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Newsletter / January 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

On December 25, 1939, King George VI of Great Britain delivered a radio address to the British people, a practice begun some seven years earlier by his father, George V. (The very first radio broadcast in the United Kingdom had taken place only ten years earlier, in 1922, and so the radio was still relatively newfangled when George V began using it as a way to communicate with his subjects.) The Christmas Day radio address by the reigning British monarch continues to this day, though Queen Elizabeth's annual speech is now broadcast on television, as well. The speech given in 1939 included an excerpt from a poem by Minnie Louise Haskins entitled "God Knows"—though it is usually referred to as "The Gate of the Year." The king's wife had given him a copy of the poem earlier that year, and he was so impressed with it that he included the following excerpt:

And I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year: "Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown." And he replied: "Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."

The times in which this speech was delivered were turbulent. George VI had ascended the throne only three years earlier, following the abdication of his elder brother, Edward VIII; only three months before this radio address, Great Britain had declared war on Germany, as Hitler continued his march across Europe, swallowing up weaker countries and virtually daring any other nation to try to stop him. Many people around the world had already lived through "the Great War," which had ended twenty-one years earlier, and the memories of the devastation wrought by that international conflict were vivid and terrible.

The subjects of King George, and indeed people in many nations, found comfort in the words quoted in that Christmas speech—and I believe that they hold great truth and the potential for great comfort for us, too, especially as we find ourselves beginning a new year and a new decade. For whatever reason, the beginning of a new year tends to make us think about the year just behind us and the year immediately before us, and as we look forward, we inevitably think about the uncertainties of the future. The future of the adoption world is somewhat uncertain, as governments continue to change their adoption laws and practices, and as countries that formerly allowed large numbers of their orphans to be adopted are becoming more and more restrictive in their allowances. The need remains huge around the globe, even as the availability seems to diminish.

What better thought could we choose to cling to, in pondering the imposing Unknown moving toward us, than the one expressed above? And what better discipline could we cultivate than to choose, daily, to put our hands into the hand of God, to trust Him to be our Light and our Guide, and to walk boldly into whatever awaits us, with the limitless power and wisdom and goodness of the great I Am to lead us and protect us? I know that I will strive to cultivate that mindset personally, and I will strive to lead this ministry in the same manner. Please join me in welcoming this new year and the opportunities God will present us with, and please join me in walking hand-in-hand with Him throughout. Soli Deo gloria!

Spotlight: Hydrocephalus

From time to time in these spotlight articles, we plan to highlight various special needs or medical conditions that we commonly see among the children listed on our website. This month's spotlight discusses hydrocephalus.

Hydrocephalus is a condition found in millions of children around the world, with tens of thousands of new births each year accompanied by this diagnosis. The term hydrocephalus is a compound derived from the two Greek words for "water" and "head." The condition is characterized by an abnormal accumulation of cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) in the cavities of the brain. The presence of this excess CSF can have severe side effects: those with hydrocephalus might suffer from increased intracranial pressure, progressive enlargement of the head, seizures, and mental impairments/delays. Progressive hydrocephalus is nearly always fatal if not treated. This is even more tragic when we consider that the treatment for hydrocephalus is usually rather simple. In the United States, the death rates associated with hydrocephalus have decreased in the last twenty-five years from 54% to just 5%, indicating just how successful the treatment for this condition can be.

For most children with hydrocephalus, the implantation of a shunt—with careful monitoring over time and a possible replacement of the shunt—is all that is needed to provide relief. The shunt is a tube that drains the excess CSF from the brain and shunts it to another internal cavity, where it is simply reabsorbed by the body. The one-way calibrated shunt system was introduced in 1954. A number of technological advancements have been made since then, but the basic principle of shunting the excess fluid from the ventricles to another location in the body remains the same.

Children with hydrocephalus who have shunts implanted in infancy often go on to live normal lives—assuming no other complications occur. Unfortunately, shunts are not always available to orphans in the countries that we work with, and many children around the world die from hydrocephalus each year while waiting in their orphanages.

We ask that you join us this month in praying for the children with hydrocephalus, that they might receive the care they so urgently need. If you have been considering adoption, please pray about children with hydrocephalus. These children are sometimes overlooked simply because this condition and its long-term outlook are not very well understood.

Completed Adoptions

The following children have come home to their adoptive families during the last few months. 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.

Note that in this group of children, we include one whose adoption was arranged before he was even born. This is a domestic adoption (meaning, an adoption done here in the States), which is a relatively new area for The Shepherd's Crook. We are very excited that God is opening doors for us into this area of domestic adoption.



Levi, in China



Levi, at home in Oregon



Lily, in China



Lily, at home in Kentucky

(Since this was a placement at birth, we have no "before" picture of Timothy)



Timothy, at home in Ohio

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