

## And baby makes ... 6

**G**reg Isch, then employed at a local bank, wrote a simple note on his calendar: meet with client about a loan.

Instead, he should have written something different: start considering

life-altering plans.

For neither Greg nor his wife, Katie, could foresee how God would transform a simple meeting into a mission ... or how years later, they would rescue one-year-old Thomas, possibly condemned to a life of pov-

erty and neglect.

Greg and Katie, married since 1994, always wanted to have children, but they decided to have a small family.

Yet, once child number three came into the scene in 2000, the concept of a small family faded — and God started planting the seeds for more nap times, birthdays and baby giggles.

Still, even after deciding to expand their family, Greg and Katie did not consider adoption — until that meeting.

A client of Greg's was preparing to adopt, but because adoption can cost between \$15,000 and \$40,000, the client needed a loan.

"I thought this was really cool that someone was so committed to adoption that they were willing to make financial sacrifices to make it happen," Greg said.

More importantly, however, the couple said they felt called to adopt.

"We felt blessed by the children we had and felt the Lord leading us to adopt," Katie said.

"We believe that everyone has their own mission

opportunities; this is one way that we can try to make a difference in some child's life."

Loving Shepherd did not exist when Greg and Katie started their adoption proceedings, so they decided to forge ahead on their own.

For 40 hours, Katie called agency after agency; she didn't know what countries were available, how to tell what country best suited her family and what agencies would be reputable.

Unfortunately, one lead melted into failure ... and another ... and another. In fact, three referrals transformed into disappointment.

So, they decided to give up on international adoption and their adoption agency and look a little closer.

God then blessed their efforts with two children from the United States.

But He wasn't done yet.

In about March of 2006, they decided to try to adopt internationally again.

Only this time, they



### 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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## Banner year for auction

With support from inside and outside the Bluffton community, Loving Shepherd shattered all records at its fifth-annual benefit auction. Hundreds of people showed up to bid on a variety of items, from vacation packages to a puppy. Ed Schwartz, Loving Shepherd's president, said he was once again overwhelmed by the response of the Christian community. "Truly, these people have a heart for the at-risk children of this world," he said.

## LSM Surgery program helps first child

Loving Shepherd has started its new corrective surgery program, which has helped its first child — a small boy in Haiti.

In December of 2006, while traveling in Haiti, Loving Shepherd President Ed Schwartz found a young boy who was in desperate need of surgery. He had a very large hernia that could endanger his life.

Knowing a U.S. surgeon who traveled monthly to Haiti, Ed arranged for the doctor to perform the operation there.

The operation was completed less than two weeks after Ed found the



This little boy, living in Haiti, suffered from a severe hernia until Loving Shepherd Ministries arranged for his surgery. LSM expects to continue this program for other children.

child.

This surgery not only allows him to live like a little boy again, but it has also helped facilitate a

mentoring relationship between the boy and a local Christian man.

Loving Shepherd's corrective surgery program helps at-risk children who otherwise would not receive the surgeries needed to improve their lives.

These surgeries will also make those orphans who receive the surgery more likely to be adopted.

"We are very excited about the opportunity to help restore health and hope to so many children across the world," said Loving Shepherd President Ed Schwartz.

## From the Word

- By Ed Schwartz

**Ephesians 1:5 - Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will** – We can mentally understand that God has chosen to adopt us through Jesus Christ, but it is difficult to totally understand in our hearts as to why God would want to adopt us or why it would even be His good pleasure to do that. Orphans can help us understand the concept of our adoptive relationship with God.

Orphans have done nothing to deserve adoption. They've not been "good" enough; they've not accomplished anything of great note; they do not have a list of successes or good works to warrant adoption; they can't purchase adoption; they are simply chosen.

I recently had the privilege to see an adoptive father meet his new 18-month-old son in an orphanage for the first time. The little boy had rice on his face, was slouching in his chair and looked unhappy. Did that make a difference? Did that stop the process? Did the little boy need to do something special to make this adoption happen? No, the connection was made; love took over and paid the price.

Orphans can teach us so much. They have so many needs. There is nothing they can do about adoption. They are at the mercy of someone greater than themselves. Can we learn our lessons well from these little children?

## Haitian group home progressing

Loving Shepherd expects to break ground on its first Haitian group home in June.

A Loving Shepherd representative will spend about a month in Haiti supervising the first phase of construction.

The group home will house nine children, whose parents are either deceased or unable to care for them.

Without the home, some would be domestic servants and grow up as slaves. Others would live on the streets, most likely becoming gang members or prostitutes.

## Family: Loving Shepherd Ministries helps Isch family find right country and agency



Greg Isch, and his most-recent son, Thomas, bond at the orphanage where Thomas had spent most of his life.

immediately went to Loving Shepherd for no-cost advice and direction.

Within days, Loving Shepherd provided Greg and Katie with a list of countries from which they could adopt.

“With LSM, for us it was a matter of making a couple of phone calls. It was really beneficial,” Greg said.

“With LSM’s help, it was simple to find out what countries we were eligible to adopt from and what agency would best suit us,” Katie said. “The time and effort that went into the decision-making process was definitely more doable with LSM’s help.”

# Baumgartner turns talents to God’s work

Chet Baumgartner discovered what he wanted to do while sitting in computer class ... in eighth grade.

“I suppose most people don’t have their career plans forged so early in life, but I’ve always been passionate about these things,” he said.

Chet decided to be a journalist and dedicated his high school and college careers to that singular goal.

But while Chet planned, God was moving behind the scenes, opening another door — and on the other side, Loving Shepherd waited.

“Looking back, I’m so glad the Lord called me out of the journalism field,” he said. “It thrives on antagonism, whereas Christians need to preach the Word in love. You can’t do that and work as an aggressive reporter who should be impartial.”

At Loving Shepherd,



### LSM Quick Facts

**Full name:** Chet Martin Baumgartner

**Born:** October 24, 1980

**Family:** Born to Keith and Ruth Baumgartner. Two siblings, Tricia and Nick. Five nieces and a nephew. One cat.

**Education:** 2004 bachelor’s degree in journalism from Ball State University.

**Hobbies:** Singing with the Psalm 100 and Gloryland quartets. Writing songs. Playing the violin and banjo.

Chet’s primary responsibility entails scouring Web sites, research papers, journals and more, looking for data to help facilitate decisions at Loving Shepherd.

For instance, when Loving Shepherd President Ed Schwartz needed to know how many Taiwanese children were being trafficked as



As the resource development specialist, Chet keeps his eye out for new statistics and research to help Loving Shepherd develop programs that help children.

slaves, Chet needed to find the numbers and verify the sources.

Chet also helps to organize fundraisers, such as “The Picture of Love” CD

series and the inaugural Loving Shepherd benefit concert held last December.

“It truly is a blessing to work for Loving Shepherd,” Chet said.

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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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