

SanMing, China

December/January 2011/2012

Greetings from SanMing.

It's so hard to believe how fast time flies... I know it has been a long time since I wrote my last update. I wanted to get one written right before I went home in November, but I ended up having so many things to try to get done before I left that I didn't get it written. So, I'll try to fill you in a little from then until now. :)

Back in October, we were able to take the choir down to Hong Kong for a fundraiser for the CV. It was the first time to Hong Kong for most of them, and it was so much fun to hear their exclamations of wonder at all the many things that are different then Mainland China. The children did a fantastic job with their programs, even though I think they all had a little stage fright for their first one. But after that, it was very touching to see them start to really sing from their hearts... As I sat there and listened, it again filled my heart with loving compassion for these children... children who have suffered so much heart pain, and continually face rejection and slander from their own culture and 'friends'. (classmates at school, etc.)



In November, I had to return to the US to renew my visa. Joyce graciously gave me a couple extra weeks to spend time with family and friends. I arrived in the US on Nov. 2nd, and was there for just under 4 weeks. When I arrived in JFK, my good friend Mike Kauffman was there to pick me up. We spent the first day there in New York city because I had made an appointment to add pages to my passport. The following day we went to Mike's home in Bainbridge where I was able to spend the weekend. It was such a blessing to go to 'fellowship' again, as well as get to meet the people and see the faces behind the voices that I listen to every week. :)

My family then picked me up, and I was able to spend the next week with my sister and siblings at the B school in PA. It was such an encouraging time of refreshment; though I have to admit, it was quite a culture shock!!!

It was so good to see family again, and be able to spend some time back home in Wyoming. Of course the time went altogether too fast, but my family did a great job of scheduling my time there so that I could get the most out of it as possible. Thank you Daddy, Mother and family for all the special effort you went to make my time there such a blessing.

I flew back to China on November 29th, arriving here in SanMing on the 1st of Dec. It was a long trip, with over 40 hours of straight travel... but it was good to back. It was so good to see the children again, and they seemed excited to have me back.

Soon after I arrived, Stephen Burkholder also came back, for at least several months. It's been a blessing to have him here, and now I have someone to practice my English with a little more. :) Joyce also changed my position from 'Houseparent' to more of a dorm overseer. My new job involves keeping an eye on more things and children in general, instead of focusing so much on one dorm. I'll try to give you a little idea of what my new job is.

Since I'm responsible to open and shut the gates, I usually get up at around 5:40am. I try to have everything mostly open by 6:00, and then help wake up some of the boys who particularly 'enjoy' early mornings. :) I check around as they do their morning chores, and then help send them off to school after breakfast. After they are gone to school, I usually head down to the wood shop. Soon after I got back to SanMing, Joyce had me put in about 90 locks so that each child can have one locking drawer in their closet. Sometimes we have problems with children helping themselves to things that they need or want, so hopefully the locks will help solve this problem. (Oh how these children need our wonderful Friend...it would solve so many problems.) Anyway, this is just one of the many projects that I have, and there are still many more on the list!!

The children come home for lunch around 11:45. So, from then until about 12:30 I help Joyce in the dining room... making sure dishes get washed, the floor swept and mopped, the sinks cleaned, and the dishes wiped dry. After that, I head to the dorms to watch the children... maybe help someone with their English, or fix a pair of shoes... solve a fight, or keep them quiet until they leave for school again around 1:30. If I'm not filling in for one of the staff walking to school, or doing some other maintenance project, I usually go back to the wood shop to work for a couple more hours in the afternoon. Each dorm has one cabinet where the children keep their laundry soap and brushes, bath soap, toothbrushes, etc. Since the old ones were only made of particle board, they have fallen apart over the years. After some thought, I redesigned the cabinet, and am building new ones that should be much more efficient and easy to use. They should also last longer because of using real wood.

In the evenings, I'm in the dining room again, as well as in charge of the laundry area. Then from about 7-8:30 I teach English, and make sure the homework time goes smoothly. Oftentimes there are some of the high school children who have more homework than they can get done in that amount of time, so I often don't lock up the gates until somewhere between 10, and 10:30. Because I'm usually one of the first ones up, and the last one to bed, I also try to get a nap at least twice a week. I think my schedule is even busier than before, but so far I'm really enjoying my



new job. P for me that I can have wisdom and patience as I work with these children.... they have so many needs, and most of all, they need our dear Friend.

