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San Ming Children's Village March 2009

San Ming Times Updates

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Greeting from the Unique City of San Ming, China,

Questioning of my math skills

February 24th I venture by train to Hong Kong. My goal was to get my 6th month tourist visa stamped so I would be able to continual working in China. Crossing the border went well except for the fact that I lacked elementary math skills. My lack of preschool math resulted in me miss calculating my visa stay by two days. The border guard took me to a little room and made me sit for several minutes. These minutes seemed like hours, but when the guard came back he only gave me a warning. I want to give the Chinese government special thanks. They had every right to whop me with a big fine and or put me in jail. Thanks

## Encouragement Trip

Four of my friends Andrew Burkholder, Anthony Sensenig, Ryan Rissler, and Lance Rissler came for a visit from American joined me in Hong Kong. Their mission was to bring me some encouragement and to bring me so good American cheese. We tour Hong Kong for two days. Thanks to Phoenix and Irene for giving us an excellent tour of Hong Kong. Friday evening February 27th me and my four friends crossed the border into China and took a 14 hour train to San Ming. While on the train my friends saw the plumbing facilities and realized that China is very much unlike America. We arrived at the children's village Saturday just in time for lunch. My children almost instantly feel in love with these four American friends. It was a fast week of walking the children to school, helping them with English, teaching them to play American football, and making American soft pretzels. When it came time to say good bye most of the children had wet eyes and they keep asking the question "Why do you have to go back to America". I am almost certain some of my friends were also asking the question "Why must we leave"

## Homesick

In my almost two years in China I think I can say I never got homesick until now. Yes, before I had moments where I would miss America and my English speaking friends etc..., but it never got to the point of sickness. After my friends left I got one of the worst cases of homesickness I ever had. For almost two days I had no appetite, and my whole body was really sick. Before I thought homesickness was just an emotional feeling, but now I know homesickness really is a sickness. Thanks God I am finally getting over it!!!

## The light at the end of the Tunnel

The beginning of this week I was feeling a little bit tired and depressed partly because of my homesickness and partly because of some of my boy's problems. I decided I would spend some extra time in prayer for the children's village and for my boys. While I was praying I was also reading through the book of Ezra. One thing that stood out to me about the book of Ezra is that Ezra led the Jewish people back to Jerusalem. Ezra led several thousand people on this 900 mile trip without military escort and over some very dangerous and difficult roads. They finally arrived in Jerusalem after a 4 month trip filled with lots of prayer and fasting for God's protection and guidance. As I read this I believe God was telling me that like Ezra the children's village has been on a big dangerous journey, but it is now nearing the end of its hard journey. Like a light at the end of a tunnel. I feel that God was saying he is about to do something big here at the children's village.

Thanks for reading,

Stephen Burkholder

PS: My four friends gave me 20lbs of GOOD American Cheese. Wow!!! This will last me for months.

Thanks