

Reflections

An Informational Magazine for Reflections Adoption Ministry

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of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
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Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

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Abstract

For my senior honors thesis I have received permission to present a project along with its scholarly apparatus. I will be displaying ways to apply communications to ministry. The project will be a promotional magazine and informational materials. For the thesis I will include the magazine and a press release. I will be approaching some marketing techniques for a non-profit organization and assessing potential ways to reach the public. Many organizations are doing incredible work to fight social injustice and often times few people understand the issues. I want to show how communication can revitalize ministry and get the word out through promotional materials, graphic design and writing. These are examples of marketing tactics in a ministry setting. My goal is to show how creative communication strategies can ignite passion in the public and bring people into involvement. Through the work of artistic, passionate, persuasive communicators, social injustices can and should be brought to light. Not only awaking knowledge but also inspiring action is the mark of a successful communicator.

Purpose

I have chosen Reflections Ministry, a small adoption awareness organization in Northern Virginia. Reflections Ministry is partnered with a local church to provide information on domestic and international adoption to perspective adoptive families. On the website of the partner church the mission of Reflections states, “We provide information, encouragement, prayer support and financial assistance to families who feel called to reach out to the orphan through the miracle of adoption” (Reflections, 2012, p. 1). They assist through fundraising, support, information, counseling, and more. Reflections Ministry hopes to partner with an overseas orphanage to provide aid for children unavailable for adoption as well as those being adopted into families. The ministry could grow into a strong advocacy organization because the heart and passion are already there. I want to take this organization and create a promotional magazine to help them increase their reach and keep people informed about the mission, heart and goals of the ministry. This magazine will be the first step for Reflections to increase their audience and have a product to give to interested individuals and partner organizations. It will keep readers updated and will offer clear directions. Compassion International is a prime example of a non-profit with a wide reach and professional marketing. Compassion was selected as one of the top three organizations by a social media site called Social Fresh. This site evaluates the competence and success of various organizations and stated, “The 29 finalists included Disney Parks, PlayStation, Southwest Airlines, Time Warner Cable, and Whole Foods” (Social Fresh, 2012, p. 1). This shows that non-profits can be effective and influential similar to major for profit corporations.

Plan

I will combine my research for this thesis with knowledge I have gained in advertising, graphic design, and writing courses to create a packaged promotional piece. Non-profits need to set themselves apart to engage people. In an article addressing effective marketing the author said, “Positioning is the process by which marketers try to create an image or an identity in the minds of their target audience” (Gluck, 2013, p. 32). My hope is to create a promotional magazine that can be presented to Reflections that displays their mission and reasons why they are an effective ministry. This article on international entrepreneurship displays the impact non-profit organizations are making in the world. The article reveals:

Whether delivering solar energy to Brazilian villagers, expanding work opportunities for disabled people across India, creating a network of home-care agencies to serve poor people with AIDS in South Africa, or bridging the college-access gap in the United States, social entrepreneurs are pioneering problem-solving models that will reshape the 21st century (Bornstein, 2007, p. 19).

Communication

Various forms of communication are crucial to the success of a ministry organization especially if they work overseas. At first I thought by majoring in Communication Studies I would not be able to be directly involved with international missions until I realized how useful it could be. Films, videos, graphics, campaigns, fundraisers, events, all of these are growing needs for non-profit organizations. How can a message reach people? Our society is saturated by technology. Corporate organizations are utilizing media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and blogs to advertise

