

# Reflections

Jewels For Jesus



## STORIES FROM THE PAST

May 2008

Foster care has been a critical component of Jewels For Jesus' ministry since very early in the Mission's history. It was, without question, the Lord's plan for Jewels' ever-evolving ministry to the needs of children. Below is a window into these early days of fostering that has led to 56 years of providing loving homes to children who need a safe haven for a season.

The story below is an excerpt from *Gathering Gems – The Life and Labours of Milton J. Hill* by Thomas Swan

Hazel Hill's "mother and father passed away when she was pre-school age. Placed in foster homes, her experience was fraught with difficulty. At times she lived in the midst of miser-



*The Hill Family*

able surroundings and was treated as something mechanical rather than human...Her experience and insight into the living conditions which many little orphans had to endure did much to develop a heart of compassion. After being moved from place to place, she was consigned to a Christian foster home. At the age of fourteen, she accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as her personal Saviour...

"Cherished in the heart of this little girl, the desire to become a matron of an orphanage was destined to be fulfilled. The girlhood experience of Hazel would be of immeasurable value some day..."

"The first child to be taken into the Home for a lengthy period was Marilyn, a girl of thirteen...She attended the Jewels For Jesus Camp during the summer of 1952. When Camp came to a close, Marilyn refused to return home...With the consent of her parents, she was taken into the Hill's home on Helendale Avenue...During the days at Helendale Avenue the Lord sent to the Mission, children from families where heart-breaking conditions prevailed...At one time six children from two families, all under seven years of age, were accommodated there...The little ones whose lives had been upset required patience during the period of readjustment. One child had the habit of biting things and people, including herself. Another had spells of asthma. Love and kindness were served to them in lavish quantities and their progress was remarkable.

"Mr. and Mrs. Hill were constantly reminded of their dependence on their Father's love...God taught them to be content in their state and to rest the responsibility of maintaining the Mission wholly upon the Lord."

# STORIES FROM THE PRESENT



Foster care continues to be a critical component of Jewels For Jesus' ministry, and this winter and spring has been no exception. In fact, it's been one of our busiest six months in some time. During these past few months I've been reminded of the unquestionable importance of our foster families. Recently we have had the privilege of providing care for four little people who needed a tranquil oasis while the grown-ups around them made the important decisions that would shape their future.

Let me share two stories with you:

In one instance we had been supporting a fine young mom as she made plans for her child's future. She only discovered her pregnancy at the eleventh hour. As you can imagine, her head was spinning while she worked hard making plans for her baby's soon arrival. Even with the shortness of time, she was thoughtful and responsible in her decisions. Her plans were in place, complete with a wonderful adoptive family picked, just in time for her baby's arrival.

However, at the hospital after a long and difficult birth, this young woman's heart, head and hormones collided. By the time discharge day arrived she was still experiencing significant pain, was exhausted from sleepless nights, and was physically and emotionally fragile. She was no longer certain she had the strength to continue with her plan but she was also not convinced she should be parenting her child.

Our young mom had two obvious options. She could continue with her plan to let her child go

home with the adopting family. But was this fair to them when she was now uncertain she could walk this path and, especially, was it fair to their young child who was expecting this baby to become their sibling? The other choice was to take the baby home. But she knew this would increase her emotional bond and she knew what she really needed was to be alone and think.

We were able to offer her a third choice. Our mom was given the opportunity to have one of our foster families care for her baby for a short time while she rested, healed and had some time to think. She gratefully chose this option. It was a gift to everyone during those turbulent days.

I'm not going to tell you what our mom decided. The reality is that situations like this can, and do, move in either direction. But regardless of the outcome, and regardless of the joys and sorrows that are wrapped up in an unplanned pregnancy and dreams to adopt, our foster families provide an indispensable haven for children as their futures are planned for.

My second story highlights the life-changing impact of a loving and nurturing foster home. A birth mom whose toddler was in the care of Children's Aid asked for our help in finding a good Christian home for her child; a common request and, having helped many other parents in this situation, we readily agreed. What was different this time was the birth mom's concern that this quiet, timid little one was in a home that was stretched to the limit and not able to attend to their needs. At the birth mom's request, her child was moved to one of our homes.

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# GETTING READY FOR OUR FUTURE

Our fund raising goal - \$60,000 for our 60th Anniversary

As we've mentioned, over the course of this year we would like to challenge our friends and supporters to join with us in raising \$60,000, above and beyond our regular donations, to help with some important areas that need attention as we move into the next decade of ministry.

