

God Keeps His Promises

A Praise Journal of Miracles and Answered Prayer the Lord Has Performed in the Adoption of Christopher Kyle Wall

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On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Acknowledgments

To paraphrase Churchill, seldom have so few owed so much to the prayers of so many.

We give thanks to the Lord for the faithful prayers of the thousands of saints who repeatedly lifted us up in prayer.

I have always found it difficult to intercede for others whom I have not developed a deep friendship. Perhaps that is why I find it difficult deepening my relationship with our Lord. However, I personally believe that without the fragrant prayer offerings by untold thousands, most of whom we have never met, that we were able to triumph in Christ in our ordeal to adopt Christopher. It is for this reason, that I have selected the verse 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11, to be a running footer in this story:

On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many. (New International Version)

To those closer to the home-front, we have this to say:

To our parents and family... we always knew that you would be there for us because you always had in the past. We are sorry that you had to wait so long for a grand child, but we think that you will agree that Christopher was worth waiting for.

To Tom and Rose Shannon and their children... you were Christopher's first real family, and without you not only would we not attempted the impossible, but we would not have had the courage to continue to the end.

To our special friends (too numerous to mention without accidentally leaving someone out), fellow church members, and members of our Bible studies... we thank God for the Barnabas' among you. God will reward you for your encouragement and your faithfulness in prayer.

We can never thank any of you enough, at least on this side of heaven. We hope that in part, at least, our thanks can be in sharing with you, God's gift to us, Christopher.

But most of all, I am thankful to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ... not only for His gift of Christopher, but even more-so, for drawing closer to the heart of His Father.

To God be all the glory!

— Kevin W. Wall, April 28, 2004

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Preface

Although the story you are about to read was transcribed by myself, I believe that it was written by the hand of God

Written by the hand of God... It is a brash claim, to be sure. I am not claiming that the recording of the events in this journal are inerrant, much less infallible, as are the original sacred Scriptures. However, I do believe that you will find that this story was orchestrated by God. So while the words may be mine, I feel that the events were certainly authored by the Lord through His providence, sovereignty, and miraculous power and as well as guided by His love.

Everything that you read in this journal before you is true and accurate to the extent that I know and understand it, with the exception that several names of people, places, and organizations, and a few dates have been changed to protect people's privacy.

This journal is to be one of praise and glory to the Lord our God for the miraculous things that He has done and the blessings that He has brought us through Christopher. I see it's purpose as four-fold:

1. That all may know, beyond any shadow of doubt, that the Lord intends for us to be the parents of Christopher, and that He has personally intervened, not just once, but several dozen times, to show us clearly what He can and will do for those who trust Him and take their delight in Him. (This had been our prayer from the beginning, and it is, without a doubt, why we saw so much opposition from the enemy.)
2. That the body of Christ might be lifted up and see beyond their present circumstances, and know that our Father is a loving, compassionate, and merciful father, and "no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm. 84:11). These miracles contained herein are not just for us, but for the entire body of Christ, that the body might be encouraged.
3. To encourage the body of Christ to prayer all the more diligently, as they see the God's answers to their earlier prayers.
4. To convince those who are without hope, but who have not yet given up, that there is One who offers hope. To those of you who are searchers and seekers of truth, may this somehow be a small aid to assist you in finding the Truth. And may you discover, as I did, that the Lord indeed is good.

A Note to the Seekers and the Skeptics Among You... Outside the body of Christ, there are those who are honest seekers of the truth and searchers to the meaning of life. There are also those who are cynical skeptics. I know, because I have been both.

To you skeptics, there is nothing that I can write that will convince you that these events are not simply coincidence. That's okay; it's not my job to convert you.

