

The LYDIA Fund



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

Let
Youths be
Delivered from
Institutions by
Adoption

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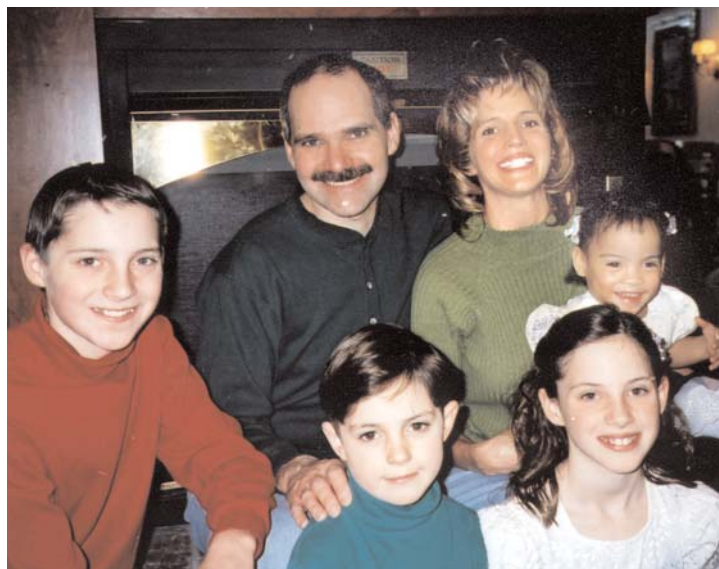
CAMI GRACE: A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S DAZZLING PROVIDENCE *by Tim Glader*

We welcomed home our new daughter, Camella Grace (Cami), from the Philippines on December 17, 2002 after four nerve-wracking weeks in the Philippines. As a testimony to God's dazzling providence, we would like to share with you a bit of her story.

Cami was born on April 6, 2000, about the time my wife, Barbie, and I started to pursue adoption in earnest. Cami was abandoned at the hospital by her birth mother 3 days later. After more than two years of working and waiting, she legally became our daughter. However, in that time, her home, an orphanage in the southern Philippines, became an unsafe place to travel for Americans. Abu Sayyaf guerrillas, with suspected links to al-Qaida, had committed several terrorist acts. The state department recommended no travel to this area. But God answered our prayers, and the Philippine adoption board (ICAB) agreed to transport Cami to Manila. We were told her visa would be processed on November 18 and we could come and get her.

However, when ICAB took her to the embassy for the visa they learned that 6 days earlier the US Center for Disease Control (CDC) had issued new guidelines for tuberculosis tests. She was the first adoptee subject to the new guidelines. Since Cami had a "suspicious" chest x-ray, she would have to stay in Manila for 6 months of daily TB treatments. They would not tell us who was caring for her or even where she was staying.

Years earlier, the Lord had placed Jeff and Deb Bender in our lives. Jeff is an epidemiologist who worked for the state health department and was able to get us connected directly



with the CDC. I was able to talk directly to the author of the new rules. The CDC Dr. told us that he was indeed requiring a new TB test, but ICAB was not willing to administer it. Being sympathetic, he gave us the name of someone at the embassy to contact. He even promised to e-mail that person on our behalf, saying there were waiver provisions available. However, our calls were not returned and no hope of a solution was in sight. Meanwhile, Cami was away from the only home and caregiver that she had known. With no one to care for her, the possibility of permanent attachment disorders and life-long bonding problems were very real. We left immediately for the Philippines to find Cami and work out a solution with the embassy in Manila.

Cami Grace continued on page 2

When we arrived in Manila, ICAB would not let us see Cami for 5 days. Adding to our sense of alarm, the day we arrived, Canada, Australia, and the European Union closed their embassies located a few blocks from where we were staying due to terrorist threats. Finally on December 3, almost 2 weeks since Cami had been sent to Manila, they took us to the White Cross orphanage. Our worst fears were realized, she was severely underfed, had deep infected sores on her legs, a "pink-eye-like" condition in her eyes, and, according to workers at the orphanage, "had sat against the wall and cried for the past 2 weeks." They would not let us take her, so we stayed at the orphanage with her. God knew what He was doing. On our second day there, at a "chance" meeting in a hallway, Barbie met the woman who had cared for Cami for the past 2 1/2 years. She was dropping off another child. Barbie was able to learn invaluable information about Cami's care up to that point, specifically that Cami had been well cared for during the first years of her life, helping immensely with future bonding with Barbie.

Meanwhile, we were working on getting Cami a visa. Up to this point, she had not even been tested for TB. The CDC and ICAB had not agreed on a TB test. And the sobering truth dawned on us that unless a solution was reached, one of us would have to stay with her. Cami was rapidly improving under Barbie's care - amazing all of the orphanage workers. A return to orphanage care was unthinkable. No parent would knowingly leave their child in the care of that orphanage. The embassy was of no help whatsoever, not returning any calls and rebuking us when we went to the embassy, claiming there was nothing they could do about a CDC rule.

