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Newsletter | June 2011

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Prayer Requests

- We encourage you to pray fervently for the children of the world who are waiting for their families to find them.
- Pray for the adopted children and their families, particularly as they go through the sometimes-painful process of getting to know each other and becoming a family.
- Pray for The Shepherd's Crook Ministries: that God would bless us financially and allow us to continue doing this important work in His name

From the Director

I want to begin this column by noting that we did not send out a newsletter in May. We held our annual, full-staff meeting that month, and the preparations for that event—and the event itself—occupied so much of our time and energy that we just weren't able to pull the newsletter together. We hope that missing a month will be a rare occurrence.

The thing I want to talk about in my column this month is the state of the ministry. Many of you probably remember that about a year ago, we hit a low point. Our funds were depleted, the difference between regular monthly donations and regular monthly expenses was at an all-time high, and we seriously were about to go under. In July, one of the elders in the church Kathy and I attend offered a prayer on behalf of The Shepherd's Crook in a morning worship service. The response to that appeal, along with some generous donations from other friends of TSC, provided more than enough funding to carry us through our difficulties. The surplus from that generous outpouring—along with some ongoing though unanticipated monthly gifts over the past year—have carried us along for the entire time since that low point. We have continuously praised God for this provision, and the work of the ministry has gone on. We also thank God's people for being willing to be used on behalf of His orphans and the work of TSC. We know that we could not do this without you.

As we enter the summer months once more, we are again facing the possibility of financial hardship. Though we continually work to stretch our donation dollars as much as possible, and though we are always looking for ways to reduce costs and regular expenses, we still find ourselves short every month throughout the year, as our expenses exceed our regular donations. This situation is even worse in the summer, when donations are typically lower than at other times. In light of this reality, we are asking all of you for a couple of things:

1) Please pray for this ministry. Pray that God will provide all of the funds we need each and every month, to enable us to continue this work. Pray that the Lord will lead the decision-makers of TSC to choose wisely, as stewards of the gifts sent to us by God. Pray that the work of The Shepherd's Crook will continue.

2) Please consider contributing to this important work. We simply cannot do what we have been called to do without money, and that money comes, almost exclusively, from God's people. If God is prompting you to support this work in any way, please do so. We really want to increase our base of monthly support, and if you could support us on an ongoing basis, that would be great. But even one-time gifts are greatly appreciated. Please pray about this, too.

God has sustained us for nearly ten years now, and we are convinced that He is not yet through with The Shepherd's Crook. We don't know when or from where the deliverance will come, but we are confident that, to the glory of His holy name, it will come. Please consider prayerfully how you might be a part of that deliverance.

Next month, I plan to write about the number of orphans in the world—a somewhat confusing and elusive statistic.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Spotlight: Colombia Hosting Program

Typically, when we address a group of people on the topic of adoption, we close by listing several ways in which people can fulfill the biblical mandate to care for the world's orphans. The most obvious way is to adopt, but there are other things that can be done: supporting families who adopt, supporting ministries (like ours) that advocate for these children, and, of course, praying for the millions of orphans worldwide and for those who labor on their behalf. It is also possible to serve as a host family for an orphan through a program called Citizens of the World, run by one of the agencies we work with. Let me explain how this works.

Adopolis is a not-for-profit adoption agency based in Washington, D.C. They have worked hard each of the past few years to match waiting children from the country of Colombia with host families here in the U.S. for stays of three to four weeks. While the exact dates of the visits vary on a case-by-case basis, the children are typically brought here during either the summer holidays or over the Christmas holidays, in order to maximize the time spent with an entire family. The goal of this program is to expose these children to the loving care of a family, and because of that, Adopolis prefers that at least one parent be home—either off work or working from home—for the duration of the child's visit. These visits are meant to be educational and enriching to the children, and the program has been successful each of the past two years.

The children available to participate in Citizens of the World fall into two age brackets: (1) special-needs children from ages four to seven; and (2) older, otherwise healthy children aged eight to twelve. Families may host individual children or a sibling group. Note that participating as a host family does not in any way obligate the family to adopt the child(ren) that they host. Of course, it would be great if the host families were to do just that, and that is one of our prayers regarding this program. In fact, one of the recent host families is now adopting the brother/sister pair they hosted last year. We have mentioned the McIndoe family of Mason, Ohio in previous e-mail updates, and the two children that they are working to bring home—Andres and Heidy—spent several weeks with them in 2010. We thank God for that answer to prayer, while we continue to ask Him to raise up more host- and adoptive families for the fatherless.

If you would like to find out more about this program, please write to host-program@theshepherdsCrook.org for additional details.

Completed Adoptions

The following children have come home to their adoptive families since TSC began in 2000. We include them as representatives of all of the children who have come home. Their faces provide just a glimpse into how significantly these lives are changed, as the children transition from the hopelessness and aloneness they once knew, to the comfort and security that come from belonging to a family. Thank you for helping us make these dreams realities, both for the adopted children and for their families.



Benjamin, in China



Benjamin, at home in Ohio



Johanna, in China



Johanna, at home in Tennessee



Jonathan, in America



Jonathan, at home in North Carolina

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