



Birth Pains on Mission Trip to Africa

Pregnancy and childbirth have been on our minds lately in the Chollar family. Our youngest daughter, Bethany, was due any day with her second child, and we had just discovered that our oldest daughter, Rachel, was also expecting. So in that frame of mind, I prepared for a trip to Africa. Here's how my own "birth process" went....

Change of plans: Nothing can disrupt your plans and schedules more than a surprise pregnancy! Such a change occurred when we decided a few days before heading out to Africa that our Medical Team would not be able to go. I spent the last few days making all kinds of changes to see that the medical needs might be met for our orphans in Sudan. These challenges are unexpected, but also create some excitement of what to anticipate from the Lord.

Weariness and sleep deprivation: Every mother knows this very well. The night before leaving for Africa, I was up the whole night emailing various people, making changes of plans, and trying to switch over to the East Africa time difference of 8 hours. The various flights to Kenya took 19 hours sitting on a plane and another 10 hours sitting in airports. So I was awake for some 48 plus hours with very little sleep or rest.

After 2 days in Nairobi with various meetings with the Northeast Director of CrossWay (Melaku Abebe) and our CrossWay Sudan Board of Directors, I was off again to Entebbe, Uganda with another flight and hours in the airport. Upon arriving in Entebbe, I left for Rukengeri, Uganda on an excruciating 10 hour trip by car on some really bad roads. Fatigue and weariness began to set in and take its toll. (Any of you mothers relate to this in your past pregnancies? Mothers are probably laughing at this point. What, only a few days of exhaustion and weariness!?)

This Story Continued on Back ...

Newest Addition to the Chollar Clan



Speaking of births, we now present Eli Kenneth Wainio, Dean and Joan's 10th grandchild. Mom Bethany and Dad Adam and big brother Troy are enjoying God's blessing on their family. They are living in the Orlando area, a 3 1/2 hour flight away.

This photo was taken just before they left the birth center 3 1/2 hours after he was born.

Strengthening the Orphans in Sudan

Since I couldn't be two places at one time, we sent Melaku Abebe to Sudan to check out the work and orphans in the village near Darfur. He took with him some finances to buy milk cows, a motor bike, and a number of other items needed to strengthen the work there. He is from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which is at an elevation of 7800 feet and normally quite cool. He now knows what hot means. <grin> He had a good trip and was able to meet with our two managers, Moses and Pastor Samuel, to monitor the progress of the work and care of the orphans. A number of changes will be made as a result of his trip, and we are looking into expanding our work in the area by setting up a feeding station and perhaps another water well in a nearby village.

We met again on his way out of Sudan in Nairobi, Kenya, with a Director of CrossWay Sudan, Ken Gatithi. The changes needed in the care of the orphans were made, and we are looking to the Lord for His direction and wisdom in all this.

The good news is that all the orphans are well, even though they are very dirty and still need our help. By God's grace we plan to stand in the gap and invite others to do the same.



Morning Sickness: I finally got hold of my wife at this point and discovered that she was not in Texas but had traveled to the Washington, D.C. area to take care of Rachel, who was hospitalized for severe nausea, vomiting and dehydration. She is pregnant with twins and has 2 little girls already. My portion of this mission trip, which I am calling morning sickness, was getting to me. I was nauseous and had to stop a couple of times to finish this trip. By the time I got to Rukengeri, I was in bad shape. How could I teach at the Pastors Conference or go out with the evangelistic teams? (Okay, mothers, ... stop laughing. I know it was only a day or two, but after all, I'm just a man!)

False labor pains: I managed to do some teaching to the 500 plus pastors anyway at the Pastors Conference, and the next day I went out with the evangelistic team to share the gospel in the marketplace. After the puppets and drama, I shared the gospel and we had one drunk come forward. No one else responded as no one wanted to be associated with a drunk. We talked to him as best we could and his conversion was suspect at best. What was I doing there? I was beginning to feel discouraged and overwhelmed. This false labor pain portion of my mission trip was very hard. To come so far and see such little or no response was really discouraging. (Well, maybe the mothers can show me just a little sympathy on this one. When you think it's time, and it's not, it is disappointing.)

Back ache: Many pregnancies involve back aches, and this portion of my trip was no exception. I could feel my back going out from the long hours of sitting and riding on planes, the car, and now the bus. I told the leader of Call to Africa, Dr. Ken Galyean, that I was not sure if I could do much more. I was lying in bed with my feet up on my suitcase to take the pressure off of my lower back, now completely overwhelmed with discouragement. Dr. Ken got down on his knees next to my bed and breathed words of life and grace into my spirit, telling me that I was his friend and he loved me, not because of what I can do, but because of who I am. I was his friend and he loved me simply because I came on the trip. This took a lot of pressure off of me and revived my spirit.

Pain killer: It's also not unusual for doctors to administer some kind of pain medicine just before birth. Ken's words of comfort had brought healing to my spirit, but my body still hurt. Shortly after Ken had prayed with me and encouraged me, Lebit Lopez, a member of our team from Nicaragua who was in her last year of medical studies, gave me a strong pain pill. For the first time on this trip, I slept the whole night through, and by the next morning the inflamed nerve in my back was much better. I was ready for the next portion of the birthing process, the birth itself. What a difference a good night's sleep makes, along with some sympathetic souls around you!

The Birth: The next day, I went out with the evangelistic team again, and this time we went to a primary school of around 360 students (first to twelfth graders). The team put on the puppets and dramas, and I presented the gospel and gave the invitation to trust in Jesus Christ alone. Around 330 of these students responded, as well as 5 of the 12 teachers. After this we went to the Makerare College, a business college with around 200 students. Again, the evangelistic team with Call to Africa did their magic with the puppets and dramas. I presented the gospel, and we had 70 of the students respond. That night I spoke at the evening Crusade event, and another 30 responded. And the Lord wasn't finished. The next morning I went out again to a school for the deaf and mute and another 40 students responded to the gospel. All in all, over 1400 came to put their trust in Christ alone through the ministry of all those associated on this trip. It was an amazing ending. The joy of the birth took away all the pain and suffering, making it all worthwhile. (And I'm sure you mothers and fathers can relate to that.)

To close out this process, when I got back to Nairobi on my way back to the USA, my wife called to inform me that our youngest daughter, Bethany, had just had her second child. So I had joy upon joy!

Thank you for your prayers and support for this trip. Please understand, I don't mean to suggest I know anything about the difficulties of what you mothers go through in the birthing process! We men just don't understand. But I hope the parallels helped make my trip clearer, and help us men appreciate you mothers even more.