\$10,000 of this drive is targeted for Jewels For Jesus Adoption Agency. Did you know that there are a number of expenses that aren't covered by the fees billed to adopting families? One of the most costly is when we are bringing

## STORIES CONT'D

Within days of his move this little one relaxed into the welcoming environment and began talking, playing, laughing and reaching out to others in ways we hadn't seen before. A month later, when our little jewel left to begin a new life, we saw a different child; a happy, giggly, chatty toddler. The amazing difference we saw in just one month was the product of the loving, attentive and prayerful haven our foster family was able to provide.

Currently we have three foster families. David and Karen Barrett, and their children Christy and Andrea, have been fostering for 2 years. Glenn and Lisa Colling, along with their children McKenzie, Caleb and Ethan, have been fostering for 1 1/2 years. Scott and Deb Guthrie and, their children Alyssa, Toby and Brooklynne, are the newest members of the Jewels' team, having just been approved this spring. We're thrilled to have them onboard and they're already caring for their first little boarder.

### NEEDS

- New sleepers, especially for boys - newborn size
- Urgent need - gently used spring and summer clothing for girls and boys (sizes newborn to 6x). We have had to turn away several care cupboard clients recently because of lack of supplies.

new foster families onto the team, as we have recently done. In addition, Jewels For Jesus Adoption Agency is committed to providing ongoing support to adoptive families, adoptees and birth parents. So it's not unusual to see us making our staff and facilities available to those who need a compassionate ear or some advice on how to handle a concern.

Please consider making a donation to the \$60,000 for our 60th Anniversary.

## JEWELS FOR JESUS 60TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Our 60th anniversary gala celebration is set for Saturday, October 4th, 2008 and will be held at Lakeside Church in Guelph. We are excited to inform you that as part of our celebration we have booked singer/songwriter, 2006 Dove Award winner and adoptee Mark Schultz. Mark will be performing and sharing his story with us. We will also be holding a silent auction and hors d'oeuvres reception. We are excited to celebrate with you the goodness and blessings of God over these past 60 years and invite you to join with us. Details will be posted on our website as they are available. We are also accepting donations of goods, vouchers or gift certificates towards our silent auction. For more information, email [karen.k@JewelsForJesus.net](mailto:karen.k@JewelsForJesus.net) or call the office at 905-821-7494.



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## MARGO'S THOUGHTS

Currently I'm teaching a study on the book of Ruth. It's an impressive little book sandwiched between Judges and I Samuel. At first glance the book seems unassuming, if not uneventful. But the book of Ruth is peppered with small acts of kindness and everyday displays of personal integrity. Look at just a few examples from Ruth's life. She stays with her bereaved mother-in-law, comes up with a plan to keep food on the table, and works hard in the fields. Then there's Boaz. He speaks kindly to Ruth, encourages her, and gives her a bit of food and water. Naomi, though immersed in her own grief, looks out for Ruth's safety and tries to come up with a plan for Ruth's future. These are all small acts of kindness and mercy in response to daily needs and opportunities.

The book of Ruth is interestingly low in drama. The actions and events are not epic – giants aren't slain, armies aren't defeated, kings aren't crowned. It's just a lovely little story of everyday acts of kindness and integrity that culminate in a young woman and her bereaved mother-in-law finding security in a second marriage to a kind man.

That may not seem like a life changing observation; in fact it barely seems noteworthy, until you get to the last six verses in the book. The closing sentences tell us that these small acts of kindness and everyday displays of personal integrity led to a marriage and the birth of a child who became part of the lineage of Christ. In other words, the efforts of three ordinary people – Ruth, Boaz and Naomi – to live godly lives changed the world.

I find this more exciting than tales of grandeur. It's exciting because it gives me hope. Hope that my day to day efforts can and will make a difference. Small acts that please God, kind responses, little mercies extended to others, can change history. That's the grand message of the book of Ruth. It's not the story of a single hero performing a heroic feat that alters the world. It's the small actions of many people faithfully focused on pleasing God in their everyday conduct.

Our days around Jewels are often taken up with



little actions that, in isolation, can seem insignificant. A foster mom scoops a little boy into her arms when he reaches up. A staff member prays with a birth mom as she cries while saying good-bye to her baby. Another takes a moment to sit down with a couple who is struggling with the wait to become parents. A faithful supporter answers an urgent request for clothes within minutes of hearing about the need. A young child sends us a picture and note with a donation of coins taped to it. What Ruth communicated is that these small acts can ripple out from where they begin and change the lives of many for the ages to come.

The little acts of kindness and integrity that each of you extends to us and to the people we serve are significant. You are part of the life-changing ministry that happens through Jewels For Jesus. Each action, even if it seems insignificant, ripples out from here, changing lives on through the ages. Whether it's clothing for the care cupboard, a small donation, prayer support, volunteering or attending a fundraiser – your actions are part of the constant, consistent, everyday actions of God's people.

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