

Thanksgiving:

"Will that be for here, or to go?"

Mmmmm. Anita's Turkey, Tim's ham, Grandma's old stuffing recipe (Thanks Mom), Tom's rolls (Thanks Cort)...and Yam Balls!? Oh yeah, babe. And who can forget the pies? I still have pie tucked up somewhere deep inside my colon, I ate so well. Christmas may be a difficult time to be away from family, but with the feasting of Thanksgiving going on as we left Oakhurst—our hearts were joyfully light (and our bellies, pleasantly heavy).

Thanks to all of you who made our departure such a happy memory—our small group, for the constant prayers and financial support; our friends, for the tasty dinners and conversations (and for making lots of friends for Eoghan); our family, for the prayers, phone calls, and encouragement.

We packed up the car and headed out on the Sunday after Thanksgiving. Arriving at [Andy's brother] Ian's church in Redding around 8:00pm. The car came to a sluggish stop, and when Cort turned the key to turn it back on it didn't make a noise. Luckily, Ian's got some great friends at the church who helped us get the car moving again, and we experienced more trouble with the car for the next week—eventually buying a new alternator and the services of an old, beat up tow truck. But we made it to Portland by the first of December: the date we'd hoped and planned to arrive.



*Thanksgiving
Oakhurst*



*Visiting with Ian
Redding*



*House Hunting
Portland*

Portland, Finally It was about five in the evening as we drove into Portland for the first time in three months. We were so happy to finally be in the place that we had begun to love, even if only from a distance...

Quick Recap: We fell in love with Portland while staffing a Y.W.A.M. school last summer in Lakeside, Montana. We were there in Big Sky country also seeking direction for our own lives: *Where should we finish our education? What city, what school? We knew we'd have to move, but where?* We were also wondering what long-term plans we should pursue. After a few late nights and conversations with God, we felt that He'd given us a new vision for the Himalayan regions of **Nepal, Tibet, and Bhutan**—these were old places of interest for us, and many other missionary-types, but we had never received God's confirmation to travel to these countries. However, in our dorm room at the school in Montana we finally felt Him leading us there. (If you're interested in this sort of thing, we'll write more about it on our blog.) We also felt he was telling us to move to Portland, and many of the people and circumstances at the Y.W.A.M. base were confirming this idea for us. From there we would be traveling back home for three months to work and save money for our move to Portland where we would go to school, make some new connections, help some refugees, and get ready for what God had for us in Asia... Of course, none of that has begun just yet—it's only what God has told us.

...As we were headed home from Montana, back in August, we drove through Portland to scope things out, view some apartments, and just get a feel for the city. We also applied to a rental agency that managed apartments all over the Northwest District—the part of town where we really wanted to live.

And so it was, on this trip we made that agency our first stop and had just enough time to view three apartments before they closed for the night. It was too late to start signing any papers and we wanted to check out some other prospects the next day. So, we headed over to Gresham to stay with the Leithams—the family of one of Andy's friends—and as we took the Broadway Bridge over the Willamette River we could look back at the city, the tall buildings all lit up like Christmas trees in the night.

The Leitham Family offered for us to stay as long as needed—their hospitality and kindness has been one of the biggest surprises and greatest blessings of our time here—and early Wednesday morning we drove west out of windy Gresham and back into the city to look at more apartments. Back in Northwest, we stopped at a nice upscale grocery store called Zupan's in order to get some coffee and muster up some kind of a strategy for the day. Cort said her mocha was *the bomb*, too.

SO GOODBYE FOR A WHILE, I'M OFF TO EXPLORE EVERY BOUNDARY AND EVERY DOOR... I'M GOING NORTH. - MISSY HIGGINS

Christmas Presence: And some Christmas presents too...

