

Subject: It is finished!

Jan 31, 2010

Dear Family,

On Wednesday of last week, I handed in the final copy of my thesis. I also presented a Power Point to my class on thesis project. It was my final paper and assignment. I now have a Masters in Education and two years of hard work is finished. The family has insisted that I "walk" down the aisle at the graduation ceremony in May to receive my Masters. I think they want to cheer and get some credit for my finishing. Bill is hoping that laundry gets done before the "underwear is all dirty" crisis that seemed to happen a lot.

I did all my research for my thesis in Nigeria while teaching 3rd grade. There is a reading philosophy called "Fluency". Essentially students re-read a passage at their grade level each day. We practiced fluency every day in my first class. They went on to 4th grade and their teacher was not able to continue the curriculum. For my project, I wanted to test the class after 4th grade and see if they were able to stay at the fluency reading level they had when they left my class. Of the 6 students I tested, only 2 maintained their fluency. The others had decreased in fluency up to 15% which is a significant loss in speed of reading.

During my literature research, I e-mailed a couple of authors of articles on fluency. One professor in NC responded and recently suggested we co-publish an article on fluency. I am very excited about the possibility. I also have been helping different teachers in David's school to implement fluency. It has been great fun. The greatest challenge has been doing fluency in 1st grade because the range of reading ability is huge.

The last few weeks I have been working part-time as a Kindergarten aid to a boy with slight autism. He is a great kid that needs a lot of extra attention. The job is at David's school, so he walks me home from work 3 days a week. It is a nice amount of work for now.

Marie has had a great start to her second semester. She is taking abnormal psych and thinks of her own family often when they diagnose different problems ☺ She is really loving her course work. Next Sunday she runs in the Surf City marathon in Huntington Beach, California. She has trained hard and seems to be ready. We are going up for the weekend to watch her and encourage her.

Heather and Anna finished well their semester in the high school. I still spend a lot of time moving them from point A to point B for sports, music lessons and social activities. David has really improved in his trampoline and tumbling. His coach is already sad he won't be back next year. All the kids miss their friends in Nigeria.

There was recent trouble in Jos with more riots and bloodshed. School at Hillcrest was cancelled for 2 weeks and they will resume Monday. Pray for the teachers as they welcome students back and listen to stories of their experiences. Pray they can help the children who heard and saw too much.

Bill is enjoying his work and this week was in Phoenix for a meeting on using simulation technologies in healthcare education. He is also scheduled to go to Tampa in March for another similar meeting and Portland next week for a VA related meeting. He continues to help with medical student education and working with the surgery residents.

Bill's mother is improving after her broken hip on January 1. She is walking with a walker but is still having leg and back pain. We are enjoying having them over to our half of the house for dinner and whenever we can be helpful. Please also pray as we consider our options for them when we leave.

We had a great time on Saturday going sledding in several feet of snow at Big Bear in the mountains 2 hours from San Diego. It was the kids first experience sledding and they were thrilled to see the snow and

had a ball sledding down the hills in a beautiful area in the mountains. Fortunately in spite of lots of spills and thrills no bones were broken.

We are also beginning the process of planning for our return to Nigeria in August. Thanks for your prayers as we plan our next several months and all the arrangements for our return.

Dorothy Ardill

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