

The LYDIA Fund



...to look after orphans... ~ James 1:27

Let Youths be Delivered from Institutions by Adoption

Volume 1 Number 2

Fall, 2000

From the Editor

I believe with all my heart, and have for years, that faith in the promises of God is fundamental to living a life that glorifies him (see Romans 4:19-21). But about a year ago I heard an illustration that drove this truth home like nothing had before.

The reason that this illustration struck me so profoundly was because of the circumstances we were in at the time. My wife and I had just brought a little boy home from Russia to be our adopted son. We began the adoption process on the heels of a second-trimester miscarriage, which was very difficult (as many of you know). We completed the entire adoption process in less than two months (those of you who've adopted know that that is miraculous and it means that our lives were consumed by adoption during that time). And in the meantime we moved into a new house that we purchased before we knew we were going to adopt. Talk about trusting God's promises! Now we were home with a little Russian boy who had a cleft lip and palate that required two surgeries ASAP. He was underdeveloped physically and mentally and so required immediate medical attention. We had no idea where the money for the medical needs was going to come. And my employer at the time decided to change insurance providers, and we had no idea how that was going to affect us. On top of it all, we were adjusting to life with two one-year-olds, which is very hard. All the stress from the previous months, which we didn't have time to deal with, converged with the present stresses and sent both my wife and I headlong into a pit of God-scourning doubt and second guessing. Then came this analogy one Sunday morning. It was intended for kids and was exactly what this child needed to hear.

Your daddy is standing in a swimming pool out a little bit from the edge. You are, let's say, three or four years old and standing on the edge of the pool. Daddy holds out his arms to you and says, "Jump, I'll catch you.

TRUST GOD!

by Rick Gamache

I promise." Now, how do you make your daddy look good at that moment? Answer: trust him and jump. Have faith in him and jump. That makes him look strong and wise and loving. But if you won't jump, if you shake your head and run away from the edge, you make your daddy look bad. It looks like you are saying, He can't catch me or he won't catch me or it's not a good idea to do what he tells me to do. And all three of those make your dad look bad.

But you don't want to make God look bad. So you trust him. Then you make him look good, which he really is. And that is what we mean when we say, "Faith glorifies God" or "Faith gives God glory." It makes him look as good as he really is. So trusting God is really important.

And the harder it seems for him to fulfill his promise, the better he looks when you trust him. Suppose that you are at the deep end of a pool by the diving board and can't swim, and your daddy is at the other end of the pool. Suddenly a big, mean dog crawls under the fence and shows his teeth and growls at you and starts coming toward you to bite you. You crawl up on the diving board and walk toward the end to get away from him. The dog puts his front paws up on the diving board. Just then, your daddy sees what's happening and calls out, "Jump in the water. I'll get you."

(Trust God! continued on page 4.)

LYDIA Fund's Mission:

to encourage and enable Christian couples in greater Minnesota to adopt children from orphanages and similar institutions overseas by providing financial assistance for their overseas program fees and agency-designated in-country expenses.

GOODBYE RETIREMENT; HELLO 5 MORE KIDS!

By Janice Connor

How does a middle-aged couple find themselves the parents of five young children between the ages of four and ten? Why would this couple give up thoughts of retirement, IRA's, travel trailers, and senior's retirement villages to concern themselves with swing sets, broken arms, bunk beds, children's Tylenol, pediatric dentists, and head lice?

The story starts over thirty years ago when Michael and I were married. Before our wedding Michael said he would like to have twelve children. I loved children too, but I wasn't sure about twelve! Through the years God blessed us with four girls and three boys. As the years went by, we wished there were more children; we could not seem to lose that desire for twelve. Four or five years ago we checked into overseas adoption, but we were told that the agency and country would not look favorably on our age. So we gave up the idea of adoption.



In the providence of God, a social worker friend of ours, Heidi Foy, gave us a call in early February to say, "I have a family of four siblings in Russia who are ready for adoption; your age is no problem. Are you still interested in adoption?" What an explosion of thoughts and feelings and prayers that phone call brought. After talking with all of our children, with each other, and with the Lord, we said "Yes," even though we had no money for such a huge undertaking.

After filling out oceans of paperwork, I was getting ready one morning to go to the adoption agency for the umpteenth time when I suddenly felt a strong urge to pray, "Lord, if there is just one more child who really needs our home, please show us." That day when I met our director she was terribly upset about an adoption in Russia that had gone wrong with a little four year old orphan who was left behind. Of course the words just popped out of my mouth, "We'll take him! Let me talk to Michael, but I think he'll agree." He did agree and that is how the Lord brought our fifth, or should I say, our twelfth child into our hearts and home.

Many scriptures speak to the worth of a child and the blessing of having children, but one of our favorites this year has been Mark 9:35-37: "Whoever in My name and for My sake accepts and receives and welcomes one such child, also accepts and receives and welcomes Me; and whoever so receives Me, receives not only Me, but Him who sent Me." (The Amplified Bible) What a privilege!

As we traveled to Russia, adopted Olga, Anastasia, Katerina, Ivan, and Dmitry on June 7, and finally made it home to Minnesota on our 30th wedding anniversary, June 19th, some truths from God's Word were made clearer to me. 1 John 4:9 says, "We love Him because He first loved us." Even our ability to love requires God's intervention. We

began in a similar way to love these children who did not have a clear understanding of love. They were love-starved and self-centered just as we all appear before our Heavenly Father. Because of our Father's great love, He gave everything to accomplish our adoption. How can we be less willing? Michael and I have realized our weakness and our inability to love and give and serve like our Heavenly Father does, and so we need to claim His supply for our needs. At times we feel very weak, tired, and unwise. We thank the Lord for our daughter, Alicia, who just graduated from high school and has chosen to stay home this year to help with her new brothers and sisters.

