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CHURCH MISSION TRIP LEADS TO ADOPTION

(Albuquerque, NM, May 31, 2004). Families are made in Heaven. That was never so apparent as it was for Lynn Ellen Doxon and Robert Habiger in the creation of their family through the adoption of Anastasia, Janalyn and Lydia. The journey to adopt the girls took Lynn and Robert halfway around the world, and lasted two and a half years. In the process they learned lessons of perseverance, faith, love, hope and surrender. The laws and economy of Ukraine were unstable, the officials fearful and suspicious, the circumstances wearisome, but love won out. This miracle of love occurred as a result of a mission trip set up by Lynn and Robert's church, St. Stephen's United Methodist in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

By 1995 Robert Habiger and Lynn Ellen Doxon had been trying to adopt in New Mexico for eight years. Then the members of the first mission team St. Stephen's sent to Ukraine returned with a picture of a little girl in a Ukrainian orphanage. Lynn and Robert were positive this was their opening. Lynn traveled to Ukraine with the second mission team, only to discover that the girl they planned to adopt was no longer in the orphanage. She found another girl to adopt, but this one had a younger sister. Would Robert accept two children?

Authorities in Ukraine found Anastasia, Snijana, their 9-year-old brother and 13-year-old sister living in a dirt floor hut in a small village. The authorities had been called in after Snijana was attacked by a dog and found the children living with their alcoholic, and often absent, mother. The children were taken to the district orphanage. Anastasia and Snijana were later transferred to the regional orphanage for younger children. The sisters had been in the orphanage for a year and a half when Lynn arrived.

Working with newfound friends in Ukraine, Lynn managed to get a court date set to adopt Anastasia and Snijana. As Robert was on his way to Ukraine to be present at the hearing, Ukraine passed a new constitution. All the laws were thrown out and the adoption could not take place. It was almost a year before new laws were in place and they could proceed with the adoption. When they contacted an agency to help them, the agency discovered that there was a third, younger sister who should be adopted with the older two. Would Lynn and Robert take all three? Of course!

When they were finally able to return to Ukraine, Anastasia saw them and ran screaming "Papa" and jumped into her father's arms. She had remembered and waited for them for a year and a half. Battling suspicious officials and uncertain procedures, they fought for four months to complete the adoption. Even after the adoption was granted, they had difficulty acquiring documents and getting the girls home. The story of this journey of faith and love is told in Lynn's new book, [Rainbows from Heaven](#). Describing both the experience of the girls and the parents, the book is an inspirational testimony to how prayer and perseverance can triumph over hostility and tribulation.

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