

## JOHN & SARA VOGT ADOPTION STORY (Revised 10/15/2011)

Our adoption story began back in 1949. I was an orphan with no hope and no future. But the Lord promises to be a Father to the fatherless and care for the orphan. In His great mercy and love God cared for me and gave me the best Dad and Mom that any kid could have. My parents lavished me with love and provision and they taught me about God's love for me and Jesus. Two years later they adopted another little boy and gave me the gift of a brother. My name is John and my brother was named Jim. You may remember James and John in the Bible, "THE SONS OF THUNDER" - well Dad and Mom had it right when they named us. Five years later Dad and Mom were surprised with our little sister by birth, Catharine Jean Vogt. They had not done anything different to conceive her. Up until that point Mom's womb was closed. I know that the enemy is at work in an effort to ruin our lives and destroy our hopes and dreams. I also know that all things really do work together for good for those you love the Lord and that Papa God is the blessed controller of all things. I am so grateful to the Lord that my sister was late coming into our family. If she had been born first I would not be here today writing this story.

He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord. In 1969 the Lord helped me find Sara. One day when Sara and I were talking about our future

together Sara told me that her doctors have determined that she would never be able to have children. Sara knew how much I love kids and it was important to her that we talked about this before our wedding. I reassured her of my love and told her that God could help us build a family through the blessings of adoption. We wanted a son and a daughter. I can still remember that evening when I had a heart to heart talk with my Mom and shared with her how Sara would not be able to carry children in her womb but would carry them in her heart and that we would be adopting. Mom and I tearfully embraced as we remembered what the Lord had done for us. Sara and I were united in marriage August 21, 1971.

Then one summer night in June of 1973 I was lying on the floor of our living room in Arlington, VA in great pain. I had ruptured two discs in my back and I could hardly move. I could not sleep in a bed. Sara came in to comfort me and joined me there on the floor. That night as we embraced we realized that we had very little going for us... no home, just a small one bedroom apartment, no money, employment threatened because of my ruptured discs and no children with Sara's womb closed. It was in this darkness that I called out to God. It was actually a proclamation of faith in the midst of total frustration. I believe my exact words were... "If God wants us to have a baby we will have a baby". Approximately four weeks later Sara believed that she was pregnant. The docs said, "no way... that would be physically impossible." But on March

28, 1974 **the God of the impossible** gave us a son. We named him John Regis Vogt. We call him Regis after my Dad the man who took me in his arms and loved me to life when I was an orphan.

The Lord blessed us with a son but where was our little girl? We knew that the Lord could do the impossible and open Sara's womb again, after all we had living proof of that in the blessing of our son. As the years went by our hopes for a daughter began to fade. We had moved to Washington, DC and life was very busy. We poured our lives into loving our son and working hard in our broadcasting careers at WCTN Radio serving our nation's capital area. We came to the place where we were no longer thinking about more children. I was over 50 and Sara was now \$#%#^&. For some reason God never gave us our girl. Sometimes I would think... maybe He couldn't trust me with a girl. Maybe I would break her. Girls are very fragile.

Then one day I got a call from America World Adoption. They wanted to know if we would be willing to do an interview during the morning show to promote an adoption seminar that they would be presenting in the Nation's Capital area. "Sure", I said. I told them that I was adopted myself and had a soft spot in my heart concerning the blessings of adoption. Little did I know at the time what the Lord was doing. I was about to be touched in a profound way by the God of love. The morning I

conducted that interview I was absolutely blown away. They were focusing on their China Program at the time. As AWAA's founder Brian Luwis shared with our listeners about these little girls in China my heart burned within me. I went home that night and talked to Sara about the broadcast. "Do you think that the Lord may be calling us to go to China and rescue one of these little orphan girls and bring her home as our daughter?" Sara looked at me cross eyed. "Honey, I'm almost 50 years old... we have older parents to care for... I just don't know." I kept my big mouth shut, for once, and just prayed while God began to work on Sara's heart.

It took a few months for Sara to come to terms with **hope deferred** because that can make your heart sick. (Proverbs 13:12) During this time the Lord kept bringing little Chinese girls across her path. She would meet them in grocery stores and WCTN events... we even met a mother and her adopted Chinese daughter in a restaurant outside of Harrisburg, PA while driving home to visit family.

Sara had longed for a daughter but her womb had been closed. We could not understand why the God of the impossible did not open her womb. As time passed that hope became rekindled as Sara began to embrace the work that God was doing in her heart. I asked myself... Is this what the Lord was doing? He had prepared our hearts for this moment so many years ago. So, is this why God allowed Sara's womb to be closed? It sounds almost

too good to be true. But the Lord loves us so much and he loves orphans so much that he may be calling us to the other side of the world to rescue a little orphan girl and bring her home as our daughter.

Sara needed confirmation. So the Lord sent a precious young woman by the name of Lynne Prinzing to represent America World Adoption for another radio interview. This time Sara was co-hosting the morning show with me. We hung onto every word that Lynne spoke and then went to breakfast after the broadcast where Sara asked her many questions. Sara had been praying that the Lord would confirm this call to adopt in her heart and give her a name. A short time passed and the Lord put the name Johanna on her heart. At that point Sara had all the confirmation she needed. And so, with help from AWAA and the encouragement from family, friends, and adoptive parents like David and Barbie Barwell we began this great adventure in love. Soon we would be in China to rescue Johanna and bring her home.

