

The LYDIA Fund



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

*Let
Youths be
Delivered from
Institutions by
Adoption*

Volume 3 Number 2

Fall 2002

Congratulations!



Giovanna Ayers adopted from China by Gary and Corrie



Sara Grace Anna Tinklenberg adopted from Ukraine by Brad and Bonnie



Grace Lade adopted from China by Craig and Shelley

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’” -Isaiah 55:8-9

The following adoption story is a glorious example of God’s high thoughts and wondrous ways. He certainly “moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform.” The LYDIA Fund feels privileged and honored to have played a small part in getting Beau and Jack to the family God placed them in. And we feel privileged and honored to know people such as Dave and Wendy Briggs who count their trials joy because those trials are working to produce in them Christ-likeness. May you be filled with faith as you read - like we were!

HIS WAYS ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN OURS

Dave and Wendy Briggs

Several years ago I heard a man share his story on Focus on the Family. At the time, FOF was doing a series entitled “When God Doesn’t Make Sense.” The man shared how over a very short period of time he lost his father to a sudden heart attack and watched helplessly as his wife and daughter slowly died of AIDS. At the same time, he was the pastor of a church that asked him to keep it all secret because they were afraid of their reputation being hurt. During this entire time, the man begged God for an answer to why he was suffering this way. The Lord remained silent.

A few months after his wife died, he had to take his son into the doctor to get a shot. During the entire ride to the office his son kept asking his dad not to get a shot. The dad remained silent. Inside the waiting room, the son pleaded with his dad not to get a shot. The dad remained silent. As the doctor gave him the check-up the boy begged to be spared the pain of a shot. Finally, the nurse came in and gave the boy a shot. Immediately the boy began to cry and gave his dad a look of total betrayal. The man said, “At that moment, there was no way I could make my son understand why he needed a shot. All I could do was hold and comfort him. Immediately, the Lord answered my prayer for an answer to why I was suffering. It was as if He said, ‘There is no way I can make you understand why your father, wife, and daughter all died. But I will hold and comfort you through this . . .’”

In the same way, through adopting Beau and Jack, the Lord has led us into a difficult time. We wish we could tell you that the adjustment has gone very well. But we can’t. We wish we could tell you that Beau and Jack were becoming friends with Drew, Alex, and Tommy. But we can’t. We wish we could tell you that Beau and Jack appreciated our family and all that we did for them. But we can’t. We wish we could tell you that we all loved our new family and thanked God daily for bringing the 2 new boys into our home. But we can’t.

We were led very clearly to adopt the boys, and the Lord confirmed it repeatedly over the past two years. After Wendy became pregnant with Tommy, everyone told us to stop the process because there was no way we could handle a newborn and two very needy orphans all at once. After weeks of fervent

prayer, the only One who said to go forward was God, and it was very clear. So we obeyed. My parents and I brought the boys home from Bulgaria the first week of November, 2001.

We immediately began to see some behaviors that we had not counted on.

The first month seemed like a long nightmare. Beau and Jackson were not only extremely stimulated by their new environment, they were also very defiant. No matter what we said, Beau did the opposite. It was difficult as it affected a newborn and the other children’s lives on a continual basis. We held him through hours of temper tantrums because he was completely out of control. No amount of discipline would change this behavior. Over time Beau began to respond to my discipline but would go crazy whenever I was out of the house and he was competing with 4 other boys for Wendy’s attention.

Beau also didn’t like his brothers. In Bulgaria he was all smiles until we picked up Jack from his orphanage. We can see the looks on Beau’s face in all the pictures as we were picking Jack up. At home he felt threatened by both Drew and Tommy. Periodically, Beau would hurt Drew for no reason whatsoever. Drew tried so hard to play with Beau but was always physically hurt in the process. We also saw Beau threaten Tommy on a daily basis by holding large objects over his head, trying to push him off things, and once even threatening to slit his throat with a knife. We were horrified and unsure what to do except to be hyper-vigilant in keeping a constant eye on Beau and Tommy.

Initially, Jack’s behavior seemed much better. He had a very lovable and funny personality and was much more calm. However, we began noticing that he was trying to touch the other boys in sexual ways. During the night, he would go to Beau’s bed and start fondling him. Alex was the one he tried to fondle the most. Again, we couldn’t get him to stop this behavior. All we could do was to try to keep him separated from the other boys.

Needless to say, these behaviors and others added a ton of stress to our family. Our home was in constant upheaval with all of the hyperactivity, defiance, safety issues, and neediness surrounding Beau and Jackson’s behavior. Drew began writing notes to us

telling us he didn't want to come home anymore and Alex became very withdrawn. Tommy began throwing up more and sleeping less. Wendy and I were stressed out all of the time and felt trapped in our home. Did we hear God wrong? Did we ruin our family by adopting these boys? These and other questions began flooding our minds. We began crying out to the Lord for answers or for something to change.

