



*Striving to rescue the
neediest orphans of
God's flock...from any
place on earth.*



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Reflections...

Thoughts from the Editor...

In my column this time, I'm going to talk about the state of the ministry right now. Specifically, I want to talk about some of what brought us to the point at which we felt it necessary to send out the letters in September, what developments have occurred since then, and where we think we're headed from here.

First, the question of why this ministry sent out a letter asking people to support us financially. Admittedly, we've never done such a thing before. We know of many Christ-centered ministries out there who routinely solicit their mailing lists for support. Our position is not that doing so is improper or wrong; we've simply never sensed the need to do so ourselves. But events over the past two years and the burgeoning responsibilities and demands of this work forced us to evaluate where we are and where we should be going, and what we would need to do to make that happen. Let me elaborate. As most of you know, this ministry was formally begun in January of 2002 by Kathy and me, for the purpose of identifying special-needs and difficult-to-place orphans all over the world and finding willing and able families to adopt them. We were very soon joined by a Board of Trustees of godly men and women, all equally dedicated to following God wherever He leads and all passionate about ministering to His orphans as He directs. We also immediately began assembling a staff of other volunteers to help our Board in this work. We have been greatly blessed over the past three years, as we have seen so many people come forward to give of themselves on behalf of needy children and as we've seen God move His mighty hand to accomplish His purposes. We now have a staff of

volunteers comprising more than thirty-five people, to date we have been involved in bringing more than sixty-five children home to their permanent families, and we have nearly a hundred more listed on our web site, still waiting for their families. Our six country coordinators regularly work with about fifteen adoption agencies and as many as thirty different families. The letter we sent out in September included many of these details as well as some additional information, and more is available on our web site.

However, the reality for this ministry, like virtually any other, is that the majority of the day-to-day work must be done by a very small group of people. As the ministry has grown, the demands on this small group have grown proportionately. We came to the realization during the summer that the ministry work was causing at least some of our volunteers to neglect their own families, a situation we simply could not tolerate. We all believe that our primary ministry, entrusted to us by God, is the raising and nurturing of our children. When an outside work, such as The Shepherd's Crook, demands so much of our time and energy that we are forced to neglect our primary calling, we must then at least evaluate whether we are doing what God wants us to do. Our Board of Trustees wrestled with these questions for a period of several weeks, during which we met together multiple times and prayed continually, both as a group and as individuals. The conclusions we reached were that God had not yet called us to end The Shepherd's Crook, and that we would need to hire a full-time director—me—to continue. Again, you can refer to the letter for additional information about this pivotal step in the ministry. (If you didn't receive a copy of the letter and would like to have one, please contact us and request it.) The Board put together the letter and

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Family Spotlight *The Vanderhoffs*



Left to Right: Elizabeth, holding Thea; Wesley, holding Mailee; Isaac; Joy, holding Naomi; Hudson, Jr., holding William; Nathaniel

It was seven years ago that God started Hudson and Patti Vanderhoff on a journey that they had not planned. The birth of their fifth child, Nathaniel, brought them all the joy that a new family member brings. And, in a way, it marked the beginning of the story of his younger sister, Mailee. Mailee, child number ten in the Vanderhoff family (Joy, Hudson, Elizabeth, Wesley, Nathaniel, Isaac, William, Mailee, Thea and Naomi), as well, helped to start the story of her younger sister, Naomi.

Nathaniel was born with spina bifida. As Hudson and Patti dealt with the unexpected differences in their son, God birthed in them a realization that raising special needs children was something that, as Hudson said, "need not be feared." In fact, the pride and joy that they took in Nathaniel blessed them and their entire family. Despite being paralyzed from the waist down, Nathaniel learned to walk with a walker. As they watched Nathaniel grow and mature, they began to think about how God could use them in the lives of special needs children, including adoption. As Hudson said, "Adoption is a practical demonstration of God's love."

At the same time that God was preparing the hearts of the Vanderhoffs, His hand was on the life of a little girl in China.

Han Jing was born with serious birth defects in her spine. Doctors in China had diagnosed the problem to be spina bifida. Hannah, The

Shepherd's Crook contact in China, had seen Han Jing (soon to be Mailee) at the orphanage there, and had advocated for her to be operated on for the first Bind Up the Broken Ma Jia Le Surgery Project.