However, to you who are seekers, I ask that you consider these events not just individually, but instead as a whole. Looking at these events separately, one could think that they *could* be mere coincidence and that I am reading more into them than what is really there. However, I believe this is not the case for two reasons:

1. Many or most of the so-called "coincidences" were beyond the control of those interested in seeing Christopher placed into our home.
2. It has not been my general experience during life that "coincidences" appear to be *aligned* along a common goal or purpose, as these seem to be. Rather, they tend to be random, independent events.

Or to quote G. K. Chesterton, "when I pray, coincidences happen".

To better help the seekers among you to come to faith, I have attached a table of all the "miracles", listed chronologically, along with an estimate of the probabilities that I have associated with each. (Much of this material is also included in the main text.) I have tried to be ultra-conservative with the probabilities that I have estimated there. Also, for simplicity, the individual and overall probabilities were estimated and calculated as if all these events were completely "independent,

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discrete events” (in the statistical sense, not the spiritual sense), rather than calculating them using conditional probability density functions and using the probably more appropriate Bayesian methods. While this may change the ultimate probabilities — even by 2 or 3 orders of magnitude — I believe that the overall results are so mind-boggling that there is no doubt that the Lord’s hand was in all of this.

Regardless of your present beliefs, my wife and I both hope this story serves draw you nearer to the ultimate gift giver, our Heavenly Father, and His most precious gift, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Him,

— Kevin W. Wall, October 20, 1995

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1. THE ADOPTION JOURNEY

There are three independent threads in this story that need to be all tied together before we proceed. These threads are the background of Christopher's life, my wife Carol's life, and my own life. Because these things were all happening in parallel, I felt it easier to describe them all separately, rather than chronologically and all interwoven together.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Christopher

Christopher's birth-mother, Mabel Smith, gives birth to Christopher on May 12, 1993¹. Christopher is born 6 weeks premature, and is immediately placed under observation because his birth-mother admitted to taking drugs and drinking alcohol during her pregnancy with Christopher.

Mabel Smith is told while in the hospital that her son may have fetal alcohol syndrome or some other birth defect. She appears unconcerned, commenting that she "should have aborted him anyway".

City of Columbus Children Services (CCCS) is awarded temporary custody of Christopher because his birth-mother did not wish to retain custody of him. After spending three weeks under close observation in Columbus Municipal Hospital, Christopher is placed into the foster home of Tom and Rose Shannon as a foster child. Originally, the Shannon's were reluctant to accept Christopher as a foster child, because they had not yet fully "recuperated" from their previous foster child. However, they quickly decided to accept Christopher after further urging by the CCCS caseworker.

During the fall of 1993, when Christopher is four or five months old, Christopher is taken to see a world renowned geneticist at Columbus Municipal Hospital. This was to ascertain his risk of having fetal alcohol syndrome. Dr. Pauline Winthrow quickly rules out fetal alcohol syndrome, but is bothered by Christopher's abnormal appearance. (At the time, Christopher had an unusually large head, leathery skin, a hairy body, and a bloated stomach / liver.) Being suspicious, Dr. Pauline Winthrow had Christopher sent to Dr. Roger Gantry, an ophthalmologist at Columbus Municipal Hospital. Dr. Roger Gantry examined Christopher and discovered that Christopher had corneal clouding in his eyes.

1. Note the real date.

He told Rose Shannon that Christopher had a terminal disease called mucopolysaccharidoses (MSD)². Dr. Pauline Winthrow concurred with Dr. Roger Gantry's initial diagnosis of MSD. In fact, she stated that it was no longer an issue of *whether* Christopher had MSD, but only of which type of MSD that he had. Because of this, Christopher underwent a battery of tests during the next two months to attempt to pinpoint the exact type of MSD present.

Fortunately for Christopher, also during this time, the Shannon's mount up prayer support for Christopher's health in eight or nine different churches. During this time of testing for the MSD types, Christopher's overall health continues to improve and eventually, one by one, the test results all came back negative. After the test results all came back negative, Christopher was again examined by Dr. Pauline Winthrow. She concluded that it seemed as though Christopher no longer had any evidence of MSD, but she still listed him as "at risk" until the age of two³. A subsequent examination by the ophthalmologist, Dr. Roger Gantry, also revealed that Christopher's corneal clouding had disappeared. Thus the Lord not only healed Christopher of MSD, but He also arranged for him to be still listed as "special needs (medically fragile)", so that we would have an opportunity to adopt him.