and increase their audience. Non-profits are also taking advantage of the global reach provided by social media. Unlike in the past, today millions of people around the globe can interact simultaneously. Communication professionals are finding ways to reach large audiences through the media. Culture is competitive, and non-profits require many of the same qualities as corporate businesses. An article on intercultural innovation states, “It requires a critical mass of creativity, talent, knowledge and the ability and skills to network and cooperate both locally and globally in order to create the power of innovation” (Bisbale, 2006, p. 8). An example of an organization displaying what I am seeking to accomplish is World Vision. According to a marketing study, “World Vision do fantastic work, sure their core function is helping the needy, but their true skill is attracting, motivating, and managing those of us who are in a position to make a difference” (Strawczynski, 2013, p. 14). By organizing this thesis as a portfolio style rather than simply a paper, I hope to implement some of the ideas and techniques that I believe will help promote my chosen organization. Compassion International highlighted beneficial uses of time by stating, “You might spend more than 90,000 hours of your lifetime at work. Why not use that time to rescue children?” (Compassion International, 2014, p. 1). I will take the heart and message of Reflections Adoption Ministry and create a foundational plan of steps to grow their reach and impact. I hope to use this magazine as one piece of a campaign. I have plans for social media, events, fundraisers and more for the ministry but for the purpose of this thesis I will include the first issue of *Reflections Magazine* and an event press release. This ministry has immense potential and merely lacks the means to take the organization to the next level. Communication is important and can set an organization apart. According to an article on the power of

social interaction, “Communication shapes patterns of social interaction, the expression of cultural values and norms, political practices and relations of power, and our positions as local and global citizens” (USF, 2013, p. 2). Currently, Reflections focuses on helping families adopt children by hosting fundraisers, providing information and support, and raising awareness for the orphan crisis. There are over 145 million orphans worldwide and it is a crisis that needs a voice. Using communication to promote products and corporations is good but I want to show how communication can change lives, spread the gospel and reach the broken.

Goal

Through a promotional magazine I will display the heart of Reflections and create a product that could be used by the ministry for actual distribution. Communication skills are just as prevalent and necessary in non-profits as in corporations. Strategically planning how to get the message out is essential to the success of a non-profit. An article researching strategic planning says, “Strategic planning is likely to become part of the repertoire of public and non-profit planners” (Bryson, 2013, p. 22).

By the end of this project I hope to have gained practical experience in my field of choice. Also, this project could be an excellent addition to my resume if done well. I will research various uses for communication techniques that have been effective tools. Then, I will implement them into a cohesive plan for Reflections Adoption Ministry. I hope to display knowledge of advertising techniques as well as understanding of the mission. Ministry jobs in the Communication field are growing. OM Ministries is an example of an international ministry seeking Communication specialists. For example a job description on their site says,

You have creative abilities or an education to create brochures or web pages and you want to serve God with these skills? You like to write for newspapers and newsletters? You have the desire to become creative in the graphic design for print and web? Then you are welcome to come join us!” (OM Ministries, 2013, p.1)

My committee members are perfectly suited to assist me in the areas I will be focusing on and I believe I have a good opportunity to display a well-rounded, thought-out approach to communication in a non-profit ministry setting.

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NEWS RELEASE

LOCAL MINISTRY HOLDS ALL DAY INFORMATION AND TRAINING SESSION FOR ADOPTIVE AND FOSTER FAMILIES IN THE NORTHERN VIRGINIA AREA.

This special event will take place Saturday, May 24 at 7:00pm

Reflections Adoption Ministry announces their first full training session for foster and adoptive families. The event will take place Saturday, May 24 at 1287 Main St. Leesburg, Va.

This event will be a compilation of state-required certification training and necessary informational sessions. Perspective adoptive and foster families will have the opportunity to, accomplish various tasks required for the process all in one day.

There will be representatives from the local police department to oversee fingerprinting and paperwork for background checks. Notaries will be present to assist with signatures for official documents. Red Cross representatives will hold CPR and first aid training sessions specifically to equip prospective foster parents with state-required skills.

Founder Lea Richards is excited to announce this new opportunity. Richards said, "We are thrilled to offer this new opportunity to families. Both foster care and adoption require a detailed process and this will allow families to accomplish multiple steps all at once." This is the first event of its kind in the Northern Virginia area.

The event will also offer informational sessions on beginning the foster and adoption processes, raising children with attachment disorders, nutrition and more. Parents will share their adoption stories, and there will be informational adoption literature and starter packets from various adoption agencies available.

