

Road To Adoption

What Led Us To Adopt – Again!

by Ginny Wells

[Note: This article was originally written as an e-mail to friends and relatives in the fall of 2002, and describes the events, activities and circumstances that led a 51-year-old husband and his 48-year-old wife to expand their family with a 2nd adoption. This piece was written before the Chinese government had referred 15-mo.-old Sheng Guan Ling for our consideration in 2003. As of today, 1 Dec 2007, she is our happy, healthy 5 ½ year old daughter, Krista Li-Ming Wells.]

"It has been an enormous lesson in faith to ... see us enter into this incredible mystery of what does it mean to embrace a child who didn't have a family and now we are her family. Now we are apart of her and she's part of us -that's what God has done with us -- and that's what the Gospel is."

-- Steven Curtis Chapman, recording artist,
adoptive father of Shaohannah of China

"Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed."

-- Psalm 82:3

On Memorial Day Weekend, we attended an adoption reunion at the Cleveland Zoo for those who had adopted through the European Adoption Consultants (EAC) agency. There were 2,000 of us strong, and at one point, we were organized to form a parade. Each child received a flag from their country of birth, and a sign -- the name of the city of the orphanage where the child once lived. Children were everywhere... clinging to their adoptive mother's or father's hand... and with the other hand proudly and gleefully waving a flag of their heritage, e.g. -- Vietnam, Cambodia, Romania, Guatemala, China, Russia ... Waxing philosophical, I first thought how beautifully symbolic this was of adoption, holding on to one's roots at one hand and, simultaneously, holding on to the people who are giving the child wings.

But then, EAC began to play on loudspeakers that classic Neil Diamond song, "America." Growing up with an immigrant mother and grandfather, "America" is a song that has made me brush away tears in the past. Yet now, for some reason the tears could not be brushed away... they were starting to come in full-force, much to my embarrassment. My children naively turned to me, asking, "What is making you sad?", or "What is your problem, Mom?" I put on my sunglasses, even though it wasn't sunny, and hung my head, only to briefly glance up, taking in a tall, attractive woman unashamedly sobbing at the sidelines of the parade. I caught my husband's eyes, too, which were glistening wet, at the sight of so many hundreds of children who were formerly orphans.

Although I felt disjointed and appeared out-of-control, I really did know what was happening. Between our experience in Russia and oh-so-many adoption conferences to preserve my licensure, I have learned more about Third World orphanages than I ever wanted to know. / knew that my tears were not for the children at this parade, but for the thousands, even millions, left behind...

A leader in a Christian relief organization once prayed, "Lord, break my heart with the things that break your heart." I have prayed that prayer, and knew undoubtedly that God -- through His Holy Spirit -- was breaking my heart that day...

On the trip home, Mick brought up the idea of adopting again. Interestingly, until this

time, we both felt that another adoption was a "closed door" because of his medical issues. Here Mick was, pursuing it in conversation, talking about it so naturally and enthusiastically, without any prodding from myself. We began to prayerfully research adoption on the internet until 1 a.m., seeing pictures of beautiful children from Haiti, India, the U.S.A., and all over the world.

Mutually, we decided to pursue an adoption from a country where the child would have virtually no chance of hearing the gospel - and that country was China. We quickly learned that there are 500,000 precious Chinese little girls that are abandoned - in ditches, on cliffs, on street corners. From a friend who adopted from China, I had learned earlier that little girl orphans are not really considered human. China, of course, is the most populous nation on earth - one out of every five persons on earth live in China - I could easily be one of those little girls. Millions literally have not even heard the name of Jesus in this nation that regards evangelism as criminal activity.

China is also a nation that would accept us as adoptive parents - because there are so many Chinese children that need homes, they accept adoptive parents who are in their forties and fifties. The child that we adopt will more than likely be 3, 4, or 5 years old because of our ages. In researching this, we learned that these older little girls become abandoned when their mother gives birth to, or finds herself pregnant with a boy. Sadly, these older ones are also the children least likely to find homes. Additionally, as in other Third World orphanages, education is not provided for orphans. As in the region where our Michael lived, the orphans inevitably face a future of slave labor. Concerning an older child, I think back on my own experience as a five-year-old overseas. I remember assimilating the language quickly and enjoying my altogether short-lived, bilingual status. Practically speaking (for those of you who are interested in this), we also learned that the U.S. Government allows up to \$10,000 of adoption costs to be written off our taxes.

ROLE MODELS

When I think about our decision to adopt, I also find myself reflecting upon certain people who planted vital "seeds" unforgettably inscribed in our hearts and minds. Some of the people described below are household words to you; others will never be known here on earth, but I believe are heralded in the annals of heaven. Consider these and the way they live or lived their faith.

a. **Dale Evans Rogers** – Moved with grief for hurting children, Rogers and her husband Roy took in several children in need. Redefining her career, did this decision then give Rogers a lighter load, a Leave-it-to-Beaver type of lifestyle? I think not. Embarking on this different road, Rogers then became endeared to these children, even though her heart was broken at times for their need and want. Nonetheless, her labor of love reciprocated her with uncommon gifts. She had a compassion and depth that is rare among celebrities, as mirrored in her poignant book, Hear the Children Crying.

b. **Martin Luther** – Although I know the name of Luther evokes understandably controversial emotions in some readers, I have to esteem Luther for this -- he and his wife, a former nun, took in and raised eleven orphan children. Luther believed that this was his duty as a man of faith. Rather than detract from his life work, I believe it helped to accomplish it, and purify his soul as well. What is characteristic of Luther's life is his search for truth, particularly in the issue of salvation. I believe personally that raising an orphan that has been neglected and deprived of human basics can strip away all the chaff in one's life - the self-absorption, the materialism, the petty hobbies - and leave one seeking the truth, clinging to what matters most. The truth is only human beings and the Word of God will last throughout eternity. I believe that every decision on how we spend our time and money must be surrendered to God and weighed against these criteria.

