

Sharing the Love

Other adoptive families around LifeWay

Jeff Land, childhood ministry publishing, and his wife Abbey originally thought they would adopt domestically because they wanted a young infant. They soon learned that Taiwan's adoption program usually gives families their babies at 6 months. In September 2007, the Lands welcomed their son Reed into their lives. "Adoption has changed our lives more than we could ever express. God took us from a sense of hopeless despair to a wonderful reminder that He indeed does have a plan and it involves us! We love our son and he has blessed so many people!"



Jeff and Abbey Land with son Reed



*Ken Barker's family (above)
Kate and Izzie Barker (right)*



Ken Barker, LifeWay Worship, and his wife Brenda have welcomed the world into their home. In 1988 they adopted twin daughters, Faith and Grace, from Hyderabad, India. A few years later, the Barkers adopted from China. Joy is now 17 years old. In 1992, the Barkers adopted Samuel from Latvia. At age four, Samuel was diagnosed with leukemia which relapsed at age nine. He had a bone marrow transplant in 2001 and is now a healthy 15-year-old high school freshman. The Barkers also adopted Andrew from Latvia, who is now an eighth grader. Melody, 14, and Daniel, 10, siblings, were later adopted from Vietnam. In March, the Barkers adopted sisters Kate, 8, and Izzie, 3, from Ethiopia. "It is a privilege and an honor to parent each of these children. They are a gift to us, as the Lord tells us, 'Children are a gift from the Lord.'"



Kirk Weimer's family

Kirk Weimer, human resources, adopted three siblings from Ethiopia in January: Bereket, 12-year-old boy; Bethlehem, 8-year-old girl; and Selamawit, 5-year-old girl. Kirk and his wife Heidi also have three biological children, Brandon, 9, Isabella, 6, and Justice, 2. "We have always yearned to be useful to God and to do something with our lives that will impact others," Weimer said. "Once we both realized that our lives are not our own, we couldn't NOT adopt! The orphan situation is huge with over 140 million orphans worldwide and 10,000 new ones every day. We could not sit idly by and wait for someone else to take care of the problem. Children all around the world have the commonality of wanting a family and needing love. We figured we could provide both, so why not?"

Bev Sullivan, leadership and adult publishing, and his wife Rachel have a five-year-old biological daughter Erin, whom they conceived after fertility treatments and two unsuccessful pregnancies. The Sullivans wanted another child so they tried twice using the same approach they had used before, but all attempts failed. They began to consider other possibilities, including conventional adoption. The couple also had heard about embryo adoption, and the concept excited them. After a year the Sullivans become recipients in their fertility center's embryo donation program. The transfer procedure took place on Feb. 4, 2005. "Then, on Valentine's Day, we learned we were pregnant," Sullivan said. "Anna Grace was born to us on October 11, 2005. Just like Erin, she is a superlative blessing from the Lord."



Bev and Rachel Sullivan with daughters Erin and Anna Grace

Kevin Cecil, business technologies, and his wife Janet had three biological boys when they adopted Rebekah in 2003 and Maggie in 2005, both from Hunan province in China. "The initial decision to obey the Lord's will was huge. There was no way we saw humanly [possible] to come up with the required funding. The Lord provided. We have had numerous opportunities to share this testimony with others considering adoption, and at least two other families have similarly been obedient, further glorifying God. The addition of these little girls has totally changed our family. We had three boys and a male golden retriever. My wife was surrounded with males. We now have pink sprinkled throughout the house, and are tripping over dolls and dress-up clothes."



Kevin Cecil's family

Kerrie Ledbetter, business operations, adopted domestically. Rylie Grace, 2, reminds the Ledbetters of God's love. "God placed adoption on my heart from our first days of marriage," Ledbetter said. "We were able to see Him lead us directly to our daughter. She is our little angel, whom we love so much. God couldn't have prepared a better child for our family. I believe that adoption is very near to the heart of God, as He adopted each of us. We hope that God allows us to experience the miracle of adoption again. I believe as Christians God calls many of us to adopt. We have been so blessed as God has led us on the journey of adoption."



David, Kerrie and Rylie Grace Ledbetter

Due to space limitations, *LifeLines* was not able to print every submitted employee story. However, all submissions are available on the *LifeLines* section of IntraLife along with a video extra.