The Lord has met us in this crisis in many different ways. First, He surrounded us with wonderful people from our church. Many people brought over meals, got together and prayed on our behalf, and called to encourage us continually. Others came around us to encourage and strengthen us in a very accepting manner at a time when we were at our lowest physically and emotionally, simply trying to make it through each day.

Second, He brought Ann Dahl into our lives. She works for an adoption agency in Fargo, North Dakota. Her counsel has been priceless. She told us that we needed to think about what was best for the entire family. 15-20% of adoptions with older children do not work out, and the children have to be placed into different families. This helped relieve the feeling of being trapped.

Third, the Lord met us in our times with Him. He showed both of us that He leads us into affliction and traps. And, at the same time, He will also deliver us so that He gets the glory and we unmistakably see his hand of rescue.

After several weeks of daily struggle, we began to see that we were not the best family for Beau and Jack. They needed a family that didn't have younger children whom they could hurt and that could meet their emotional needs better than us. We realized that we could give them all of our attention for the next 10 to 15 years, neglecting our other 3 kids, and it still might not be enough. We realized that Drew, Alex, and Tommy could have some life-long emotional damage from the stress in our home. We realized that the daily stress could erode our marriage and cause our family to implode. So we decided to seek out another family to place them in.

After contacting many agencies, a family in Arizona called us. They said they had prayed about it and would like to adopt the boys. They believe that the Lord has given them a ministry of adopting kids from disrupted adoptions. They have three older children from Eastern Europe already and their teenage son is fluent in both Bulgarian and English and was excited to have 2 new Bulgarian brothers. Their extended family has 20 adopted kids, and all attend a Christian school where the teachers are aware of how to deal with adoption issues. This seemed like the perfect answer to our prayer. We began to see the Lord's deliverance.

I flew the boys to Arizona a few weeks later. Their new family explained to them that our role was to bring them from Bulgaria to the USA and that their role is to raise them. The boys accepted

that explanation, have adjusted well, and are going to a Christian school. The new parents give us weekly updates and all seem to be doing well.

Since then we have gone through a whole range of emotions. At first we were surprised at how sad we were to see them leave. Our home seems much emptier now. We also feel guilty as if we have abandoned them and scarred them for life. We have felt relief, being able to actually have conversations again and to get out of the house. Most of all, we have found a new level of contentment, resting in who God is, being thankful for what He has given us, and accepting what He hasn't.

We have also asked the Lord for wisdom. Why would He lead us this way just to see us fail? Did we not hear Him clearly? Where did we go wrong?

We believe the Lord did lead us to adopt Beau and Jack. As we prayed fervently about it, he kept confirming it over and over again. When we look back, we wouldn't do anything different in our decision-making process - we obeyed every step of the way to the best of our ability.

God arranged things in such a way that He chose us to adopt Beau and Jack. Then He raised up a family who is much better equipped to raise them with all of their issues. This family would never have thought of adopting them from Bulgaria, but felt led to take them from us and raise them. We know that God has an awesome plan for Beau and Jack.

The Lord has also used this to do some very deep things in each of us. First and foremost, He developed in us contentment. Paul writes in Philippians 4:11, "I have learned the secret of being content." Contentment is a learned characteristic, and the Lord has "learned us real good." Second, the Scriptures tell us that often He leads us into affliction and traps (Lamentations 3:25-40; Psalm 25). Then, when things look hopeless, He rescues us to glorify Himself, to produce Godly character in us, and to build our faith. Third, the Lord has given us a whole new appreciation for the body of Christ. In Acts 2, we see a picture of the early church using their gifts to meet each other's needs. The Lord has placed us in a fantastic church that has helped us shoulder this burden. Many people rallied around us and assisted us in many different ways. These are just a few of the things the Lord has done in our lives through this whole experience. For these we can honestly rejoice. *If*

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 fees and expenses.



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www.LYDIAFund.org

HEY!

LYDIA is now a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. So now you can make out checks to "The LYDIA Fund" and send them to:

The LYDIA Fund
c/o Jeff and Sarah Owens
3125 Park Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55407

Participate, by all means, in delivering youths from institutions by adoption!

- Receive future quasi-quarterly issues of this newsletter.
- Pray for the LYDIA Fund.
- Adopt!
- Donate.

Contact Us:

by phone at 612.338.7653 ext. 345 or by e-mail at LYDIAFund@juno.com