1.1.2 Kevin

Shortly before Carol and I were married, we decided that we would like to have two children, a boy and a girl. However, once we were married, we decided to wait awhile, for an indefinite period, until we were certain that we had solidified our relationship and to a lesser extent, our financial situation.

After about two years of marriage, certain relatives kept asking us about children, and this "pressure" to satisfy them made me somewhat rebellious — especially since many of the comments (unintentionally) wounded my wife's spirit. Therefore, I decided to avoid any potential future conflicts and not even

2. MSD is a genetic disease that usually doesn't show up in a child until the age of two, and is almost always accompanied by corneal clouding. The disease is ultimately fatal, generally killing the child between the ages of 6 and 10.

3. At a later examination, after Christopher had turned two, Dr. Pauline Winthrow stated that she no longer believed that Christopher had MSD, although she was still puzzled by the corneal clouding that had appeared, and then disappeared.

mention children further until my wife explicitly expressed it as her desire first. Shortly after my brother's son was born and I saw how much his son meant to him, my desire to rear children slowly came to life again.

Sometime in the summer or fall of 1992, my wife and I had a real heart-to-heart talk about our raising children. During that discussion, neither of us really came right out and explicitly stated that we wanted children (although, in retrospective, I think that we both hinted at it), but we did both admit that we were open to the possibility, and more importantly, we prayed that if the Lord's desire for us was to raise children that He would confirm it in both of our hearts. After that discussion with Carol, I never expressed my feelings about children to anyone until the following summer. At that time, I was talking with Siamak Shadbodaghi, a Christian friend of mine at work. At that time I was unsure of whether Carol wanted children or not (mostly, because I was too blind to see the obvious and too chicken to provoke a possible confrontation by directly coming out and asking). Therefore, Sia suggested that I pray that the Lord would change her heart, or if she already wanted children, that she would somehow express it.

Later, during the fall of that year, I remember seeing a cute little boy with jet black hair and big brown eyes and a the most joyful looking smile that I can ever recall seeing in a child. As I sat there in church, I watched Stacy Shannon bounce that little baby on her knee, and I remember saying to the Lord "Lord, I wish I had a son like that little boy. He has such a joyful temperament." At the time, I only knew that the boy was a foster child in the Shannon's home; I did not know that CCCS was seeking an adoptive home for him and that his name was Christopher. And I especially did not know that the Lord meant for me to have *that* little boy.

By December of 1993, Carol's sister and brother-in-law, Linda and Jim Braun, had adopted a new born boy. His name was Jonathan James Braun, and he was born on December 24, 1993. Two days later, I was sitting downstairs, reading, when I heard a quite sobbing coming upstairs from our bedroom. As I went upstairs to see what was the matter, I could hear Carol's crying growing louder with each step. I went over to the bed to try to console her. Placing my arms around her with a big hug, I asked her what was wrong. She was initially able to speak, but I finally drew it out of her that she was sad because her sister had a baby and she wanted one too. The only trouble was that here she was, thirty-nine-ish, and she had given up all hope of this husband of hers ever wanting children. So, there it was — my moment of truth. I quickly prayed a silent prayer for courage and the right words to say, and then blurted out that I too would like

a child. From there, as we discussed it further, we decided that we would first try to adopt rather than Carol attempting to give birth. The fact that Carol's father is adopted and that her sister adopted definitely influenced us in this decision.