Apartment #303

We searched all of Wednesday and Thursday for a home. Walking the streets of the Northwest District for two straight days, we became intimate with the neighborhood—the old brick-covered buildings, the eclectic shops, the forested parks. We eventually signed papers for an apartment on Everett Street—in fact, it was the very first apartment we looked at on our first night in the city! (*We should have signed papers then, I guess.*) And it's cute, too. It has lots of windows and nice wooden floors so when Eoghan's naked and pees we can clean it right up, or take him streaking through the park around the corner.

Cortnie Lands A Job

Once we were settled into our new home we began shifting our focus to finding a job. That first morning in Portland while we were at Zupan's buying mochas Cort happened to ask the barista if they were hiring. They were, in fact, she replied. So Cort applied online and began stopping by the store every few days. Amazingly, after a week and a half of Cortnie's insistence they hired her! Which was smart for them, too; cos' she's good...*real good*. They gave her some decent pay and hours, and everyone in the store is genuinely personable. She describes her fellow baristas as *an eccentric group of talented musicians and artists—and exuberantly friendly.*

"SERIOUSLY THOUGH, WHAT EXACTLY IS



Christmas Conspiracy

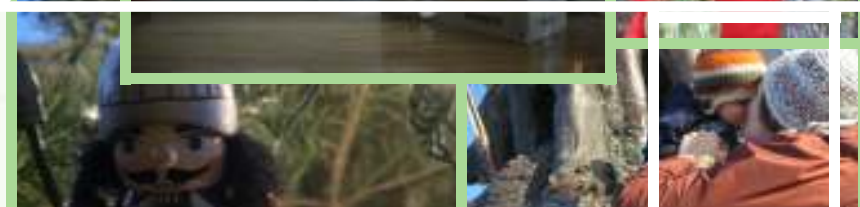
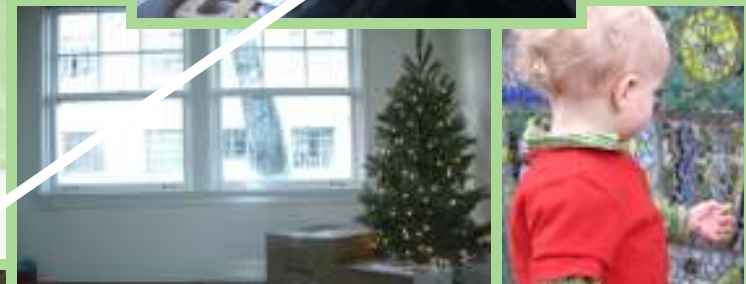
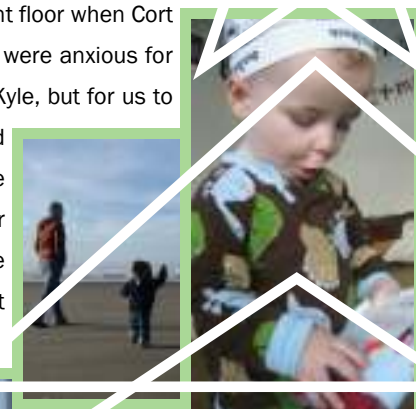
On the Tuesday before Christmas we had two huge, brown boxes sitting on our apartment floor when Cort came home from work. A delivery man had dropped them off earlier and Eoghan and I were anxious for Mom to get home to show her what Santa had brought. Actually, I think his name was Kyle, but for us to have such large packages inside our bare apartment—apparently with gifts inside—kind of sparked the imagination. My dad graciously sent us some money to help us celebrate the holiday, so we had already bought a small tree and a single strand of lights to cover it. We had a little money left over to buy a few presents for each other—mostly things we needed—like some socks for Eoghan, chap stick for Cortnie, and bike hooks for me. But other than that, we were content in our expectation of a few modest-sized presents

beneath a modest-sized Christmas tree. *But now we had two huge presents!* We opened the boxes to find a fabulous assortment of gifts from our old small-group in Oakhurst. **Christmas decorations, cookies, brownies, chocolates, a double-pack of NUTELLA, and a bunch of presents to put under the tree for Christmas Day!** Now, I know that Christmas is about one special baby who was born (and he was visited by a group of Magi who brought him three special

gifts) and it's shouldn't be all about us giving ourselves gifts—affluent as we Americans can be—but the kindness of our closest friends and family to come through with financial and material gifts has warmed our hearts and our home more than I would have ever imagined. This has been one of the greatest Christmases for Cort and I. Not a modest one, as we expected, but one filled with blessings and surprises

packed away in every corner. **Thanks you guys, for making it so special for us—and to the Leithams, for giving us a family to laugh with as we shared Christmas dinner.**

