

FALL 2011

# Reflections

Reflecting God's heart in the lifelong journey of adoption and orphan care



## Through the Crucible

# Hope's Promise

Spring 2011 Volume 7 Number 2

## Adoption & Orphan Care

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Libby, born Aug. 10, 2010. Domestic adoption by Dwight & Brittany Whitworth.



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Kalea, born June 2, 2009. Domestic adoption by Chad & Heather Willborn. Photo by Vanessa Kruse.



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Cover photo: A child in Vietnam, © Colleen Briggs

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Reflecting God's heart in the lifelong journey of adoption and orphan care.

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# The Crucible of Change

From the Director



Obstacle or opportunity? Most times it's hard to tell the difference.

Plummeting numbers of inter-country adoptions condemn children in developing countries to languish in orphanages, suffer abuse or die.

Change litters the adoption landscape...social media, internet, litigation and shifting cultural norms to name a few. These serve to remind us that the way things were is not the way things are.

Out of the crucible of change erupt opportunities for ministry.

Our mission to reflect God's heart in the life long journey of adoption and orphan care remains the same. New opportunities to accomplish this abound!

Permanency for children in Christian families with an opportunity to know Christ compelled our international adoption programs. U.S. politics and current policies now thwart these efforts worldwide.

Our indigenous orphan care staff members, however, work tirelessly in each of their countries to fulfill these goals. Colleen Briggs' account of how one child rose from the crucible of war to impact the lives of countless orphans in Vietnam will encourage and inspire us to join with God where He is working!

*“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart.”*

Proverbs 17:3, NIV

With the door of inter-country adoption slamming shut, many Christian families now adopt from our foster care system or infant adoption programs. As these children mature, compromised beginnings frequently announce themselves through challenging behaviors, medical needs or increased therapeutic interventions, depleting their family's financial, emotional and spiritual resources. In response to this mounting need for post adoption services we're developing a support group ministry for adoptive moms of children with challenges. With a pilot group set to launch this fall, A Place I Didn't Belong will provide an opportunity to help bring healing and hope to adoptive families.

Efforts to provide Christ centered adoption services throughout Colorado just got a face-lift! Historically, long hours of driving from our Castle Rock office accomplished the task. Today, five offices strategically located throughout Colorado serve both birth and adoptive families...Castle Rock, Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins and Pagosa Springs.

God's heart for children and families worldwide remains constant! He wildly loves them and longs to redeem and restore...one child, one family at a time!

Father, give us eyes to see your opportunities amidst the obstacles!

**God Bless!**  
**Paula Freeman, MSW**  
**Executive Director**

# The Crucible of Adoption

By Paula Freeman



Disorder. We learned that FASD often manifests itself in a 'ceiling' of development, social maturity, judgment and learning. So until she hit this ceiling, we had no idea how severe her problems really were."

Kristy and Joe anguish over how to help their daughter. She drives, but can't keep a job because of her inability to learn new skills. Becca seems adrift in a world of her own. She grows more withdrawn from her family while "stalking" friends through texting, facebook and phone calls. Her growing lack of judgment causes friends to shun her. "Joe and I believe it's our responsibility to keep her safe from the world and the world safe from her. I just don't know how we can continue to do that."

The parent child relationship they dreamed of and lost is not the only casualty of Kristy and Joe's adoption. "We have also lost friends over this," Kristy said. "People in our church think we have done something horrible. Why else would Becca have so many problems?"

Like many adoptive parents of children with challenges, Kristy and Joe often feel isolated. Some suffer in silence; others publicly unravel. They are not alone. As Christians continue to answer the call to adopt "at-risk-children" expectations more frequently collide with reality, creating families in perpetual crisis. The journey from one's own heart, longing to love and be loved, into the heart of God, a place where broken dreams find safe harbor, may feel unattainable.

Out of the crucible of these challenging adoptions, Hope's Promise watched an opportunity to reflect God's heart in the lifelong journey of adoption and orphan care emerge. What if moms had a safe place to share their stories with people who understood? What if these same moms returned to their families validated, nurtured and better prepared for the spiritual battles that threaten them and their families?

Families who adopt need communities of grace and understanding. Even the healthiest of individuals, marriages and families falter when stretched to capacity.

