

How God Gave Me an African Grandson

My daughter Margaret was pregnant for almost three years.

I should explain. She didn't actually carry a baby in her womb that long. But it was almost three years ago that she and her husband, Rick, took a team of students from Emmanuel College to Ethiopia for an evangelistic outreach. They learned about the plight of the children of that country during their visit and felt God was calling them to adopt an Ethiopian baby.

The dream grew in Margaret and Rick's heart, and they officially launched the adoption process in January 2011. It was tedious and expensive. The wait seemed endless—sort of like standing in line at the post office for 26 months. Bureaucracy moved at a snail's pace—and it seemed even slower after they learned they were assigned an infant boy and got a picture of him.

I've been more impatient than my daughter and son-in-law during this journey. They held on to their dream, even when the adoption agency faced some serious problems. To keep focused, Margaret ran a marathon to raise awareness of the need for international adoption. She decided that since she didn't have to go through the pain of childbirth to have this baby, the least she could do was run 26 miles.

Her stamina paid off. Last week Margaret and Rick traveled to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, to do the last interviews and get the final paperwork approved. They arrived there just in time to celebrate their son's first birthday. And a few days ago, they landed at the Atlanta airport with their African bundle of joy.

His first name is Grady. His middle name is Bereket, which means "blessing" in Amharic. I have a feeling he's going to

remind many people about God's amazing love.

First, this little boy will remind people that God cares about the poor. Did you know that more than 7 million children in developing countries die from hunger every year? Almost 3 billion people in the world live on less than \$ a day, and children in these countries often die of malnutrition or easily treatable childhood diseases.

If my grandson had stayed in his homeland in poor conditions, the odds are that he might not have survived past age 5. (Statistics show that 1 out of 15 children in developing countries die before this age.) That's why international adoption is such a vital cause and why more Christians today are responding to this need.

Second, my grandson will remind people that there is no color barrier in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. When Margaret was young, I used to tell her and her sisters that they could marry guys from any racial background as long as they were Christians. Margaret decided to marry Rick, a white guy from Georgia—with red hair! But now she and Rick are bringing a dark-skinned African boy into their family because they know God's love makes racial differences irrelevant.

And third, I expect my grandson to remind people that we serve a God who went to incredible lengths to adopt us. When Margaret and Rick made their first trip to Ethiopia to begin the legal adoption process, I was struck by how far they traveled to provide this child the nurture and protection he needs. They flew 16,000 miles—two times—to adopt Grady.

Just think how far Jesus Christ traveled to purchase our salvation so we could be adopted! He came from heaven to earth, made a trip to the cross and even went to hell to conquer death. Galatians 4:4-5 says: "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son ... so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the

adoption as sons” (NASB). I hope you are grateful that the Father has legally and eternally adopted you—and that He spared no expense to bring you into His family.

In a few weeks, I’m going to take little Grady in my arms at his baby dedication. I’m going to ask the Lord to help Rick and Margaret raise him in the faith. But I’m also going to thank God for the fact that this little boy from the other side of the world has already taught me so much.

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