We decided to make our announcement public during one of our Monday morning broadcasts. We had voice tracked the morning show the Friday before. In radio-land that means that we sounded like we were there in the studio but we were actually home in bed listening like everybody else. Our radio alarm went off at 6:30 AM - just in time for Focus on the Family with Dr. Dobson. The morning show would follow at 7:00. As we began to wake up we could

hear the story about a little girl adopted from China by the name of Shaohannah. It sounded like they were saying Johanna. We held each other close wondering what was going on? As we laid there in bed listening intently we finally realized that it was Christian recording artist Steven Curtis Chapman and his wife Mary Beth talking about their little girl Shaohannah not Johanna. Steven and Mary Beth had adopted Shaohannah from China. What a wonderful confirmation. Our show followed at 7:00 AM and most everyone listening thought that we had timed our announcement to adopt with the Focus on the Family broadcast with the Chapmans. In reality we were very surprised on how the Papa God unfolded things.

America World Adoption provided outstanding service assisting us every step of the way. Our visit to China was amazing. The Chinese people were gracious and kind. And on May 21, 2002 they placed Johanna Renee in our arms and life has never been the same. What would we do without her? She is the most loving, kind and talented child that any parent could have. She has a heart of care for others. Johanna loves God and loves people. She is strong academically and athletically. In some of her subjects Johanna's PA State reviews and testing shows her one to two grades ahead of her peers. She helps Dad in the office with paperwork, filing and phones. Johanna plays the violin and even though she is only 10 at the time of this writing she is being classically trained through the

Strings Program at Mansfield University. We thank God everyday for our Johanna.

But God was not finished with our adoption story. The process of bringing Johanna home only made us more aware of the millions of children around the world that desperately need a Mom and Dad and family to love them. The Lord not only makes our dreams come true He blesses us beyond what we can even ask or think. God began to move on our hearts again regarding the blessings of adoption. We believed that the Lord was leading us to rescue and bring home another. Daughter number two. Frosting on our cake. Blessing upon blessing. The God of the impossible was moving once again in our midst. However, this step of faith would require more perseverance than anything we had faced before.

We began our paper pregnancy for Julianna Elizabeth Vogt in 2005. But this time everything seemed to be working against us... our age, my employment situation had changed, our finances and the process with China seemed like it would never end. Years went by with one delay after another. The Lord began speaking to our hearts not to grow weary in well doing. He gave us grace and strength to press on with what He had called us to do. The process was broken but the children without hope were still out there. The re-filing of paperwork for expired documents seemed to go on forever. Year after year we

would file another round of paperwork and updates. And with the launch of a new multimedia business venture things were very tight financially. The Vogt family was running out of money.

We prayed and asked the Lord to help us. A few months later we got a call from Shaohanna's Hope asking if we would be willing to come to Steven Curtis Chapman's concert in Williamsport, PA to share part of our adoption story and help encourage adoption. We said YES, of course. Little did we know that the Lord would use Steven and his wonderful staff to surprise us with a special gift. At the end of the concert Steven Curtis called us to join him on stage and then blessed us with a check for \$4,000.00 to help us get Julianna home. This gift seemed to give us new energy and renewed patience all at the same time.

We took comfort in knowing that all of this was unfolding in God's perfect time. If we had been processed one minute earlier or one minute later the first time we adopted... Johanna would not be our daughter. And the Lord knew before the foundations of the earth were set in place that Johanna was meant to be our daughter and that we are ordained by God to be her parents. At the end of that concert Will Chapman, Steven and Mary Beth's son, gave Johanna one of his drumsticks and signed it for her. She placed it in the studio with the rest of my drum sticks. Every time I practice I pick up that stick. As soon as I feel it in my hand I remember to pray for Will. Young men don't

come any finer than Will Chapman. He is mighty in Spirit and in truth and a powerful servant of the King of Kings. I look forward to seeing the awesome things that Father God will do through Will in the years ahead. The BEST is yet to come for this mighty young man in the Lord as he continues to live for Christ.

Then on Monday, June, 7th 2010 at 12:15 PM we got the call from the Living Hope Adoption Agency that our referral had arrived. The Lord makes everything beautiful in His perfect time. And she certainly is beautiful. After spending time in prayer thanking the Lord for His incredible love and faithfulness, Johanna called our son Regis to let her big brother know that their baby sister would be home soon.

But things were much different for us now than they were in 2005 when we started the process to rescue Julianna and bring her home. With the economic downturn and the rising unemployment in this country we found ourselves thousands of dollars short and little time before we were scheduled to leave for China. When we adopted Johanna we had plenty of resources to cover our adoption expenses. With Julianna it would turn out to be one of the most humbling experiences that we have ever been through.

