

# The Loving Shepherd

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## Korean brothers united in America

**T**he odds, not to mention thousands of miles of salty water, stood between Isaac Gerber and his only brother, Caleb, from ever seeing each other. Now, only sibling rivalry stands between the two boys: Who gets the best toys and who gets the coveted spot on mommy's lap.

The two children, one born in 2005 and the other in 2006, were given up at birth by their Korean birth parents, but instead of spending their childhoods in orphanages, God had a different plan.

"God definitely had a lot to do with making it as easy as it was," said Jarrod Gerber, the boys' adoptive father. "You definitely have to believe that God had a lot to do with it."

Jarrod and his wife, Amy, adopted Isaac from Korea in the fall of 2005, but when they brought him home, they had no idea they would adopt another baby a year later.

In fact, no one had any idea — until the Korean birth parents came to a case worker in the Korean office of Holt International, an adoption agency, just weeks after the Gerbers had left Korea with Isaac.

The unmarried Korean couple were about two-weeks pregnant with another child, and fearing the stigma attached to such families in Korea, they wanted someone to adopt their second baby as well.

In her six years at Holt, the case worker had never encountered such a case.

Another case worker from Bethany Christian Services said she has seen less than 10 similar cases in the more than 1,000 cases she has worked with in the past 20 years.

"It's still rare," said Melitta Payne, the coordinator of international services at the Indianapolis office of Bethany. "It's always a surprise."

Originally, Jarrod and Amy hoped to start the paperwork for another adoption in mid-2006.

They planned to have another Korean child sometime in 2007.

But plans changed in the summer of 2006 when Payne called.

She told Amy she had better sit down.

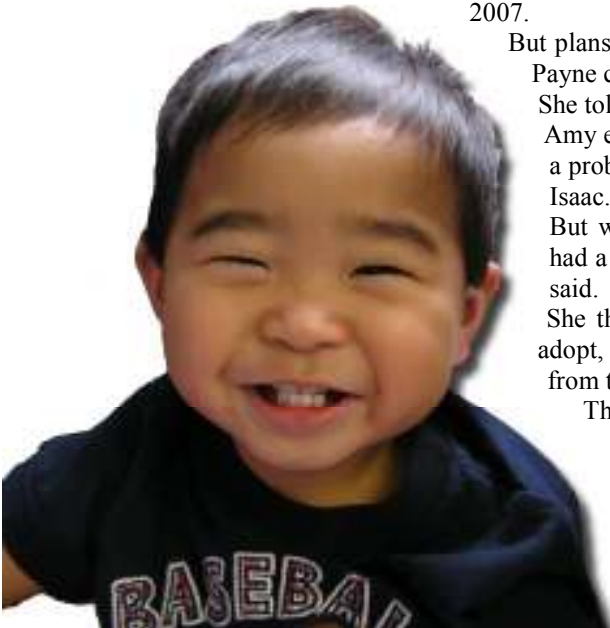
Amy expected Payne to say the Gerbers had a problem with their paperwork concerning Isaac.

But when she found out instead that Isaac had a brother, her head started spinning, she said.

She thought back to when they decided to adopt, and how God was working silently from the beginning.

Though Jarrod and Amy ultimately used Bethany to handle their adoption, they originally didn't plan to, and had they not, there's no telling where the two brothers would be now.

But God used Loving Shepherd



Isaac SukHwan Gerber



Caleb DongSu Gerber

See "Brothers" on pg. 2

### Who we are

Loving Shepherd Ministries is a Christian, not-for-profit organization providing objective, no-cost advocacy, resources and direction to the faith community for the direct benefit of children and families who find themselves at risk or in need.

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# Program designed to help Haitian orphans

Because of the dire financial situation in Haiti, many families cannot provide food, clothing and shelter for their children. When this happens, families have few options. Some children are simply deserted onto the streets; others are given or sold to wealthier families. Often the parents believe their children will then live in a safe environment where they will at least have the necessities of life. Unfortu-

nately most children endure abuse, grueling work and no education. These children are called *restaveks*. Approximately 300,000 children in Haiti, some as young as 4 years old, live as *restaveks*.

Loving Shepherd Ministries has begun a new program that builds group homes with Godly house-parents to provide a spiritual family environment to orphans and *restaveks*. Loving Shepherd will build its first

group home in Kpoux, a small and primitive mountain village with a school and church, in southern Haiti.

The land has been purchased, and construction on the group home will begin later this year. Nine children (ages 3 to 12) are already identified for the home, though it can hold 10 to 12 children. The Kpoux pastor and wife will serve as house parents; LSM will provide the ongoing monthly support

for the couple and children; and LSM will provide the long-term accountability and oversight. Issues related to vocational training, discipline of the children, and developing a plot for growing food and products for sale is being developed.

You'll hear more about these group homes in upcoming newsletters. If you have a desire to partner with LSM for these group homes, please contact us.



Isaac SukHwan Gerber (left), Caleb DongSu Gerber (right), and their parents share a moment at the office of Loving Shepherd Ministries.

## Brothers: Gerbers originally intended to adopt child from Colombia, not Korea

to direct them there.