FIGGY PUDDING?"



Trails ablaze

"Honey, will you be my Sacagawea?"

Finding the Image of God

So, we started going to a hip little church here called *Imago Dei*. That's Latin, it means "the image of God." You might've heard about it if you've read the author Donald Miller, he helped start the church nine years ago and he says they named it *Imago Dei* 'cos they thought it made them sound cool. But really they're all about *authenticity*: being an authentic community that lives out an authentic spirituality (and thus becoming more like the image of God—for Portland and the world). Still, I feel pretty *cool* going there.

We feel inspired as ever to get locked into the community here in Portland, and we're hoping *Imago* will help us do that. Their small groups, or "Home Communities," meet all over the city and are the obvious place to start. We're still looking for one that's a good fit for all three of us. *Imago* also has a refugee ministry, so we're looking for mentors to help us with our vision to be God's image to the Bhutanese refugees here.

If you happen to be in Portland, give us a shout—we'd love to hang out. We were lucky to have Korin [Lehman] and Jenny [Scott] over last week, and this week we saw Kristen and Beau [Hobbs] and Brandon, Amanda, and little Isaiah [Bowles]! It was really great and our home seemed happy and warm long after they had gone.



Cruisin'



Relaxing with friends



Out for a walk

Impressions of Portland

We've been giving some thought as to our mission here in this gigantic city, and to our dreams and visions for this place that we *live*—but don't really yet *know*. One thing I know for sure is that I feel at peace where we are, and I may not know the city but I know the feeling I have for it. I call it, *being in God's will*. Right now, it's like we're walking on a path that's surrounded by fog. We may not see exactly where we're going—and whatever we do see ahead of us is a little blurry—but we can see our feet clearly. And they're walking firmly on a path, and we believe that path is God's will. So *what are our expectations? Is it going to be easier or harder than we expected?* It's going to be very difficult to complete all that's set before us. Right now, our only plan is to stay on the path. (We'll have to "wait and see" for all the details.)

Lewis and Clark traveled four thousand miles on their journey of discovery—no trail to guide them. We're happy there's a trail.

Let's Get Connected

Learn more about us and what we're doing next by visiting our blog at: thebrookses.wordpress.com

Here's where you come in: will you pray that God would complete this work in us? We can't do it alone. Bless you as you read this. We love you all,

ANDY & CORTNIE

Prayer Points

- **To provide for finances** (That Andy would find a flexible part-time job that would fit in with Cortnie's job, ministry, and school schedules.)
- **To make friends** (To build relationships with our neighbors & co-workers. May God lead us to the right group of people with whom to share our faith and our lives)
- **May God bless our mission** (Giving us continual vision, direction, and wisdom for *His* future plans for our lives, "Lord, light the way")
- **Pray that God opens the doors for us supernaturally** (that with His vision, direction, and wisdom guiding us He will turn the wheels and bring transformation in our lives as well as to everyone and everything around us...

Pray that God opens the doors

Andy, Cortnie, & Eoghan Brooks

Can you keep up with the flow?

Visit the Brooks' Blog:

thebrookses.wordpress.com

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GONNA RISE UP, AND FIND MY DIRECTION MAGNETICALLY...

GONNA RISE UP, AND TURN MY MISTAKES INTO GOLD. - EDDIE VEDDER, INTO THE WILD SOUNDTRACK