The event will be free for perspective families through donations may be made to help support the future of the ministry. There will also be an open Q and A session. Richards said, "The whole process is quite daunting so we want to make families feel as comfortable as possible. Many families have serious questions before they embark on this journey, and we want to be able to answer them."

Reflections hopes to offer the event quarterly so that more families can participate. This event has the potential to help the adoption and foster care processes run more smoothly.

The background of the entire page is a solid dark purple. In the top-left corner, there are several parallel diagonal lines extending towards the center, consisting of thin white lines and a wider teal-colored band. In the bottom-right corner, there are similar parallel diagonal lines, also consisting of thin white lines and a wider teal-colored band.

Reflections

Helping Find Forever Families for Children in Need



Reflections Ministry

Helping Find Forever Families for Children in Need.

Contact Reflections

Reflections Ministry is based in Purcellville, Virginia. We are open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Feel free to contact us to learn more about the mission of Reflections Adoption Ministry and how you can join with us to provide the love that every child desperately needs.

Main Office
203 Main Street, Purcellville, VA 20132
540-338-7902
540-338-2704 (fax)
reflections@gmail.com
www.reflectionsadoption.org

I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. - John 14:18



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Reflections Ministry: Who We Are

Loving the broken. Rescuing orphans. Finding forever families



Our Mission

Reflections Adoption Ministry is a not-for-profit organization devoted to advocating for the fatherless and being a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves. Reflections focuses on educating the community on the realities of the orphan crisis and providing insight into ways people can get involved. Whether through adoption, orphan care, financial support, or prayer, we at Reflections believe that everyone can make an impact. Reflections offers support and information for those seeking to adopt and those who are curious about adoption. We pray that all believers in Christ will contribute to orphan care in some way.

We hold fundraisers and raise support to financially assist families who are currently in the process of adopting. Reflections also pairs recent adoptive families with those who have already been through the journey. This provides the opportunity for families to be encouraged through the process and ask questions along the way.

Adoption is a journey. We hope to walk alongside those who have been called to bring lost and hurting children into loving homes. Millions of children are lost, abandoned, wounded and unloved. Reflections Ministry is seeking to engage Christians in the fight to care for and love orphaned children. Though we cannot save every child, we can make a difference one child at a time. Reflections is dedicated to loving fiercely and finding children's forever families.

Become an advocate

GO:

Serve orphans overseas and at home through missions. Providing love and showing love can make all the difference to a child. Let them know they are loved and treasured.

GIVE:

Give financially to provide for orphans and support families who are called to bring a child into their home. If you feel the pull to get involved but are unsure how, come alongside and partner in our ministry.

PRAY:

Become a prayer warrior. Prayer is powerful and everyone can commit to praying for orphans, caretakers, adoptive parents, and social workers. The Lord is mighty through prayer and we hope that whether or not you decided to engage in any other ways, you will pray.



Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.

— Proverbs 31:8



Speak

Find your voice

What can you do?

Advocate

Adopt

Reach

Inspire hope

Hope

Give

Journey

2014 Events

BAKE SALE • 5-17-2014

Bring baked goods for a Saturday morning sale. We will be selling homemade cupcakes, pies, breads, scones, cakes, and other delicious treats. All proceeds will go to Hope House orphanage in Ethiopia to supply food for the children living in a state of malnutrition.

SILENT AUCTION • 4-25-2014

We will be taking donations for the silent auction throughout the months of March and April. We are looking for art, furniture, airline tickets, professional services, gift cards, and anything you feel led to give as we seek to raise support for adoptive families currently engaged in the international adoption process.

AWARENESS CONCERT • 6-28-2014

Reflections will host an adoption awareness concert featuring Grammy Award Winning Artist Steven Curtis Chapman as well as local musicians.

