun go down on a frustrated wife.

When the 2012 Fiel Conference came around, it was a great relief for me just to hand Mike all the maintenance jobs involved in preparing the house for 15-20 guests. Then, before he and Hilda finished their work in Mozambique, they left us a blessing we never dreamed of enjoying anywhere in the world, least of all on a mission station in Mozambique – our own training pool! We paid the construction costs ourselves from health funds saved up over the years. It has been a relief to my aging joints to exchange the daily run for swimming laps, but without Mike's



An unexpected blessing – official size lap pool built by Mike from savings in our family health fund

Though our family was overjoyed at Mike and Hilda's decision, it required a change in my timetable. I had expected to purchase all the materials needed for finishing the interior work, get them to Nampula before prices of building supplies could rise further, then continue my efforts to recruit the missionary staff needed for the hospital. Once these colleagues were in the pipeline, we would resume construction, finishing the hospital while our new associates studied



View into the clinic corridor – consultation rooms, pharmacy, laboratory, minor surgery, etc.

boldness, expertise, and free oversight, we could never have enjoyed our own lap pool anywhere. The dent in our health fund, however, has burned the health care bridges behind us. Either our family must stay healthy throughout the foreseeable future, or we must open this hospital in time to receive free care when medical problems finally catch up to us!

There is little related to a hospital that Mike won't undertake himself, but he did decline the electrical installation. For that job, experienced electrician and builder, **Roger Clark and Chris Dighton, from First**



Chris Dighton and electrician Roger Clark, from First Baptist Church, Clinton, Louisiana

Baptist Church in Clinton, Louisiana, came to our aid. They sacrificed nearly a month of holidays working long hours each day to ensure the hospital was wired to first-world standards.

Unfortunately, it has not been all success and satisfaction since returning to the field. Disappointing setbacks have come in recruitment. After many visits to Nampula and just as many indications that God was opening every door, we ultimately lost the prospect of Dr. Larry and Venette Stack joining us. Dr. Stack was going to fill our need for a primary care physician to run the clinic and E.R. Though the Stacks were on schedule to join us last January, with Larry expecting to work at the local medical school while awaiting completion of the hospital, one major detail still needed to work out to be certain of God’s blessing on this endeavor. That did not happen, and finally the Stacks had to terminate the effort to move to Nampula. It is hard to give up on people like Larry and Venette, however, and our family still prays almost daily that the Lord has merely postponed their ministry here, not precluded it.

At about the same time we were absorbing that disappointment, God blessed Dr. Jason and Karla Hiles with a baby daughter. However, she was born with Down’s syndrome. Dr. Hiles is the general surgeon we hope will join us after serving his time in the U.S. Army. So far their daughter has not displayed any of the serious physical problems that can accompany her disability, and the Hiles are undaunted as they carry on with plans to join us one day. Nevertheless, raising a child with Down’s syndrome in a primitive place like Nampula is a challenge that, in view of other disappointments we have experienced, casts a foreboding pall over our hopes for the future.



View into hospital corridor

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Looking past the nurses’ station into the adjoining surgical ICU (behind the glass windows)



Sophisticated over bed units in the ICU with piped in oxygen, suction, power, lights – donated by Pretoria hospitals and installed throughout the complex

coming to visit us in Nampula. We had met them on furlough and thought they were the perfect couple to help with the Fiel conference and literature work and to take over the training opportunities arising from those ministries. Joshua was an experienced missionary already fluent in Spanish, a sister language to Portuguese, having worked in Mexico training church leaders. Christina had lived in Africa as a child and was familiar with African culture. Joshua had just finished his degree at Westminster Theological seminary in San Diego, and when we met them they were seeking the Lord's direction for their future. However, unable to secure funds for visiting Mozambique, they concluded God must have something else in store for them.

So in a matter of weeks, all the fruit of our recruitment efforts during furlough seemed to evaporate before our eyes.



One of four semi-private rooms with private baths



In the midst of these discouragements, we lost the excellent downtown location we have held for our bookstore since 2005. Soaring real estate prices raised rental fees beyond what we could afford. For a while we tried to pay the new rates, renting month to month without a long-term agreement, but the owner knew we could not pay what he could get from others. Finally he gave us a notice to move out. We had only a week to clear the premises.

With nowhere else to go, I moved the bookstore to the hospital, which by this time was practically finished. The bookstore thus remains on the main thoroughfare of the city, but at the extreme edge of town rather than right in the center. The building is free and much nicer, but people do have to work harder to find us.

Returning to recruitment, in my last letter I mentioned Joshua Preston, a young financial auditor with an MBA who came to Nampula from an ARBCA church to learn more about the need for someone to take over my admin duties. Though we enjoyed getting to know Joshua and, from a distance, his wife Susie, they



Part of the bookstore in its new location at the hospital

also have not been led by God to move to Nampula.



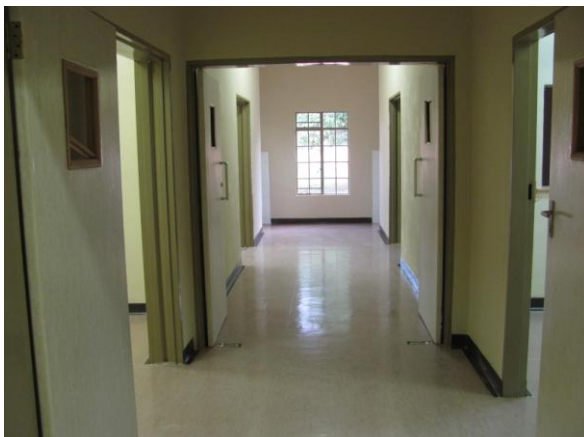
Above: Largest of four patient wards

Right: 70 meters of central corridor – clinic, surgical block, and hospital

Below: The surgical wing with two operating rooms, sterilizing room, patient preparation area, and dressing room



Below: One of the two operating rooms



In concluding this update on the medical ministry, I would ask that you praise God with us for a beautiful and useful building, for hospital furnishings already donated by South African hospitals and put into service, and for the blessings our family has gained through people like Mike and Hilda Stolk that God has sent to help this project on its way. But please also pray for God to undertake as we recruit evangelistic-minded doctors, prepare for kitchen and laundry construction, procure more medical equipment, and finish out the roads and landscaping around the hospital.

By His grace,
Charles and Julie Woodrow



Utility area – source of piped in oxygen, suction, compressed air, and surgical gases