

Bill Ardill

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

Imagine a power grid energized by a thousand smaller points whose additive power was enormous. We are meeting on our trip some of these "points of light" whose prayers have been the power behind us these years in Nigeria. It has been an encouraging and energizing experience to meet young and old who have said to us "we have been praying for you." One pastor told me, "I pray for you every day." Wow! We have also been amazed at the interest in the various ministries in Nigeria in which we have been involved. People are genuinely curious and asking informed questions. What a delight to share with them about the work at Evangel Hospital, the Pro-Life outreach to women in crisis pregnancies, the VVF project rescuing desperate women with childbirth related complications, the prosthetics workshop helping get amputees back on their feet and the amazing opportunities to influence young people at Hillcrest School.

Last Monday evening we had a wonderful opportunity to share at a home group in which we were involved when we furloughed in Annapolis a few years ago. At the end we used Google Earth and showed the group the hospital and our house from a "bird's eye" view. On Wednesday we enjoyed meeting with our friends at Bay Ridge Community Church in Annapolis. They are truly a praying church and we were richly blessed by their enthusiastic prayer and financial support. More points of light!

On Thursday we drove to Lancaster, Pennsylvania and had a good afternoon with Dennis and Colletta Shelly. They are SIM missionaries teaching at an ECWA seminary about 1 ½ hours from Jos. They are in the U.S. for the summer getting their son, Dwight, settled in college. It was great to spend some time with them, Ray Hutchison who is the SIM representative in the area and a few other friends we know in the Lancaster area. We then drove to Quakertown arriving quite late. It was amazing to be able to drive at night with street lights in sections to help us and without the fear of armed robbers. We were relying on a GPS to help us get to Lancaster and Quakertown and got lost several times. Because the GPS was a bit older, the maps were not current and a few times we found ourselves, according to the GPS, driving through fields even though we were in the middle of a four lane freeway. So we continue to learn that what seems progress is not always a step forward.

On Friday we went patriotic and drove to downtown Philadelphia. There have been wonderful improvements in the downtown area and we had a good day going to the Constitution Center, the Mint (where we watched U.S. coin currency being made), the Liberty Bell exhibit (there is still a crack in it and "Yes, there is a typographical error – Pennsylvania is spelled "Pensylvania!"), and Independence Hall where the Constitution was written and where the U.S. congress met before moving to Washington, D.C. It was a fantastic history lesson for all of us and we all learned a great deal. I had forgotten that the revolutionary war lasted 8 years so why are we so impatient with emerging nations today struggling to figure out democracy? Our nation had a violent beginning so why are we surprised when freedom movements elsewhere turn violent? It took the founders of this nation 3 ½ months to write the constitution so why are we frustrated when new nations don't get it right in a month or two? The number of men and women who died in the Revolutionary War and Civil War was atrocious – men and women who died for the cause of freedom. It was a great experience and a "must" for all Americans (including going to a country without the freedoms we take for granted so they appreciate what we have here!)

On Saturday we met with a group of elderly women at East Swamp Church (Yes, that is the real name of the church!). These women adopted our family as their missionary many years ago and have been praying faithfully for us. The most senior woman "Dot" was 93 and had been saving my weekly email letters since 1998! She gave them to me to help me write my second book. Stay tuned. It was again heartwarming to meet these faithful women of God and express our appreciation for their important role in our ministry and lives.

This morning Dorothy and I shared in both morning services at East Swamp Church and were amazed to see so many friends we recognized from our last visit 8 years ago. Dorothy's patens grew up and met in this church so many of Dorothy's relatives attend the church. (Dorothy also took a long walk in the cemetery and saw some graves of family members on her mother's side of the family.) We had a great lunch with the missions committee and we so pleased to hear of the growing interest in missions especially with the young people and summer mission teams. We hope a group from the church can visit us when we return next year to Nigeria.

So now you know why we feel so blessed to be going to our supporting churches and having the privilege

of meeting so many terrific people committed to supporting us with their prayers and gifts. Points of light – the power behind our front lines ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit. The good part is that we are only in the beginning stages of our trip and we know there are lots more points of light ahead of us.

Tomorrow we drive to northern New Jersey, then on Friday we drive to Connecticut and on Saturday on to Camp of the Woods in upstate New York.

We were also glad to hear from Marie this week. She is doing well and has finished all her courses and training so she is certified in CPR, First Aid and Life Guarding. (As long as she is not certifiably nuts we will be OK!) She is having a great time and was very excited the girl campers arrive this weekend. We really miss her and look forward to seeing her this Saturday. We are trying to get used to living as a family without here but occasionally I slip. At Independence Hall I ordered 6 tickets instead of 5!

To our “points of light,” thanks for your prayers. The kids are getting tired of the car trips, hearing our missionary “speal” every Sunday morning and not having any real friends for the summer. But they are enjoying the side trips (going to the Crayola Factory tomorrow), especially the trips to stores. Can we borrow someone’s credit card? Thanks also for praying for good rest at night, alertness as we drive and freshness as we present the work in the coming days.

In Christ,
Bill Ardill

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