

# HOPE HAPPENINGS

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## Christmas Miracles~ By Lorne Welwood

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I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS... will soon be heard everywhere. In our culture, Christmas time and being home for Christmas are strongly associated in our minds and emotions. But for many of the world's children, being part of a family at home for Christmas is not even a dream.

Since Hope Services became a licensed adoption agency six years ago, the number of British Columbia birth parents choosing adoption for their children has declined, while the number of children who need families in the rest of the world has continued to soar. Natural disasters and civil wars have left countless children orphaned and homeless, and even more are in need because of political and social causes.

This year, 5 BC children and 35 from foreign countries will be in their new homes for Christmas with the assistance of Hope Services. Altogether, we have been involved in adoptions from about 20 different countries, and more are on the horizon. One of those "horizon" countries is

Sierra Leone, which is just beginning to recover from years of terrible civil war and unspeakable atrocities. Let me tell you a "Christmas" story about a special little boy from that African country.

Angela was almost ready for Christmas. The decorating was done. The shopping was done. Gifts for her husband and two children were wrapped and under the tree. She turned on the

*Natural disasters and civil wars have left countless children orphaned and homeless.....*

television. Somebody was singing "I'll Be Home For Christmas" for what seemed like the hundredth time. She changed the channel and there on the screen was the most beautiful African child she had ever seen.

He was sitting with Rod Black, host of Canada AM, who called him Freeman. Rod was promoting the work of Foster Parents Plan and was visiting a refugee camp for people displaced in Sierra Leone. Not much was known about Freeman, because he seemed to have been struck speechless by the

horrors he had experienced. Angela's heart went out to Freeman, but not only in the usual sympathetic way. As she talked with her husband, they felt they were meant to open their home to Freeman. It was December 23, 1999.

Trying to track down Freeman and determine his status for adoption was difficult and discouraging. Neither Rod Black nor Foster Parents Plan knew what had become of him. Angela's family members were sort of wondering about her sanity. But God did not seem to let Freeman leave their minds.

By the time Angela called Hope Services in January of this year, she and Russ had decided that if they did not find Freeman soon, they would simply consider him an inspiration to adopt some other child from Sierra Leone. They had found a California organization with a child care centre in Sierra Leone, which was willing to try assisting a Canadian family to adopt from there.

Then it happened! In

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# A Departure

*“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9.*

Since March 1997 I have had the pleasure of working for Hope Services and it has been an incredible joy for me to see so many families grow as they have been blessed with the experience of adopting. I have been deeply moved many times as I have been fortunate enough to observe and play a role in the building of families, but by sometime in the coming spring my run with Hope Services will end. Starting in February I plan to cut back to part-time hours. By June I expect to end my time with the agency and my family and I will move on to something entirely new in an entirely different part of the world.

A few short years ago when we adopted our third child from China, I would never have imagined the idea of God calling our family to missions there. Yet here we are, planning to make what for us is a monumental move and join a team in China by the summer of 2003. We can dream and plan and imagine what we want our lives to be and yet our dreams are nothing compared to the reality that God has in store for us when we put our trust in Him.

After much prayer and exploring a variety of options God has led us to join PIONEERS, an organization whose mission is to initiate church planting movements among the world’s most unreached people groups and regions. When we move we will be joining a team of families and individuals in a major urban area. Last March we took a survey trip to that area in order to meet the members of our team and to get a clearer picture of what to expect when we make our long-term move. It was a great time for us to connect and to learn more about the city we will be living in.

Once we are established in China our desire is to be involved in caring for homeless children. I hope to have the opportunity to do international social work that could involve developing foster care and other residential care programs for children with special needs; however, a big part of our initial focus will be on learning a new language and culture since we are thinking this will be a long-term move for us.

It’s a big step to take but we are confident that this is what we are meant to do. I hope you will pray for us.

*Bruce Regier*

## **ADOPTIVE FAMILIES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

The Adoptive Families Association of British Columbia (AFABC) is a province-wide, non-profit society which offers information, support, and assistance to families and individuals involved in the adoption process. The organization serves the adoption community by providing up-to-date information through their magazine (Focus On Adoption), libraries and provincial office; by supporting local chapters throughout the province; by liaising with related groups at the provincial, national and international level; and by promoting adoption as a viable means of building families. The Association dedicates itself to children in need of homes, both here and abroad.

