

Stories from the Field

how A Child's Hope International is making a difference

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An Unexpected Adoption Journey “From Foster Care...to China...to Haiti”

In the United States today, there are about 500,000 children waiting for placement in the foster care system. Worldwide, another 143 million are waiting for forever families to fold them into their hearts and homes. The orphan crisis is real and God's Word to His Church is clear.



“Religion that God our Father finds pure and faultless is this, to care for orphans and widows in their distress...”
James 1:27

Mike and Brook Fiegel first felt a call to get involved in foster care in Kansas when the number of children who needed foster homes exploded due to state privatization. There they cared for three infants, one whose high-school graduation they will be attending this spring.

After relocating, the Fiegels also became certified in Ohio, where they were blessed to be able to adopt Peyton, the first little girl they brought into their home. Then, almost as quickly as they felt called into foster parenting, they sensed God calling them out. To what, they weren't sure...

The Lord began to speak to Brook when their neighbors adopted a little girl from China. “I felt like God was giving me a heart for adoption, but I was resisting,” Brook justified. “We had a two-year old. Life was good. Life was easy. We didn't really *need* to do this.”

On the other hand, Mike's family had been blessed by the adoption of his older sister, so adopting was something he always felt he would do. “I recall my parents always telling my sister's story. It was so meaningful to them,” he said. “Most people feel adoption is just for those who can't have children, but I have always viewed it as another way God puts a family together, like He did ours.”

Mike and Brook talked about adopting even before they were married, but that wasn't necessarily Brook's intention back then. God, however, often has a way of redirecting our plans when they run contrary to His.

The couple had made a conscious decision to put off having biological children, but when Brook turned 40, Mike broached the subject as they were walking along the beach one day while on vacation, “So, what are we going to do about having children?” he asked.

Much to his surprise, Brook's response was, “Oh my goodness! Look at that crab!” She picked it up and turned it over. Lo and behold, “China” was written on the bottom! Obviously, it wasn't a real crab, but it did turn out to be a *real sign* from the Lord to confirm for both of them that He was leading them to adopt from China.

Even so, Brook kept wrestling with God, not wanting to give up her *easy life*—that is, until an acquaintance reminded her that she couldn't put God off forever. Those words pierced her heart, and she conceded—*well, sort of*. “Only this *one* time,” she told God. “I'll be obedient this *once*. That's it!”

Brook's defiance was short-lived. On December 10, 2010, A Child's Hope Int'l (ACHI) hosted a packing event at their Hope Factory™ in Cincinnati, where volunteers assemble high protein meals to distribute to hungry children. It was Brook's first time volunteering at the site. About that same time, she and Mike were also getting ready to turn their dossier in for China.



Brook had no idea how grave the orphan crisis was until an ACHI Leader shared his testimony and heart-wrenching videos of orphans that day. She felt so convicted, “God was saying, “There are so many children out there who need families and you're just going to adopt this *one* time?” She determined then to do His will.

The food that was packed that day was going to Haiti, where there had recently been an earthquake. Throughout the day, Brook sensed the Lord planting a seed in her heart for this country, but He had clearly confirmed their call to adopt from China. Their dossier was ready and they were headed there soon. Once again, Brook was unsure what God was doing, so she and Mike just took one day at a time and did what they felt was the right thing to do in the moment.

One short year later, on November 11, 2011, the Fiegels went to China to bring their daughter, Bella, home. They returned in 2014 to adopt Tatum, and then again on January 25, 2016 (their 24th wedding anniversary), to pick up Olivia. Through those years, the couple continued to see sprinklings of Haiti. Though inquiries were made, those doors remained closed.



Adoption often comes with great risk and a roller-coaster of emotions. The Fiegels experienced all of this when they tried to adopt a little boy from Uganda. “There are challenges in adopting from developing nations,” said Mike. “We don’t know why God closed that door, but we accepted it, believing there must be a reason. Maybe it was to prepare us for a longer or more difficult process in Haiti.”

In November 2017, Haiti finally opened up and Mike and Brook, who are hoping to adopt a sibling pair, were able to submit their paperwork. Unlike China, where adoptions can be finalized within a year, Haiti can take as long as three to five years—two to three years to get matched, then another to bring the child home.

Though the couple is unsure at this point how all of this will play out, that’s not what’s important to them. Obedience is. “None of it makes sense that we’re going to Haiti because the process takes so long and we’re getting older, but this is what God is asking us to do,” said Brook. “We try to hold onto our time and possessions so tightly, but when we release these things to God, He blesses us abundantly.”

Mike adds, “God has predestined us for this. Everybody likes the *Savior* part of Christianity, but the *Lord* part is about our response to what He has said. God has a life for us that’s so much more rewarding than we could ever imagine, if we’ll just listen and obey. So that’s what we try to do.”

The Fiegels have seen God’s hand in their lives countless times, like when He has used a brief video, a testimony, or even a toy crab to confirm, encourage, and help guide the couple into His will. Or when He showed Brook the beauty

of a doll with broken feet when she was concerned about Bella’s clubfeet, or when He gave her His peace through the words of a Chris Tomlin song, “Be still, there is a healer..”

The thought that the God of the Universe cares so deeply and personally for their family leaves the couple awestruck and desirous of pleasing Him through their obedience.

Mike and Brook feel blessed beyond measure with the family God has given them. Peyton is now 14, Bella is seven, Tatum is six, and Olivia is three years old. “I never viewed our girls as orphans,” Mike shared, “They were *always* ours. That channel is just how God introduced them to our family.”



Though there is still uncertainty surrounding Haiti, the Fiegels are expectant and trust God will continue to shape their family according to His will as He has thus far. Mike and Brook take comfort in knowing that each child God places in their home is a gift ordained by Him before the foundation of time. It doesn’t get any better than that...

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Four daughters later, Brook is grateful for that day at the Hope Factory™ when her eyes were opened to the reality of the orphan crisis and she realized God was calling her to be a bigger part of the solution without limiting what He could do through her and her husband.

“At the end of the day, when people see you adopting, they either think you’re crazy or they think you’re something special,” said Mike. “But it’s not us, it’s God who is special. He has allowed us to be part of the story he’s writing and we are grateful. We can’t do this without Him.”

To learn more about how you can impact a child’s life through adoption or foster care, contact ACHI at the number below or visit our website.



As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the mission of A Child’s Hope Int’l is to motivate and mobilize the church and community to care for orphans and vulnerable children through adoption, foster care, orphan care, and humanitarian relief. As advocates for the least of these, our programs reach thousands of children worldwide.

We exist because the children are waiting™.

A CHILD’S HOPE INT’L

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