1.1.3 Carol

As early as 1992, our friend Marilyn Brizz told Carol and myself several times that she had thought the Lord was going to give us a son. Of course, since neither of us had expressed to the other an explicit desire for children, we both were somewhat nonchalant about the whole matter. Besides, during the times that we had discussed raising children, we decided that if we had a choice in the matter, we both preferred that our first child be a girl.

Between 1991 and 1993, my wife kept buying baby clothes for various friends' children and for people in our church. She claimed it was her ministry. I guess that it was her way of telling me that she was ready without imposing on me or demanding children. Unfortunately for her, I was too blind to see the obvious. However, eventually it all came out after her sister got her baby. The Lord then gave her the desires of her heart. (And I might add, I think she is doing great as a mother.)

1.2 Taste and See the Lord is Good

About a month or two after December 26, 1993 (the date that we agreed to look into adoption), Carol and I entered a "lottery" with Lutheran Social Services to be placed on their adoption list. When we were selected as first on of the 10 couples on the list, and later, one of the 3 couples to be accepted on their "foster-to-adopt" list, I thought that I had the Lord all figured out. We completed the 6 hours of classes at Lutheran Social Services and were all set to begin our home study with them when the Lord started speaking to Carol, repeatedly telling her that "Nothing is too hard for the Lord". Since He was granting us such success with Lutheran Social Services, we were befuddled regarding the meaning of this impression. Indeed, Carol wasn't even initially sure of whether this impression was of divine inspiration.

Shortly thereafter, Rose Shannon asked us if we were interested in being a "backup couple" to adopt Christopher. Another couple in our church was interested in adopting him, but one of them was having second thoughts. We told Rose that we would pray about it, but I was a bit hesitant to commit because of Christopher's medical diagnosis and our "cruising along" with Lutheran Social

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Services. The night after Rose asked us about being a “backup couple”, Carol told me that the Lord had told her that He was going to give us Christopher. Again, when she first shared this with me, she thought it was from the Lord, but expressed some uncertainty about it. We prayed, and decided to take a wait-and-see approach. For the next week or so, she continued to receive this impression that the Lord was going to give us Christopher, but since the other couple was trying to adopt him, we simply decided to wait upon the Lord.

Then, on March 24, 1994, Carol was viewing a videotape of her sister giving a testimony about the son that the Lord had so graciously provided them. While watching the tape, Carol again received the impression, “Daughter, I am going to give you Christopher.” No more than five minutes later, the telephone rings. It was Rose Shannon calling to tell Carol that the other couple had backed out because the husband had decided that it was not in the Lord’s will for them to adopt Christopher. Rose then asked Carol if we were interested, and Carol answered yes, but that she had to talk to me first. Carol immediately called me and told me what happened and I took this as confirmation from the Lord that He had spoken. Rose then spoke to Claudia Clump, the Special Needs Recruiter for CCCS. She told her about us, and that we would be calling. (Rose had received prior permission from her to try to find someone to adopt Christopher. Since at the time, he was still diagnosed as having MSD, CCCS was having difficulty finding someone interested in adopting him.) Rose then gave us the phone number for CCCS recruiting and we also spoke with Claudia Clump. She was very positive and told us that the only person who had expressed any interest in adopting Christopher was a woman from Marietta, Ohio, and that since that woman was more than 50 miles outside of the county, we would have precedence over her. She told us about signing up for the CCCS fostering / adoption classes, but more importantly, she told us to spend as much time as possible getting to know Christopher, and to attempting to bond with him. A few days later, we would be given the first of several opportunities to do just that.

On March 26, the Shannon’s called us to ask if we would like to watch Christopher in our home for a few hours while they attended a Melaleuca meeting. Once we got Christopher into our home, I picked him up and held him. I almost broke down in tears of pure joy as I receive the impression “Taste, and see that the Lord is good.” Until that time, His goodness had remained an abstract concept to me. It was only now that I had truly *felt* His goodness in my heart.

