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Newsletter | February 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

As I type this column, I am sitting in a patient room at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. The patient is my ten-year-old daughter Caelyn. We were told to expect a stay of three to five days. As of right now, Caelyn has been in this hospital for thirteen days, and it is likely she will be here for at least another three to five days. She had surgery to remove a portion of her large intestine. The surgery was necessitated because of her spina bifida and the damage done to her system in the years before she was able to get adequate medical care. Unfortunately, she developed a blockage in her small intestine as a consequence of the surgery, and so far her body has not been able to heal sufficiently to resolve the blockage. We are praying—and many people are praying with us—that God would heal her and allow her to return home very soon.

There is nothing like a stay in a Children's Hospital to help you see things from a fresh perspective. I mean that on several different levels, such as, for example, the very relative nature of the sufferings we endure, or the way difficult situations bring out some of the best in people. But I'm thinking of a different sort of perspective. As I look at the small child in the bed here in the hospital room, I am struck by something I often fail to notice. The fact is, this beautiful little girl doesn't really look anything like me. And she doesn't look anything like her mother, either. Kathy and I are both of European descent, but this child is clearly of Asian ethnicity. In fact, she is Chinese. She came to be our daughter through the wonder that is adoption.

Most of the time, I forget about the fact that fourteen of our eighteen children look nothing like us, and they look different because they were born to other mothers, in different countries. Kathy and I are taking care of this little child in the hospital, though, because she is our daughter. We often forget that these children are adopted, until we sometimes see them and ourselves through the eyes of others. Then it hits us that, yeah, these kids look different than we look. But they are, every one of them, our children. We tell them that all of them are our children, just as surely as if Kathy had given birth to every one of them. God knew and saw clearly from eternity past, before He even created the earth, that these eighteen children (and possibly others we don't yet know about) would be our children, the children of Scott and Kathy Rosenow. Some of them just came to us through different means.

I am grateful for our Children's Hospital, which is ranked the third best in the nation. I am grateful to the doctors and nurses and technicians and staffers who work so hard to make this the great hospital it is, and who work so hard to take care of many of our children. I am grateful and so thankful to God that our little one is here, and not still languishing in an orphanage in China, in who-knows-what condition. And right now, I am even grateful that this little one of ours is here and that I am, through our time in the hospital, reminded of the wondrous ways God has employed to build this amazing family. Soli Deo gloria!

**Post script:** At the time of the publishing of this newsletter, we are at day twenty in the hospital. All indications are that Caelyn will be going home later today, and we are praying that this comes to pass.

## Spotlight: The Hague

We often hear references to “the Hague” in discussions on adoption these days, but I have found that there is still a lot of confusion about just what that means—just what people are referring to when they say, the Hague.

The Hague can refer to several different things. First and foremost, the Hague is the capital city of the the Netherlands, the seat of government and the administrative center of that small country. “The Hague” can also refer to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which is based in the Hague (the city). The ICJ is the judicial court of the United Nations, formed in 1945. Another common usage of “the Hague” is to refer to the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH, for Hague Conference/Conférence de la Haye), which is also based in that city. This international conference was formed in 1893 to promote agreement among different countries on matters that cross national boundaries. Many international conventions are developed by the HCCH for ratification by the member states, of which there are officially seventy in number. (In international law, a convention is essentially the same as a treaty, though the steps for creating and ratifying it may be slightly different.)

The most relevant usage of “the Hague” within the adoption community refers to the *Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption*, concluded by the HCCH in May, 1993. This is the convention that stipulates how adoptions between member states (i.e., countries) should be conducted so as to safeguard the rights of the child being adopted, as well as the rights of both the birth parents and the adoptive parents. For the sake of simplicity and clarity, I will refer to this document in the remainder of this article as *the Convention*. Note that *the Convention* does not have anything to do with domestic adoptions conducted within member nations; its purview is limited to intercountry adoptions—that is, adoptions that originate in one member country and finish in another. One of the primary goals of *the Convention* is to eliminate, as much as possible, the trafficking of children under the guise of adoption.

The United States signed *the Convention* originally back in 1994, but its full implementation took nearly fifteen years to complete: the American government finally implemented *the Convention* on April 1, 2008.

Some of the provisions of *the Convention* are as follows:

- Each Contracting State (a country that is a party to *the Convention*) is required to designate a Central Authority to oversee the adoption processes for that entire country, though the various responsibilities may be delegated to other organizations. Here in the United States, the Department of State (DoS) is the designated Central Authority.
- The Central Authority is responsible for accrediting adoption agencies wishing to perform and facilitate intercountry adoptions with Contracting States.
- The Central Authority in the sending State (the country in which an intercountry adoption originates) is responsible for ensuring that a prospective adoption is in the best interests of the child, after having determined that domestic adoption within the State of origin is not a possibility. The Central Authority is also responsible for determining that no coercion or financial inducement exists in the context of the adoption, either of the child being adopted or of the natural parent(s) of the child.
- The Central Authority in the receiving State (the country in which the intercountry adoption finishes) is responsible for ensuring that the prospective adoptive parents are qualified to adopt and have been counseled regarding intercountry adoption. In the U.S., the responsibility for that determination has been delegated by DoS to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

One of the more interesting provisions of *the Convention* is that Contracting States may not conduct intercountry adoptions with other Contracting States that are noncompliant with the requirements of *the Convention*. This explains why adoptions between Guatemala and the United States terminated as soon as the U.S. implemented *the Convention*: Guatemala is a Contracting State but they are not in compliance with the requirements of *the Convention*. Thus, it would be considered unlawful for the U.S. to allow intercountry adoptions from Guatemala.

Adoptions between the U.S. and most other countries are now governed by the provisions of *the Convention*. Thus, the process is a bit different, the paperwork and forms are a bit different, and the fee structure is slightly different now compared to what they were before *the Convention* was fully implemented. Some countries have not implemented *the Convention*, and so adoptions from these countries are conducted according to U.S. adoption law in force prior to implementation of *the Convention*. Examples of the latter include Ethiopia, Haiti, and Liberia, to name a few.

## 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.



Liam, in China



Liam, at home in Ohio



Jaxson, in China



Jaxson, at home in Indiana



Vanessa, in Liberia



Vanessa, at home in Florida

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