In November 2002, neurosurgeon Dr. Jorge Lazareff traveled to Changchun, China to provide medical care and surgeries for four children who were born with spina bifida. His surgical nurse, Julie Byrd, and a TSC volunteer, Amy Musselman, traveled with him. Amy's purpose in travel was to be with her soon-to-be adopted son, Benjamin, as Dr. Lazareff surgically corrected his spine.

"What struck me most when I first saw Ben and Mailee was their stillness," said Amy, in a recent e-mail. "They sat very still on the hospital beds and were very quiet. I was there for five days and often observed them very still and quiet, and distant. However, when they were approached by their caregiver or me they were both willing, and I think longing, to make a connection. They were two precious children waiting to be discovered and treasured by a family. Mailee's eyes would brighten and she would smile and "emerge" from her quiet place when spoken to... Both children were quiet and passive, not initiating conversation or contact. Mailee especially loved it when Hannah (our Chinese friend who made all the hospital arrangements) would arrive each day. Hannah would scoop Mailee's little crippled body up in her

arms and sing to her and waltz around the hospital room."

Unfortunately, when Dr. Lazareff began to assess the children, he realized that he would not be able to perform surgery on Han Jing. Her spinal problems were far too severe for him to attempt surgery in China, and, in fact, were not even what the doctors there had indicated. Han Jing was born with a neural tube defect called diastematomyelia. Simply put, her spinal chord, in addition to being tethered, was split lengthwise into two chords. The diastematomyelia was accompanied by another complication, severe congenital scoliosis.

Back in the United States, Patti and Hudson continued to pray about adoption. Dr. Lazareff's trip to China caught Patti's attention because of its connection to spina bifida. Patti joined The Shepherd's Crook e-mail list in order to receive updates about the surgery and to pray for the children. It was then that she learned about Han Jing and began to seriously pray about adopting her.

Hudson and Patti had concerns about the adoption being successful. Their major concerns lay in the fact that both their family size and income did not fit within the constraints that the Chinese government had laid out for adoptive families. After a phone call to Kathy Rosenow, however, they felt God leading them to try to bring her home. Odds were stacked against them, but they felt that the worst thing that could happen was that China

would say “no.” At the time, they
thought that the best thing would be

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What was Lost

"I will seek **what was lost** and bring back what was driven away."

Ezekiel 34:16

The following Shepherd's Crook children have come home to their families since our last newsletter was published.

Eliana

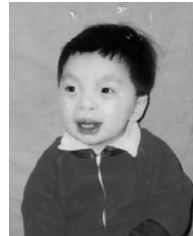


*Before, in a
Haitian orphanage*



*After, in her
Norman, OK home*

Max



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in his
Ocala, FL home*

Daniel P.



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in his
McKinney, TX home*

Daniel S.



*Before, in a
Korean foster home*



*After, in his
San Antonio, TX home*

Vera



*Before, in a
Russian orphanage*



*After, in her
Waxahachie, TX home*

Cartur



*Before, in a
Kazakhstan orphanage*



*After, in his
Cincinnati, OH home*

Luke



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in his
Malvern, AR home*

Joshua



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in his
Lakeland, FL home*

Jacob



*Before, in a
Korean foster home*



*After, in his
O'Fallon, MO home*

Rebekah



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in her
Louisville, KY home*

Kathryn



*Before, in a
Guatemalan orphanage*



*After, in her
Cincinnati, OH home*

Stephen



*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*

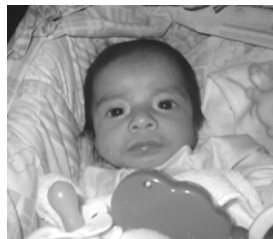
(Picture not available)

*After, in his
Muskegon, MI home*

Luke



*Before, in a
Guatemalan orphanage*



*After, in his
Cincinnati, OH home*

Eli



*Before, in a
Korean foster home*



*After, in his
Brighton, MI home*

Will

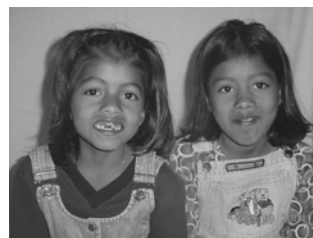


*Before, in a
Chinese orphanage*



*After, in his
Skandia, MI home*

Lidia & Isabela



*Before, in a
Guatemalan foster home*



*After, in their
Mechanicsburg, PA home*



“I will bring them **out from the nations** and ... into their own land.”
Ezekiel 34:13

Adoptions have been started on the following children since our last newsletter was published.



