

Westerholm's e-Mail News

Wednesday, November 16, 2005

Friends and Family,

Although it hasn't been long since our last newsletter went out, much has happened in the past week or so. Things were going smoothly except that my back had been continuing to bother me for about a week even though I was trying to take it easy. On Saturday, however, we began to have some concerns about Amy and the baby when she experienced some slight bleeding. We quickly consulted all of the pregnancy books that we had on hand and tried to determine the cause. All of the books said it was a reason for concern and that one should consult a doctor immediately. Unfortunately, that is not easy when you live in the middle of the African bush! We tried to do the next best thing and called our teammate's father who is a medical doctor. Dr. Smith told us that the bleeding could be due to something very minor or it could be signs of premature labor. Without a quality medical exam, it was very difficult to tell. He ordered Amy on bed-rest and gave us instructions in case of a premature birth.

A little while later, we talked again and were given instructions to do a basic medical test to see if Amy was losing any amniotic fluid. Our teammate, Mika, who is a nurse, was able to help, however we needed a microscope to see the results. I went to one of our friends who works at the hospital in Montepuez, and she took me to the house of the lab technician. He was very helpful and aided us in examining the results with a microscope at the hospital Sunday morning. The results were fairly inconclusive since each of the three samples we examined all looked different and some of the microscope slides were cloudy and scratched. I drew pictures of what I saw in the microscope and scanned and emailed those to Dr. Smith. He also found the results inconclusive.

At this point we were monitoring Amy's temperature and watching that she didn't develop a fever. She also began taking an antibiotic. Dr. Smith suggested that we try to get an ultrasound, but the closest machine is in Nampula (a five hour drive) and we weren't sure that the technician could tell us what we needed to know. An American medical missionary also works in Nampula, but he is on furlough, so we didn't know where the nearest qualified medical professional was. At this point we had a decision to make, either stay in Montepuez and hope everything runs smoothly, or fly to South Africa and have Amy checked out. We decided to play it safe and go to South Africa.

We hadn't planned on leaving Montepuez for another month, and we didn't know how long we would be in South Africa. So Sunday night we began preparing to leave, not knowing for how long. Amy was still on bed-rest, so that meant that I had to make a lot of the preparations. Our teammates came to the rescue as Mika and Martha brought food over for us and ran around the house following Amy's instructions (Jeremy also helped by watching the kids). I was also trying to take care of as many details as possible: organizing the flight, contacting our medical insurance, calling people in South Africa, making to-do-lists for our teammates, packing, and trying to arrange a million other details. I finally went to bed after two in the morning.

The next morning Missionary Aviation Fellowship picked us up on the dirt airstrip in Montepuez. We went directly to Johannesburg, South Africa. The previous night, our teammate, Aaron, had called several people in South Africa for us. There is a volunteer organization called the Mozambique Hub, which is comprised of various churches and Christians who try to provide technical support for missionaries to Mozambique. Aaron contacted some people he knew and they were able to set up transportation from the airport to the hospital, make a doctor's appointment, and provide us with a place to stay. We immediately went to the doctor's office where he was able to perform an ultrasound and run other tests. He told us that everything was fine and the bleeding was due to a minor infection. We breathed a huge sigh of relief and praised God for hearing our prayers. We have a follow up appointment on Friday to see if everything is continuing well.

In the meantime we are enjoying the hospitality of a family from the Mozambique Hub. They have driven us around, fed us well and helped us out considerably in this time. After our appointment on Friday we will make a decision about what to do next. If everything is well with Amy, we think it will be best for her to return to the USA. Depending on several factors, I may return to Montepuez for a short time and try to get some things wrapped up or I may go with Amy

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to the States. We are thankful for all of the prayers that were said on our behalf in this time and we are praising God for His protection and care.

Praise God For:

1. Amy and the baby's health.
2. Missionary Aviation Fellowship being able to take us to South Africa.
3. The support of the Mozambique Hub.
4. The help and advice of Dr. Smith.
5. All the help our teammates gave.

Please Pray For:

1. Another positive doctor's appointment on Friday.
2. Wisdom as we try to decide about our plans after Friday.
3. Our team as they visit with our mentor, Sam Shewmaker.
4. Continued health for Amy and the baby.
5. The Metto people, especially as they are entering a time of hunger.