

The LYDIA Fund



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

Let Youths be Delivered from Institutions by Adoption

Volume 2 Number 1

Spring 2001

Bringing Krystal Home

by Kent and Kelli Allen

"I have your referral!"

It was October 2, 2000, and the adoption agency was calling to let us know that we had a daughter. What a joyous day! Her name was An Yi, and her birth date was February 20, 2000. She lived at the Kunming Children's Welfare Home in Yunnan, China. Small photos and very basic medical information arrived later. We decided to name our precious girl Krystal Anyi Allen.

The next several weeks were a mixture of many strong emotions - thankfulness, joy, excitement, anxiety - and busy preparations and planning for our trip to China. What size clothing and diapers should we bring? What kind of formula and bottles? What medicines might she need? Will she be frightened by our non-Asian faces? When can we go bring her home?

We finally left for China on November 25. We spent a few days in San Francisco on the way over to help break up the long plane trip. We arrived in Beijing several days before the rest of our group to adjust to the time difference and to acclimate ourselves to the Chinese culture. We wanted to capture as much of China in our minds as possible so that we could share it with Krystal someday. The Great Wall, Tiananmin Square, and many other famous sights are in our photo albums, but most importantly, we became familiar with the

friendliness, helpfulness, and kindness of the Chinese people. In a few days, the other expectant parents in our group arrived, and, on December 4, we boarded the plane that would take us to Kunming in south China (just north of Vietnam) where we would be united with Krystal.

We arrived at the hotel and were told to meet our guide in the lobby in about one hour to meet the babies. We scrambled to pull the items from our luggage that we might need right away. When the time came, we went to the lobby. There we found several Chinese orphanage workers holding gorgeous baby girls. I spotted the one I thought was Krystal, and said her Chinese name to the woman holding her. The woman nodded and handed her to me. Krystal just leaned back and stared at these two strangers with white skin and strange sounding words. She looked frightened, but didn't cry. Her new mommy did enough of that for everyone.



We got to know each other over the next several days while we did the paperwork that completed the adoption and allowed Krystal to travel with us. Each day we would go for walks to local parks and tourist areas. We'd always attract a crowd. Everyone wanted to peek at our new little girl. Many

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-designed in-country expenses.

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Thoughts About International Adoption Citizenship Day

by Rick Gamache, Editor

At 12:00 AM on February 27, Yaroslav John Stephen Gamache, along with 75,000 other internationally adopted children, became a citizen of the United States of America. The bill that was signed into law last October spared his parents mountains of paperwork, \$250.00, and a two-year wait as the papers passed from the desk of one bureaucrat to another to another to another . . .

Our family gathered with about 700 other folks to celebrate International Adoption Citizenship Day at the State Capitol rotunda in St. Paul, Minnesota. The poor acoustics made it nearly impossible to hear the greeting by State Rep. Kathy Tingelstad and the remarks by Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer. But I did hear "The Pledge of Allegiance" and I did hear and sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." And I did hear the Honorable Paul A. Magnuson administer the Oath of Allegiance. Here's the oath I took on behalf of my adopted son:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the Armed Forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God.

Those words reminded me of a quote by C.S. Lewis that I hunted down later that day:

A man may have to die for our country, but no man must, in any exclusive sense, live for his country. He who surrenders himself without reservation to the temporal claims of a nation, or a party, or a class is rendering to Caesar that which, of all things,

most emphatically belongs to God: himself.¹

Paul says the same thing succinctly in Philippians 3:20: "Our citizenship is in heaven." Does the fact that our citizenship is ultimately in heaven make any difference here and now? Paul answers that question in Philippians 1:27: "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." The word for "conduct yourselves" (politeuesthe) in verse 27 is closely related to the word "citizenship" (politeuma) in 3:20. So a literal translation of 1:27 might read: "show yourselves to be good citizens." Good citizens of where? Of heaven!

So I think Paul is suggesting that our way of life be shaped by our true citizenship in heaven, that is, by a constitution different from this country, different from this world. And that constitution is the gospel of Christ.

We are aliens and exiles here (1 Peter 2:11). So we are to set our minds on another world and think of ourselves as citizens of that world. Then we will say something to this world by the way we live.

As happy as I am that Yaroslav is a citizen of the United States, my prayer is that he'll take another Oath of Allegiance one day:

I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure, by the grace of God, all allegiance and fidelity to sin, Satan, and the world, of whom or which I have heretofore been a slave; that I will support and defend the gospel of Christ against all enemies, foreign and the enemy of remaining sin residing in my own heart; that I will bear true faith in and allegiance to the same; that I will bear the burdens of my brothers and sisters in Christ as we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus; and that I will suffer and die for the gospel of Christ, if need be, because for me to live is Christ and to die is gain; so help me God. *If*

¹ C.S. Lewis, "Learning in War-Time" in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1949, original), 24-25.

Congratulations!

We are excited to have been blessed by God through you to be able to help Kent and Kelli Allen adopt Krystal Anyi from China.

