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San Ming Times

Vol. #34 June 12, 2008

Greeting from the Unique City of San Ming, China,

Life in San Ming

From the eyes of an American

It has now been 10 months since my arrival to San Ming Children's Village. If I were to describe these months in three words, I think I would use the word "challenging, rewarding, and impacting eternity".

I first visited the Children's Village January 2007. I saw many well-behaved children. These adorable children washed their own dishes, swept and mopped the floor and washed their own clothes. Wow! I was amazed! Then August 2007 I arrived to work at the children's village for an extended term. This is when I found out working with children is definitely hard work. You do not teach a child once or twice. You teach a child three or four plus times. It is also very "challenging" to teach Chinese country children to keep a clean house. Before you can teach these children how to clean an object you must first teach them to see that the object is dirty. It is also challenging to discipline a lazy or disobedient child. If you come to visit and see a bunch of well-behaved children remember these children are well behaved because someone invested time into each one of their lives.

When describing my life in San Ming I should also use the word "Rewarding". It is rewarding to teach a child for their first time how to wipe a table. It is also rewarding to watch as my children study hard for a test, and to have a child give you a hug and say "I love you". It is rewarding to see the previous lives of

each one of these children and know they now have a better life. It is rewarding to fast forward each one of these children's lives and think where is this child going to be in ten years.

The next word I use to describe my life is "impacting eternity". I know there is a big spiritual battle for each one of my 73 children lives. In China we do not have the freedom to talk about spiritual matters, but I believe true love speaks louder than verbal words. I believe eternity is impacted when my boys ask me why I do not smoke and drink like all the other Chinese men. I believe even little things like teaching kindness, love, obedience, and other character building principles or preparing these young lives for their eternal home. My heart is not just for the children of the village it is also for San Ming City. I have had many opportunities to let my life be a good witness for the people. I am the only white American in a city of 2.6 million people so everywhere I go, people watch me. Many people ask me the same question "Why did you leave wealthy America and come to San Ming?". My answer "because God told me to". I even got interviewed by the TV and the local newspaper companies.

Sometimes I think about all the money I can be making back in America or when a child is disobedient I wonder is it worth my time. Although if only one child's life is changed and if I see only one of these children in heaven. I can truly say "IT WAS WORTH IT"

Thanks,

Stephen Burkholder

PS: Enjoy your COLD drinking water, and your WARM showers!!!