Ma Xiang Qin
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon to be with her Indianapolis, IN family



Linnea
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon to be with her Cincinnati, OH family



Kristina
Waiting in a Russian orphanage
Soon to be with her Zanesville, OH family



Viktoria
Waiting in a Russian orphanage
Soon to be with her Glendale, AZ family



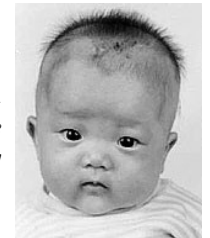
Luke
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon to be with his Merritt Island, FL family



Valerie
Waiting Kazakhstan orphanage
Soon to be with her Slidell, FL family



Amanda
Waiting in a Guatemalan orphanage
Soon to be with her Pickton, TX family



Isabel
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon to be with her Silverdale, WA family



Bella
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon to be with her Cincinnati, OH family



Maria
Waiting in a Guatemalan orphanage
Soon to be with her Skandia, MI family

Reflections – Continued from page 1

sent it out, and we have been trusting God since then to move His people in His timing, to make it possible for us to hire the full-time director.

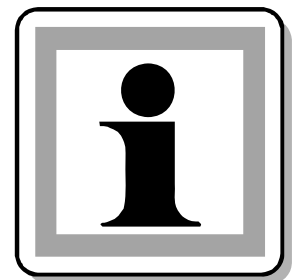
So where do we stand now? In the five-odd months since we sent out the letter, pledges of support have come in totaling approximately twenty to twenty-five percent of what we would need annually. Truthfully, this has been something of a challenge for us. We had hoped to be positioned more quickly to begin the full-time director, and the slower-than-anticipated response has caused us to adjust our plans as a consequence. I will be honest with you: the need for me to switch to the full-time director's position is immediate. The work of the ministry is consuming more and more of my time, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage the competing demands of my job, the ministry, and my family. I believe God has called us to this work of The Shepherd's Crook and that He intends for this ministry to continue. I also believe He would be displeased with me if I forsook the needs of my wife and children for the sake of the ministry, or even if I were to continue to abrogate them to the extent that I have been forced to do lately. And there is much ministry work that remains undone because there is no-one to do it. As we reported in our letter in September, we are regularly forced to turn away agencies because we do not have the staff to support them. We also have had to curtail a number of activities that we previously pursued, such as public speaking and certain correspondences and publications. Of course, these are among the very considerations that led our Board of Trustees to decide on the need for a full-time, paid director: to take care of the many items of work not being done, to coordinate and manage the efforts of our growing cadre of volunteers, and to move the ministry forward in both scope and reach. Kathy and I are excited to be taking this step, but we do it with a measure of trepidation and uncertainty.

As we have seen the response come in at a less than robust rate, Kathy and I have had to look at the possibility that our income may turn out to be less than the requirements of our large family—even more so than currently. This would force us, even more than now, to depend on God for “our daily bread.” This is scary. And yet, how wonderful! Such a day-to-day dependence on God would truly be something like walking with the Twelve, listening to the voice of the Master, watching Him heal the lame, feed the hungry, give sight to the blind, and instruct the foolish. We believe this is the life to which God has called *all* of His children. Not necessarily that they should give up their secular jobs to work full-time in ministry, and not necessarily that they live on less income than their needs demand, but that they should—must—live daily, moment by moment, in utter dependence on Him for their every need. Please don't think me glib as I speak of this commitment. I know something of what I'm talking about; not so well, perhaps, as many saints down through the history, or even as some alive now in other parts of the world, but my family has experienced this reality to a certain extent. As I prepare to walk into this wilder, lonelier territory, I sense both nervous excitement and uneasy anticipation. I don't imagine the process of burning away the dross is exactly enjoyable to the gold, but the dross must be burned away if the gold is to be purified. For whatever reason, this apparently is the dross-burning process God has selected for me and my family, that we should be forced to depend on Him to meet our needs on a daily basis. And we have experienced first-hand the reality that God's ideas about our daily needs are often not the same as ours. He seems to think, at least in some cases, that we can make do on considerably less than we think we need. Thus, all of us at the Rosenow house are going into this next phase of life with our eyes wide open. We know

