

Ika Mission News

News from the Wheeler family serving in Nigeria - West Africa.

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"If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

PS 139:9-10

Dear family, friends, brothers and sisters in the Lord,

I've tried and tried to find words, and I've searched for a scripture text for this opening paragraph, but nothing "fits" or "feels" like the Lord is leading me, or deserves His blessing. So, I switched to a let the Lord guide me while I type approach, writing, letting thoughts develop, a bit like taking a step at a time, but much more like a day at a time, the way my family often does while going through our valleys trusting the Lord to be by our side, and depending on Him to be way up-ahead preparing the way for us. But while serving Him we are not always in valleys! So equally, like those special moments when I'd love to climb a mountain to shout hallelujah! Rejoicing in the wonder of His love and His refreshing goodness! Please help us give thanks and praise to our Lord for His love, His care and protection, and for being ever present in our lives. Please join us in prayer and in supporting the great work our God has made us a part of here in Nigeria; where despite the adversaries growing influence, the fields are ripe for harvest, and working together we can do great things to the glory and praise of our Great God.

About mid March Julie became quite sick. She suffered from abdominal pain after eating. She couldn't keep any food down. The pain became acute, she was twice hospitalized, and after more test than we can imagine, still there were no answers. Tension was high, dehydration and weight loss were growing, worrying concerns. Lois's help in Chesapeake was needed - taking Julie to John Hopkins in Baltimore or another specialist hospital was the plan. The pain has settled down a bit now and they have discovered one food Julie can keep down, it's Jello! :) But Julie had to be rushed to the ER twice last week and again yesterday because of intense abdominal pain. Thank the Lord one of the doctors at the hospital stepped up to help and got Julie an appointment with a GI specialist. Every attempt Lois made to get an appointment, the shortest waiting time was 6 months. Today Julie is back at the hospital for test ordered. Pray that they find/discover answers to Julie's problem. Thank and praise the Lord for kindness and forgiveness we have enjoyed and received from hospitals and clinics so far - without us having medical insurance. God is so GOOD!

Kristie is on cloud nine. Back in 2010 Kristie's surgery was extensive. When Lois asked, the lead surgeon looked at the floor and shook his head. He gave NO HOPE for reconstructive surgery. But today our hearts are filled with joy. In just 2 weeks, (May 9) Kristie goes back to the hospital for reconstructive hip replacement surgery. Just imagine, what we were told would be impossible, now in the hands of the ONE with whom all things are possible, **we now have hope** for our beautiful daughter to walk again without the use of crutches! About the pain and rehab she's preparing herself to go through Kris says, *"I will take it a day at a time knowing that God is in control. He has placed wonderful people in my life to remind me of that! It's not going to be easy but with His strength, we will get through it."* Please pray for our sweet brave daughter who has been through so much pain and difficulty already. Pray and rejoice with us, giving thanks and praise, and all the glory to our loving, caring, and faithful Heavenly Father.



Here at Ika, we just rounded up a week of Bible studies/ Ladies meetings - our Annual Women's Conference. It was a busy week with close to 2,000 women in attendance. Yesterday the joy and fellowship filled atmosphere on the compound was hit hard with devastating news. Ladies on the way home were held-up by armed robbers, just 25 miles from here. One woman was shot and killed, another is in hospital with buckshot in her arm. The rest of the day was filled with apprehension for those who needed to travel the same way to their homes. And for me, Ben was in Makurdi - he would be driving the same road to come home later in the day.



Ben got home safe - what a relief! What a blessing!! What's really strange is that he passed the spot where the incident took place not much more than an hour before it happened. As they sped through the partial roadblock they saw men working and assumed they were clearing the debris - that robbers had operated in the night. It's a strange mix of feelings; feeling/mourning for the loss of a sister, and recalling the kind of drama the others will have suffered, along with a heart filled with relief and celebration, and joy so indescribable. How I thanked the Lord that Ben did not have to experience that business, and that he is alive and well here with me at Ika today. As I write I'm told that the road was cleared by police, and the robbers were apprehended.



Water well project business needs our prayers and we seek God's help. The rains have started, meaning I'm running out of time to complete on-going jobs. I have 5 villages to do surveys in, for preparation for well locations in the next drill season. I must hurry up about drilling three new wells that people want done right away. But first things first; that is to complete the work in Lokoja for the Orphanage, and then the Haven of Hope in Jos. Please pray for health and strength, for safe traveling for me and my guys. And pray that I may soon see the Lord's intentions concerning 5 hand dug wells that are 1/2 done, waiting for casing with concrete rings. Pray that the Lord will supply the funds needed for these wells so that I will not have to abandon them until the next dry season. Thank the Lord with us for all that we have been able to do to serve these poor people so far; for the blessing of being chosen to share His Great Love, and the privilege to sow a seed of hope in their hearts. Imagine the relief and joy in each village and when another 5 wells are completed!

Give thanks and praise for God's faithfulness and awesome love in all that is mentioned above. Praise the Lord and thank Him for answered prayers, and please pray on, trusting Him. For surely our God will meet all our needs according to His great plan; for our lives, for the people we serve, and for His glory and honor.

Tom & Lois
Ika, Nigeria, April 2012



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