

School resumed on Wednesday. It was a funny week since it was only a half week. Not enough time to start spelling or reading groups, so we did a bunch of fun things that we usually don't have time for in the normal routine of school. One of the kid's favorite games is the Dictionary game. It is exactly like sword drills but instead of racing to find a scripture verse, we race to find a word in the dictionary. Kids get points for first, second and third place. The goal is to get every child on the board. I finally gave 3 of the kids a 5 second handicap and they did get on the board.

Over Christmas break, the roof of our Hillcrest classroom building was removed and replaced. It caused a bit of a panic for me because I was expecting to do a lot of preparation for this next semester during the break. I convinced the maintenance crew to give me a few days in the classroom before the chaos of the work on the roof began. I worked long hours to get my bulletin boards and other classroom preparation done and was finished by Tuesday. The roof was taken off Wednesday morning. Because I was able to get all my class prep done, while we were at Miango, I didn't touch anything having to do with school. I finally realized it was my first real vacation since I had started graduate studies in September 2006. My vacation last summer at Camp-of-the-Woods was spent writing my last papers before going to Nigeria. It felt so good sleeping in until 7 am each morning, someone else cooking and cleaning and my major decision was when to take my afternoon nap.

Over the break I also had a contest with my third graders, "Who can read more than Mrs. Ardill?" This time I read almost 3,000 pages. Only one student beat me with several kids reading over 500 pages. At Miango our kids had a great time playing volleyball, riding the go-cart and just hanging out. David was always on some sort of adventure with some of the other kids. The girls were out until 10 pm each night watching videos or playing volleyball on the sand court. It is a safe compound and the kids enjoyed playing outside at night.

This week I will be back on my normal routine with grade 3. I have been working hard on finding some good books for some of the boys who don't like to read. We also started to write in cursive only. UGH, I really have to slow down so the kids can read my writing. We didn't have a penmanship class in graduate school; it would have been a class I would have failed!! I prefer printing!

There is one boy in my class I would like you to pray for this term. He has been having a tough time with his anger. If he gets an answer wrong, or he has to write sentences, he gets angry and then has trouble functioning. I sometimes find myself changing what we are going to do because of his mood. I can't always do that and have to deal with him putting his head inside his desk (literally). Ignoring him is sometimes the best strategy for me. We are trying to get to the root of the problem but we don't have a school counselor or even an outside counselor to send him to. I need daily wisdom to know what to do in each situation.

Our niece, Emily Ardill, is a nurse serving in the Air Force. This week she is being deployed to Afghanistan. Please pray for her safety. We do not know where she will be stationed and how close to trouble she will be. Pray that she will have many opportunities to share Christ among the others working with her. She will be at one of the hospitals working as a nurse.

We will hear this week about whether the CMDA conference in Nairobi, Kenya in the first two weeks of February will go ahead as scheduled or be canceled. There are about 250 doctors from all over Africa planning to attend so it will be a big deal if it is canceled. Bill is supposed to go with 10 other doctors from Nigeria. We have heard that there may be more demonstrations in Nairobi this week. Pray for peace in Kenya and wisdom for the conference planners regarding the best decision. We have many friends in Nairobi and they are staying put and are making sure they have several weeks' worth of food and provisions.

Bill was also very excited this week when the autoclave he ordered arrived. It came a month earlier than expected and all the operating room staff are thrilled. It is quite large and some renovations in the operating room will be necessary before it can be used so the maintenance staff are figuring out how to make that happen. Stay tuned for news of when it will be up and running.

Bill had another surprise this week. He has gotten chickens, eggs and potatoes from grateful patients in the past but this week he got a fish and some cheese. Oh the perks of the surgeon in Africa! Thanks for praying and writing. Till next week.

Dorothy Ardill

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