*B* "Becca was wonderful for many years," Kristy explained, reflecting on time gone by since their toddler's international adoption. Becca lost at least one mother before her adoption, perhaps there were others; each engraved in her fragile heart as love going away. Joe and Kristy simply wanted to love another child. They had no idea Becca's broken heart would be the starting point in their adoption journey.

"We home schooled her along with our other children to help with attachment," Kristy said. "We soon realized she also suffered with learning disabilities. How could we have known she would never overcome them?"

Depression and isolation from family members accompanied her onset of adolescence. Other emotional scars announced their wounds through challenging behaviors, magnifying tension in their home. "About that time we also learned she had been prenatally exposed to alcohol. After testing and consulting with various professionals, she was eventually diagnosed with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum

*What if moms had a safe place to share their stories with people who understood? What if these same moms returned to their families validated, nurtured and better prepared for the spiritual battles that threaten them and their families?*

What better way to begin this healing process than in the context of relationships! Hope's Promise will launch A Place I Didn't Belong, an eight week pilot support group ministry for adoptive moms of children with challenges this fall. For more information or to participate, please contact Paula at 303-660-0277.

# Adoption Legacies

## Family Album

### Behind Every Child

By Colleen Briggs & Sherryl Dillon

Into every child's story intertwine the narratives of those who have gone before. For Sherryl, a divergent twist in the story line is a tale of sacrificial love.

Sherryl's daughter, Kelsey, was just shy of her 16th birthday and finishing her sophomore year of high school when a typical morning collided with a tearful conversation across the kitchen table. Although in shock, Sherryl fully supported Kelsey's clear intentions to give birth. After many months of soul-searching, Kelsey and the baby's birth father decided adoption would be the ultimate gift of love for their baby: the family they were unable to provide. Sherryl recalls, "as a pregnant teenager, Kelsey was faced with making a challenging and selfless decision, as any parent would do for a child."

As Kelsey and the birth dad spent time getting to know the adoptive family they chose through Hope's Promise, Sherryl and her husband also met the adoptive grandparents. They shared the joy of impending birth, and also acknowledged that loss for one family gives blessing to another.

Sheryl encourages adoptive parents, "Through adoption, you are given the gift of a child. But please know that through adoption you give a gift as well... that of enabling birth moms and dads the opportunity to put their lives back on track... While Kelsey's life is forever and indelibly changed because of her pregnancy, as her mom, I am so very proud of the choice she made for Eli. My wish for you, as you become parents through adoption, is that you have happy healthy babies, and help them understand they were gifted to you because of the love of their birthmother."

And remember, behind every child are the stories and the love of those who came before.



Lila, born Jan. 20, 2011. Domestic adoption by William and Andrea Hedgepeth. Photo by Hillary Wheat.



Blaise, born Oct. 13, 2010 with big sister Bryn. Domestic adoption by Bill & Michelle Wagner.



Amelia, born May 25, 2011, and Shelby, born Dec. 20, 2007. Domestic adoptions by Jesse and Rhonda Denison. (2)

### Welcome Home

Puspa	daughter of Mark and Karen	Tadele	son of Ted and Judy
Avayah	daughter of William and Heather	Beck	son of Greg and Casey
Mateo	son of Andre and Emily	Eryn	daughter of Mark and Stephanie
Nate	son of David and Carrie	Bella	daughter of Damian and Irene
Isabelle	daughter of Bob and Renee	Ava	daughter of Jason and Shannon
Amira	daughter of Brad and Kelli	Isabel	daughter of Tim and Susan
Amelia	daughter of Jesse and Rhonda	Carley	daughter of Shane and Cary
Yemisirach	daughter of Ted and Judy		

### Program updates

Please visit [www.hopespromise.com](http://www.hopespromise.com) for information about specific adoption programs including domestic adoption, inter-country local services, and international adoption.

# One Child, Through the Crucible

## Orphan Care in Vietnam

By Colleen Briggs



afford textbooks; so he borrowed from friends, quickly absorbed the content, and returned the books. Studying became his path to understand justice, freedom, sin, and then salvation. In a Communist country where Christian beliefs are suppressed and believers are persecuted, Thanh discovered faith in Jesus Christ through his studies. He earned his medical doctor degree in Vietnam and attended seminary in the United States, committed to returning home to help his people. Subsequent medical trips to remote areas exposed him to many orphans and children in need.

