

Bill Ardill

From: Bill Ardill [bill.ardill@sim.org]
Sent: Sunday, December 16, 2007 6:15 PM
To: ardill-news@sim.org
Subject: boom, riots and the holidays

On Friday evening we had the Sampson family over for supper. About 8 pm we had a loud boom sound and then a few minutes later another one. It didn't seem to be coming from our compound so we ignored it. A few minutes later, someone came to the door for Don Sampson and after greeting his guest he called all of us to see someone outside. As we looked out our front yard, in the distance beyond our compound and the neighboring polo ground was a pillar of fire about 75 feet high with dark smoke billowing from the flames. We figured it was coming from one of the petrol stations down the road. As the news trickled in we learned a petrol tanker truck had caught fire and basically exploded when the fire reached the main tank. Apparently it had pulled in to unload and a second tanker was also in the station. Someone flicked a lit cigarette near the tanker and it caught fire. A brave soul ran to the second truck and drove it out of the station but the first one was lost in the flames. I walked down to see the sight the next morning and all that was left of the truck was the charred skeletal remains of a tanker. The cover over the pumps was destroyed but surprisingly the station was not damaged and there was little other collateral damage. Even more amazing was that no one was burned or hurt. I had expected to get called for a mass casualty situation with many injured but there were no injuries! Wow! Never a dull moment on Evangel compound.

On Thursday morning while doing rounds we met four men from Bauchi state who had been shot during the religious riots last week. Apparently some members of another faith had decided to build their place of prayer in the Christian section of town and it upset the Christians. A few men then did some damage to their house of prayer and a riot began in one of the primary schools. By the time the authorities had things calmed down quite a number were killed or injured. These four men were Christians and had been rescued by a private group and brought to Jos for security reasons. Fortunately their injuries were mostly minor shotgun pellet wounds. One boy had a few pellets go into his eye and he lost his eye. Please continue to pray for the ongoing religious tension in many areas of Nigeria. We are thankful Jos has been quiet and we believe the new governor is taking security more seriously.

We heard from my niece, Emily, my brother Jim's daughter, who is a nurse in the Air Force this week. She is being deployed to Afghanistan in January and has asked for our prayers for her safety in this new somewhat risky assignment. Having grown up in Liberia, Ethiopia and Kenya and having traveled widely, the travel and cross-cultural aspects should be a bit easier for her to adjust to but she will be going as a military officer this time in quite a different role with the added security risk dimension. We pray she will have opportunities to be a witness to her colleagues and those with whom she has contact in her role as a nurse.

The other big news this week is that Hillcrest school is out for the Christmas break. We are all delighted. The girls did fine on their exams after putting in long hours day and night preparing for them. Dorothy learned that the maintenance department will be putting a new roof on the elementary classroom building over the break so she will have less time in the classroom to prepare for next semester. So, she is still putting in long days at school until Wednesday to get her preparation done in the classroom for next semester – bulletin boards, lesson plans and so on. We are all looking forward to having "Mommy" back in a few days when she is thrown out of her classroom.

I have been asked to serve on the SIM Nigeria Board. I had been on this board in the distant past and was thankful to be off it for a while but decided it was time to help again. Some say I have the "gift of boards" but I am not sure. I do not like the time it takes me away from the hospital and other responsibilities but am thankful Dr. Gidado is understanding and fills in for me.

On Saturday we are planning to go to Miango for two weeks for the Christmas week and then the SIM Annual Spiritual Life Conference the first week of January. The generator at Miango has been broken for some time so we were a bit unsure if going for that long was a good idea but we learned today that they will rent a generator for the holiday season. We are looking forward to the quiet and rest and hopefully get some reading and fun times with the kids.

We have had internet problems again this week which is frustrating. I wish we could find a solution!!! Thanks for your prayers.

In Christ,
Bill Ardill

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