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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 sit down to write this column, I am essentially surrounded by noise and activity—even more than usual. My wife is working on the semi-annual clothing switch-out. This ritual occurs in both the spring and the fall, as the prevailing weather changes from one classification (such as, warm/hot) to the other (i.e., cool/cold). The reason for the noise and bustle is that we still have fifteen children at home for whom this rite must be performed. First, my son and I haul all of the out-of-season clothes bins up from the basement, transforming our already too-small family room into something of a used clothing warehouse, filled with Rubbermaid bins and piles of clothing. The room is almost unusable until this ordeal is complete. Next, Kathy, aided by the older girls, goes through all of the bins to determine what items are potentially reusable and which ones need to be donated to charity or thrown out. Then the process begins in earnest: the children, in groups of two or three, report to the family room for “trying on.” Each child receives a load of clothing which he or she will try on (in another room), one or two items at a time, and then submit to inspection by Mom. Items that pass inspection are classified as either “good” or “play,” depending on condition and suitability, and are marked with the appropriate designator (“G” or “P,” respectively) along with the child’s initial(s). The youngest children have to be helped by their older siblings in this operation.

The whole “clothing switch-out” procedure lasts for a week: five days, give or take. By the end of the week, the bins have been filled with clothes from the season we’re closing out, and they have been put back in the basement. Our oldest daughter, Kristen, has compiled a list of articles still needed for each child to have a reasonably complete wardrobe for the incoming season. All of the clothes for the incoming season (except those yet to be bought) have been laundered and put away. And everyone, especially Kathy, is exhausted. We’re always thankful for the hand-me-downs and the donated clothing that we go through in this process, and for the fact that we don’t have to try to figure out how to fit out all of these wardrobe demands without the hand-me-downs. But the truth is, we’re glad that we don’t have to do it more than twice each year, and, without doubt, it is an exhausting ordeal each and every time.

As I said at the beginning, the fall switch-out is in process all around me right now. And as I listen to the noise and observe the bustle, I am struck by a couple of thoughts. First, I am thankful for the various ways in which our faithful God continually provides for us. I am thankful, and I am humbled. Christ told us not to worry about how we would manage to clothe ourselves. He said, “And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these! If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t He do much more for you—you of little faith?” (Matt. 6:28–30, HCSB) And yet I almost daily have to remind myself of this very thing, O me of little faith!

Second, I am struck by the fact that the magnitude of the activity and noise is a consequence of the number of children we have, and the number of children we have is a consequence of God’s leading us to adopt . . . fourteen times. In addition to the wonder that accompanies parentage through biological processes (four times), we have been blessed through the magic and wonder associated with the temporal adoption of children into our family. Psalm 127 says, “Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, children, a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one’s youth. Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them.” I admit that not all of the arrows in my quiver were born in my youth, but I can certainly testify to the truth that the man with a full quiver is blessed of God. Some of our (Kathy’s and my) arrows are the offshoots of the natural tree, but far more of them are branches that have been grafted in through adoption. How grateful we are to the Master for this blessing. And how this wonder teaches us about the love and care and skillfulness of our Father in grafting all of us into His spiritual, eternal family.

On many levels and in every way, I am blessed. And I am thankful for the ways in which the noise and hustle and bustle of the semi-annual clothing switch-out reminds me of those blessings.

Soli Deo gloria!



Spotlight: Website Changes

If you’ve been to our [Waiting Children](#) page during the past few days, you might have noticed that the left sidebar looks a bit different than it used to. Previously, some of the orphans were listed by the country’s name, while others were listed by region. We used this method for a number of years in order to comply with the regulations of the various countries that these children come from. Some countries will allow pictures of orphans to be posted on-line along with the name of the country. Others will allow pictures to be displayed only if the country remains unnamed, and still others will not allow pictures at all in any situation. Thus, in our efforts to comply with these regulations and to share as much information about these children as possible, we have listed children by country or region on essentially a case-by-case basis.

First, we are asking you to read them. Remember, these are real children in real need. Each one is created in the image of God, and each and every one is stuck in some sort of institution, waiting for his or her permanent family and all that such a family can bring into his or her life. Also, please pray over every one of these kids. Pray for a family, and pray for the child’s welfare while he or she waits. Recently, however, we realized that our listing categories had become somewhat muddled. So, we took a closer look at this system and decided to make some changes in order to bring some clarity to our website. Now, the left sidebar lists only regions of the world, not individual countries. We are hopeful that this change will result in the ability to post pictures of more of the waiting children. Sometimes it can be difficult to connect with a child if there is no photo associated with his/her information, and so we want to list as many details about each child as possible. If you would, please pray with us that more children’s pictures will appear on our website in the near future. We continue to strive to do all that we can on behalf of these neediest of orphans, and we covet your prayers and support in this work.

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.



Joshua,
in China



Joshua, at home
in Ohio



Joshua,
in China



Joshua, at home
in Montana



Katherine,
in China



Katherine, at
home in Michigan

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