

# inTouCh

YWAM ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL      KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED

## My **BIG FAT** Multi-cultural Family

by JOHN DAWSON

**G**reetings family. That's right, Family. No matter how brief your service in YWAM may have been, you have become a permanent part of a huge relational network.

God builds His kingdom through gifts of friendship. In God's family, relationships should always transcend institutions. A few days ago I drove two hundred miles, just to fellowship with a couple that I first met as a YWAM student 32 years ago. It's amazing the way God has used service in YWAM to give hundreds of thousands of people friends for life. "He chose our inheritance for us." Psalm 47:4

There is also an international strategy unfolding. The Holy Spirit has been weaving together the redeemed of the nations through organizations like YWAM. The present full-time staff includes missionaries from over 150 nations. I don't know of anything like this before in church history. There are spiritual as well as social implications when such diversity is united in Christ. When we join in intercession, there is a canopy of protection thrown over the nations and healing grace is released.

You may no longer be staffing a YWAM ministry or outreach, however your spiritual/relational assignment continues and as you take your position in prayer, you are no doubt praying with compassion and understanding for the nations because your missionary service

has changed forever the way you see the world. You have nations in your heart because you have friends in many nations.

As the new president of YWAM, I need you. There are now three generations in YWAM and we are entering into a new season of growth. The Bible reveals many examples of the spiritual authority that is released when three generations come into an alignment of heart and purpose.

My wife, Julie, and I have spent time alone with God seeking His guidance for this presidency. Isaiah 51:1-2 has become very meaningful to us.

*Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the Lord; Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; Look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was but one, and I blessed him and made him many.*

In response to that exhortation, we recently spent 2½ weeks with Loren and Darlene Cunningham at their home in Kona. What a privilege to follow in the footsteps of such leaders, to be able to build upon the foundation of such lives.

Where do you come in? What does all this mean to you?

Firstly, cultivate the relationships you received in YWAM; they are an eternal gift to you.

Secondly, continue to carry the breadth of God's kingdom-vision in your heart, even if your current vocation limits your time and energy.

Thirdly, nurture the YWAM workers

you have contact with. Being a missionary is difficult and demanding and your encouragement is life to us.

Some of you are now spiritual grandparents. You have come through the fire of testing recently and although you may feel like a survivor, you are more than that. You now have a spiritual authority that you never had before.

God has more for you yet. Look up and worship. Listen for the next step of obedience and begin to walk it out. Hear God, obey God, prove God. You have dreamed of the evangelization of the whole world. The battle is still on. We are still here working. Join hands with me and let's go!



On Sept 3rd in Singapore, to the "Amen's" of almost 1000 staffers present for the occasion (along with echoed "Amen's" from another 16,000 scattered worldwide), John Dawson was commissioned as YWAM's new President. He follows Jim Stier and Frank Naea, each of whom faithfully served in that role. We are a blessed family. John & Julie with daughter Rachel are pictured above.

# The Ministry of Adoption - 7

## Farewell Two Fathers



**Dr Howard Malmstadt**  
1910-2003  
'Characademic'  
(an academic with character)

As co-founder – together with Loren Cunningham – of the University of the Nations, Howard left the fame (and maybe fortune too) of the academic-scientific world to join YWAM in 1978. To say that Howard was a great man scarcely touches his greatness; his was a greatness that was embedded in his humility. As his son-in-law Tom Bloomer



put it, "Howard was excellence crucified." And to quote Shakespeare, "We shall not see his like again." Howard is shown with his Water Purifier invention. His wife Carolyn and his three children mourn his passing.



**TC Cunningham**  
1911-2003  
'Mr Missions'

Tom Cunningham, father of Phyllis, Loren & Janice, joined his wife Jewell in heaven this past July. He was a generous, tender-hearted man with an engaging handshake and a booming voice that often rang out, "Glory to God!" Missions was in his heart, and it has been estimated that in his lifetime he raised \$65 million for the cause of world evangelism. Is it any wonder that his son Loren, growing up in that sort of environment, founded YWAM? – a mission that now has 17,000 full-timers.

### 1. The Lienau Family

What do you do when five children are deposited on the doorstep of your heart and refuse to leave? "But Lord, we weren't looking for a new ministry," we argued, as Michael and I wrestled with the opportunity of adopting five orphaned children. But then, maybe we were looking...

Last winter, we'd been invited to a Native Reservation in Southern Oregon to show the John Dawson documentary, *Healing America's Wounds*. In the midst of longstanding racial strife over water rights, Native Christian leaders hoped to facilitate reconciliation with surrounding white communities. While there, we fell in love with these five siblings, ages 1-7, and soon to be up for adoption.

