



August 17, 2017

Only 8 days left on our calendar on the fridge - counting down 'til we head back to Canada for our 11 month Home Assignment. But while we prep and pack, ministry needs continue. Here's one from Dawn:

I'm usually busy homeschooling 4 kids, or shopping in many stores to find a couple ingredients, or just keeping the 6 of us functioning semi-normally. But sometimes I get to do medical things, and when I do they are usually strange and/or epic.

Obar, an adorable 6 month old, rolled into a fire in a tribe, burning about 20% of his body including his whole little bum and one foot really badly (3rd-4th degree). A week later, they decided to medivac him and I was the only one who could receive him off the airplane. Did I mention his parents spoke almost no national language (my only other language) and no one in our city spoke their language?

Praise the Lord for a co-worker who is experienced with NG (through the nose to the stomach) tubes who bravely met the airplane with me. The ambulance showed up (yay), but they really do only come with 'ambulance drivers' here. So into the back I went with Mark (the coworker), and the parents, with me holding Obar! During the crazy ride (imagine fuel trucks pulling over for us, while motorcycles continued passing us, with oncoming traffic), Mark expertly inserted the NG tube, we assessed that Obar's wounds were not infected yet, and his mom was thoroughly car sick, which is perfectly expected, seeing as she had never been in any kind of motorized vehicle before!

Without going into excruciating details, we were in emergency for about 6 hours, with culturally appropriate care, which amounts to a very frustrating experience for North Americans. Now, more than two weeks have gone by, and Obar has needed a toe amputation and clean up surgery this whole time. They have not operated because he had a lung infection, but now it is being delayed because of diarrhea (hmmm from the antibiotics maybe??). His parents are so wonderful, and it was amazing to see they carried out a partial New Testament in their own language, that some of our own missionaries are still working to complete. They are strong believers, who have already lost their first 2 babies shortly after birth but have amazing childlike faith in the Lord! Please pray with me for healing for Obar, encouragement for his isolated parents, and peace for my heart as it is very hard to watch this little one suffer and not have confidence in the medical procedures (ask me for details when you see me, I have SO many stories!)

At the same as Dawn was involved with this medical emergency I was prepping a motorbike trip to our nearest work in the village of Sawa. They have helicopter access only, which has been very helpful, but various changes including new road construction mean we need to consider other means.



The dad and mom, Dawn with the baby wrapped in a bark bassinet, and Mark prepping the NG tube, in the ambulance



Obar sleeping peacefully in the hospital

When Peter and I set out on the first trip in April we didn't know which road to take, if there would be bridges across the rivers, or if the roads would be passable. We easily made it more than half-way that morning.

On August 14th I set out again, this time with off-road bikes, aiming to go as far as possible on the road, all the way if we were able. Cassia, rode on my bike, and we were joined by Billy and Mark. Wet weather meant that the half-built road would be muddy, but this would be my last chance for a year.

Immediately after passing the April turn-around point we encountered steep hills for the next 17km. After 45 minutes we reached the end of the gravel surface and the beginning of the slippery clay roadbed. We went down two more hills, knowing coming up them would be a challenge, and then faced what would be our turning point. The long steep clay hill before us had recently been worked on by an excavator and was badly chewed up. I made it up and over the crest with my knobby tires but not without stopping to let Cassia off and then walking beside my bike to push it full-throttle through the mud. Mark and Billy did not have the traction to make it to the top.

Without a rock or hard surface anywhere I parked my kickstand on a stick and walked ahead to look down the next gully to see if the road would get better. It appeared that from this point forward, and looking at the GPS, it would be about 20 more km of steep muddy hills. Even if I put the tire chains I brought on Billy's bike our progress would be at a full-throttle walking pace and we would not have enough gas to make it there and back. Even after we turned around we had some difficulty getting back up the slippery slope. Though we were not able to join the family in Sawa for lunch, we are thankful for a safe trip and for the time the four of us could spend together. I was even able to talk to the road contractor who was working there that day.



Cassia at the turning point on the road

Looking forward: It is still my goal to make regular project trips to Sawa by road in the future to support the team there. Now I have a better idea of what it will take to do that. When I return from Canada in a year, I look forward to doing the trip again to see how far the gravel surfacing has progressed - maybe all the way by that time. If surfacing isn't done by that time I'll need a high powered bike built for mud. I'll be making plans to build one and then see what the road conditions are a year from now.

Praise God for:

- Packing details coming together including homes for pets
- The miraculous lack of infection in Obar's wounds
- New Visas!

Pray with us for:

- Obar to get his much needed surgery
- Coming travels including a motorhome for travel in Canada
- Dawn's parents who are facing health challenges

Thank you for partnering with us!

In His grip,

Duane