Like many other families who adopt we had to raise our support from family and friends. I had taught families how

to do this in over sixty adoption seminars that we conducted for America World Adoption Association. But, when you are the one who needs assistance you begin to truly understand how difficult it is to ask others for financial help. For most of our 40 years together Sara and I were able to reach out to others who were in need. Now the situation was reversed. Our total expenses to bring Julianna home was around \$33,000.00. This included all the legal stuff, investigations, fingerprints, FBI clearances, travel and lodging. We were about \$15,000.00 short. Amazingly, with the help of our family and friends we raised the amount needed to cover the rest of our expenses. **Special thanks** to Vineyard Church of Wellsboro and my sister Cathy and her husband Dean for their love, support and financial assistance... and to all of our family and friends who supported us during that critical time. Some of our dearest friends were not able to help financially but would call or write to let us know that they were holding us up in prayer.

Then on July 26, 2010 in Nanchang, China they placed our littlest princess in our arms. Cen Sibeï was rescued, saved and redeemed. She was chosen by us and received a new name and family. She was no longer an orphan without hope or a future. She was now a joint heir with Regis and Johanna. She would now be bathed in love, encouraged and trained in the way that she should go. For Cen Sibeï old things had passed away and all things had become new. She was given a new life

through the blessings of adoption. Sound familiar? She is now Julianna Elizabeth Vogt.

True religion that our heavenly father accepts as pure and holy is to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being stained by this world. We thank God for His loving kindness... His grace and mercy and the new life that we have in Christ Jesus our Lord. God has blessed us beyond measure. We don't deserve it. We did not earn it nor could we have ever given of ourselves enough to be worthy of even the smallest of His blessings. Thank you Lord! To God be all the glory for the things He has done... is doing... and is about to do because of His great love for us. By Him and through Him we have received the Spirit of Adoption and cry out Abba Father... Papa God... Daddy. Oh, how He loves you and me.



Our very first moments with Johanna... May 21, 2002



Johanna's first gift from Mom and Dad... May 21, 2002



THE PEN - in honor of my father Regis Augustus Vogt... May 21, 2002. The story behind the pen... One of my earliest childhood memories I have was sitting in my Dad's lap with my head on his chest playing with his Cross pen and pencil set. I purchased a gold Cross pen for Johanna at the beginning of our adoption journey. I did all of our official paperwork with that pen - except for one signature because of a Chinese official who would not allow me to use my own pen. That gold pen is now locked away in a safe deposit box and will be given to Johanna when she turns 21.



Baby is getting tired of all the paperwork... May 21, 2002



She finally has a Daddy to hold her and love her as she sleeps... May 21, 2002



Big brother Regis, Dad and Johanna - first moments together in China... May 21, 2002



Johanna's first bottle with Mommy... May 21, 2002



Playing with Daddy's glasses in the hotel room... China Photos, May 2002



On the way home... don't let anything happen to **THE BROWN ENVELOPE!**... Johanna threw-up on it!



Daddy's Kiss. In the plane... on the way home to the USA



At the airport in Hong Kong. Just 13 days of love and we have a different little girl in our arms



She did not care where we were going.....she is loved and her little heart knows it!



What has happened to our baby girl? Johanna Renee Vogt loves to play the violin!  
2009



Johanna Renee Vogt plays WAYS Soccer 2010



Johanna Renee Vogt's 10th birthday party with friends... July 1, 2011



Always lean to the RIGHT. Johanna's 10th birthday with friends



Building for the future! July 1, 2011



Run with perseverance the race set before you. July 1, 2011



Johanna's 10th birthday fun with friends, baby sister and Molly the Wonder Dog - July 1, 2011



He sent them out by twos.



Painting a picture... July 11, 2011



Johanna Renee and big brother Regis... July 12, 2011



Johanna Renee Vogt with baby sister Julianna Elizabeth Vogt - August 2011



Daddy and Julianna - First moment together. China, July 26, 2010



Mama... Julianna bonded with Mommy first. She is still Mommy's baby girl. China, July 26, 2010



The infamous PEN - in honor of my father Regis Augustus Vogt. China / More Paperwork. The story behind the pen... As with Johanna this pen was given to Julianna the day she became a Vogt in honor of my Dad. I tried to bring Ice Cream but it started to melt and I had to eat it. Julianna's pen is also locked away in a safe deposit box and will be given to her when she turns 21.



Walking the streets of China - July 2010



Time for a little shopping... where's Mommy? China - July 2010



I love my baby girl! China - July 2010



Another paperwork trip as we prepare to leave for home... China - July 2010



Julianna tells Daddy a baby joke as we wait for the bus... China - July 2010



Regis and his baby sister... China Photos



Johanna Renee and Julianna Elizabeth... China Photos



Daddy looks hungry. Julianna decides to share her cookie... Oh Joy! China Photos



Julianna plays with Johanna... China Photos



Oh look... more chocolate! China Photos



We are ready to leave for the USA ... China Photos



I just love airports... China Photos



Julianna Elizabeth Vogt - Age 2. Post placement report photos. Our final step - October 2011



I'm thinking of a flavor... it's time for some Ice Cream with Dad! October 2011



Yes, I can count to ten. October 2011



"Sit down and relax and let me tell you my story. I started out as a child." October 2011