Difficult? Yes, it is. Think of the problems of adopting just one. And then multiply by five! Problems with discipline, authority, and physical problems, too, all have been part of the challenge facing us. We are greatly helped and blessed by those who have promised to pray for us, and by those who have given money, time, and other necessary things. Everything given has met a need, and we are so grateful to God for you all.

Our most important goal in all of this is to lead our children to Jesus Christ and a personal relationship with Him. "I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth" (3 John 4). Were it not for the gifts of friends, groups such as the LYDIA Fund, and even total strangers, the children would not be here. Praise the Lord, Jehovah Jireh!

Congratulations!

We are excited to have been blessed by God through you to be able to help these children get adopted this past quarter:

**Andrew Valera Hansen
Rachel Sveta Hansen**

Proud parents: David and Cheryl Hansen

NEW PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

By David and Cheryl Hansen

Andrew and Rachel were "born" in our hearts years ago. David has always had a special care for Russia, a desire to do something for Russians, as they have endured many years of suffering and oppression. Cheryl's heart's desire was to be a mother, but many years with no husband, and thus childless. Then in 1997, late in life for both of us, we married.

We started the adoption process with prayer. Then we filled out papers in the summer of 1998. And in early March 2000, Reaching Arms International, our adoption agency, referred a brother (age 7) and sister (age 5). Just the combination we were hoping and praying for! Cheryl immediately knew they were for us. David had to decide. How can a mere human decide which children to choose? Through prayer our gracious Father moved us to know. But it was a tremendous inward struggle to have to decide in the space of a weekend. The decision wasn't based at all on information we had about the children since all we had was a 2-minute video in a language we didn't understand. God put love in our hearts for these children we didn't even know.

So we boarded a plane to Ukraine on July 8, 2000. We met our children after just two days. The children were asked if they would like to be our son and daughter and

go to America. They gladly accepted! At this very first meeting they climbed into our laps and made their way deeper into our hearts!

Seeing all the children at the orphanage broke our hearts. They were all so scrawny, and lots of them gathered around us and wanted our hugs and attention. They kept calling us "mama" and "papa." We wanted all of the children to have homes.



After days and days of sitting around and going to offices in old buildings to do more and more paper work, on July 18, 2000 these children became ours. In the first days the children were voracious eaters, and they gained over ten pounds each. We loved carrying them, but now it takes a lot more energy on our part!

Our lessons as new parents started right away. Rachel had a huge abscess on her neck that burst. Andrew sliced open his foot on a piece of glass at the Amsterdam airport (dads, don't let your sons walk in a fountain barefoot) and had to have the cut glued together. We learned not to buy chocolate ice cream if we want the clothes to stay clean. And we experienced firsthand how delightful it is for a child to fall asleep in your arms.

In the space of two months, our children have gone from being little Ukrainian street urchins and tree climbers yearning for unripe fruit & nuts to crack open with a scrap of wrapper as their only earthly treasure to learning English and manners and being excited about being in a family, about learning, and about Jesus. These children are sponges. They soak in everything: words, mannerisms, schooling, songs. Maybe it seems so because these are our first children.

One thing we struggle with is that the children have been deluged with material things. We do not want to spoil them. We need balance and wisdom as parents to know how to help them cope with living in America, where almost everyone is spoiled.

This adoption seemed "impossible," but God poured out His wonderful grace and still is through the loving prayers of others. It has been and still is exciting. The children continually fill our hearts with joy and our bodies with exhaustion!

Name This Newsletter

You may have noticed something missing from the LYDIA Fund newsletter, a name! Help us to remedy this situation. Send in (or call in) your suggestion, and if yours is chosen, you will receive:

- our gratitude
- recognition in this newsletter
- a gift basket of candies and handicrafts from Eastern Europe.

The LYDIA Fund



Bethlehem Baptist Church
720 13th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55415

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MINNEAPOLIS, MN
PERMIT NO. ----

Trust God! (Continued from page 1.)

Now, you have never jumped from that high and you can't swim and your daddy is not underneath you and this water is way over your head. How do you make your daddy look good in that moment? You jump. And almost as soon as you hit the water, you feel his hands under your arms and he treads water holding you safely while someone chases the dog away. Then he takes you to the side of the pool.

A week after I heard that illustration I was in a car with the man who gave it. He asked me about Yaroslav and how things were going and how he could pray. I told him. And I'll never forget him looking in my eyes and saying, "Rick, our Father dives well and swims fast!" And he did, and he does, and he will! We give glory to God when we trust him to do what he has promised to do, especially when all human possibilities are exhausted. Faith glorifies God.

This illustration is taken from John Piper's sermon, "Faith: In Hope, Against Hope, for the Glory of God," preached at Bethlehem Baptist Church on 9/26/99.

you can participate in this great calling!

- Pray for the LYDIA Fund.
- Tell others about us.
- Adopt an orphan!
- If you wish to give, send checks payable to:
"Bethlehem Baptist Church"
720 13th Ave. S.,
Minneapolis, MN 55415
(Please indicate "Lydia Fund" on a separate piece of paper, *not* on the check itself.)

CONTACT

US:

by phone at
(612) 338-7653 ext.345

by e-mail at
LYDIAFund@juno.com