The AFABC has moved!!! They are now located at #275 - 6450 Roberts Street, Burnaby, BC V5G 4E1 Phone 604-320-7330 Fax 604-320-7350. email [info@bcadoption.com](mailto:info@bcadoption.com); or visit their website at [www.bcadoption.com](http://www.bcadoption.com)

### **Upcoming AFABC Events**

**January 12, 2003 - Fun With Flavor!!** (for kids)  
-create distinctive dishes from three countries.

**February 8, 2003 - The Story of Me - Creating Your Child’s Lifebook**  
-a lifebook can bridge your child’s past to the future and build their self worth.

**March 14, 15 & 16, 2003 - Jane Brown’s Renowned Playshop**  
-Jane travels the world with her Playshops to enable children to explore what it means to be an adoptee and a person of colour.

### *Hope Proudly Announces...*

We are pleased to announce the following additions to Hope families since our last newsletter.

#### *Intercountry Adoptions*

- ◆ Bart and Audrey, a boy, Noah, born June 28, 2001 from Thailand
- ◆ Piers and Karen, a boy, Nathan, born April 24, 2001 from Thailand
- ◆ Doug and Shannon, a boy, Steven, born July 3, 2001 from Thailand
- ◆ Jerome and Yvonne, a girl, Celine, born June 21, 2001 from Thailand
- ◆ Bob and Cina, a girl, Chiara, born July 24, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Brian and Louise, a boy, Andrew, born February 8, 2002 from Cambodia
- ◆ Russ and Jenny, a boy, Aaron, born October 4, 2001 from Peru
- ◆ Gary and Teresa, a girl, Olivia, born May 31, 2001 from China
- ◆ Abe and Virginia, a girl, Emily, born June 25, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Rona-Lee, a girl, Makayla, born February 9, 2001 from Ukraine
- ◆ Allan and Keitha, a girl, Ameenah, born June 6, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Peter and Annette, a girl, born January 30, 2001 from Thailand
- ◆ Jack and Karyne, a girl, Anna, born May 20, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Scott and Cindy, a boy, Matthew, born February 1, 1998 from China
- ◆ Mike and Lynda, a girl, Zoe, born March 22, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Dawn, a boy, Adrian, born April 21, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Ken and Shawn, a girl, Macy, born March 6, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Koenraad and Christine, a girl, Yelissa, born March 29, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Sui Lun and Lin, a boy, Isaac, born January 12, 2001 from China
- ◆ Gary and Linda, a boy, Mikhail, born October 27, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Eric and Cindy, a boy, Eli, born February 20, 2002 from the USA
- ◆ Denis and Deb, a girl, Madeline, born June 29, 2001 from

#### Russia

- ◆ Brad, a boy, Mikenson, born February 19, 1994 from Haiti
- ◆ Zoltan and Tracee, a girl, Elisha, born October 23, 2001 from Suriname
- ◆ John and Pam, a boy, Jakobe, born December 17, 2001 from the USA
- ◆ Ken and Susan, a boy, Tanner, born November 23, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Jeremy and Ghislaine, a girl, Briar, born August 17, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Ben and Nancy, a girl, Jaling, born November 10, 1998 from Thailand
- ◆ Tammy and Rick, a boy, Jesse, born September 10, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Robin and Cindy, a girl, Jaenjira, born April 4, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Richard and Mary, a boy, Rohan, born November 8, 1999 from Thailand
- ◆ Ron and Valerie, a girl, Niramol, born August 10, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Trent and Melissa, a girl, Jenna, born July 31, 1997 from Haiti
- ◆ Craig and Glenda, a girl, Oraya, born July 19, 2000 from Thailand
- ◆ Darrell and Leanne, a girl, Kate, born June 17, 2001 from China
- ◆ Jamie and Marcy, a girl, Rolande, born July 2, 2001 from Haiti
- ◆ Ron and Marcella, a boy, Victor, born January 16, 1995 from Ukraine
- ◆ Ken and Carina, a girl, Maya, born November 14, 2002 from Alberta
- ◆ Gerard and Jane, a boy, Jason, born December 7, 2002 from the USA

#### *Domestic Adoptions*

- ◆ Stan and Michelle, a girl, Tori, born February, 2002
- ◆ Scott and Rhonda, a boy, Alexander, born February, 2002
- ◆ Rod and Janice, a boy, Logan, born May 2002
- ◆ Blaine and Jadine, a boy, Zachary, born August, 2002
- ◆ Kerry and Susan, a boy, Caleb, born September, 2002
- ◆ Brian and Kim, a girl, Ilia, born October, 2002

#### **Interesting Websites**

[www.kazschool.com](http://www.kazschool.com) (do a google search). An extensive internet school for Kazakh adoptive children.

