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Prayer Requests

- We encourage you to pray fervently for the children of the world who are waiting for their families to find them.
- Pray for the adopted children and their families, particularly as they go through the sometimes-painful process of getting to know each other and becoming a family.
- Pray for The Shepherd's Crook Ministries: that God would bless us financially and allow us to continue doing this important work in His name.

From the Director

One of my favorite stories in the Bible is Ruth's story. There are so many lessons contained in this small Old Testament book, and some of its passages are among the most often-quoted of the whole Bible. Briefly, there is a family from the nation of Israel, from Bethlehem in the land of Judah, who leaves their home and travels to the land of Moab during a period of famine. In time, the father, Elimelech, dies and his two sons then go on to marry Moabite women. After another ten years, while the famine continues, the two sons die, leaving only their widowed mother and the two widowed daughters-in-law. The mother, Naomi, decides that the only sensible thing for her to do is to return to Bethlehem and live there according to the laws of the God of Israel. Naomi tells her two daughters-in-law to return to their own people to find new husbands. One of them, Orpah, decides that Naomi is right, and she returns to her people. But the other one, Ruth, insists that her place is with her mother-in-law, no matter what. She utters those words that have become so well-known: "Wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God."

So, Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem to eke out an existence according to the mercies God built into the law of the Israelites. In the Book of Leviticus, where God lays out the levitical law, He says to His people, "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the Lord your God." God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, made provision for the poor and the needy to gather food for themselves. (It's interesting to note, in passing, that the harvest times of various grains and fruits of the vine in Israel were dispersed among virtually the whole year; thus, the needy were provided for year-round, not just in the typical autumn harvest time we are familiar with.) Ruth thus went out each day to glean grain for herself and her mother-in-law.

The rest of the story is somewhat strange to us, so removed are we from the customs of this time in Israel's history. Ruth, at the urging of Naomi, presents herself to Boaz and, according to the norms of the time, asks him to marry her and redeem her from her impoverished and barren life. Boaz fulfills the requirements of the law and, in the end, marries Ruth, providing for both her and her mother-in-law. This is a beautiful story because, first of all, it shows us something of the people in the lineage of David, for Ruth and Boaz go on to have a son named Obed. Obed later has a son whom he names Jesse, and Jesse goes on to become the father of eight sons, the youngest of whom is David, the king of Israel and ancestor of Jesus. The second reason the story is beautiful, though, is because of the poignant and unmistakable way it demonstrates for us the concept of kinsman-redeemer, a foreshadowing of the work of Christ on our behalf.

So, what does all of this have to do with adoption? Why am I telling such an apparently unrelated story when this ministry and its newsletter are dedicated to the cause of the orphan? I will cover that in my column in next month's issue of this newsletter. Soli Deo gloria!

Spotlight: Daniel

In January of this year, we introduced you to a little boy in China named Xiao Bing, whom we have been calling Daniel. He was born in China on December 1, 2001 and abandoned by his birth family shortly thereafter, probably because he suffers from hydrocephalus. Shortly before his third birthday, Daniel underwent surgery at the hand of a neurosurgeon that The Shepherd's Crook helped to send to China, to insert a shunt to drain the excess fluid from his brain. Daniel's shunt later became infected, and despite several more surgeries, his condition didn't appear to be improving. In 2005, he was transferred to Hope Foster Home, a short-term care facility, as he was not expected to live much longer. God, however, had other plans for this boy. Daniel didn't die, and he was subsequently moved to another foster home in China—Agape Family Life House—in January 2007. Here he is able to receive long-term care, which is important because, sadly, he will never be available for adoption.



Over the past two years, Daniel has made significant progress, in spite of initial opinions that he would never do more than sit in his wheelchair and stare at the sky. He is now doing much more than that. He has learned to walk with support and to feed himself, and he has gained an interest in music and television. His caretakers are optimistic that they can teach him to walk unaided. He has also learned to tell time, so he now knows when to expect such things as his snack and his favorite television programs. Praise God for this unforeseen progress!

The Shepherd's Crook has committed to paying for Daniel's foster care. The monthly cost is \$300, and for some reason, we have consistently had trouble raising the full amount. In spite of this, God has continued to provide for Daniel and has kept him at Agape. As this is an ongoing expense, we are asking each of you to consider prayerfully whether you might be able to help this boy to stay in the foster home where he has begun to blossom. We currently have commitments amounting to half of this monthly need, but we still need \$150 more each month. If you would like to donate to Daniel on an ongoing basis, [click here](#) for more information.

Completed Adoptions

The following children have come home to their adoptive families during the last few months. We include them as representatives of all of the children who have come home. Their faces provide just a glimpse into how significantly these lives are changed, as the children transition from the hopelessness and aloneness they once knew, to the comfort and security that come from belonging to a family. Thank you for helping us make these dreams realities, both for the adopted children and for their families.



Caleb, in China



Caleb, at home in Ohio



Rebecca, in Uganda



Rebecca, at home in Ohio



Teresa, in China



Teresa, at home in Maryland