

Romans 8:12-17 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹² Therefore, dear brothers and sisters,^[a] you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. ¹³ For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature,^[b] you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children^[c] of God.

¹⁵ So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children.^[d] Now we call him, "Abba, Father."^[e] ¹⁶ For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. ¹⁷ And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. But if we are to share his glory, we must also share his suffering.

Ephesians 1 New Living Translation (NLT)

Greetings from Paul

1 This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus.

I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus,^[a] who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus.

² May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Spiritual Blessings

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. ⁴ Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. ⁶ So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.^[b] ⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸ He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

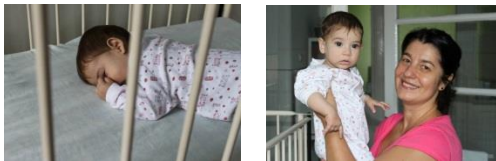
⁹ God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. ¹⁰ And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. ¹¹ Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God,^[c] for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan

James 1:27

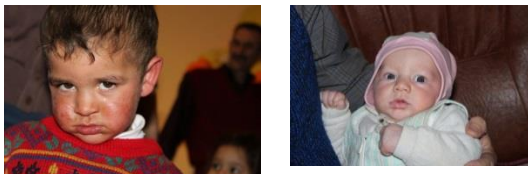
²⁷ Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

Sermon 18 October 2015 – Hilary Campbell

I would like to introduce you to some children.....



Bogdon*, found alone in his cot in a Romanian Hospital. Aged 7 months (*not their real names)



Adi and his baby brother Luca were rescued early last year. The youngest two of a family of 5 kids were found in the town hall, abandoned. Their solo father had sold their dirt house, so he could buy alcohol, and then left the kids in the town hall.



Stefan – abandoned, found in a hospital bed. Alone.



Gabriela – rescued in 2013 aged 2 years old. Her mum was an orphan herself and lived on the streets. Local authorities found Gabriella and have put her in our home.



Maria, rescued from her cot bed in a Romanian Hospital. The poorly made bed, a toy and a blanket. That was her living environment. She might get a visit from caregiver once a day with a bottle. Or she might not.

It was scenes like these that Sue van Schreven – saw with her own eyes, on a visit to Romania 11 years ago. This is Sue pictured here with Maria. She came home from that visit, determined to do something to help the helpless. Be a voice for the voiceless and provide love and a home for the homeless. From that, Orphans Aid International began.



As an organisation, Orphans Aid exists because of children such as these. Children – through no fault of their own, are in situations where they are abandoned, with no parents to care for them, no extended family, and therefore have been left in the care of an already full hospital.

Orphans Aid International's mission is: ***To rescue orphaned & abandoned children. To relieve suffering, to love unconditionally wherever the need maybe.***

The organisation was born in Invercargill, but quickly gained support from others throughout the country. Orphans Aid's first project was to fundraise to buy a large house in Romania,



To employ loving house parents and caregivers and seek permission from the Romanian government to fill it with children rescued from hospital beds and the streets. How exciting, to be able to give some forgotten and abandoned children, a home, a family, clothing, food, warmth and shelter. It was named "Casa Kiwi" (Kiwi House)

Ironically, in 2004, at the same time, another journey was beginning, and taking flight. More accurately Craig and I were taking flight – 5 of them in fact, to get us to a small city in the middle of Russia. Craig and I started our family by way of meeting two gorgeous little souls who had a start to life with some similarities to those I mentioned above.

When we met them 11 years ago, our daughter was 5, and son was 3. They had had a rough beginning, and were currently cared for in an orphanage, one of 4 orphanages in that small city. There was no extended family to look after them, they were wards of the state.



Their future was to be brought up in that orphanage, schooled in the same building, and once they were 15, put out on the street to survive. A bleak future with no family and no one to support them.

We travelled by plane then by road, to an orphanage filled with almost 400 children.

Children - without the care and LOVE that they need and deserve.

That was 11 years ago that we adopted the kids. Well for us, we have been extremely blessed, and totally privileged by the enrichment these two kids have so far brought to our lives and we are very thankful for them, along with the other two gorgeous kiddos we have been blessed to parent.

I share this, because there are usually points in our lives that God highlights to us – to lead us in a direction. Often a direction that we couldn't have anticipated. He opens our eyes to needs that require HIS love.

Some of you will be familiar with the music of Brooke Fraser (singer and songwriter). Brooke went on a trip to Rwanda, and after meeting an orphaned girl called Albertine, she wrote the song of that same title. In it were the words:

**“ ...Now that I have
seen, I am responsible”**

Oh how true are those words. God purposely guides us to see people/situations through eyes like his own. Seeing needs....., seeing something that pulls on our hearts..... Something we feel compassionate enough about to try and DO something about. Many of you I know, will have had an experience such as this.

For me this was exactly the same. I had seen not only two beautiful little beings who were soon to become our own, but also God had shown me needs like I had never seen before and I felt responsible to do something about it.

Soon after returning home, I heard about the work of Orphans Aid International, and along with their programme of rescuing children in Romania, they were now also providing care, love, food and daily experiences for vulnerable kids in a city in Russia, Kids who spent their days and nights on the streets, kids whose parents were in prison. Kids from orphanages. Kids with extreme need.

This pricked my curiosity, with our new link to Russia and so our involvement in Orphans Aid began.

After volunteering in a variety of roles over the years, I now manage the Dunedin Op Shop, located in King Edward St, South Dunedin.



We have learned that Op Shops are a great way for us to fundraise .

We have 3 Op Shops around the country now Invercargill, Hastings and Dunedin. And a head office and Fair Trade shop in Queenstown.