Steven Curtis Chapman is the founder of Show Hope an adoption ministry in Nashville, TN. Proceeds from this concert will go to orphan care around the world and will specifically help families currently embarking on the adoption journey. There will be informational materials available for pick up and Steven Curtis will be giving his testimony and telling his adoption story.

If you live in the Northern Virginia area, do not miss this opportunity to enjoy an incredible night of music and entertainment with a purpose.

NIGHT OUT • 5-24-2014

The event will also offer informational sessions on beginning the adoption process, raising children with attachment disorders, nutrition and more. Parents can share their adoption stories and there will be informational materials and starter packets available from various adoption agencies.

The event will be free for perspective families though donations may be made to help support the future of the ministry. There will also be a Q and A session.



The Heart of Reflections

Taking a look into our dreams and goals for the future of Reflections Ministry



Where then is my hope? Who can see any hope for me?

-Job17:15

Love Across Lands...

There are over 147 million orphans worldwide. These are children who are abandoned, broken, lost, and afraid. What can we do in the face of such heartache? What can we accomplish against the staggering numbers of fatherless children? Reflections Ministry is seeking to raise awareness of the growing international orphan crisis. Never before has there been a time when the body of Christ can have such a global impact on the lost and needy. Now is the time to stand up and advocate for hurting people around the world.

At the core of this ministry there is a heart for children. We want to see children who have never experienced real love to find their way into a family who will love and nurture them.

Reflections Ministry is dedicated to educating families on the process of adoption as well as orphan care. We offer support and



encouragement throughout the lengthy process and seek to financially assist families through fundraising events and donations. We have seen the joy of uniting a child with his or her forever family, and we hope to inspire a passion to bring many more orphaned children into loving homes.

Currently, Reflections is providing informational materials for adoptive families and raising awareness of the international

crisis. In the near future we aspire to become our own 501c3 organization and grow into an independent non-profit ministry. In the next months and years we hope to grow Reflections into the foremost adoption ministry in the northern Virginia area. We have plans to partner with specific orphanages overseas and begin to build lasting relationships. We desire to send teams on short and long term mission trips to remodel and create clean, healthy spaces for the children.

Reflections has helped families through the journey of international adoption. We hope to expand to include branches for foster care, medical missions, and orphanage partnerships. We want to inspire people to get involved in the fight for orphans. This will be through adoption, finances, support, prayer, and advocacy. Children are precious in the sight of the Lord and we desire to be a voice for the voiceless.



Global Impact

THE FACTS

There are currently over 145 million orphaned children worldwide.

There are an estimated 10 million orphans worldwide currently living in institutions.

Every 20 seconds a child is orphaned.

Every day 5,750 children age 4 and older become orphans.

Every year over 2,100,000 children are orphaned in Africa alone.

