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Fwd: Update on travel

1 message

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Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 3:00 AM

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From: **Sam and Mary Beth Snyder** <snyder.samandmarybeth@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 4:34 PM
Subject: Update on travel
To:

Thank you for praying for our urgent prayer request over the last several days! After prayer, seeking counsel, and tears, Bethany and I caught a chopper while it was in our area again. (We don't know how much longer they will be operating in our area, but they are doing a good job and we are thankful for them. They have come three days in the last two weeks.)

Sunday, the weather was too bad and the chopper didn't make it into our area. We had our bags packed, packed lightly since we were told to hike over a mile to get to where the chopper wanted to pick us up. But then we heard they couldn't come and would try the next day. Then it would not be until the next day we could get to Cairns, Australia to be with Sam and the boys. We prayed for the border to stay open so we wouldn't get stuck in Port Moresby in between without a flight either way.

My first choice was to stay settled in the village. We were into the swing of things and had supplies, and a small market, three lady coworkers, and church friends. But Sam and the boys can't get back into PNG yet and we were afraid we may get separated for months. Pastor Ben understood, agreed, and explained it to the church.

Monday morning I thought the chopper may get to Kerema (on the coast, capital of our province) around 9:30 am like they had planned for the day before, but then we got word he may land in Kotidanga at 8:30 am so Bethany and I left the house around 7:30, said goodbye to some people and began walking. Anjuda, Pastor Ben's wife, caught up with us and said she was going to help us. Then a young lady from church, Jessica, met us about half way and told her Sila had told her to help us. (Sila was going to go with us on Sunday when there are less people around the station area where we were to meet the chopper, and bring the radio back to Sarah for me. I told her she didn't need to go with us on Monday and to go on to her school instead. She came to check on us Monday morning and prayed with us and left.) The bridge is unsafe on the shorter way to the station, so I had planned to follow the path around farther and cross a safer bridge. (None of the bridges have railings, but at least these are not just a single log.) Anjuda and Jessica helped Bethany across and as we were going to pass the station school, Anjuda said she saw that Sila had fainted. Some of our church youth girls were carrying her over to a hut so I ran over to them. Anjuda took Bethany. Sila was breathing well and had not had signs of a seizure. I heard the chopper coming. I told the girls that when she woke up to give her some clean water to drink, thinking she may be dehydrated after running from our house to school and then standing in the sun for a while during assembly. Anjuda ran with Bethany across another bridge and I ran behind, trying to not miss the chopper. I ran across the field and waved to the pilot who motioned for me to come and then I got Bethany and went over to the chopper and we climbed in. It broke my heart to leave.

In no time we were in the air looking at the mission houses and church building down to our left and then we were in Kerema soon. We waited in Kerema about three hours for the chopper to make more flights. Some people we know waited with us in the small airport. I had mobile service there and told the nurses about

Sila. They had not heard me well on the radio when I tried to tell them from inside the chopper before we took off. I later found out she was doing well.) Then we flew to Port Moresby where the chopper is based and John Allen picked us up at the hangar. We stayed the night with Matt and Becky Allen. Both families took good care of us. John took us to the airport the next morning for our flight to Cairns. We were praying the border had not closed yet. We know Bethany and I would have to be in a self quarantine at the missionary lodge for 14 days either way. (The immigration officer in Cairns told me that if the boys get visas to go back to PNG we can leave before the 14-day quarantine is up.)

Bethany and I made it through check-in, security, and had boarded the plane, when the pilot said we all needed to disembark because of a failed engine test. I feared we would never make it to be reunited with our family. After waiting in departures some more, we heard that had another plane ready for boarding to Cairns. I was so glad when we were finally in the air. About an hour and a half later, I almost couldn't believe it when we saw Sam, TJ, and Leland.

So now we are waiting on those two visas (that's another long story) and taking it a day at a time to see what will happen with the PNG border. Countries are making decisions quickly at times. We are thankful for this missionary lodge to stay in with a kitchenette. The stores are out of toilet paper and short on certain foods like flour and long shelf-life staples, but there are plenty of fruits and vegetables, and some other foods that are rationed out. Sam is using this time for studying more for the Bible School and mailing tax forms which are hard to do from the village, and I am continuing some homeschooling with the kids. Although I could not bring most of their school books and supplies, we are doing what we can with our Kindle, online, etc.

Although this had been an uncertain time for us, the Lord has been faithful to direct us through certain confirmations along the way. Please continue to pray that our visas will be finished very quickly and that we can get back home. MAF and SIL are sending many or all of their missionaries back to their home countries and we don't know how much longer travel within the country will be available. We came out on Airborne Logistics, and many of their pilots are expats from NZ and Australia.

We know many of you have been affected by this pandemic as well, and we all have our own story. Ours is not any more important than yours. Many of you have had to decide whether or not to hold church meetings, what to do for your families, your jobs, etc. We all have to pray for wisdom, do the best we can, and not judge others for their situations. We are thankful that our missionary team is not judgmental. We are thankful for you: our supporting churches, mission board, family, and friends. Thank you to those who have emailed us. We can't describe how much that has meant to us, and I'm sorry we did not write back to you all individually.

Mary Beth Snyder

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