Clearly our main aim is to fundraise money we can use on our overseas projects, However, we have realised that our Op shop's purpose for being, is not only that. There is another significant purpose and that is to provide a base for local people to purchase affordable clothes and household goods.

Many locals seem to love coming into our shop, to chat to our wonderful volunteers, occasionally share their ups and downs, and to find a place they can get the basics they need for affordable prices. We also give away items and vouchers to people in need as we hear about them, and enjoy sharing the love we can, with people close to home, as well as far away. Our local giving is often through the avenues of other helping agencies in the city that we support so together we can get the right things to the people who need them.

As the years have gone on, Sue has seen more overseas needs that require help.

• India



we support a Doctor who provides free medical care to people living on the streets. We also feed hundreds of kids and families each day at 10 different feeding stations around Kolkutta.



- Bhutan - Our project in Northern India at the Bhutan border, provides food, clothing, education and medical needs for some of the world's most vulnerable slum children Here they are wearing school uniforms provided by supporters of Orphans Aid.



- Uganda, a strengthening families project for at risk families – in most cases single parents who need guidance and skills to ensure survival for their families. This is to prevent kids ending in orphanages, and to aim to keep families together.



- Nepal, following the earthquakes, we are helping to rebuild a village of 37 houses that was destroyed

- NZ - We also have projects that we support locally for eg Christchurch – rebuilding of a



building that gives families and children help and respite care ,and many other smaller needs around NZ as we hear about them.

- I apologise for having to briefly list these other projects, I just don't have the time to go into them as much as I would like to. Please check out our website if you are interested in finding out more!

And at this point I would like to THANK all of the people in our church family who have helped Orphans Aid in one way or another over the last few years. Your contributions big and small have all helped to make a difference in the lives of others here and abroad, so, thank you.

OPEN SHOP NIGHT

I do have another wonderful opportunity to share with you. I would like to warmly INVITE you all, to an **Open Shop Night** at the Orphans Aid Opshop on Thursday 5th November , between 7pm and 9pm. – drop in anytime that evening, check out our 2nd hand items, check out our NEW fair trade gift

ideas, check out Trade Aid food range, and the REALLY neat part of that evening is, that we have two very special visitors who have come all the way from Russia to meet OA supporters. They are Yuri, Yulyia and they run the day centre in Russia, that Orphans Aid supports. They, along with Sue van Schreven (founder and CEO) will speak briefly, then you can enjoy a yummy supper, and a wonderful shopping opportunity.

- ***Let me just take a moment to fill you in on the current lives of the kids you met earlier....***



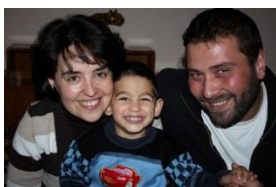
Bogdon – Well, we rescued him at 7 months of age, now at 2years old, he has his own family. HE has lived in our care during that time, and now has just been adopted by a Romanian couple. He now has LOVE and a future.



Adi and his baby brother Luca, were rescued from the town hall where they were abandoned, have recently been adopted by a Romanian couple. A family, LOVE and a future.



Maria – and **Gabriella** – Here they are in Casa Kiwi with Lumi, our lovely Romanian Project director and house parent, celebrating Maria’s 3rd Birthday. And this picture is more recently when Maria got adopted into her own family. Sue was excited to have been there at that special time too. Gabriella is still living in Casa Kiwi, but has the love of the CK family around her.



Stefan - Stefan was rescued from the hospital where he had been abandoned. And a year ago, he too was adopted into his very own family.

Such happy endings for children who were abandoned. The abandoned, rescued.

You know, kids like these aren't the only ones who need rescued.

In Roman's 8 it says: WE all are orphans before becoming part of the family of Christ. God is the Father of adoption.... He adopted us.... Paul uses adoption to illustrate our new relationship with God. Being chosen, being loved unconditionally, and gaining all there is to gain by being a child of God's.

We have been taken from one family, the family of sin and death, and adopted by another family, the family of righteousness and eternal life.

In Ephesians, Paul says, that God 'chose' us. Even before HE made the world, He Chose us, according to his plan. His plan has always been to grow HIS family and to have us in it! All we have to do is believe it and accept it.

Eph 1:5 –His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family, by sending Jesus Christ to die for us. And he did this because he wanted to!"

How can we spread this message around the world?

We are all familiar with how precious children are in God's eyes. We are also no doubt familiar with many verses in the bible teaching us to love and care for the poor, the needy, the orphans, and the widows. Probably the most well known being: *James 1:27*.

So where to from here? Perhaps God is opening our eyes to a portion of our society, or our global society who need our help. As we all know there are people in our everyday paths that need to see and feel God's love around them. We can be Jesus's hands and feet to the people in our communities, workplaces, neighbourhood, church, so they may receive God's love.

We can also support international organisations (and there are many!) to allow the people on the ground in those countries around the world who are reaching out and being the hands and feet to those in need and those who are yet to experience God's love.

May we all also have our eyes wide open to who God is, where HE is, what He has done for us, HOW loved we are, and in all things may we remember to be thankful that we were chosen to be adopted into Christ's family. Thankful for what we have been given, and be willing to share that with others around us.

Prayer:

Dear Lord – we come to you, asking you to open our EYES.

Open our EYES to You, to your love, and your will for us in our lives here on earth.

Open our eyes and our hearts to the people around us who need to know your love.

Open our eyes and hearts to the opportunities you give us to show that love.

Open our eyes to the needs of people internationally and locally.

Guide our hearts as to how we give and serve you in this area.

Thank you for all you have given to us, and will give us. Help us to share what we have, with those who have not. In Jesus name we pray, Amen

Final Song:

Open the eyes of my heart Lord, open the eyes of my heart, I want to see you.