1.3 Nothing is too Difficult for the Lord

It was during that first day that Carol and I first had Christopher in our home that we prayed together and asked that the Lord’s will in this be done in His way and His timing, that we would be submissive to His sovereignty in this situation, and, above all, that He would use this adoption to glorify Himself.

I’m sure that at the time, we did not realize all the ramifications of that prayer. If we had, we probably, in all honesty, would not have had the courage to pray it. We would soon learn why the Lord had told Carol “nothing is too difficult for the Lord.”

However, for the short term, the blessings of the Lord continued. Carol’s cousin, Lydia, donated us a crib, playpen, high-chair, and other miscellaneous items so we did not have any major expenses. Also, we arranged to sign up for special Saturday sessions (4 Saturday classes, each 8 hours long) of the CCCS fostering / adoption classes that we were required to take as part of the home study process, rather than having to take 8 weeks of 4 hour classes. These classes ended by May 21, which was twelve days before Christopher’s second scheduled court hearing (on June 2) for CCCS attempting to get permanent custody of him¹. Although we didn’t know it at the time, we were soon to face what was the first of many trials.

On Friday April 15th, shortly after I had assembled the crib that we had received from Lydia, Tom and Rose asked us if we would like to baby-sit Christopher, and watch him over night. We were to bring him back to their house on Saturday evening. Carol woke up early Saturday morning, and receives the impression from the Lord “I’m going to give you Christopher. Now, believe it!” Although she had received this impression several times before, it seemed extremely urgent this time and she did not understand why the message was being emphasized to such a degree. Around 10:30am that Saturday, we received a phone call from Rose. She said that we would have to bring Christopher back right away because Claudia Clump had just called her and said that she wanted to use Christopher as a representative in the CCCS Media Day for Special Needs Children because she couldn’t get enough other children. Claudia Clump had invited the local newspaper, and three local TV channels to the media event that was to be held at a McDonald’s in Worthington. During this whole time, Carol is very calm and has an inexplicable peace about her (from the Lord, no doubt), but I essentially break down and give in to fear. Before entirely losing it, I managed

1. The first hearing, scheduled for December, 1993, was canceled because CCCS attorneys had not filed the required paperwork.

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to call a few friends to ask them to pray that Christopher would not be shown on TV, but all I reach are three answering machines, so I could only leave messages. Reluctantly, we meet Rose at another McDonald's just down the road, and baby-sit Chrissy while Rose takes Christopher to the other McDonald's and CCCS Media Day. The plan is that we will stop by in about 45 minutes to bring Chrissy back and to find out what happened. After one of the longest 45 minute periods in my life, we arrive at the other McDonald's restaurant and the Lord also gives us an opportunity to meet Claudia Clump in person. When we talked to her, we ask how the Media Day went, and she seemed very disappointed. She said she did not understand it, but that for the very first time, not a single representative from the media showed up. She remarked that at least one person from one of the television channels or the newspaper always shows up, and more often than not, several of them are there. Claudia Clump may have been disappointed at the outcome, but inside, my heart was jumping for joy. I knew that someone had been praying for us. I later learned, that Jeff Sopp, one of my friends from the men's Bible study group, for one of the few times in his life, actually got down on his knees and prayed for us. This direct answer to prayer carried me through many days of tedious waiting.

A few days after the CCCS Media Day, Carol was shopping at Toys-R-Us. While there, a woman evangelist, whom she had never before met starts up a conversation with her about children's clothes. In the process, Carol mentions that we were trying to adopt a 11 month old boy. After their conversation, the woman pays at the checkout line and is on her way out when she stops, turns around and re-enters. She then searches the store to find Carol and hands Carol \$20. When Carol says that she can't accept the money, the woman evangelist insists, saying "The Lord told me to give this money to you for your boy, and I do what the Lord tells me to do!". Carol eventually takes the money and uses it to buy some baby clothes for Christopher.

