



Bethany Christian Services  
*insider*

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SEEDS OF *faith*  
By Gwen Oatsvall

*I grew up with an uncle who was a foster parent, and I remember always having new little cousins to play with, especially around the holidays. Even as a young child, I realized that there were children in the world who needed loving homes. This was the first seed that the Lord planted in my young heart with regard to adoption.*

Many years later, I got married and gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, Jeremiah. I fondly remember being home with him as a baby and thinking about adoption. I just knew God

was growing the seed of adoption in my heart, but I had a husband who only wanted one child. He would boast, "One and done." A few years later, I gave birth to another

beautiful boy, knowing that God's plan for our family was not complete.

As my second child, Elijah, turned one, I bravely expressed to my husband, Scott, that I felt God calling us to adopt. He responded with shock and explained that he is a school teacher/coach and I am a stay-at-home mom. He felt that we couldn't afford another child. I expressed that if God is calling us to adopt, then He would provide the finances. Scott agreed, and we began to investigate adoption. Our one seed had become two!

Shortly thereafter, I remember sitting at church as a friend shared her story of adopting from China. I was touched to the very depth of my heart. I began crying what seemed like rivers and began jotting in my journal information she shared. I wrote, "Bethany Christian Services?" and began listing little girl names. I never mentioned this to my husband.





A few months later, after literally seeing little Chinese girls everywhere, I explained to my husband that I knew that we were definitely supposed to adopt and China. He asked why, and I simply said that “Her eyes are speaking to my heart and I know that we have a daughter in China.” We investigated more about adoption.

Then one day, Scott came home and told me he just didn't think we should adopt at all. I was crushed and began praying to the Lord. I knew that my daughter was in China and my heart was aching for her. I begged and pleaded with Scott, but he still didn't feel the calling as I did.

I again went to the Lord because I realized that He was the only one who could change Scott's heart. I heard the Lord calling to me in His infinite wisdom. He asked me to be silent and be still and to wait patiently for Him for He heard my cries. Anyone who knows my impatient nature, knows that this was asking for a miracle in itself.

I submitted to God's advice and, 14 days later, Scott came home and told me that He thought we were supposed to go to China and adopt. In a calm, collected manner (as I did cartwheels on the inside), I asked him what had changed his mind. He explained that one of his students, Emily Chapman (who has three adopted sisters from China), had been challenging him for weeks to go to China and get a little daughter. Now I have never met Emily, but she immediately became my hero and my prayer angel.

Emily and her mother, Mary Beth Chapman (co-founder of Shaohannah's Hope, a foundation to assist people financially with adoption), came over to our house to share their story. During their visit, I saw a light shine in Scott's eyes. When they left that night, Scott said to me, “Well, I guess we are going to China.”

Scott said that Mary Beth sharing the fears she had about adoption mirrored his own. He felt God's assurance and calling when Mary Beth explained that everything changed when they placed their new daughter into her arms. She confessed that she had a deeper understanding of God's real love through the experience.

The impact that Emily Chapman has made on our family is indescribable. God was speaking through her to my husband. What a wonderful gift we have to share with others as we tell our adoption story.

You never know what seeds have been planted that are just waiting to be watered. God says you reap what you sow. We are never hesitant to share our miracle of adoption and how God has grown our faith through this process. Ever since our precious daughter has come home, Scott and I discuss how this has been the most amazing spiritual journey of our lives.

In honor of Emily Chapman's obedience of sharing her heart for adoption, we named our precious daughter after her: Emily Rui Oatsvall. I held her for the first time on April 7, 2005. As a one-year-old, she is already planting seeds with everyone she meets. She is a light, ordained by the Lord to be a part of our family from the beginning of time.

Don't miss your chance to be blessed by adoption.



*Editor's Note: For more information about financial assistance for adoption, please see the Shaohannah's Hope website at [www.shaohannahshope.org](http://www.shaohannahshope.org).*