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Important Announcement

The Shepherd's Crook Ministries has made a change in the way we process receipts for contributions. Effective as of January 1, 2005, we will send out receipts only once each year, at the end of the calendar year. We have decided that this change in process is necessary in order to relieve some of the burden and stress on our small, all-volunteer staff. This practice will bring us in line with the majority of ministries and churches and the way they send out receipts, and it will allow us to work more efficiently as an organization. We hope this change does not cause any inconvenience, and, as always, we thank you for your support.



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unequivocally that we can depend on our Father to meet our every need—and I want to be completely clear about that—but we at the same time know that life will not be easy. (I also want to acknowledge that we are by no means alone in this dependent lifestyle. There are many families we know in Christian service, some even here locally, who also must depend day by day on God's feeding, hand-to-mouth, as it were. We find ourselves among some of the very best and most faithful of God's flock as we take this additional step, and we certainly enjoy the company.)

So why am I spending so much time harping on what's ahead and what we're a bit uneasy about? Simply that I want to be as transparent as possible with all of you, the friends and supporters of The Shepherd's Crook. It is important for us to do that, and we have been doing so for several years now with our regular e-mail updates that we send out several times each month. We will continue in this practice until God indicates to us that we are to desist. And we ask all of you to pray for us, both for The Shepherd's Crook and for the Rosenow family. There is no way we can do this work without your prayers, and there truthfully is no way we can fail in this work if God's people are praying regularly and faithfully for us.

Finally, I want to let you all know that our Board of Trustees has decided that it is time to take on a ministry director on a part-time basis, since we are not yet able to fund a full-time position. The demands of the ministry and the demands on my family have made us realize that we can't wait until we are fully funded, but that we must begin where we are and trust the LORD to take us the rest of the way. I have given my employer notice—who has been extremely patient and gracious throughout this entire process—and on January 17 of this year, I began working two days each week for the ministry; the other three days each week I am still with my current employer. We all continue to pray that God will provide the funds we need on a regular and ongoing basis to support the full-time position, but we are thankful that we are able to take this interim step in the meantime. I want to stress that this is a temporary work-around, as we continue to wait for the funding necessary for the full-time position. This hopefully will permit the ministry to keep its head above water, but will not yet allow us to add agencies or countries, nor to resume the activities I mentioned above. We want to thank all of you who have pledged your support for this change in the ministry, and we want to encourage those of you who have determined to support us to return the response card, so we will know how to plan the coming months. (If you've lost the card or would like another, just let us know and we'll get you one as soon as possible.) We are making this request simply because we believe this is where God is leading us, and we want His people to participate in this work in whatever way He leads.

As I said earlier, please continue to pray for this ministry and for the Rosenow family. Pray that God will provide the balance of funding we need, and that He will sustain us and nurture us through it all. And join us in praising God for His faithfulness and for His mighty acts, and for the fact that He has allowed us the rare privilege of being His hands and feet and voice in this ministry to the least of the least.

Thank you, Father,
Amen.

Annual Celebration Banquet 2005



Mark your calendars: the Fourth Annual Celebration Banquet of The Shepherd's Crook Ministries will be held **Saturday, July 2, 7:00 pm**, at the Sharonville Convention Center here in Cincinnati. Be sure to check our web site (www.theshepherdsCrook.org) periodically for updated information about this special and important event in the life of our ministry. We would love to see you there!

As we plan for this year's banquet, we are earnestly seeking corporate sponsors to help underwrite the cost of the event. If you are in a position to make decisions about charitable contributions for your company, or if you know someone in such a position, we urge you to consider prayerfully if you might be able to help us. If you would like more information about the banquet and the ministry, please let us know and we'll get the materials to you.

Family Spotlight – Continued from page 2

God adding one more child to the Vanderhoff clan...