1.4 The Lord Still Speaks

About a week later, Carol "accidentally" meets Sonja Weiner in the Northern Lights Library. Sonja is a Messianic Jew, and she and her husband, Steve, quickly become our friends. As it turned out, Sonja previously had "just happened" to work for Dr. Pauline Winthrow, the geneticist at Columbus Municipal Hospital who was seeing Christopher. Sonja was used by the Lord to tell us all about Dr. Pauline Winthrow, including that Dr. Pauline Winthrow was one of the best and most famous doctors in that field in the world. The Lord also used Sonja to provide us with information about MSD.

A few weeks later and we learn that two godly woman in our local church had dreamt that the Lord had given us Christopher as our adoptive son. Both of these woman had these dreams several months prior to us even mentioning that we were interested in adoption at all, let alone in adopting Christopher.¹

On May 14th, during an afternoon break at the second to last mandatory CCCS class, Carol feels that the Lord tells her "2½ weeks". That's all; no further explanation. We both puzzled over this message, as it seemed so vague... what's going to happen in 2½ weeks? And starting from when? From today? From the last class? Because we didn't understand it, we didn't dwell on it, and to be truthful, I was a bit skeptical. However, during the following Saturday (our last class), our instructor, Matilda DeStresse, came around to schedule the first home study.² She asked us "when would you like to do your first home study?" I replied that she should pick a date that was convenient with her, as I worked flex time and had plenty of vacation days remaining so I could take off pretty much any time. So she said, "well, how about at 9:00am on May 31st?". I said "fine", and as she was preceding on to arrange her next appointment, I wrote it down in my calendar. That's when I noticed that from May 14th to May 31st is 17 days. I quickly grew excited as I calculated that 2½ weeks equals 17½ days, so the Lord couldn't have made it much closer! Carol and I continued to be amazed by God's display of providence working in our behalf.

1.5 Trials in the Wilderness

On May 26th, Carol received another impression that she felt was from the Lord. That impression was "30 days and I'm going to wind this up!" and "in 30 days, I'm going to have Christopher in your home". Given all the other similar impressions that had already come true, we felt that we had to believe this in faith as well. However, it didn't happen that way. This could have been because this impression was not really from the Lord, or because of some unbelief on our part. I believe this incident served to remind us that "hearing God speak" is

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1. Much later, we discovered that a third Christian woman had dreamt that she saw Christopher running to me and in her dream, saw him wrapping his arms around me, shouting "I love you, Daddy!". However, she did not reveal this to us until after we had received confirmation that we would be allowed to adopt Christopher.
 2. That's when they visit you in your home and interview / interrogate you.

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much more subjective than we would like it to be. Therefore, we would have to learn, before this whole ordeal was over, to trust in the objective written Word of God, and specifically the *character* of God's love and faithfulness that it reveals of Him rather than leaning on subjective impressions. As the poster on a door in our home says, "Our faith does not rest in our feelings; it rests in the unshakable character of Christ."

Our first home study visit with Matilda DeStresse went as well as could be expected. Before that encounter, we together decided that we would be truthful in everything, especially with respect to our Christian beliefs. We both felt that only then, would the Lord honor our daily prayers for Christopher. Therefore, when questions were asked such as "how do the two of you resolve anger between you", etc. we answered truthfully, by saying that we pray about it, first separately, then together, and confess our sin to each other and ask the other for forgiveness. Such answers did not go over too well, to say the least. Also, we had decided before the initial home visit that we should investigate the possibility of becoming a "resource home" so that we could try to get Christopher into our home before CCCS had secured permanent custody of him.¹ When we asked Matilda DeStresse about this, she became visibly upset that we wanted to adopt a *specific* child, namely Christopher. (This is just not the way the bureaucracy works at CCCS.) When she saw that she couldn't talk us out of this intent to adopt Christopher, the interview became more like an interrogation. Matilda DeStresse told us that there were probably at least a dozen other families who were on "the list" ahead of us, and that we shouldn't get our hopes up. When we mentioned that we had spoken to Claudia Clump and that she had encouraged us to spend as much time bonding with Christopher as possible, she became rather indignant and said she would have to speak with her. At this time, Matilda DeStresse also scheduled our second and final home study visit. Despite our every effort to schedule it earlier, it was not scheduled until June 21st. . . more than 3 weeks *after* CCCS scheduled court date to obtain permanent custody of Christopher.