THE RESULTS

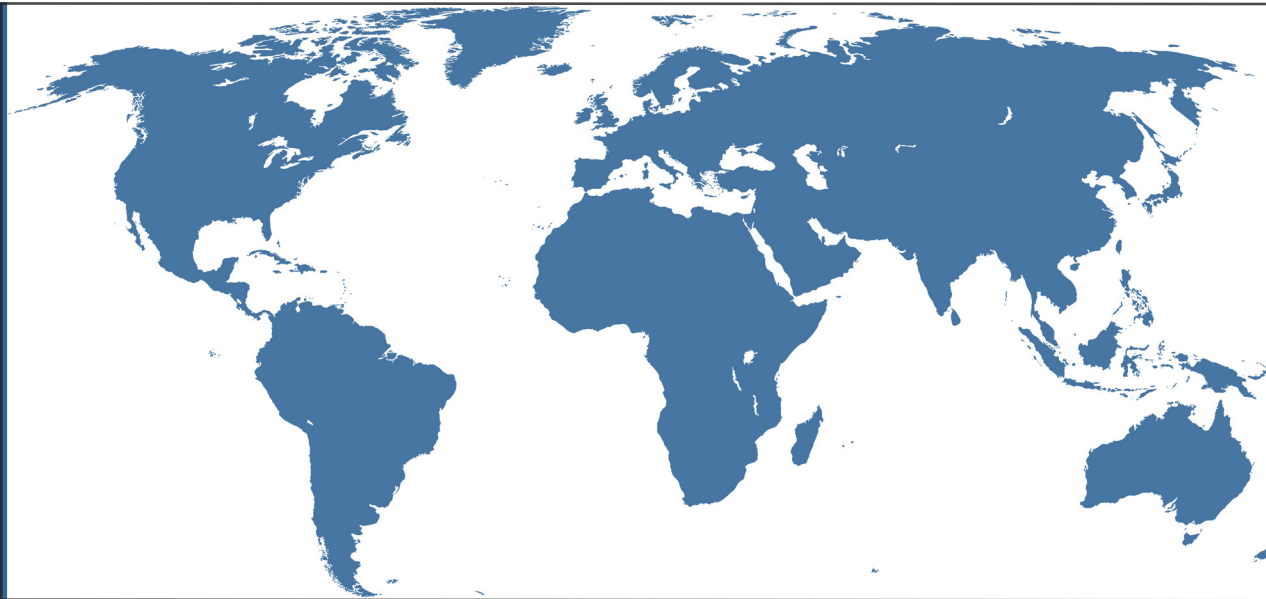
Countless children spend years in an orphanage with crowded conditions, substandard shelter, poor nutrition and little or no medical care.

During the critical years of their development, this toxic stress can cause life-long physical, emotional and developmental effects for these forgotten children.

Every day 38,500 children worldwide age out of the system, falling victim to crime, human trafficking or a life spent struggling to survive on the streets.

NATIONS

What's happening around the world?



ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia has one of the largest populations of orphans in the world. Nearly 13% of children living throughout this country are missing either one or both parents. More than 4 million orphaned children struggle to survive each and every day in Ethiopia. Many of these children have lost their parents to Africa's HIV/AIDS outbreak and have little hope of ever finding a family. With so much devastation, these hurting children are in desperate need of love.

HAITI

Haiti was once one of the wealthiest colonies in the Caribbean, largely based on its forestry and sugar-related industries. Due to political unrest and natural disasters, Haiti is currently the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, with approximately 80% of the population living below the poverty line and more than 50% of them living in extreme poverty. Children typically enter orphanages in Haiti because of poverty, parental abandonment, and neglect. They are in dire need of rescue.

CHINA

In China there are an estimated 50,000 children living in orphanages. Many of the children in China's institutions were abandoned due to correctable special needs. They are waiting for someone to believe their lives are worth saving.

BULGARIA

Nearly 2% of children living in Bulgaria are orphans, one of the highest rates in Europe. Inadequate, unsafe conditions describe many of Bulgaria's orphanages. Sadly, orphaned children often age out of the child welfare system only to fall victim to dangers like homelessness, crime and prostitution.





Highlight: Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa **1 out of 9 children dies** before the age of **five** (UNICEF)

Sub-Saharan Africa has the **highest risk of first-day-death** for infants, and is the region showing the least progress toward ending infant mortality (UNICEF)

Malaria is a leading killer of **children** under five in Africa, leading to over **600,000 deaths** in 2010 (UNICEF)

In Egypt, **9 out of 10 children** at our SOS Villages were born out of wedlock and **abandoned** (SOS)

In Zimbabwe, 66% of children in SOS Families have **lost both parents** (SOS)

The **highest youth unemployment** rates are in the Middle East and Africa, where **1 in 4** young people cannot find work (ILO)

Love is a Journey of Faith: Our Story



Am I called to adoption? Will I love the child as my own? What if it is too hard? These and many more agonizing questions race through the minds of potential and current adoptive families. Adoption can be a daunting journey, but the joy of uniting with a child makes it worth every moment of doubt, struggle and waiting.