We had a special big meal for Christmas... but there was one stipulation: to be able to come, you had to 'dress up'. This didn't mean just dress up nice, but rather in a unique way. :) It was so much



fun to see the creativity of so many of the children as they used the things they had available. Of course they didn't really have money to go and buy special clothes, so they used old clothes, rags, cardboard, sticks, finger paint, etc, to make up their costumes. It was incredible to see what all

they came up with!! One boy used some old cardboard boxes to make a body, arms, legs and head and he was a robot. Another boy used some green paint, some old silver colored clothes that he found somewhere, and some wire with little round balls on the end: he was an 'alien'. :) After supper, we also played some games and had some competitions. One of the first competitions for the little children was seeing how many sunflower seeds they could crack and eat in a certain amount of time. The next one was for the staff. For some reason, I was thinking it would be the same as the little children. But, when we got up there, here we all had two chicken feet that we had to eat and pick clean in a set amount of time. It was quite the challenge... especially since chicken feet don't happen to be in my list of 'favorite' foods. :) Over all we had lot's of fun, and everyone got a good laugh.

After we had finished the competitions and given out all the prizes, we all sat down, and Stephen and Joyce shared about the True meaning of Christmas. As I sat there and listened, I was also p.... that somehow this would stick in their minds, and that His love and light would shine through.

As staff, it's not an easy job; especially when we aren't free to say all we'd like to. But I p that His light and love will shine through anyway, and that these dear children could see our dear Friend and desire Him as their friend too.

The next couple of weeks were full of tests and preparing for tests. We also did a big cleaning to get ready for the Chinese New Year holiday. Then on January 12th, I left for India. I have about 3 weeks vacation from the CV, and the L opened the doors for me to come over here and do some ministry. My good friend Mike Kauffman also came, and met me in Delhi. We spent about 10 days together, doing some ministry and a little sight seeing. Seeing the many needs in India, and so many more hurting hearts... seeing so many more souls who are seeking the only One who can give them true Fulfillment is again heart stirring. It has also been such a blessing to be with Mike again. He is such an encourager, and has such a heart for the work. As we rode public buses.... hour after hour of crowded bumping and jolting first this way, then that way... Mike always had such a positive attitude.

The two of us also had the opportunity to share with around 50 C leaders that were here in Delhi for a weekend of training. I felt unworthy and so small to be in such a place, yet I thank G for such opportunities to further his work.



Mike and I were able to spend one day and go down to Agra to see the Taj Mahal. It was a fun time together, even though our train was about 3 hours late, and we didn't get home until about 2:00am. :)



Mike had to leave late Saturday night to catch his plane, but I plan to be here in India for about another 8 days before heading back to China. Max and his family have been so hospitable, and I'm really enjoying being here again. The food here is good, but I miss Chinese food too. I definitely miss speaking Chinese!! This morning I went and got a haircut... :) it brought back lots of memories of my first haircut in China when I didn't speak the language yet. :) I wasn't sure how it was going to turn out when the power went off soon after he started this morning, but thankfully the lights came back on just in time for him to finish up. :) Over all it has been a nice vacation so far, and I've had some extra time to really seek His face. Truly He is a rewarder of all who will seek Him... and truly He alone satisfies.

P for me, as I head back to China soon, that I would be refreshed in Him, and that His love and light could shine forth in a bright new way. I feel in need of so much wisdom, guidance, patience, and love as I go through each day.

I want to especially thank all of you for your continued pr's and support as I start this new year. One of the newest things for me too is that Bethany Esh, (a wonderful and Ch'st-like girl from PA,) and I have started courting. We would appreciate your p's as we seek the Ld's face in this... Of course it's not the typical courtship with me being in China. I feel so honored and unworthy that she would even consider me, especially under the circumstances, but I thank my Father, and trust Him for direction for the future. May our wonderful Friend receive much honor and glory, and may His Kingdom be advanced in the earth!!

Many Blessings to you all,
Edwin Strubhar