



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



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Reflections...
Thoughts from the Editor...

I want to talk today about the high cost of adoption – a topic often on the minds of those of us who pursue international adoption. But the high cost I want to talk about is that of our own adoption into God's family. Kathy and I recently went with our older children to see "The Passion of the Christ," Mel Gibson's much talked-about movie depicting the final 12 or so hours in the life of Christ. Many others have written extensively about this film and its impact upon their lives, so I don't really need to say much about it except to say that it is a very powerful and moving experience. And of course, one of the results of seeing this film is, or should be, to cause us to reflect upon what it cost our Savior to purchase our salvation – our adoption, in fact. However, the point I want to make about the movie is simply that it fell short – as indeed, all movies or other attempts to depict so momentous an event must do – of fully capturing the real cost to Jesus when He died on the cross.

It is highly unlikely that any of us will ever experience anything even remotely like the brutal physical abuse our Lord endured between Thursday night and Friday afternoon, but I believe the Scriptures tell us that Christ's real agony was in the spiritual realm. The just punishment our sin deserves, indeed requires, is so much larger than having our flesh cruelly mutilated by vicious and evil men. It is, in fact, eternal separation from the life-giving and life-sustaining presence of God Himself. And I believe the prospect of enduring that torment is what caused our Lord to sweat drops of blood and to plead with the Father to let the cup of God's wrath pass from Him, if at all possible. It

was this isolation from Life itself that caused our Savior to cry out, in fulfillment of Psalm 22's prophecy, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" The minutes, however many there were, between that cry and His proclamation of "It is finished" probably marks out the temporal boundaries of that horrific separation. I say temporal, indicating that which can be measured in our understanding of time, as distinguished from the time-transcendent spiritual period of the suffering, which in some mysterious way was actually limitless. God the Son, co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Spirit, was separated from the love and fellowship and communion of the other two Persons of the Godhead, and I for one simply cannot imagine the torture this must have worked upon our Savior.

Now, I'm not suggesting that the impending physical abuse, the brutality of which was so hauntingly portrayed in Gibson's film, was a matter of no concern to Jesus as He prayed in the garden. Rather, I am suggesting that the physical suffering would have seemed to Him virtually insignificant in comparison with the prospect of bearing in His spirit the eternal and immeasurable punishment of the world, of being literally cut off from God the Father, with whom He, God the Son, had co-existed throughout all eternity.

One of the praise songs we often sing at church is Chris Tomlin's "Here I Am to Worship," and it includes the line, "I'll never know how much it cost/to see my sin upon that cross."

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Family Spotlight *The Petersons*



Back: Jon Mark, Jon, Missy, Jamie
Front: Luke, Haly

Every Christian knows that the timing of God and the timing of man are often two very different things. Sometimes we never know the reasons for what seems to us an unbearably long wait. But other times, God blesses us by allowing us to look back and see some of the many pieces that He has been laying in place, and to understand some of the reasons for the delay. Jon and Missy Peterson have known since before they were married that they would one day adopt a special needs child, but it wasn't until March 12 of 2003 that little Luke joined their family. It was a very long wait, and there was hardship along the way, but this is one of those cases in which they can clearly see the hand of God at work in their hearts and lives, preparing them for this special little boy.

Missy had always been interested in adoption, but after hearing an interview with a Major League baseball player who had adopted special needs children, she knew that God was calling her to do a similar thing. In spite of the fact that she was still a very young woman at this time, she explains that this was no girlish, emotional reaction to a touching story. It was a quiet certainty that came from God. When she and Jon were engaged to be married, she shared with him that she felt called to this sort of a ministry. He also had always wanted to adopt, although he admitted that he had never considered the adoption of a special needs child. He agreed to pray about this to find out if God would lead his heart in the same direction. After only a week of prayer, he knew that he was open to this option. For the next ten years, Missy and Jon waited and prayed, eager for God to show them which child He intended for their family.

While they were waiting for the special

child they were to adopt, God blessed the Petersons with three biological children, Jon Mark, Jamie and Haly. Following Haly's birth in 2000, both Jon and Missy began to feel much more urgently their calling to adopt. Missy was already involved with The Shepherd's Crook Ministries, as their Listings Coordinator and director of the Hope Eternal prayer ministry. As she worked on behalf of these special orphans, her intense desire to find her own son or daughter grew into what she calls a *burning*. Their time was drawing near. It was during this time that Jon and Missy both found pictures of little Ruthie Phelps, who at the time was called Dong Hong Ying. Both were instantly drawn to her and felt that they had to do something to help her. Was this their daughter? They began to pray about adopting her, but though some pieces fell into place perfectly, they didn't feel strong confirmation from God that they ought to pursue her adoption. As it turns out, God had chosen another family for Ruthie, and it would still be a little while before God revealed Jon and Missy's child to them. The same day they found out that the Phelps family had decided to pursue Ruthie's adoption, they also discovered that Missy was pregnant with their fourth child. Everything then seemed to make sense. God had been using Ruthie to open Jon's and Missy's hearts to the idea of having another child. They even decided to use the name they had chosen for Ruthie for their new baby. It seemed to them that the time had still not come for them to adopt. But this apparently clear understanding of God's plan was soon shattered when Missy lost the baby she was carrying. On top of having to deal with the deep sorrow of losing their child, the Petersons also struggled with great fear during the ordeal, as Missy herself very nearly lost her life. It