We had heard their story months before and had already begun to feel a tug toward taking them in as our own. Without parents to care for them, these precious brothers and sisters desperately needed a 'forever family.' But in our wildest dreams of serving the First Nations people, we never thought something like this would happen.

The idea of adding five more to our existing family of six was a big stretch. It seemed at odds with our busy video production business, but the Lord had been speaking to our hearts and in the last few years our whole attitude toward parenting had shifted. We began to believe His Word that says children are a blessing - not a burden - and that we have an extraordinary privilege to train up 'nation changers' for Him. But the doubts swirled around us. What about the needs of our four children, ages 1, 5, 7 & 10? Could we really parent nine children effectively? Could we afford them? How would we all fit in our 3-bedroom house? How could we travel? And a very big question: Would the mother's tribe allow us, a white family, to adopt them?

As we prayed and searched the Word, we found over 40 scriptures revealing God's heart for 'the fatherless.' We sensed the Lord saying, "Welcome these children. Make room in your HEARTS for them and I will make room in your house, your family, your work, your life." In one family prayer time, our oldest son Jacob prayed, "Lord, please let it be your will – how could it not be your will?"

Back home, a lot needed to happen to make this dream really work. There was all the training and licensing for the foster/adopt program. Our home must be modified. Our church rallied with prayers and help. The missions team, led by our dear friends, Andy and Janet Kerr, committed to transform our garage into two more bedrooms and a bath. Lumber and labor were donated and after three months we were nearly ready. The savings allowed us to make a down payment on a big van and the tribe was willing to release the kids.

Well into our new adventure, we wonder if we're still in the honeymoon stage with our new children. While exhausted most days with challenges of sibling relationships, laundry, meals and home schooling, we sense an amazing grace over our family. We are having so much *fun* experiencing daily miracles of love in our home. Children *are* a blessing and we have a God of wild surprises. And we are minus a garage full of worthless stuff and have it filled instead with living treasures.



# - Three Associates Families...

## 2. The Lee Family

Our biological sons are teenagers and our adopted daughters are preschoolers. Our desire to adopt stemmed from our mutual concern for needy children. We fostered both our daughters before we adopted them, one as a toddler and one as a 3-year old.

As Christians we need to consider adoption seriously. The status quo of raising two kids and being basically free of them by the time we're 45 needs to be challenged. What about the children in our communities – or internationally – that need healing, need to know Jesus, need to know the God who created them in His image?

The gay community is stepping into a place where Christians should be. If we had not taken our younger daughter she would have gone to a lesbian home. Gay people are socially conscious; they know what it's like to be different or unaccepted and are not afraid to adopt a needy child.

Why are we as Christians afraid? God calls us to be strong, committed families, reaching out to the lost and lonely. He requires us to look beyond ourselves to the world around us with compassion and selflessness. His grace is sufficient. We, or the other families also featured in this *inTouch*, are not amazing families. We're ordinary families choosing to make a difference in children's lives. Our children, whether biological or adopted, bless us with their beauty and creativity. We are challenged daily, cry daily and laugh daily because we choose to love.



*Considering adoption and want to chat?  
Email me at [kirsty@ReformationDesign.com](mailto:kirsty@ReformationDesign.com)  
or by mail clo YWAM Associates.*

## 3. The Armerding Family

Malcolm and Dana were sons in my heart long before they became my legal sons.

I used to run a daycare in my home and have fostered many children; then one day Malcolm rolled in with his birth mother. He was tiny, scared and needed assistance to do anything. Anything. He doesn't hold his own head up, he doesn't talk, at least not the way others do and he has almost no control of his hands. Soon he was living with me all the time. I was head over heels in love with him, and still am. He is a child, and has a unique personality, but if you don't look too closely he might look like a vegetable.

Dana also has cerebral palsy. He is engaging, observant, will talk about anything and is fiercely independent. I adopted both boys on the same day with my family and dear friends around us. Would it be trite to say that I don't feel I deserve the blessings that the boys are in my life? I remind myself to trust that God put them here and He will provide whatever their little hearts need as they grow into men.

But things can be hard and people can be downright challenging. Parenting can be more than I can cope with some days. I have struggled personally very much in the past couple of years, and in particular over the past six months.

God hasn't put any of us in identical positions, yet it is so easy to question why God stuck these poor kids with me, a single mother who doesn't give them the range of experiences with which I was blessed. They have no father's input – but no, that isn't true. They have a Father. God.

*Malcolm, Jenny & Dana enjoying a laugh while reading "A Light in the Attic"  
by Shel Silverstein.*



**AND** **Profound**  
**Pithy**  
*some wisdom  
from somewhere*

You cannot improve the future without disturbing the present.

– William Booth

God does not propose to judge a person until their life is over. Why should you and I?

– Samuel Johnson

A Christian cannot win God's forgiveness, but he can lose it by refusing to extend it to a brother.

