

Bill Ardill

From: Bill Ardill [bill.ardill@sim.org]
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To: 'ardill-news@sim.org'
Subject: impressions

First impressions are not always right but they do give insight into how we are perceived and how we see others. As usual we have been impressed by many things in the U.S. so I thought you might be interested in a few of our impressions so far.

- Lots of beautiful new looking cars with taillights that work.
- Driving is very quiet. No one beeps their horn to greet you or remind you they are passing you.
- Air conditioning is too cold. We roll down the windows in the car and take a jacket to the mall so we don't freeze.
- Smooth streets and roads with no potholes, lines for lanes and traffic lights that work so there are no men directing traffic at the intersections.
- We are not sure where people put their garbage but it is not on the streets and in the streams and rivers.
- Motorcycles are very rare here and those driving them wear helmets and don't have an entire family packed on the bike behind them.
- Hardly any people live in America and the only place we see large numbers are at the shopping malls and on TV at sports events. We did see a lot in the churches we visited and wonder where they all hide during the day.
- There are friendly people everywhere but they don't wave at us or greet us unless we know them.
- We go into "shock and awe" mode when we step through the automatic doors of grocery stores. There is SO MUCH STUFF, so many choices of everything in any color or size you want. Dorothy bought me a toothbrush this week so I would not have to go through the embarrassment of standing in front of the toothbrush section and make that decision!
- The houses have nicely trimmed lawns and gardens but we don't see people in their yards enjoying them much.
- Out of habit we keep greeting "African-Americans" in Hausa and they look at us quite strangely.
- In the American "markets" called malls, there is so much room for walking and the stores are huge. We could pack in a whole lot more selling stalls and stands in the walkways and at least double the amount of merchandise on display.
- The church services are lively and worshipful and very orderly with only one offering. Very few churches have choirs and those that do rarely wear church gowns or robes. The services are short, only an hour, and then everyone hurries home.
- The lights have not gone off once since we have arrived and there has always been water from every tap we have turned on for the last three weeks now. I have to admit I am enjoying leaving the water running while I take a shower instead of turning it on and off and collecting the water in a bucket to use to flush the toilet. No one here has asked us to do that yet. (Maybe in California!)
- The TV has a lot of programs that are quite superficial and silly. Even the news is mostly about what is happening in America with little mention of what is going on in other places in the world.
- Computer internet access is like lightening here and we are enjoying the faster access and better communications. The phones work, voice mail lets us leave messages and overall communication options are better. We still have not made the plunge to join the Facebook cult and are sternly resisting joining the Twitter generation (if you even know what that is!)

We have had a wonderful time visiting with friends in the Annapolis area this week. I have also visited the VA hospital where I worked in Baltimore for two different furloughs and the prosthetics company that helped me get started in making artificial limbs. Dorothy and the girls have enjoyed going to the malls and we have all enjoyed our trips to the grocery stores just to look at all the food!

Two Sundays ago we spoke at College Parkway church, I spoke at two morning services at Bay Area Community church last Sunday and Dorothy and I spoke in two different Sunday school classes this morning at Annapolis Evangelical Presbyterian church. We have enjoyed getting together with many friends who have been praying for us and supporting us. Tomorrow night we speak at a home group and then on Wednesday we speak to the Bay Ridge Community Church.

This week Heather and Anna will be helping with the Vacation Bible School program at Annapolis Evangelical Presbyterian Church and I will be presenting the missions project which is to help raise funds to help children coming to Evangel who need care and have no money. We are excited the church children are helping toward this project to help the needy in Nigeria. David is very excited to be in the VBS program and is already working on his memory verses, lessons and chores.

On Thursday we will stop by and visit friends in Lancaster, Pennsylvania on our way to Quakertown, Pennsylvania. On Friday we will make a trip to Philadelphia to see some historical American sites and then speak in the church on Sunday. We have not heard much from Marie who is at Camp Tapawingo in upstate New York but the little we have heard she is doing well and enjoying the orientation program to prepare her for her summer work as a camp counselor. On Monday next week we head for New Jersey on our way north.

My back is feeling much better. Dorothy had been experiencing a skipped heart beat on a daily basis for about a month. Her family history of heart disease is on both sides of her family so our doctor in Nigeria suggested she get a stress test done as soon as we could. She got a good report from the cardiologist last week after her checkup. Thanks for your prayers for us as we present the work of the Lord in Nigeria and for safety as we travel.

In Christ,
Bill Ardill

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