was several months before she fully returned to health. Suddenly nothing seemed to make sense anymore. Why would God seem to prepare them for and bless them with a fourth child, only to take it away before it was even born? Both Jon and Missy felt confident that God was doing something special in their lives, but neither of them had any idea what it could be. They would not have to wait much longer to find out.

One day Missy was sitting at the computer, adding new children to The Shepherd's Crook's web site, when she came across a picture of Kee Hyeok, a Korean baby with a heart defect. Thinking he was very cute, but not considering that he might be her son, she called Jon over to look at his picture. As soon as he looked at the picture, he asked Missy to contact the agency and request more information on him. Before the information even arrived, they were convinced that this was the little boy they had been waiting for. Kee Hyeok, or Luke as they decided to name him, was born with Heterotaxy with right isomerism. All of the organs on the left side of Luke's thoracic cavity are essentially copies, or clones, of those on the right side. For organs that are more or less symmetrical, like lungs and kidneys, this presents few problems. Because the spleen is normally located on the left side of the human body, Luke was born without one. Luke's condition is manifested most severely in his heart; in a normal heart, the right and left sides are very different, with one ventricle and one atrium on each side, and with the left ventricle somewhat different than the right ventricle, etc.

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"I will seek **what was lost** and bring back what was driven away."
iel 34:16

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



Before: In a Chinese orphanage.



After: In her Cincinnati, OH home.



Before: In a Chinese orphanage.



After: In her Fletcher, NC home.



Before: In a Korean foster home.



After: In his Cincinnati, OH home.



Before: In a Chinese orphanage.



After: In his Federal Way, WA home.



Before: In a Japanese hospital.



After: In his Mauston, WI home.



Before: In a Korean foster home.



After: In his Arlington, TX home.



did you know

A friend of the Forward family wrote a song for their new son, Isaiah (above) that will be performed at our banquet this year, with the help of many of the TSC children.



"I will bring them **out from the nations** and into their own land."

Isaiah 34:16

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



Faith

Left Lobus Temporalis Cortex atrophy;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with her Lakeland, FL family



Alexander

Mild Cerebral Palsy;
Waiting in a Romanian foster home
Soon will be with his Sarasota, FL family



Stefan, Alexandru, and Florentina

Waiting in a Romanian foster home
Soon will be with their Murrieta, CA family



Vera

Downs Syndrome;
Waiting in a Russian orphanage
Soon will be with her Waxahachie, TX family



Melanie

Meningocele Spina Bifida;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with her Milford, OH family



Daniel

Extrophy of the bladder;
Waiting in Honduras
Soon will be with his Lawrenceburg, IN family



Jordan

Waiting in a Guatemalan orphanage
Soon will be with his Valrico, FL family



Gavin

Club feet;
Waiting in a Korean foster home
Soon will be with his
Colorado Springs, CO family



Eliana

Waiting in a Haitian orphanage
Soon, will be with her Norman, OK family



Simona

Head injury requiring some surgery;
Waiting in a Romanian foster home
Soon will be with her Mt. Juliet, TN family



Evan

Cleft lip/palate;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with his Coopersville, MI family



Max

Cleft lip/palate;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with his Ocala, FL family



Carter

Ptosis;
Waiting in a Kazakhstani orphanage
Soon will be with his Cincinnati, OH family



Daniel

Cleft lip/palate;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with his McKinney, TX family



Vera, Irina, and Tatiana

Waiting in Russia
Soon will be with their Newport Richey, FL family



Sayera

Very small stature for undiagnosed reasons;
Waiting in a Kazakhstani orphanage
Soon will be with her Cincinnati, OH family



Caelyn

Spina Bifida;
Waiting in a Chinese orphanage
Soon will be with her Cincinnati, OH family



more **happy endings**

You can find all TSC children, placed or in process, online.
www.theshepherdscook.org/happy_endings.html

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I believe that statement to be both true and profound. We will never know the full cost to Jesus, and to God the Father, of purchasing our own adoption. Our only response in the face of such an overwhelming exhibition of love is to fall down before Him in worship. As we occasionally draw comparisons between our adoptions of special-needs kids and God's adoption of us, may we never forget that the high financial cost we pay to complete these adoptions does not begin to compare ñ nor ever can ñ with the price our Lord paid to purchase our adoption.

