

Bill Ardill

From: Bill Ardill [bill.ardill@sim.org]
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2009 9:23 PM
To: 'ardill-news@sim.org'
Subject: pack and go

Last week was the Hillcrest spring break so Dorothy and the kids were off. I took the week off as well. On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday we began a major packing of the house for our furlough. Knowing how busy things get at the end of the school year and with all the activities of Marie's graduation and Dorothy closing out her school year, I wanted to get a bit of a jump on the process. Because we will be away for a year, we pack everything in the house except the furniture and appliances. With everyone helping we got a lot done and the house is beginning to look emptier. I am already looking for things I need now that are packed but we are managing. We have a place to store our boxes in the attic which we cover with a tarpaulin to keep the rain that might get in through holes in the roof. We also have set aside a couple of boxes for a yard or garage sale whenever we can fit that in the calendar.

Other furlough planning includes organizing our furlough itinerary for our two month road trip with housing and speaking engagements in the various places we will be stopping, getting our new "prayer cards" or more accurately "refrigerator cards" made, getting our deputation video updated with more recent family pictures, updating our "coffee table book" which illustrates our family and ministries in Nigeria, anticipating financial obligations here in Nigeria while we are away and making arrangements for payment of staff, school fees and so on, making a medical slide presentation to use with medical groups when we are in the U.S., making arrangements for forwarding mail and turning over our various committee and board responsibilities. So we have a few busy weeks ahead before our departure date of May 31.

On Thursday we drove 8 hours southeast to a mountain range on the Cameroon border. A number of years ago a European man was flying over the range and noticed good pasture land on the top plateau of the mountains so started a cattle ranch. Eventually because of the cooler climate and fantastic vistas, a resort, Obadu Mountain Ranch, was built that now is spectacular with a Presidential Villa for the President of Nigeria, two incredible restaurants, recreation facilities including tennis courts, miniature golf, horse back riding, a gymnasium and organized hikes through the mountains. About 5 years ago they built a huge swimming park at the base of the mountain resort and set up an amazing Austrian built cable car system to transport guests from the mountain resort to the swimming park. The park includes a diving pool area, a lap pool, two water slides and a kiddy pool with a picnic and play area along a bubbling brook behind the park. Our family had a wonderful time for three and a half days out of cell phone, TV and internet reach! A group of a dozen single missionaries went with us and we had a terrific time with them and had lots of good family time as well. We are especially thankful our long road trip was uneventful with no accidents or car trouble either way.

As I was preparing for our trip to Obadu making copies of our passports, I noticed that Heather's and Anna's passports were going to expire in April. So on Monday after Dorothy, Heather, Anna, David and I got back from Obadu Sunday evening, we got back into the van and headed to Abuja for the 3 1/2 hour trip to the American embassy. We had another good trip and got there in good time for lunch before getting in line for the consular services appointment at the embassy. The girls' documents were quickly processed and we had time to go for an ice cream before heading back to Jos. Again we are so thankful that in spite of seeing many accidents on the roads, the Lord gave us protection from many dangerous drivers and a child who ran onto the road in front of us and we arrived safely. So in two weeks we will pick them up and be ready for our trip in May.

Heather and Marie start soccer practice tomorrow and Anna is busy with rehearsals for the high school musical in 2 1/2 weeks. David is struggling through his times tables but is doing well in his reading. On each vacation Dorothy has a contest to see which student in her class can read the most pages. The goal is also to beat the other elementary classes and every vacation her class does well. David now enjoys reading and Dorothy has a keen eye for "boy books" he likes like "Captain Underpants" (really!).

Marie is excited about college and now we are praying for the Lord to provide the finances for her to attend Azusa Pacific University. They sent her a financial aid package and now we are looking at our options for helping her go there this fall. Thanks for your prayers. She applied to over twenty scholarships and none has come through except the basic one the school offered her. She worked hard on writing many essays, getting faculty to write recommendation letters and sending school transcripts. She applied to a wide variety of scholarships and has not heard from any. She is pretty discouraged after all the hard work she put into the applications and yet we believe the Lord will provide for her as he has proved so faithful to our family.

So till next week, thanks for your prayers and support.

In Christ,
Bill Ardill

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