– John P. Meier

It should be more important what you leave in your children than what you leave to them.

### Upcoming *inTouch* Gatherings

#### **Kona, Hawaii – Nov 16-22**

With Albert & Reona (Peterson) Joly and Peter & Donna

Contact: [info@ywamassociates.com](mailto:info@ywamassociates.com)

#### **New Zealand – Jan 4-10,**

With Albert & Reona (Peterson) Joly and Peter. Contact [dingle@clear.net.nz](mailto:dingle@clear.net.nz)

#### **Australia – Jan 18-23**

With Albert & Reona (Peterson) Joly and Peter. Contact: [westfolk@ozemail.com.au](mailto:westfolk@ozemail.com.au)

#### **Kona, Hawaii – Mar 7-13**

Details on request

Contact: [info@ywamassociates.com](mailto:info@ywamassociates.com)







Are you living for **Eternity** or are you living here on earth for possessions, position, power or prominence?

Howard Malmstadt, who was like a spiritual father to many, lived for eternity. He walked in humility and self-sacrifice to see God's Kingdom come, rather than his own. He lived for eternity and now he is with Jesus.

At the start of 2000, **Eternity** appeared in lighted letters across the Sydney Harbour Bridge (above). Over a period of three or four decades, that one-word message had been hand-written half a million times in chalk on the sidewalks of Sydney and two other Australian cities.

The word had been chalked – in obedience to God – by a shell-shocked, First World War veteran named Arthur Stace, a man who had given his life to Jesus while still a homeless, uneducated alcoholic. Millions saw the word on TV in Australia, along with billions across the world on that memorable beginning to this century.

I believe God was speaking to all of us through this message. Where will we spend eternity and what will our reward be? Only what we do for Jesus, with the right motive of heart, and in obedience to Him, will last. Genuine 'good' behavior always begins in our hearts.

Jesus revealed that our actions here on earth will affect our future in eternity (Matt 16:24-27 & 19:28-30; Luke 6:20-23 & 14:12-14). Those are just some of the things Jesus said that I love to read.

How we spend our time, money and giftings are key to how we will spend eternity. Every day counts. Live for Him and your reward in eternity will be great.

For more understanding and revelation look at my weekly devotions mid-October through November on [www.ywamassociates.com](http://www.ywamassociates.com)

There is no time to compete or compare, only time to live for Jesus and to be led by His Spirit. There's no greater joy than being in right relationship with others and with the Lord. He created us for those relationships, here and on into eternity.

Love and blessings,



*Donna*

## The Adoption Option

There were two things that I defiantly refused to permit God to mess with in my life. One was to be a missionary – I had an absolute deafness to a call into missions. In fact, I used to joke about it, saying, "That's the last thing I'll ever do." God enjoys a laugh too; missions *is* the last thing I'll ever do.

My other 'holdback' from God was adoption. And wouldn't you know it, God lovingly – and maybe a bit sneakily – did something in my heart on that one too. It happened like this...

About ten days before Christmas one year, as Donna and I were just talking, the subject of adoption came up. She knew I was dead set against it (so maybe she was a bit sneaky too in even bringing up the subject!) For a reason that I didn't understand until later, I was immediately open to the possibility. In January we applied to adopt a son.

On a Friday in November we received 'The Call' from the Adoption Agency. A little 2½ month-old boy, whose birth mother had named him Peter – the name we had already chosen – was available, would we come and 'see' him on Monday? Would we?

An anxious weekend followed, as with great excitement we counted the hours until the Monday appointment – our three girls could scarcely contain themselves as they looked forward to having a little brother.

Monday came – no school that day! Off we all went to meet the newest member of our family. Though we still had the option of declining to take him (would that be adding to his rejection?), how could we turn down a boy whose birth mother had named him Peter? We all knew it had been a done deal since Friday (it was actually a done deal earlier than Friday, as you will see).

And so it was, that a few years later around the time that Peter turned six, and with my other major disobedience toward God by now crumbled, He called us into missions. Our family, to the consternation of many – if not all of our relatives and friends – pulled up stakes and headed off to YWAM.

Can God soften hearts? Something happened in *my* heart when I realized that our son Peter was conceived right at that pre-Christmas time, for it was nine months later that he was born.

Did God soften my heart because an unwanted child was about to be conceived? Or was it because an unwanted child had just been conceived, that God wanted to prepare a family for him, so he softened my hard heart?

I won't tell you that it's all been easy. God has done things in our lives that He might not have accomplished had we not adopted Peter.

Though adopted kids are 'chosen children,' they usually have a special set of challenges in life. If you asked me for one piece of advice that you (as an adoptive parent) should instill in your child, it is to teach them gratitude. And do it from an early age.

Don't forget: we're all adopted into God's family (Rom 8:15)

*Peter*