They quickly began the paper chase necessary to start Han Jing's adoption. As Han Jing had special needs, the Chinese government required pre-approval of families before they could send in the dossier for the adoption. Once the initial set of papers were sent to China, the Vanderhoffs scrambled to complete their home study as quickly as possible. Soon it was complete and they had reached the six-week mark.

Then the six-week mark passed. Followed by the seventh week, and the eighth week. They heard absolutely nothing from China. By this time, they were figuring that the answer was simply "no," and they started to pray about what God wanted them to do next. Around one year earlier, Patti had posted an e-mail to a discussion group asking about large families receiving approval to adopt. Someone in that discussion group read that e-mail, and a year later, they responded to it—but not with a general answer! They replied to that e-mail with information about a baby, recently born in Texas, that needed a family.

The baby was a girl with spina bifida. She was living with an older couple who were serving as her foster parents, but were unable to adopt her. When the Vanderhoffs learned of this baby's situation, they took a week to pray about what God would have them do.

At that time it had been over nine weeks and no word from China. Believing that China was going to say no, they decided to have their international home study changed to one that was international/domestic. The changes were made, and they prepared to travel.

Two days before leaving for Texas, thirteen weeks after applying for pre-approval from China, the Vanderhoffs received a phone call: the Chinese government had given them pre-approval to adopt Han Jing.

Although surprised by the sudden change, it did not take long for them to decide what to do. Continuing in the belief that "the worst that could happen was that China would say no," they added an addendum to their home study explaining the second adoption and that they were still approved to also adopt from China.

In March of 2003, Naomi Ruth Vanderhoff was welcomed home. Several months later, notification of their final approval to adopt Han Jing arrived. Travel dates were assigned, and Hudson prepared to leave.

On September 1, Mailee Hannah Vanderhoff met her new dad. Hudson, although alone in China, had a wonderful trip with the contacts there. In fact, he left China with only two regrets: that he did not get to meet Hannah (Mailee's namesake), and that he could not take home all of the children from the orphanage!

On September 9, 2003 at 10:00 PM, Mailee and her father arrived home to her family in Williamstown, New Jersey.

Since arriving home, she has matured and blossomed in many ways. She is still small, but has grown in her abilities and independence. Doctors, both in the United States and in China, believed that she would never walk. And, indeed, when one looks at the physical obstacles she faces, it is apparent why that was thought. In addition to the problems with her spinal chord, her spine has two curves in it, both of about 100 degrees. However, against all odds (just like her adoption!), she walks quite well with the help of crutches.

In a constant quest to help her gain independence, Hudson and Patti are having their house equipped with some smaller fixtures (a sink, toilet, etc.) that are appropriate to her small stature. They have also purchased a specialized wheelchair that is motorized in such a way as it lowers her to the floor for easy access, and can also raise her up high enough to work at a counter. They ask for prayer as they continue to look for ways to help teach Mailee the independence that she needs to have. Although quite capable, Mailee tends to resist being assertive or taking initiative, traits that Patti and Hudson know she needs to develop.

Medically, of course, there are many variables in Mailee's future. The problems with her spine have caused other internal problems—from the location of her heart to diminished lung capacity. Her kidneys are also fused together. At this time, these problems are not affecting her general health, but there is potential for problems in the future. As a result, Patti and Hudson are prayerfully considering many surgical options at this time. So far, nothing has presented itself as a direction in which they believe they should go, and their family would appreciate prayer for wisdom as they weigh these options.

Mailee has many obstacles still to face, and her road may not be easy, but now, with a family to support her, she has hope. Amy Musselman testifies to the changes in Mailee: "It was about one and a half years later when I saw Mailee again. This time she was a beloved member of the Vanderhoff family. The transformation was beautiful to see. She had grown even more beautiful, and now had a smile on her face and a sparkle in her eyes. Mailee had gone from a helpless, hopeless orphan to a child with a hope and a future. What a joy to see what a change the love of a family brings in the life of a child."

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Patty Morwood



We're Sorry!

We, the publishing staff of The Shepherd's Crook Journal, want to apologize for the tardiness of this issue. We have been trying since December to get this thing finished and sent out, but we haven't been able until now. This is another indication of the state of affairs in the ministry and of the need for a full-time director. Thanks, as always, for your patience with us.



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