Our story, like so many others, began by stepping out in faith and trusting that the Lord has a perfect plan. We began our journey unsure of where our road would lead but were excited to see the path unfold. First, after what seemed like endless streams of paperwork and red tape, we were given pictures of two little girls in Kazakhstan. Never had we planned on pursuing an adoption from this country but how could we possibly say no to the two precious faces before us? Taking the next step, we said yes and began pursuing the process of a Kazakhstan adoption.

Only a few months later, we hit devastation. We were informed that the girls had been adopted by a couple in Kazakhstan and were no longer available. Confused, we questioned why we were allowed to grow to love these girls only to have them ripped away before we even had the chance to meet. As we were well into the process, we continued on trusting that God had a plan that we could not see. All we could do was wait. Waiting can seem endless but eventually it does end.

In March 2007 we finally flew to Kazakhstan hopeful that our long journey was coming to a close and we would soon have our child

in our arms. Upon our arrival, we were shown into a small room where they brought three precious little girls and said, "Choose now." The thought of choosing one child and leaving the others was heartbreaking. We asked for time to pray, and seek the Lord's leading. That night we had no idea what to do. How could we choose a child? After a long night of prayer we were blessed with unexplainable peace that can only come from God. We returned to the orphanage and met Maria for the second time.

What an experience. Holding this child who the Lord knew was ours from the beginning of time. She was small, scared and our goal became the difficult task of making her smile. We visited Maria every day for a month and then came the heartbreaking moment of departure. We had to return home to finish all of the required paperwork and wait for the judge to approve our adoption. Two months later, in June 2007, we returned to Kazakhstan and were able to bring Maria out of the orphanage. She was officially ours.

Six years have passed and we cannot imagine life without Maria, our bundle of laughter and joy. We have been blessed with five children and the Lord truly chose each one. He knew that Maria belonged in our family. All the doubts and waiting were worthwhile and we would do it again in a heartbeat. At the end of our journey, another began. This new journey will last a lifetime.

What if...

No one cared that you were born? No one showed love in your loneliness? No one fought for your life?

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans in their distress.”

-James 1:27

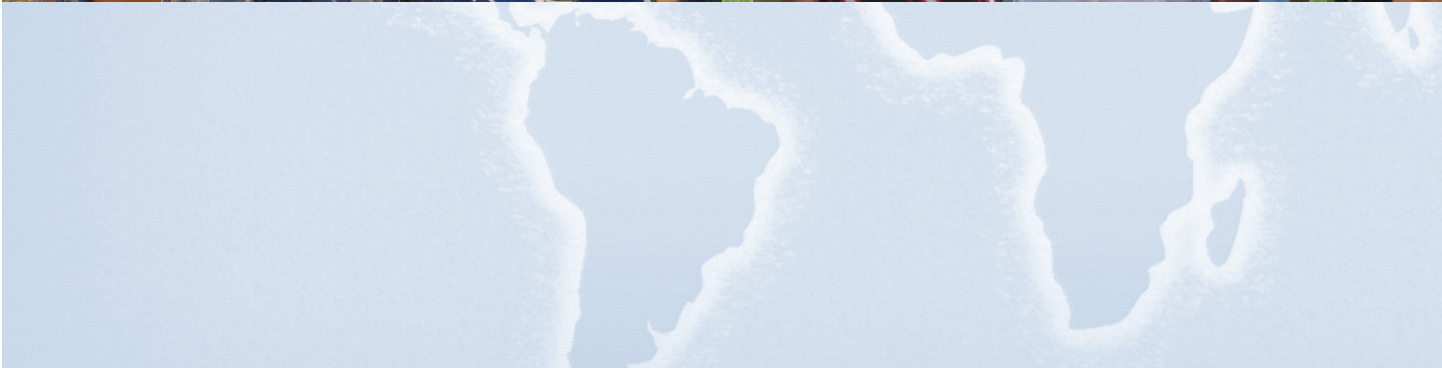
Will you

Embark

on the

journey?







Reflections

Helping Find Forever Families for Children in Need