Thanh, a long time friend of Hope's Promise, became our orphan care Country Coordinator, along with his wife, Kim Anh, in 2008. Today, Thanh oversees two homes for orphans, educational scholarships for three pods of thirty students each, and regular medical missions to impoverished areas. Although the causes of orphan-hood in Vietnam today differ from Thanh's childhood war memories, his heart of compassion forged during the crucible of those tragic days presses on with the heart of God to rescue, one child at a time.

One child grew to become a man who is impacting the lives of countless children in need. Thanh now chooses to fight a different kind of war than the one that shaped his childhood. Thanh says, "Every day, we pray for our people and the authorities, too. They do not know what they do. They need the Light. We always choose the solution 'conquer them with love.'"

Five-year-old Thanh was just one child struggling to survive the chaos of the Vietnam/American war and its aftermath in the 1970's. He vividly recalls an early morning tragedy. A friend and his family who lived next door huddled around their camp-stove, when suddenly a rocket shattered and killed the entire family except the boy. An uncle rescued Thanh's friend, but he never recovered emotionally and was too poor to attend school. Thanh longed to help his orphaned friend. But Thanh's own family evacuated from end-stage battle areas three times in one month, fleeing past the carnage of people who waited too long to leave. They lost all their property in the war. After Saigon fell, the new Communist government mandated mass relocation of its new citizens. Cassava and salt kept the penniless family alive, day after day. At the time, Thanh only knew he was hungry; as he grew in his understanding of the world, he realized that loss of freedom was the harshest casualty for the South Vietnamese people.

Eyes of children, like Thanh's, always peer from the dark shadows of adult conflicts. Thanh remembers that the word "orphan" was not even mentioned in Vietnam during the war and its aftermath - too many orphaned children to acknowledge their situation as unusual, too many people oppressed by their own suffering to care for the fatherless. The number of orphaned children placed in Vietnamese institutions more than doubled between the years of 1966 and 1974.

Through challenges of abject poverty and loss of freedom, Thanh determinedly read every book he could get his hands on. His parents could not



Above: Thanh's leadership has made all the difference for the children of Home of Hope #1

Above Left: Thanh with Duoc, Home of Hope #2's newest family member

Learn more about Hope's Promise's ministry in Vietnam: [www.hopespromise.com/orphan-care/projects/vietnam/](http://www.hopespromise.com/orphan-care/projects/vietnam/) or email [lorie@hopespromise.com](mailto:lorie@hopespromise.com).

# Around the World



**KENYA** Jepson Karau knows what it feels like to go to bed hungry at night. He grew up quickly in a family that struggled to provide basic sustenance. Yet his humble beginnings seemed like nothing to him when he first witnessed the tragedy of children's lives in Mathare Valley: hunger, disease, broken homes, abuse, and all the suffering that one can imagine a child must endure in one of the oldest slums in Kenya. Pastor Karau and his wife, Edith, began ministering in this desolate place in 1983 and opened a new church in 2004. Day after day, torrents of needy people flowed through the simple cement block building, almost always seeking help for a child: lack of school fees and food, needs for medical assistance or counseling. Pastor and Edith Karau grieved when fires broke out in the slums and killed children



who had been locked in the houses because there was no one to care for them. Their hearts broke when church members died of HIV/AIDS, leaving orphans. Pastor Karau says, "We had to do something. Orphan care is now one of the ministries we treasure most. It meets the immediate need of a child that is sometimes the difference between life and death, but it also allows us to pour ourselves into these children in a way only a family setting can allow. It gives us a way to impact future generations when these children finally grow up and serve the Lord in their own way."

**NEPAL** Givson's heart breaks for the motherless children she encounters in the streets, filthy and begging for food, faces swarmed by greedy flies. She mourns the deaths of many vulnerable children two years ago. A deadly diarrhea scourge in a remote village claimed a total of 500 lives.

Of the 29 million residents of Nepal, 30% do not have enough food. Only the capital and a few major towns are developed, leaving vast impoverished rural areas. Many children never attend school. Lack of basic health-care jeopardizes pregnant women and their babies. Thirteen years of Maoist conflict has claimed the lives of fifteen thousand people, leaving countless children orphaned.

