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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

I recently stumbled across an article written in the Journal of Medical Ethics titled, "After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?"¹ I found this article deeply disturbing. Before I go further, though, I want to state, again and for the record, that The Shepherd's Crook Ministries is a pro-life organization. Our work specifically is focused on the orphan, in striving to find homes for waiting children and advocating for these special ones in any way we can. But this ministry exists within the context of God's mandates to care for the orphan and to value all human life. What I mean when I say that we are pro-life is that we affirm that all human life is sacred, and that life begins at conception. The sacredness of human life derives from the fact that man is created in God's image and that the Creator has put His stamp of significance on man. The Bible affirms, too, that man is man while still in the womb, not only at the moment of birth or, more relevantly to this discussion, at some point after birth.

And now, back to the article in the Journal of Medical Ethics. The authors of this article, Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva, advance an argument to the effect that the killing of a child should be permitted after the birth of that child for the same reasons and on the same basis that the abortion of that child would have been permitted while he or she was still in the womb. They present the justification for abortion (pre-birth) as a fait accompli: there is no question in their minds that this issue has been decided, and that abortion is a justifiable choice for the birth mother. The authors state, ". . . *we claim that killing a newborn could be ethically permissible in all the circumstances where abortion would be.*" They then proceed to argue that a newly born child is still a potential person, in the same way that an unborn child is merely a potential person. "*Failing to bring a new person into existence cannot be compared with the wrong caused by procuring the death of an existing person. The reason is that, unlike the case of death of an existing person, failing to bring a new person into existence does not prevent anyone from accomplishing any of her future aims.*" The authors are arguing that the newborn, like the preborn, is a potential person rather than an actual person. This clever reasoning allows them to suggest that the abortion practitioner—and now the neonatal physician or nurse—has not actually killed a person, but has merely terminated the existence of a potential person, a person who might have been.

From the authors' point of view, they can argue that the unborn child and the newborn child can be considered of lesser value than, for instance, the mother and father, because the child is not actually a person. He or she is a human being, they say, but not a person. "*We take 'person' to mean an individual who is capable of attributing to her own existence some (at least) basic value such that being deprived of this existence represents a loss to her. This means that many nonhuman animals and mentally retarded human individuals are persons, but that all the individuals who are not in the condition of attributing any value to their own existence are not persons. . . . Merely being human is not in itself a reason for ascribing someone [sic] a right to life.*" This reasoning is beyond absurd to me.

The authors of this article suggest that the killing of a child, a potential person, does no harm because the child is not capable of making any aims and thus experiences no loss or harm at being denied the ability to strive to achieve those aims—through being killed. "*If . . . an individual is capable of making any aims (like actual human and non-human persons), she is harmed if she is prevented from accomplishing her aims by being killed. Now, hardly can a newborn be said to have aims, as the future we imagine for it is merely a projection of our minds on its potential lives. It might start having expectations and develop a minimum level of self-awareness at a very early stage, but not in the first days or few weeks after birth. On the other hand, not only aims but also well-developed plans are concepts that certainly apply to those people (parents, siblings, society) who could be negatively or positively affected by the birth of that child. Therefore, the rights and interests of the actual people involved should represent the prevailing consideration in a decision about abortion and after-birth abortion.*" Thus, the sole qualification for personhood, which determines whether or not a human has a right to live, is the self-awareness necessary to form aims for one's life. The potential ramifications of this line of reasoning are, in my opinion, frightening. My own daughter, Kathryn, would, according to this reasoning, not qualify for personhood and should have been killed, if not in utero, then after birth. Many of our TSC children who are home with their families, enjoying life and giving joy to others, would fall into the same category. What a loss the world would have suffered if these children had been exterminated, for any reason.

The Bible tells us that God has ordained all the days of our lives before we were even born, "when as yet there was none of them."

"For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them." Psalm 139:13-16

This doesn't sound like the description of a potential person, but an actual person formed in the image of his Creator, imbrued with incalculable worth. No arguments of man, no matter how cleverly conceived and presented, can overturn the truth of God's Word, and as we continue our work of advocating for the "neediest orphans of the God's flock," we must always remember that. The future of children, and indeed our society, is at stake.

Soli Deo gloria.

1. "[After-birth abortion: why should the baby live?](#)" Alberto Giubilini and Francesca Minerva; Journal of Medical Ethics, published online February 23, 2012

Spotlight: Waiting Children

By Greg Godwin, Administrative Assistant

In the four years that I have been working for The Shepherd's Crook, numerous people have asked me questions about our ministry and the adoption process as they began to consider adoption. Looking back over those conversations with the benefit of hindsight, one of the things that stands out to me is that people often wonder what qualifies a child as a "waiting child." Until recently, I have thought that people were unclear as to how severely disabled a child had to be in order to be listed as one of our waiting children—and I think that in some cases this was what folks were asking about—but I now think that the confusion was primarily over the term "waiting child," as that reflects a fundamental difference between the world of international special-needs adoption and "regular" international adoptions of healthy or very nearly healthy children. (I'm largely leaving domestic adoptions out of this, because there are other factors beyond those that will be discussed below that differentiate it from international adoption.)

With a "regular" international adoption (for lack of a better designation), a family contacts an adoption agency and, after being found to be suitable prospective adoptive parents, communicates with the agency regarding what kind of child they envision joining their family. Then, the family is put on a list with other families hoping to welcome a similar child into their homes. Finally, after what can sometimes be years of waiting, the family's turn comes and they bring home their new baby. This is the picture of adoption that we see presented most frequently in movies, television, and by celebrities in their own lives. And, in fact, a quick Web search for "waiting families" revealed that there are at least hundreds of families out there, hoping to adopt a child someday.

Now, if you were to reverse the roles in the above scenario, you would have a basic overview of the world of international special-needs adoption. Rather than having lists of waiting families who wait in turn, so to speak, for a child, there are lists of children who are waiting in orphanages and foster homes around the world for someone to come and rescue them. The Shepherd's Crook's focus is on these children, those whom adoption agencies have trouble finding families for. A child can be difficult to place for a number of reasons. In our eyes, it doesn't matter why an orphan has become a waiting child. We have children on our website who are simply too old by some standards (in some cases, that means that they are over the age of two years); others who have a small and correctable physical disability; others who have more severe physical and/or mental disabilities; and still others who are healthy but whose biological sibling(s) are being placed with them.

It is tragic whenever a child is separated from his biological parents for any reason, but the tragedy is even greater when the child's chances of finding healing and acceptance are lessened because of a perceived undesirability. Each one of them has been made in the image of God, and as such ought to be treated like any other human being, for that is what fundamentally makes us human. This is our calling: to be the voice of the waiting children, to proclaim their plight loudly, to advocate for them in the hope that they will be adopted, and, most importantly, to pray that they will all know the love of our heavenly Father through Christ. We would love to see the church of Christ step forward to adopt the world's waiting children, the world's neediest orphans, just as our Father has adopted us. What a powerful witness that would be.

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.



Eliana,
in Korea



Eliana, at home
in Pennsylvania



James, in
Guatemala



James, at home
in South Carolina



Simon,
in China



Simon, at home
in Kansas

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