



The perfume of Burger King hung in the air like smoke. Our first *real* food in over a fortnight sat in our stomachs straining our waistbands. “We’re home, we’re home, we’re home!” Noah shouted from the back seat as we pulled into the driveway concluding our epic journey to China. We had opportunities to see things that most people in America only read about. We stayed in 4 and 5 star hotels. Kaara assimilated to us fairly quickly. With the exception of one shattered terra cotta warrior souvenir and 14 hours on a plane being punctuated by air sickness just as we landed in San Francisco the trip probably went as well as it could have.

I remember waking up our last morning at The Gloria Hotel in Nanchang. Happy to be leaving, *eager* to pack my two young children onto the airplane and ready to be home. The problem was our destination was not Washougal but Guangzhou. We had another week in China. It wasn’t that our accommodations were unacceptable; The Gloria was the nicest hotel we had ever stayed in second only to The White Swan (where we would stay the rest of our time in China). The food was good. The people, as a whole, were the most gracious that we had ever been around. Even the local Wal-Mart seemed vaguely familiar as the greeter handed us our cart and welcomed us (all be it in Chinese) but that was the problem, at best, things were only *vaguely* familiar. We were strangers in a strange land.

“A man travels the world in search of what he needs and returns home to find it.”

George Moore; English philosopher 1873-1958

It is difficult to get comfortable existing away from home, living away from where we *belong*. We as human beings are just not wired that way. But that is just what we do over time. We get comfortable.

Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief *cornerstone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Ephesians 2:19-22 NKJV

We surround ourselves with things that we perceive we *need* believing it will fulfill us, that it will fill in the gaps in the vague familiarity of our existence here on Earth. They can’t, we weren’t created that way. We were meant for something more, we were meant to be members of the “household of God”. We are invited into relationship with Jesus. This is the message that is often lost at Christmas. It is our prayer that this Christmas season you find yourself eager to be home in His embrace.

We are so thankful for all God has done in our family over the past year. Our family has continued to be blessed as we have grown not only in numbers (with the addition of Kaara) but also spiritually. God has used our experiences over the course of the past year to draw us closer together and to Him. We are excited to see how He will continue to bless and use our family for His glory.

Merry Christmas

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