Givson's heart soars, though, when she talks about the transformation she has witnessed in the lives of ten former orphans whom she and her husband now parent at House of Hope's Promise, Hope's Promise Nepal's first orphan home. "When they were brought home, they didn't recognize even a single letter of the alphabet... Now, when they sing and worship God, I feel blessed. I am hopeful the children will be blessings of God. Opportunity will change the life of the children and generations."

**Empower Hope's Promise's international staff members** to extract the immeasurable worth of one child at a time from the crucible of his or her particular country. Start a monthly Country Coordinator (CC) co-sponsorship at any amount that fits your budget! You will receive updates twice per year about your sponsored staff member and also have the opportunity to write letters of encouragement.

*"I want to see children flourish through Hope's Promise and the way for me to do that is to ensure that the staff are supported to enable them to do the work that God has called them to."*

Cindy Samples, Vietnam CC Co-Sponsor



**Kenya Country Coordinators (CC)**  
Pastor Jepson & Mrs. Edith Karau



**Vietnam Country Coordinators (CC)**  
Dr. Tran van Thanh & Mrs. Nguyen Thi Kim Anh

*"The Karaus had a dream to rescue children from the unbelievable slum of Mathare Valley into a loving home, not an orphanage, but a real home with family. When my wife and I realized we could be involved in their dream becoming a reality, the decision to sponsor Pastor & Mama Karau was no decision, it was a privilege!"*

Kenny Vaughn, Kenya CC Co-Sponsor

**Nepal Country Coordinators (CC)**  
Names withheld for their security

To begin sponsoring a CC, donate on-line at [www.hopespromise.com/donate/](http://www.hopespromise.com/donate/) and write "Country Coordinator" and the country where they serve in the comment box, or call Holly or Lorie at 303-660-0277.

You are cordially invited to join us for

## *Hidden Treasures Bold Hearts*

Saturday, October 1, 2011  
6:00 - 8:45 p.m.  
The Wildlife Experience  
10035 South Peoria  
Parker, CO

### **A Benefit Dinner**

Featuring stories fresh from the villages of Vietnam. Hear accounts of orphans, God's hidden treasures who suffer unseen; glimpse into the courageous spirits of Vietnamese believers who stand with bold hearts against the persecution of a Communist regime.

### **Orphan Experience**

Come early for a walk through the Orphan Experience, a journey through life as an orphan in Vietnam, Kenya, and Nepal.

### **RSVP Required by September 19, 2011**

Please RSVP to [tammy@hopespromise.com](mailto:tammy@hopespromise.com), or call 303-660-0277

### **Adults Only Please**

If you are unable to attend but would like to give, please mail your donation to Hope's Promise, 309 Jerry St. Suite 202, Castle Rock, CO 80104; or donate online at [www.hopespromise.com](http://www.hopespromise.com)



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## *Hope's Promise Calendar*

### *A Place I Didn't Belong*

#### **Support group for adoptive moms**

Hope's Promise  
309 Jerry Street #202  
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Sept. 29  
Oct. 6, 13, 20, 27  
Nov. 3, 10, 17

Contact Paula at 303-660-0277 for more information.

### *Infant Adoption Training*

Sept. 8, 2011 Colorado Springs  
Sept. 15, 2011 Ft. Collins

Contact Beth or Paula at 303-660-0277 for more information.

### *Free Adoption Informational Meetings*

#### **Thursdays, 7-9 pm Castle Rock**

Hope's Promise  
309 Jerry Street #202  
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Sept. 1 Oct. 6 Nov. 3 Dec. 1

#### **Colorado Springs**

6755 Rangewood Drive  
Colorado Springs Fire Station 20

Sept. 15 Oct. 20 Nov. 17 Dec. 15

#### **Pagosa Springs & Ft. Collins Call for information**

### *Adoptive Family Training*

Grace Chapel  
935 Evalina Street  
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Friday, October 28, and Saturday, October 29, 2011  
9 am to 5 pm.

To register or for more information, please call the Hope's Promise office at 303-660-0277 or email [adopt@hopespromise.com](mailto:adopt@hopespromise.com).

### *Short Term Mission/Vision Trips*

**Vietnam**  
Aug. 31- Sept. 9, 2011

**Kenya**  
Mar. 28- Apr. 9, 2012

Contact [holly@hopespromise.com](mailto:holly@hopespromise.com) for more information.