On June 2nd, the date of CCCS's Permanent Court Custody (PCC) hearing for Christopher and his half-sister was scheduled, it was postponed for a second

1. A "resource home" is where you become a foster parent, with the intent that you will later adopt that child. We wanted to do this because CCCS still only had *temporary* custody of Christopher, and we felt that it would be in Christopher's best interest if he could move in with us as soon as possible.

time.² Both the Shannon's, our parents, and ourselves were hoping that CCCS would receive PCC of Christopher on June 2nd; however, on the night prior to the hearing, I received a feeling of reassurance in my heart that the Lord was in control. At that moment, I suspected that CCCS was not going to get PCC as they planned. Thus when we learned that the PCC hearing was canceled for the second time for the same reason (the CCCS attorney again had not completed all the paperwork), I had nothing but perfect peace about this particular situation. At the time, it was not obvious *why* the Lord allowed this delay in CCCS getting PCC, but only that He was still in control. Looking back, it is obvious that among other things, He allowed time for CCCS's bureaucracy to complete the paperwork to get us an approved home study. (Note that by June 2nd, we still had one home visit to complete.)

During the whole time of waiting, control of the entire situation was removed from our hands. There was nothing that we could (safely) do to speed the process up — at least not without further jeopardizing our chances. However, throughout this time, it seemed as though whenever we were at our lowest, someone would call us up or drop us a note or we would bump into someone and be reminded that they were praying for us. We praise God for the faithfulness of His saints during these times. When we needed it most, the Lord graciously provided someone to minister to us. Those who encouraged us are too numerous to mention by name, however we have not forgotten you and neither has the Lord. It is for you that we are holding this adoption celebration. Many of these miraculous intercessions by the saints of God are detailed in the attached table at the end of this journal. However, this list is by no means complete.

On June 15th, Matilda DeStresse called a meeting at CCCS to decide what to do about us and Christopher. (Specifically, the pretense that the meeting was called under was whether we should be allowed to proceed with our request as a "resource home", or whether we would be kept in the standard adoption process.) We learned from Claudia Clump that four people had been invited: Matilda DeStresse, Claudia Clump, Colleen Herman, and Marie Callow. Of these four people we felt that two (Claudia Clump and Colleen Herman) were either for us, or at worst neutral. We felt that Marie Callow would likely be somewhat biased against us, and we felt almost certain that Matilda DeStresse was against us. However, neither of the two we felt might speak in our behalf was able to attend

2. The first time it was postponed was in December, 1993, as the attorney and not filed the necessary papers with the court.

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the meeting. (One had another meeting scheduled at that time, and the date was in the middle of the other's vacation period.) Later, we discovered that Diana Matthews also attended. The result of the meeting was that CCCS had decided that the Shannon's had partially violated CCCS's confidentiality rules. CCCS apparently decided what we could only go for adoption, but not for a "resource home" — if indeed this issue was ever even discussed. It was at this point, we saw a real spiritual struggle begin in earnest. It was also at this time that we had to keep reminding ourselves of all the things that the Lord had already done up to that point and the promises that He had given to Carol ("nothing is too difficult for the Lord"), and most importantly, God's character as a loving Father.