"It's because of Loving Shepherd that we went through Bethany," Jarrod said.

"They were really helpful, I think more than they realize.

"They have a lot to be proud of."

The Gerbers also initially didn't plan to adopt from Korea because, at the time, agencies were not

placing Korean children in Indiana.

Jarrod and Amy were working toward a Colombian adoption when they received a "last-minute" phone call from Bethany. A representative told them to submit their paperwork immediately because the agency might be able to get them in the Korea program.

Amy had just a "matter

of hours" to turn in her paperwork.

Yet, as the baby toys and cribs can testify, the Gerbers turned in their paperwork on time, and both are now enjoying the thrills of parenthood.

And they are waiting for child No. 3 at some point.

"I'd like to see Isaac and Caleb out of diapers first," Amy said.

## From the Word - By Ed Schwartz

What do the following people have in common?

Aristotle, Art Linkletter, Dave Thomas (founder of Wendy's), Eleanor Roosevelt, George Washington Carver, James Michener, Moses, Nancy Reagan, President Gerald Ford and Esther. They were all adopted.

Luke 12:7 says "But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."

When we think of the 143 million children living as orphans in the world, it is comforting to know God knows where each of them are at any given point in time. It's also intriguing to imagine who those children would or could be if given an opportunity to be loved and accepted. Those thoughts make us wonder how many gifts and talents and souls will be wasted as these children live out their lives in the streets and orphanages of the world.

## Doug Isch keeps LSM running smoothly

*Editor's note: Loving Shepherd wants to introduce our nationwide family to the faces that work to fulfill God's plan for Loving Shepherd. Each newsletter will contain a new story that offers a behind-the-scenes look at Loving Shepherd's staff.*

For this issue, we talk to Doug Isch, Loving Shepherd's operations and finance manager.

From the very beginning of Loving Shepherd, Doug Isch has been there to help guide it through.

"There were days of uncertainty, especially in the first year when we would determine how much longer we could stay in business if no more financial support would come in," Doug said.

Doug was instrumental in helping to mold Loving Shepherd from a fledgling not-for-profit into a multi-mission Christian organization.

For instance, Doug created, designed and filled most of the databases that Loving Shepherd uses to help about 70 families a month.

Today, as the operations and finance manager, Doug remains in charge of the day-to-day operations of Loving Shepherd — from balancing the books to paying the bills

He also worked to help make Loving Shepherd a legal 501(c)(3) not-for profit, and he worked to ensure that Loving Shepherd would be admitted into several reputable Christian and child-related organizations that Loving Shepherd is a member of.

Doug has also been



Operations and Finance Manager Doug Isch

instrumental in helping to create Loving Shepherd's most recent programs: Finding Their Voice, group homes for Haitian children and corrective surgeries for adoptable orphans.

"I think we will see several of the programs that we are just launching now grow and be effective," he said. "I see the adoption services program continuing to be a positive part of whatever Loving Shepherd becomes in the future."

Through his work with Loving Shepherd, Doug said he has experienced first hand the charity of believers.

"Every benefit auction we hold reminds me that Christians in this community genuinely care about the hurting children throughout this world."



### LSM Quick Facts

**Full name:** Doug Isch

**Age:** 34

**Family:** Married to Tonia Schwartz for 12 years. Four children: Ryan, 10; Sophia, 8; Madelyn, 5; and Ellie, 3.

**Education:** bachelor's degree in business from Indiana University.

"Each newsletter donation from Christians throughout the country serves as a powerful testimony of the hearts of Loving Shepherd supporters."

"Truly, Loving Shepherd is blessed to be part of God's loving plans."

"I plan to be a part of this exciting and God-blessed ministry in whatever way God wants me to be," he said.

## Meeting to help children a success

In August, adoptive families from the Bluffton and Bluffton North Apostolic Christian churches held a meeting to encourage others from their churches to become more involved with at-risk children.

The adoptive families have begun a ministry called FAM (Foster Care, Adoption and Mentoring) to encourage foster parenting, adoption, and mentoring of at-risk children. Several area adoption and home study providers and child welfare organizations attended the meeting and distributed their information.

Motivated by Loving Shepherd, FAM represents what church members can do to help hurting children. FAM members hope their ongoing efforts will encourage more church members to adopt or mentor youth.

There have been 20 adoptions within the two Bluffton churches in the past five years, and interest in adoptions is increasing.

## 'Picture of Love' to release new volume soon

Loving Shepherd anticipates releasing its latest "Picture of Love" CD in October, but Loving Shepherd supporters can order their copies now.

To secure your copy, call the Loving Shepherd office at (260) 824-9000 or e-mail Chet Baumgartner at [chet@loving-shepherd.org](mailto:chet@loving-shepherd.org).

CDs are \$15, plus postage.

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### **Mission Statement**

The mission of *Loving Shepherd Ministries* is to bring honor to God by providing objective, no-cost advocacy, resources, and direction to the faith community for the direct benefit of children and families who find themselves at risk or in need.

This is accomplished by following the example of Jesus Christ as the loving shepherd in [Isaiah 40:11](#) - "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young".

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