LYDIA Fund's Committee Members

Terry and Deb Bartlett

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THE CALLING OF GOD TO ADOPT AN ORPHAN

by Nila M. Neumiller, Founder and Director of Reaching Arms International

Some months ago, while driving home from work, I happened to catch a radio program on Billy Graham's Decision Today broadcast. The guest was a Native man from Canada who is leading a ministry in a province there. During his interview he gave a testimony about he and his wife's adoptions of eight Native Canadian children. They adopted them as "healthy" infants or young children. Now they are teens and young adults. As time went on, it became evident that not one but all of their children had either Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or Fetal Alcohol Affect. Hearing this, I sat up straight, turned up the radio to listen to what he would say next. Then he said, "God does not always call you to easy things."

This couple accepted the call of God to adopt eight children. They have experienced some of the greatest challenges in their lives in being faithful, committed parents. It is sobering to think and accept that God may ask us to do difficult things. Few things could be more difficult than being forever parents to adopted children with special needs.

At Reaching Arms International adoption agency we have grown to understand that all orphans have some level of special need. The greatest is emotional. It is imperative that adopting parents understand why children become orphans and the effect being an orphan has on a child. Children living in orphanages are not like the ones we see waiting at neigh-

borhood bus stops in America. They do not look or act like them nor do they have even remotely similar backgrounds. Children become orphans because they are abused, neglected, abandoned, or rejected. This creates extreme needs of love, patience, and kindness as well as firmness, discipline, and direction.

Orphan children of every age and gender are waiting for adopting parents. Parents who will say, "I commit myself to you and will do my best for you." Parents who are willing to accept the call of God to adopt an orphan knowing that He will provide all that is ever needed to parent one of His.

Responding to the Apostle Paul's challenge to the Ephesians, is it possible for adoptive parents to live a life worthy of the upward calling that has been received? And in the Apostle Paul's charge to Timothy, is it possible to "fight the good fight of faith" as an adoptive parent? When you adopt an orphan, you are accepting the call of God. It will be difficult. The goal is to live a life worthy of the call and to fight the good fight of faith - do not give up. If you do answer God's call to adopt an orphan, be sure that He will be with you each step of the way. *If*

(Reaching Arms International is an adoption agency located at 3701 Winnetka Avenue North, New Hope, Minnesota 55427. Phone: 763-591-0791. Or visit their web site: www.raiadopt.org)

Living in Despair

Do you think children like to live in an orphanage? We all know they would rather have a family. But in the former Soviet Union, creating big institutions called orphanages was the way the government dealt with thousands of orphaned and abandoned children. It looked like a massive solution: the children were fed, clothed, and taught. It was also used to instruct the future generation in communist ideology. After graduating from the orphanages, most of the children were placed in trade schools to learn a profession or to be able to work at a factory or a construction site. The government provided a place to live - a bed in the dormitory, a room, or in some cases even an apartment.

Today, in the post communist days, the chances of an orphan getting a job or a place to live are very slim. For most of them, there is no hope for the future. The apartments and even whole apartment buildings are being sold today, leaving no apartments to give away to orphans. Their trade skills are so poor that no private enterprise will hire them, and factories are closed. If someone hires them, they soon realize that most of them don't want to work and don't know how to work. This puts them right back on the streets.

Recent studies show that the children graduating from the orphanages and trade schools are not ready to enter adult life emotionally, professionally, or morally. The big institutions are unable to prepare the children for life outside the orphanage. The orphanage system has crippled millions of children.

In Kiev this summer, the daily newspaper Facity reported about the hopelessness and struggles of the orphan children in Kiev. The statistics I read were heartbreaking. 75% of all orphans will not make it to a decent life. Many of them get married young, get divorced soon after, and leave their children in the orphanages. 90% of all graduates get mixed up in some type of criminal behavior. 12% commit suicide. 30,000 homeless children in Ukraine today live on the streets, in basements, or under bridges. *If*

(Taken from an article in the Little Lambs Newsletter, December 1999. Little Lambs Ministry was established to reach out and touch the lives of those who need the most, but have the least - the abandoned children in the former Soviet Union. You can contact them at PO Box 87463, Carol Stream, IL 60168. Phone: 630-260-1947 or visit their website: www.littlelambs.com.)



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would ask us about her in their limited English (or we would understand in our very limited Chinese). When they learned that we had adopted her and were bringing her home to the USA, they would get great big smiles, especially the elderly people. Often they would give us the "thumbs up" sign or say "lucky baby." We would try to reply with "lucky ma-ma" or "lucky ba-ba" (the Chinese word for daddy).

We left Kunming for Guangzhou and the American Consulate where the American side of the paperwork that would allow us to bring Krystal home was to be completed. Once again, it all went very smoothly. We packed our bags for one last time and began our journey back to the USA. On December 16, we arrived at the Minneapolis airport as a family of three. A large

crowd was there to greet us and welcome Krystal home! She even had a great big smile for her new grandma when they met.

Since then Krystal has been a healthy and active little girl. She's growing and changing every day and delighting us every minute. We can't imagine life without her. She is such a blessing. We are often asked why we chose to adopt from China. For us, the answer is quite simple. It is because God told us where our daughter was. Obviously, much research and many experiences also played a part, but we somehow just knew that Krystal was there waiting for us. If God is pulling on your heartstrings about adoption, listen, and don't ignore it. It may be one of the most wonderful experiences of your life! *If*

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

- Receive future quarterly issues of this newsletter.
- Pray for the LYDIA Fund.
- Adopt!
- If you wish to give, please contact us first.

Contact Us:

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