

Dear Friends,

It was a great privilege to speak last week as a family at the Advanced Training Institute's National Conference in Knoxville to 280 young people on the subject of "Home Ministry as a Family That Will Impact the World" and to the plenary session of about 4770 both in person and closed circuit TV (to the parents in dorms with small children) on the subject of "Discipleship as a Family – Downer Family Testimony."

At the end of each of our family's presentations, Phil asked for everyone to consider if they would be willing to disciple one person this year, and to God's glory, about 90% of the people raised their hand, confirming their commitment to disciple at least one person this year. That will change our world!

This was Susanna's largest crowd presentation thus far (Susanna is 9) and she talked about discipleship dates with Dad, how she had prayed on a recent hike to Rainbow Falls that she would stay pure and that God would bring her a godly husband, and then recited a verse that they had learned on their last date, Philippians 4:8.

In just the last two weeks, Phil has had dinner with Jim Lyon who discipled him, a telephone call with Liane Day who discipled me, and coffee with Dave Hill, who together with Judi, discipled Liane, to give them our heartfelt thanks for investing in two very unlikely candidates. How thankful we are for our spiritual parents and the team of people who invested in our spiritual regeneration and discipleship.

We are still reveling in the excitement of the CBMC Carolina Conference Memorial weekend. The following letter is to the glory of God and shared in thankfulness for all those of you who have been willing to invest in us by giving us encouragement, prayer support, and financial support. This is your fruit!

"We have attended (and led) many family conferences over the years, including 15 or more CBMC Carolinas Family Conferences. Our recent (May, 2002) retreat, led by the Downers, may well yield the most significant eternal impact. Phil and Susy are incredibly honest and transparent about their weaknesses and failures but the clear evidence of all that God has done and continues to do in and through their submissive hearts is undeniable. The Downer children are a remarkable witness to consistent, prayerful, godly parenting. When these bright, articulate kids share their faith and their perspective of how Phil and Susy influenced them, listening parents were challenged and encouraged to follow the same biblical principles of parenting. My wife and I have 3 daughters and 8 grandchildren and all have professed their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. For many years we have both taught the Bible, discipled new believers, mentored growing Christians and counseled Christian couples, but we came away from this weekend challenged in our own marriage, our role as parents and grandparents and in our ministry. We are already planning to have the Downer family lead a conference for our church. We yearn to have our church family see and hear this model of how God can prepare a family to impact a lost world for Him." **Larry and Grace Hamrick**, CBMC leaders from Columbia, South Carolina.

All of the above is a blessing, but perhaps the greatest blessing of the last three weeks has been Phil's one-on-one discipleship of his Timothy's – three this week – Paul's investment in one of his Timothy's earlier this week, Matthew reestablishing a relationship with a boy who came to our Good News Club many years ago, Joshua ministering to young men this summer as a counselor at a Christian camp, and especially a visit from Lee and Lisa Truax and their six children, a wonderfully gifted and godly family from the Boston area staying with us this weekend to whom we were privileged to pass on some of what has been given to us. What a joy it was to be with

the Truax's, not just godly parents devoted to raising godly children, but godly children who are being raised to embrace the vision of investing their lives in others.

Phil left this morning on the 6:15 am flight to Cincinnati, connecting to Portland, Oregon where he will speak to an outreach meeting tomorrow night to couples (please pray!) and meet with key leaders. On Friday, he will pick up Paul, Anna, Susanna, and me in Portland and we will drive to the CBMC Cannon Beach Oregon Family Conference to speak on the theme "Building Strong Family Relationships That Can Change the World." This conference has an unusually large percentage of adults and young people coming who do not know the Lord (about 60%), so please pray this weekend for much fruit for the Kingdom!

We treasure your love, support, and prayers. You are dear to us.

Sincerely in Christ,

Susy