

Staff Work

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Hope in Anticipation

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Hope in Anticipation

Abstract

"On Christmas day we not only rejoice that our Savior was born, but also look with hopeful anticipation to Jesus' second coming and the restoration of creation."

Posting about anticipating Christ's return from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/hope-in-anticipation/>

Keywords

In All Things, Advent, expectation, hope, refugees

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Hope in Anticipation

 [inallthings.org/hope-in-anticipation/](https://allinallthings.org/hope-in-anticipation/)

Adam Adams

St. Louis Missouri has seen its population steadily decrease from approximately 850,000 in 1950 to 320,000 in 2010. Since the 1980s when Vietnamese refugees started to arrive in the city, St. Louis has welcomed a continuous stream of refugees from around the world. These refugees have helped rebuild the city. The south side of St. Louis has seen the largest growth in refugee communities in the Dutchtown, Bevo, and nearby neighborhoods. Restaurants, groceries, convenience stores and places of worship line the streets-evidence to the diversity of the communities which surround them. Irrespective of their nation of origin, many residents share a similar desire to reconnect with family separated by war, religious persecution, or famine. There is a deep longing for restoration to come to what has been broken.

I moved to St. Louis in 2008 to intentionally seek relationships with refugees. At the time, I had little idea what kind of influence the international community would have on my future, my friendships, or my faith. During my time in St. Louis, I met people from over sixty countries, and did everything from explain junk mail (“No, the car dealership did not send you a key to a free car!”) to driving an expectant mother and father to the delivery room. Before I moved away in 2013, the most touching experiences for me within this community had come from joining in the preparation, the longing, the hope, and ultimately the reunion of long separated family members. That part of the story remains unfinished, as many friends continue to wait for their family’s restoration.

There is a time period of hopeful anticipation when refugees finally know their family abroad has the documentation needed to join them. To reach this point takes years, even decades, to be reached. Many families, due to a myriad of obstacles may never be reunited. For those who finally achieve every task to be reunited, the timeline for a reunion remains unknown. Yet, there is a renewed confidence and certainty that the family will arrive, which grants hope for the future.

I met regularly with one of my friends for several years, at church, in small groups, and to run errands around town. His English was limited, and few people in St. Louis spoke his language from the mountains of South Asia. I will never forget the day we drove to the Soulard neighborhood for the inside of his cheek to be swabbed, a final test to verify family DNA. Both of us missed a morning of work. It had snowed the day before and the streets were still icy, snowy and slick. The whole process at the office took 30 seconds, and we were out the door. I took him for a cup of coffee, and we just sat, looking at each other, smiling. We each tried to communicate that, yes, that little test was all that needed to be done. There wasn’t really any way for us to communicate the depth of what that 30 second process meant, but we knew the waiting from that point forward was only drawing his family closer. His family arrived about a year later, his infant daughters were now in their teens. A family restored after more than 10 years apart.

The Advent season is one of hopeful anticipation. [Galatians 4](#) teaches us that in the fullness of time Jesus first came to redeem those under the law and adopt them into the family of God. On Christmas day we not only rejoice that our savior was born, but also look with hopeful anticipation to Jesus’ second coming and the restoration of creation. Frenzied American minds have made time a limited commodity tied to a clock or calendar. The Advent season, however, grants the opportunity to relate with time through events: the birth of Christ, and his ultimate return. We rejoice in the certainty of these events. First, he came as a child, as scripture promised, and now we wait with hopeful anticipation for his return, as scripture promises.

Much like my friend after his cheek was swabbed, there are few words which can communicate our

hopeful anticipation of the moment of Jesus's return. May we desire to cultivate this hopeful anticipation of Christ's return, in a way that resembles my friend's patience and faithfulness in anticipating the restoration of his family. We know not when Jesus will return, but rest confident in the reunion and restoration to come.