

Bill Ardill

From: Bill Ardill [bill.ardill@sim.org]
Sent: Saturday, August 01, 2009 10:08 PM
To: Ardill-News
Subject: [ardill-news] safely home

Greetings from San Diego where we are in the midst of unpacking and trying to figure out what we really need to be doing now and not what we feel like doing. Our "to do" list is getting longer but are grateful for a productive day today. After planning for months this trip across the U.S. we are so thankful we arrive safely last night at 7:30 pm after driving for 12 hours from El Paso, Texas. Over the summer we did not have any car trouble, no flat tires, no armed robbers, no checkpoints expect along the Texas-Mexican border and the U.S. – Canada border, and we could stop and have a hamburger almost anywhere along the route expect the flatlands for west Texas, New Mexico and Arizona where the rest stops were few and far between. Yesterday in the desert in Arizona it was 110° F with lots of rocks, cactus and flat land between the rocky hills and mountain ranges.

I worked hard to make the phone calls, emails and arrangements for each stop along the way. Things were going pretty well until the GPS diversion in Missouri when we were a bit side tracked. Needless-to-say we had an open map alongside the GPS for the rest of the trip. Our last stop before San Diego was at the home of Don and Patsy Meier in El Paso. I did not bother to call him the night before our trip so on Thursday morning we headed out from Comfort, Texas - just west of San Antonio – for El Paso. It was a long day and a hot drive. I could not find the exact directions to his house so quickly looked at a map of El Paso at a truck stop and headed in the general direction of Don's house. We tried to call but no one was home so when we got to the gated entrance to his housing development at the base of a mountain we asked the gate attendant to call and let him know we had arrived. The attendant made a few calls and asked us to wait for a few minutes for him to come. When Don arrived from the downtown direction and opened his window, I was horribly embarrassed to find out our arrival was a complete surprise. His wife Patsy was out of town, he had just finished a surgical case and got our surprise call we had arrived. He escorted us to his house, made us feel very welcome and then I checked my email and was shocked to see that I had emailed him in November 2008 and let him know we would be coming the last week of July 2009 and that was my only correspondence with him. Bless his heart he was very kind to us, took us all out to eat at a nice Mexican restaurant and we had a wonderful time getting caught up on his family and work. As the second major mistake of the summer I hope that is about it and don't be surprised if we show up at your door some day and ask for room and board!

Today was a good day. We had a few helpers help us unload the attic and distribute our boxes of stuff all over the house. I then went out and bought a printer so we could print out a few important documents we need as I start work this week and Dorothy gets the kids ready for school. Dorothy, my dad and I then went (over the next three hours!) and looked at a used Honda Civic and were thrilled it was in great condition and the price was fair. So I bought the car and took it and the Toyota Highlander and got the two cars registered, licensed and insured. Wow that must be a record. The kids got a swim in this afternoon and I worked on more unpacking and taking apart a bunk bed we no longer need in Heather's bedroom. We are exhausted but are enjoying being in our own beds, house and neighborhood.

So here are a few statistics from our trip:

Miles driven from Charlotte to San Diego in 8 weeks: 6,845
 Beds slept in: 14
 Presentations of our video and ministry: 28 different groups
 Churches visited: 10 ranging from a group of 14 to 5000
 Cups of Starbucks coffee: not recorded but let's say we helped the local economy across the United States
 Sites visited:

- Washington, D.C.: The Mall, Lincoln Monument, The Vietnam Memorial, The WW2 Memorial, The Washington Monument, The Air and Space Museum, The Smithsonian Museum of Natural History
- Philadelphia: Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, the Constitution Center, THE Mint and in Easton the Crayola Factory

- New York: Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, Times Square and Broadway, The New Jersey Science Center and Niagara Falls
- St. Louis Arch – Gateway to the West
- Texas: Visited President Bush’s house hoping to chat with him about how much we have appreciated the PEPFAR program he started in Africa to provide free HIV drugs to HIV+ patients in Africa but we only saw him drive by, President Lyndon Johnson’s home town of Johnson City
- The Continental Divide

Thanks so much for all your prayers, gifts and encouragement along the way. We are greatly encouraged by many who told us they enjoy reading our emails, pray for us regularly and wanted to know all about the various ministries in which we were involved. I will be going in to the hospital on Monday to finish the application paperwork and hope to get started this week. Dorothy and the kids will finish the unpacking and do some necessary shopping. David sees an orthodontist this week to have a tooth pulled and get braces and the girls have an appointment with their high school counselor about their courses for the fall term. Marie is doing great and although it has been a lot of work, she is enjoying being a counselor at Camp Tapawingo. She will be home in 3 weeks to get ready for college at Azusa Pacific.

One last note. We had some interesting discussions along the trip with the kids. At one point when we were trying to get an appointment to see President Bush in his home in Dallas, David asked, “What does a president do anyway?” I told him he helped protect the country and made decisions how to deal with countries that did bad things. I then asked the kids, “What would you do with a country like Iran or North Korea that was doing bad things and making nuclear bombs?” Heather astutely responded as a teenager, “I would just ignore them on Facebook!”

Till next week.

In Christ,
Bill Ardill

Please reply to <bill.ardill@sim.org>

* SIM by Prayer *