Two days later, on Friday, God started to break through. By now there were five adoptive children who were in limbo because of this situation. Back in the states another adoption agency called Rep. Oberstar's office. They called the CDC and got them to agree to give Camella a Mantoux test. We called the clinic to see if we could bring her in for the test. After a 2-hour taxi ride, we arrived at the clinic late in the day. They got everything ready and then couldn't find the tuberculin needed for the test. We offered to buy it ourselves at a pharmacy, but were denied. This was a problem because it took at least 48 hours to read the test, and we had to have it read before Wednesday morning because that was when the next visa appointment was. (The embassy only holds adoptive immigrant visa appointments on Wednesday mornings, missing that appointment would make it January before another appointment was available.) They agreed to test her on Monday, but we had to convince the embassy to agree to give Camella her visa appointment before she had the results. We decided that since we had a solution for a test, I would return home to our other kids, Barbie would stay to get the test done, and I would work from home on getting the embassy to agree

to the visa appointment. Camella was finally given the test on Monday, December 9 with the promise that they would read the test first thing Wednesday.

The test was negative. However, she learned that the results had to be certified, and that couldn't happen until the afternoon. The embassy, thankfully, agreed to allow her to proceed with the appointment and then drop off the certified results in the afternoon. Barbie went to the embassy and waited 4 hours to meet the official. The visa appointment turned out to be simply dropping off forms. It took about 30 seconds.

She then had to wait 7 hours at the clinic for the certified results. The clinic told us she was free to travel to the US. On Thursday, December 12 the ICAB worker went to the embassy to pick up the visa. At the embassy, the social worker was treated very rudely by embassy staff and informed that Camella was to stay in the country for 2 months of TB treatment! She was not given any explanation. When the social worker protested, she was rebuked and told she shouldn't argue with embassy staff.

God's choosing of Camella for us now became very evident. In a rare move, Senator Dayton's and Rep. Oberstar's office got involved and by Saturday we were informed that the CDC in a special meeting had agreed to let Camella travel. Also, because several congressional offices were now calling, several high-level embassy staff finally agreed to meet with Barbie personally, becoming very helpful and accommodating, agreeing to give Cami her visa on Monday.

Barbie ended up spending two weeks with Cami one-on-one, 24 hours a day. The time allowed them to bond in a profound way that would not have been possible if they had been here. Cami's attachment to Barbie has amazed others who have adopted children. Cami is a well-adjusted little girl who already knows the power of prayer. We praise God for His marvelous sovereignty! Our whole family has learned that God is good even in difficult situations.



NEW MISSION STATEMENT

See what's different? Know why? Stay tuned...

LYDIA Fund's Mission

to encourage and enable married Christian couples to adopt children from orphanages and similar institutions overseas, by praying, by providing financial assistance, and by mobilizing God's people to contribute to the cause of rescuing these orphans.



Tom and Anita Alto adopted Isaac (age 4) and Javan (age 2) from the Pskov region of Russia, Fall 2002

Thank you so much for helping us out with the adoption of our two boys. The financial and prayer support was very much appreciated. Your ministry is a true blessing from God.



Michael and Sharon Dwyer adopted Micah Kay (girl), 19 months old, from Guangzhou, China, August 2002

She sleeps great, eats well and is not a fussy girl! A parent's dream. Oh...and she is so cute! Thank you again for helping change a child's life.



Mark and Deb Fredrickson adopted Alaina, 21 months, from Ukraine, Fall 2002

We want to thank you for your prayers and financial support in helping to bring Alaina from Ukraine into our family. We feel so very blessed to have her with us. She is truly a delight and we know that God's perfect plan for our family included Alaina!



Mark and Laura Roesler adopted Telma (age 3 1/2) from Guatemala, November 2002

I'm grateful for the prayer support and financial support from the LYDIA Fund. We had extra expenses in Guatemala and your support took some of that pressure off. Thank you so much.



Todd and Sheri Hastings adopted Sofia (21 months) from Lugansk, Ukraine, Summer 2002

David and Victoria Henle adopted Olya "Beth" Elizabeth (age 11) from Zhukofka, Russia, May 2002

Life is chaotic, but that's normal at the Henle house. Above all we have found it in our hearts to make room for one more, to share our gifts that we have been given and to be able to give a family, a home and a future to such a loving little girl.



The LYDIA Fund



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*Please visit us at:
www.lydiafund.org*

Praise God!

**THE LYDIA FUND IS NOW A 501(C)(3)
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So now you make out checks directly to
The LYDIA Fund and send them to:

The LYDIA Fund
c/o Jeff and Sarah Owens
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**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.

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