Thank you, Father,
Amen

Family Spotlight - Continued from Page 2

Luke only had one common atrium in his heart, and oxygenated and deoxygenated blood were mixed in there together.

Doctors explained to the Petersons that this was a very serious disorder and told them that the long term prognosis was not good. Even so, Jon and Missy knew that God had called them to adopt this child, and they proceeded. A close friend of the Petersons has a biological child with this very rare disorder, and he was able to offer them some hope and encouragement.

After only a few short months, the Petersons traveled to Korea to bring their son home. Although the first several days were very difficult, as he struggled with the loss of his foster family and tried to adjust to his new schedule, Luke quickly attached to his new family. He has bonded with his parents and is quite close to his brother and sisters. Little Luke badly needed surgery on his heart, and his family repeatedly tried to schedule this surgery. Again and again, because of the physical frailty resulting from his condition, Luke would become ill as the time approached for his operation, and his surgery would have to be rescheduled. It was frustrating to watch the time slip by when they knew his need was urgent, but Jon and Missy continued to wait on God's timing. Finally, in July, the doctors were able to perform the procedure on Luke's heart. They rerouted his superior vena cava ñ since the vena cava is usually located on the right side of the body, Luke was born with two ñ to his lungs so that only oxygenated blood would flow to his cells. They also repaired the valve leading to his atrium because it had been damaged by the heavy strain on his heart. Both parts of the procedure were successful, and doctors initially believed that the dire predictions about Luke's future had been overturned. Since the surgery in July, doctors have discovered another serious condition in Luke's heart, and the Petersons are even now evaluating options for surgery as they try to decide what's best for their special little boy.

As the Petersons watch Luke, whose future is by no means certain, they are daily reminded of the blessings that come when believers wait on God and seek His will. Since the beginning of time, he had appointed little Luke to be a member of the Peterson family. Jon and Missy can see how He has been preparing them to raise their son, however long they have with him, and many things that at first seemed inconsistent have now been shown to be part of His plan. □

Written by Kristie Rosenow

BIND UP THE BROKEN BUS PROJECT

Find out how you can be involved in our latest **Bind up the Broken** project.

The Shepherd's Crook is formulating a plan to help purchase and transport a used school bus to Emilio and Sully Barra for use in their important work with the orphans of the Dominican Republic. Emilio and Sully work for the Lord, ministering to His people at REMAR church in the Dominican Republic. REMAR is a worldwide Christian organization based in Spain that ministers to the marginalized of society: drug and alcohol addicts, prisoners, the poor, orphans, and the elderly and disabled.



Six months ago, Emilio was called to be the pastor overseeing the work of REMAR in the Dominican Republic. He and his wife, Sully, along with several other missionary couples, tend to the many needs of 6 orphanage houses, 62 orphaned children, the church, and a Christian school for the children.

These dedicated workers labor daily for the Lord, often going without electricity or clean drinking water. They have only three vehicles in the entire church, comprising one small car and two trucks. Emilio and another driver make three trips each morning to take all of the children to school and three trips each evening to take them back to the orphanages. Emilio and Sully are praying fervently for a school bus so they can transport the children to and from school and church more efficiently and more safely.

We have located a bus that would fit their needs well, but we still have to raise the funds to purchase the bus and transport it to the Dominican Republic. If you feel led to contribute to this Bind Up the Broken Supply Project, send your donations to:

The Shepherd's Crook Ministries
P.O. Box 773
West Chester, OH 45071

You can also donate online at www.theshepherdcrook.org. Be sure to designate your donation for the "Dominican Bus Project."



bus project online

This article can also be found on our website.
www.theshepherdcrook.org/busproject



upcoming events



upcoming events online

Read more about upcoming events online.
www.theshepherdsCrook.org/events.html

- ✓ On **June 5th**, we will be having our third annual Celebration Banquet. You can register for the event online at www.theshepherdsCrook.org.
- ✓ We are planning another **Ma Jia Le Project: China** surgery trip with Dr. Jorge Lazareff and Global Neuro Rescue for sometime this summer. Watch our website for details.
- ✓ On **May 1st**, Kristie and Allan Rosenow will represent TSC at Mechanicsburg Brethren in Christ Church in Mechanicsburg, PA. For more information, call 717-249-3236.
- ✓ Our next newsletter will be published in the **Fall of 2004**.

On June 5th *Celebrate with us...*
at The Shepherd's Crook's third annual Celebration Banquet.

Register for the banquet online at www.theshepherdsCrook.org

Celebration Banquet

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