c. **Former Congressman Tony Hall** -- now a United Nations Ambassador. Hall once remarked that over 2,500 scriptures in both the Old and New Testaments speak of caring for the hungry, the poor, the oppressed, the widow, and the orphan. So, what does this tell us of God? What does this

tell us of how we are to live? As a side note, Hall also said that the first time he saw a child with a distended stomach and matchstick legs (as our Michael was when he left Makhachkala, the city near Iran where he lived) that he cried for four hours. I cannot begin to tell you how much that statement meant to me in the first year Michael lived with us!

d. [Larry Bauer](#) – Larry was a tremendous spiritual example to me when I attended Bowling Green University. He wrote recently in one newsletter a thought-provoking meditation on James 1:27, "...*this is true and undefiled religion, that we care for widows and orphans in our distress.*" He shared that this is true religion, as orphans have no way of paying us back as we care for their needs; i.e, no personal gain is attached. Larry and his lovely wife Brenda work with the Lost Boys of Sudan. If you desire to learn more about his outreach, please e-mail him at larrybauer@juno.com

e. [A couple in Parade magazine](#) who adopted abandoned children from our country and other nations. Their words were right to the point, i.e., "If we can do it, you can, too."

f. [Adoptive Mothers](#) – This is my catch-all section where I'm citing adoptive mothers who have both humbled me and caused me to think as they impacted my life simply by living theirs. These words come to mind when I think of them - courageous, determined, and self-sacrificial.

- A young pastor's wife who already had four biological children. Although her duties herein would be more than enough for most women, this woman and her husband went on to adopt four abandoned children, including a precious baby who was left in a dumpster in South Africa.

- Single social workers who have adopted sibling groups that needed homes. Social work can be an emotionally-draining profession and single motherhood can be one of life's toughest jobs, yet these unselfish women persevere with love and patience.

- A woman in my age group (old!) who raised four children to adulthood, then with her husband next adopted a young sibling group that desperately needed a home.

g. [The Story of the Starfish](#) – Although this is obviously not a role model, this story has always been compelling to me. Simply put, thousands of starfish were washing up on a beach and would imminently die. One brave soul was walking along, and, every few steps, picked up a starfish and tossed it to the security of the ocean depths. Another soul approached this good Samaritan, questioning the wisdom of just one individual working to save thousands - "What do you think you're doing? There's no way you can save all these starfish!" Holding up one of the sea creatures, the brave individual responded, "See this starfish? This one is not going to die!", and she gently returned it to deeper waters. I think of this story when I consider adoption of needy children.

MY DECISION

After my husband and I discussed adopting again, I knew in my heart of hearts that I would say "yes" to this. However, I felt I needed time alone with God to affirm this. I knew, too, I needed to "count the cost" as I would be the one to do the majority of the care giving. Among other discourses, I remember telling God that I was not organized enough, too "out of the box" already, too many tendencies to over commit, and too old.

Yet while I was both lamenting to God and praising Him simultaneously (this takes talent!)... something else was happening. A favorite scripture of mine in Psalm 51 reads, "*Behold, thou desirest truth in my innermost being, and in thy hidden part thou wilt make me to know wisdom.*" What that simply means is this – as I am honest, brutally honest before God (I generally do this with letters to Him), He will give me wisdom... Deep calls to deep.... As I continued in prayer and praise, I sensed this (and I know this may seem really "out of the box here!") but I believe this is true ... God

weeps for China. A half million little girls are abandoned in China. That is a very sad and grim statistic, but a fact nonetheless. Yet to God, I believe He knows each one by name -- and weeps for them, and longs for them to know His Son of healing, compassion, and acceptance.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

I hope when you read this that personal applications will be made -- that readers will not merely say, "Isn't that nice?!" without some sort of application. Here are some suggestions...

a. Forward this on to others who may wish to adopt. I also would be glad to respond to any prospective adoptive parents at e-mail info@wellssofsalvation.com.

b. With prayer, research adoption. I have prayed that at least one person will follow through on adoption after reading this. Adoption is so Biblical -- consider the lives of Moses, Esther, Samuel as well as scriptures on how we are adopted into God's family.

I have included websites below of credible, reputable international adoption agencies. So many children in our country languish in foster homes, needing a permanent adoptive home as well. Children's Services in your county can best help here.

- www.ftia.org
- www.bethany.org or 1-800-BETHANY
- www.holtintl.org
- www.eaci.com

c. Ohio Youth Advocate (OYA) and similar programs in other states. OYA needs people to befriend children in foster care. If you cannot adopt or offer foster care, please contact your Children's Services Bureau on how you can still make a difference in a child's life. Christian agencies such as Child Evangelism Fellowship can always use volunteers to minister to children as well.

d. Pray (and if medical conditions permit, fast) for China, Sudan, and other countries where the gospel is forbidden. In reading the book Love On Its Knees years ago, I learned that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not just happen. People had been fasting and praying for years that the doors would be open for the gospel to be shared in Russia. Let's continue that -- intercessory prayer is so good; my burdens seem so trivial when measured in light of suffering Christians in these nations.

e. Encourage mothers of special needs children, single mothers, and adoptive mothers who may be struggling. I see so many single mothers as our modern-day widows - we need to care for them and include them. I know, too, of mothers of special needs children who became disillusioned when church members ignored or dismissed their needs. Oh, how the church needs to be the church!

f. Simply pray -- "Lord, break my heart with the things that break your heart." And, then ask God for His eyes to see the broken-hearted - He longs to be near to them. Seek Him, ask Him to use you...

May the Lord richly bless each of you as you prayerfully consider this information!

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