



## A Word from the Director

By Lynette Redal Stime

Some of the most important people who help children in need are our volunteer board members. For several years now, our branch board has been led by Dr. Scott Ellis, and we have been grateful for his leadership.

In December 2007, Scott handed the baton to Gerben Leyendekker, but has stayed on for another year to provide for a smooth transition. We are thankful for these faithful servants.

If you know Scott and Gerben, be sure to thank them for their service to Bethany, so we can serve children in need like Benjamin Theis Buus (see "Bringing Home Benjamin").

Thank you, Scott and welcome aboard, Gerben (see Board photo on far right)!

## Bringing Home Benjamin

By Alissa Theis Buus

Our son, Benjamin, was abandoned shortly after his birth on a hot August day in China. He was found by a road crew alone, dehydrated, and imperfect to worldly eyes.

His complete bilateral cleft lip and palate made it so difficult to eat that it would take hours for him to finish a bottle. I can only imagine how patient his foster mother must have been those first few months. Later, when his lip was repaired, Ben began his orphanage experience.



*The Theis Buus Family*

Worlds away, our Navy family was making its second cross-country move in three years. My husband, Eric, was scheduled for a six-month deployment and our two-year-old son, Seth, kept me plenty busy. We were comfortable in our routine, yet I knew that we weren't put on this earth to be "comfortable."

What was God's plan for us? What could we do for His Kingdom? It was during Eric's deployment that God simultaneously, yet separately, laid His plan for adoption on our hearts. Through different channels we both had our eyes opened to children in other parts of the world who are in need of a home.

We both agreed that families, especially Christian families, should adopt and care for these children. Then it became obvious that our family was not exempt from this responsibility, and our desire grew to give a home to a child who otherwise may never have one.

While still in the paper-chase stages of the adoption process, our social worker contacted us on a Friday

to say there was a 21-month-old boy from China on Bethany's Children of Promise special needs list. He had not been requested by any of the other Bethany families, who were ready to be matched.

Over the weekend, Eric and I talked and prayed about it. We looked at the picture of a little boy with bright eyes and a misshapen upper lip. We read the file about his leg problem of unknown diagnosis or significance.

We knew that God had set Benjamin aside just for us. He purposely turned the desires of the other families away from Ben so he would be offered to us. Clearly God heard us say our home was open to a child that nobody else wanted. Now He was keeping us true to our word. Benjamin was meant for us, so we called our social worker on Monday morning to tell her that we wanted to be his family.

We finished our dossier before my husband was deployed for another six months. Seth had just turned five, and I was home-schooling him and working outside the home one day a week. Miraculously, my husband was able to leave his deployment for two weeks and meet me in China for Ben's adoption, just one year after we started the adoption process.

Ben was two and a half when he came home. Just over four months later, my husband returned from deployment and our family was finally all under the same roof. At times it hasn't been easy, but we have all made the remarkable transition to a family of four.

Sometimes we think about the millions of orphaned children still out there and wonder whether we're being called again to expand our family through adoption. We have learned that when we obey God's will for us, He blesses us beyond what we can comprehend. We hope that our story will inspire other Christian families to step out of "comfortable" and also consider adopting a child in need.



*Northern California Branch Board: (back row) Jon Bushnell, Darin Denlinger, Brian Indelicato, Raymond Kinser, George VanderDussen, Dr. Scott Ellis; (front row) Gerben Leyendekker and Lynette Stime*

## Upcoming Events

**South Valley:**  
Golf Tournament,  
April 27

**North State:**  
Discover Adoption,  
March 14

**Modesto:**  
Spring Guild Tea

Dessert Fundraiser,  
August 21

## Northern California

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spring '09