[www.adoptionlearningpartners.com](http://www.adoptionlearningpartners.com) A free course offered for a limited time. If you are involved in or considering adoption of a child of a different race or ethnicity, the "*Conspicuous Families: Race, Culture and Adoption*" is offered for you and those who are a part of your world.

[www.adoptionscrapbooking.com](http://www.adoptionscrapbooking.com) Some simple layouts to help get you started on your child's lifebook.

[www.adoptiontravel.com](http://www.adoptiontravel.com) Tips for your trip so that you can be as prepared as possible.

# ~ Our Adoption ~

Dear Friends,

The Apostle John wrote

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And every one who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure. 1John3:1-3

Here is the uniquely Christian way of salvation - that all who trust Christ, without distinction, are drawn into the full blessing of being adopted and made the children of God. It is God's specific desire to be our heavenly Father. His adoption of us as his own children speaks to the deepest level of our desires: to be accepted and loved, to be nurtured and disciplined, to belong to a new humanity the family of God, to have intimacy with the one who created us. But it is more comprehensively and wonderfully God's doing as He calls us through the new birth and remakes us after the image of his Son. In giving us the Holy Spirit God gives us the Spirit of adoption who helps us grasp and cultivate the privileges of our adoption as he assures us that God loves us just as he loves Jesus Christ. The Spirit bears witness that through the joy and pain of following Christ in this life, God implants within us the spiritual DNA of Christ and shares with us the life of heaven, the resurrection life. And that life evidences itself as we call God 'Father' and call Jesus 'Lord' and are gradually made more like Jesus week by week. Adoption by God is a high privilege we receive by faith in Christ despite our bad character and despite our confusion and lack of comprehension. The point the Apostle is making is that because we are adopted *now*, when Christ appears we shall enter into the full glory of our adoption. Then faith will be turned into sight and we shall receive our full inheritance as heirs of God.

*This article was written for the St. John's church bulletin on November 10, 2002 to celebrate three recent adoptions in their church*

Warmly,  
David Short  
St. John's (Shaughnessy) Anglican Church

*continued from page 1 - Lorne Welwood "Christmas Miracles"*

*Then it happened! In September, the director of the organization called to say Freeman has been in their centre since May. They did not know he was "Freeman" until right then. Right now Angela and Russ are going through their preparation and approval process with Hope Services to be in a position to legally adopt him. To see more, go to <http://members.shaw.ca/jfaminoff/>*

As a non-profit society whose mission is "building and preserving the family", it is often troubling that finances so often are a barrier to more families adopting more children in need. It is not uncommon for an international adoption to cost \$20,000 or more including the legally required homestudy and approval process through our agency, fees and expenses payable to foreign agencies or governments, translations, notarizations and authentication of documents, immigration fees, airfares, foreign travel and accommodations, interpreters and guides, medical examinations and reports, legal and court costs, post-adoption social work visits and reports, long distance calls, courier fees, etc.

Thanks for all you have done in the past. Now we are asking you, our supporters, to pray for us to discover ways in which we can help to make the adoption of children more affordable.

## **You Are The Labor Of My Heart**

~by Steve & Annie Chapman~

I would have given anything  
To be the one to know the pain  
Of bringing you into this world.  
But, it couldn't be...  
Though I did not bring you here,  
Still I labored in my tears  
Through the long nights I prayed  
You would come to me...  
You are the labor of my heart.  
Child, you are the labor of my heart.  
With all my strength I prayed  
Till they laid you in my arms.  
Child, you are the labor of my heart.  
Blessed be the Maker of bone of other bone.  
He's made flesh of my desire,  
And today, we'll take you home.  
You are the labor of my heart.  
With all my strength I prayed  
Till they laid you in my arms.  
Child, you are the labor of my heart  
Child, you are the labor of my heart.

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*Do you have any ideas or articles you would like to see include our next newsletter? Do you have feedback you would like to share? Are you interested in writing an adoption relevant article? Please send any and all inquires to Hope Services at 604-850-1002 or email at [hopeserv@telus.net](mailto:hopeserv@telus.net) or [adopt@telus.net](mailto:adopt@telus.net)*