

Just us... serving and loving people



Dear Friends and Family,

Every day we remember how blessed we are that you believe in us. Every day we remember that we are not here alone. There is a beauty in the breath that comes from that knowledge. The first thing God said that was NOT good was to be alone.

Some of you may feel alone right now. Know that God says that is NOT good. And know that you are not alone. We are together in this. You are choosing to be a part of this with us.

Together.
Christ, us, you.
Together.

Since arriving in Maputo we have had the opportunity to be a part of a couple ministries. It is a humbling thing for the Lord to open doors and to allow us to get involved so quickly and intimately with people here. We are so thankful!

Our dear friend Alice introduced us to the Oncology department at the Maputo Military Hospital, where a couple of years ago she started a really neat program with the children. Once or twice a week she leads a handful of women who help her do crafts, read Bible stories, and give snacks to the children. After a couple of weeks of going with Alice, Jon and I found our spots, but it turned out it was not only with the children, but the men and women as well.

Jon has developed some awesome relationships with a group of men in one of the rooms next to the children. They discuss politics, language, relationships, and recently the Bible. Jon prays with them and encourages them. It has been neat for me to observe how much these men love and respect him! With the trust he has been developing over the past month and a half, deeper subjects are beginning to arise and Jon has the ability to share his faith and beliefs with them.

As for me (Layne), I have had the opportunity to begin relationships with the women. They seem to rotate more than the men Jon has gotten to know, so I have about 5 days with them, and then I'll see them again in 21 days for their next treatment. I love to sit close to them, hold their hands, kiss their faces. We talk about children and family, why I don't have children yet (unusual to them), cooking, and other things. It amazes me how quickly my heart can become attached!

This particular ministry has challenged and stretched Jon and I like unlike any other we have been a part of. Seeing pain and experiencing death so frequently are things that are new to us. They have forced us to rely on the Holy Spirit and find our strength solely in Him.





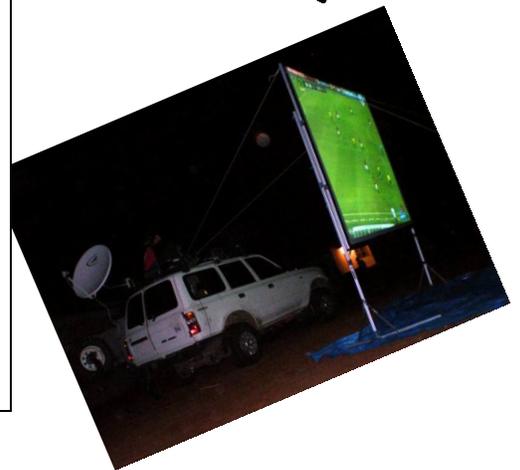
The other ministry we have been a part of on a more short term basis is that we have been showing the soccer games of the African Cup of Nations in the 'barrios' (townships) around Maputo. We have partnered with churches in the each area and during the half time we show a DVD with testimonies of famous Christian soccer players, then the pastor speaks a bit, and we hand out some New Testaments in Portuguese.



Our vehicle has been awesome! All we need for the shows is a plug outlet for the extension cord. Jon sets up the satellite off our roof rack and sets some speakers up there. We have a projector that plays out the back window, and a DVD player that is hooked up in the back. I set up a big 8x6 foot screen and Ta-da! Action!



It is a great opportunity to bless the people, since many do not have televisions in their homes and cannot watch the games, and at the same time hook them up with a church nearby. We have had from 300-500 people at each location!



from layne's journal:

I can remember my first day at the hospital. It was the Christmas party for the children. I was so uncomfortable with my Portuguese, uncomfortable surrounded by so many Mozambicans. I felt out of place, and I am sure I looked a bit like it too.

My friend Alice walked my through the room for the children, then for the women, then for the men. She greeted them all and had short conversations, while I lingered a bit in the back. I would say, "Boa tarde!" "Good Afternoon!" but that was all. It was a little overwhelming. Tumors protruding, wrappings soaked in blood, the stench of urine and vomit all around.

Our next visit Jon quickly started up conversation with the men, who were all very interested in him. I was a bit jealous. I decided to gather up some courage and go sit by the women sitting on the steps, the mothers of the children with cancer. I stumbled with my Portuguese attempting to ask about where they lived and their families. The women were less interested in me; they were content with their conversation among each other. I felt as though they were almost laughing at me in my attempts. I was discouraged.

