

The Loving Shepherd

Winter 2006

Volume 4, Issue 3



*“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior,
which is Christ the Lord”*

Merry Christmas from the staff of Loving Shepherd

A new life begins a new journey

About 28 years after he was born, Bill Mohler was adopted.

About four years later, he decided to return the favor.

And today, Bill and his wife, Erica, who both became adopted children of God when they came to Christ, cradle the delicate Sophia — their nine-month-old adopted child born in March — whose special needs will forever impact the couple’s lives.

But they wouldn’t change that at all.

“She has been a tremendous blessing to the family,” Bill said. “What she has done for our family ... is far more than what we can do for her.”

The Mohlers already had three biological children before they became Christians, and though Erica thought they should adopt, Bill did not even want to discuss it, she said.

Yet, after Bill became a Christian, started attending



Bill, Sophia and Erica Mohler pose in Loving Shepherd’s office, four years after the two came to Loving Shepherd for assistance.

church and hearing about the needs of orphans, his heart started to open.

Finally, in 2002, both Bill and Erica wanted to adopt.

They just didn’t know how.

“We were clueless. We were absolutely clueless,” Bill said.

Fortunately, Loving Shepherd had opened its doors that same month, and Doug Isch and Ed Schwartz were waiting to assist their

first clients.

Those clients turned out to be the Mohlers.

According to the Mohlers, Loving Shepherd provided the couple with “tons of information” as they

See “New Life” on pg. 3

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.

Look inside:

Loving Shepherd president visits Haiti	2
Christian singers unite to help Loving Shepherd	2
Benefit Auction scheduled for next March	3

Thanks to all those who made this a successful year.



Learning to smile again

Nine Haitian children sleep in a room smaller than our bedrooms. Their parents are either dead or cannot take care of them. They face a future where poverty reigns. But Loving Shepherd, through the support of our donors, hopes to take these children and, by the grace of God, remind them how to smile by providing them with a group home, Godly parents, an education and — most importantly — a chance to learn about Jesus.



Top left: Eight of the nine children identified for the group home stand amid the sunrise of Haiti. Without the group home, their days would be marred by the need to survive. Without the group home, some would be given to other families as domestic servants and grow up as virtual slaves. Still others would live on the street, most likely becoming gang members, prostitutes or worse. **Bottom left:** Robert (Ducky) Baum, Ryan Fiechter, Ed Schwartz and Rich Bertschi pause to enjoy the scenery of Haiti (and catch their breath) as they travel to the top of Mount Toro to meet the nine orphans.

Top right: Pastor Lama and his wife, Rose Marie, will serve as the houseparents for the first Loving Shepherd group home in Kpoux, Haiti. **Bottom right:** Rich Bertschi, who serves on one of Loving Shepherd's advisory boards, travels along the Haitian "road." The group of four men spent two of the eight days walking and riding mules because the Haitian government cannot afford to build roads in such remote areas. Poverty and squalor run rampant among the Haitian culture, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.





From the Word

- By Ed Schwartz

The mission statement of Loving Shepherd Ministries uses Isaiah 40:11 as a basis for its efforts for at-risk children. Part of that verse reads "He (Jesus, the Loving Shepherd) shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom ..."

While on a recent trip to Haiti, I found one of my traveling companions, Ducky Baum, living out the verse. He was tenderly holding a 4-year-old orphan and stroking her hair. She was so content and touched by the love and security he offered. One picture is worth a thousand words ...

Benefit Auction set for March of 2007

Loving Shepherd is pleased to announce that it will hold its fifth-annual Benefit Auction on Saturday, March 10. Once again, Loving Shepherd is looking forward to a blessed evening of fellowship as people congregate to support Loving Shepherd's mission.

If anyone is interested in donating items to the auction, they can contact Marcia Steffen at 565-3466 or Jill Fiechter at 565-3854.

New Life: Loving Shepherd helped Mohlers through emotional issues

scoured for the right domestic agency.

Loving Shepherd also helped prepare them emotionally for issues surrounding adoption. For instance, Bill said he didn't know if his family would accept an adopted child like they would a biological child.

Bill said it was "great" to have Loving Shepherd to guide them through these issues.

Near the end of their adoption odyssey, the Mohlers had a chance to adopt a baby boy.

They took him home for a night, but neither felt a

peace about adopting him.

After Bill declined the boy the next day, the social worker hurriedly said that she would call him back.

Bill hung up confused, fearing he had angered her.

But the social worker, who had also been praying, had just found out about a girl who needed parents, and she soon called Bill back.

And when Bill and Erica saw Sophia, they instantly felt the peace they had been looking for.

"She had me wrapped," Bill said.

Sophia was born with spina bifida. Her spine did

not close in the womb, leaving her nerves permanently damaged.

Sophia also needs a shunt — a tube that runs from inside her skull down to her stomach. Without the shunt, her body can't drain the spinal fluid that surrounds her developing brain.

Because of the complications, she'll never feel her legs, and she might not walk.

But the same God who opened their hearts to adoption also sustains them today.

"I pray a lot, and we have just such a peace about it," Erica said.



Sing unto the Lord

Singers from three groups practice songs for a special choir presentation on Sunday, Dec. 4. Their three groups, as well as five others, also sang for a benefit performance for Loving Shepherd the previous night. The Lord blessed those who sang and those who listened with His presence. Pictured are (from left) Jennifer Gerber from Becky & Ronda and family, Nicole Wiegand from Daughters of the King, and Alexis Gasser and Kara Bahler from the Covenant Chamber Choir.

The official newsletter of Loving Shepherd Ministries

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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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