Oh how far we've come... how far the Lord has brought us. The hospital is our second home now. The patients are some of our closest friends here; the ones we chose to spend Christmas day and New Year's Eve with. We visit every other day and the women now cheerfully greet me upon arrival, followed by chatting for hours. We kiss on the cheeks, hold hands when we pray; I like to give them a quick rub on the back to show my love.

The Lord has placed in me *His* heart for these women and children. It has taken me by surprise, this passion and deep love that is alive inside me. I am humbled to be considered trustworthy to share in their suffering and pain, these terribly intimate moments of their life. I only hope and pray that they feel the presence of Christ with them there in that dirty, lonely, depressing hospital. They have not been not forgotten.

from jon's journal

He was my friend
I remember him well
His quick smile and gentle words masking the pain of the effort to sit every time I visited
His patience with me as he waited for my limited Portuguese to finish a sentence
His hope... yes his hope. He hoped to see the end of 2010 with me, he hoped to get better, he hoped to get a job, he hoped to care and provide for his family back home
His eagerness to teach me about his culture, his language, his people
His eagerness to pray
He was my friend
I remember him well

I knew Joaquim for a mere 4 weeks. His life was already full when I met him. Now he was lying on a bed in a hospital with a mass of cancer eating away at him. Hoping... hoping that the poison being pumped into his veins would be more benefit than cost. Chemotherapy dripping... dripping... dripping, and a tumor that did little but grow.

I saw him one afternoon and we smiled and laughed and spoke of plans for when he was better.

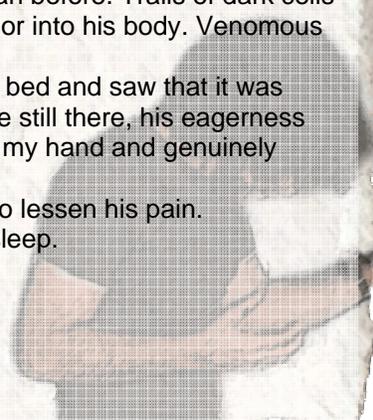
I saw him the next afternoon and knew he had little time left. Death's bony grasp was wrapped tight around his frail body and now pulled harder than before. Trails of dark cells moved from their enclosed tumor into his body. Venomous roots of death took their toll.

The next day I visited his small bed and saw that it was probably the last time. His smile still there, his eagerness for prayer unwavering, he took my hand and genuinely thanked me for being there.

My prayers and tears did little to lessen his pain.

Joaquim died that night in his sleep.

He was my friend
I remember him well



next:

Angola. We are still pursuing what God laid on our hearts so long ago. It's been a battle and it's been disappointing at times but we press on.

We met some missionaries from Angola with the ministry Operation Mobilization (OM). They happened to be in South Africa over the same weekend we needed to go there for the sake of our Mozambique visas. We sat with them and discussed the possibility of partnering with them. They have a property in Southern Angola in a city called Menongue specifically set up to be a children's home for the community it is in. However, they have no missionaries who actually live on that property. Their base is in Luanda, 2 days drive away and they have been looking and praying for some missionaries who would take up this property and pursue ministry there. It is very basic, they have the steel skeleton of a building there (no walls, no bricks, just the frame) meant to be a children's day center and they need someone.

We felt (as did they) that this may be a divine encounter, and after praying and seeking God's wisdom, we are pursuing a three month visit/trial run under OM. We will be trying to get to Menongue, Angola by the end of next month (February) because these missionaries will be there for a short time before they go back up to Luanda. We hope to spend time with them there in Menongue and then go to Luanda with them for a short time before we return to Menongue and live and work there for about 2 months. If our visa is not ready by next month we will wait until May and meet them in Menongue then. We continue to pray daily about God's plan for our future in Angola and we are tentatively hopeful that it may be in partnership with this wonderful missionary couple.

If you wish to support us please email us or Vicki Heller (who is in charge of our finances) at spartacusheller@gmail.com or vickiheller@yahoo.com and we would be happy to get you more information regarding how you can become involved in the team that is sending us. If you have any questions at all about the ministry we are involved in please do not hesitate to contact us. You can always see our latest news at our website www.jonandlayne.com. You can subscribe there to our blog and receive an email whenever we update it.

Jonathan and Layne Heller

Missionaries sent by Voices Of The World Missions

Missionaries commissioned by Trinity Christian Fellowship and Quiet Time Ministries