On June 21st, we had our second and final home visit. We also had a lot of people praying. Almost immediately upon arriving, without our even asking, Matilda DeStresse tells us that CCCS will not allow us to proceed as a "resource home", but will accept us as "adoption" prospects. I briefly tried to argue the logical inconsistency in this decision, but she remained adamant, so I quickly gave up on that angle. Matilda DeStresse told us that Christopher's next scheduled PCC date was in August (she did not mention the exact date), but she said that our home study would be approved by sometime near the end of July. She also mentioned that CCCS would prefer to place Christopher in a Hispanic home. During this time, we had a small opportunity to share our faith with Matilda DeStresse. At one point, she read the poem that I wrote Carol for our third anniversary, and tears almost came to her eyes. Yet in some sense, it seemed as though she found our faith and strong marriage disturbing. Right before leaving, we asked her if we could still see Christopher. She replied that she didn't think that we should "because we were only setting ourselves up for disappointment", but we replied that we were willing to take that risk. So the good news was that she at least did not prohibit us from further seeing Christopher.

On June 28th, Rose gets a call from Diana Matthews, whom we later learned had attended the June 15th meeting to discuss us and Christopher. Rose said that she was asking all kinds of strange, accusatory-sounding questions regarding her and Tom's violating confidentiality. Carol and I pray with Rose to bind Satan and we ask the Lord to change Diana Matthews's and Matilda DeStresse's hearts.

The next day, Rose calls again, but this time, with more encouraging news. Diana Matthews somehow gets the impression that we think that we are being persecuted by Matilda DeStresse and the agency because of our Christian faith. (This wasn't far from the truth, although we had never actually *mentioned* this

to anyone having anything to do with CCCS.) This time, Diana Matthews was very positive. Rose got to share with her the whole story of Christopher. She spoke about the standard grievance procedure and she also mentioned that she no reason why we shouldn't be able to adopt Christopher. (The Hispanic issue wasn't even mentioned.) The Lord had found us an ally.

1.6 More Miracles in the Wilderness

On Saturday, August 13th, I went to a "work day" on the church property, while Carol and Rose went out shopping garage and yard sales. They find themselves out on the far west side in an area where Rose swore she would never return. (She was there about 5 years prior and found only junky stuff for high prices.) While at one of the garage sales, Carol hears a woman mention "adoption" and Carol then asks the woman "are you adopting?". The woman replies "no, but I work as a caseworker at east CCCS". Rose says "really, I'm a foster parent for CCCS and my baby is from the east branch." The woman then asks the child's name, and when Rose tells her, she says "The Smith's! I've known them for 30 years". She (her name is Denise Needles) then tells Rose and Carol all the "dirt" on the Smith's family. Rose and Carol also learn from her that Christopher's birth father lives in town and that his birth-father's sister (Christopher's aunt) wants to adopt Christopher. Two days later (on Monday, 8/15), Rose learns of this "officially" via Christopher's case worker Colleen Herman.

When I returned home from the church "work day", I listened to the answering machine, and the only message was from Carol saying "Kevin? Are you there? Will you pick up the phone? They've found Christopher's father and he wants Christopher back." When I heard that message, all my hope was dashed, and I became very angry at the Lord for "leading us on". I showered and while in the shower, as I was crying out to God, asking "why did you let this happen?", He answered me. He told me it was because I had been seeking Christopher more than I had been seeking Him. The truth stung, but I immediately repented and cried out for forgiveness of my idolatry and my insolence.

Later, the phone rang again and it was Carol. She explained to me the circumstances by which they discovered this information, and immediately my heart was put at ease. I then knew that this encounter was *not* a coincidence, but rather it was a divine appointment set up by the sovereignty of God. Had we discovered that Christopher's aunt was trying to adopt him via Colleen Herman, all of us would have been totally distraught. As it turned out, we had an assurance that the Lord was still in control of this situation. We didn't understand *what* He was

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doing, but we did know that He was in complete control.

We finally had our home study approved in late September 1994, but it had the stipulation that it was only for “one white child, age 0 through 5”. CCCS did not consider Christopher white; they considered him Hispanic¹. Thus we did everything we could to become approved to adopt Hispanic children. We took many additional classes and went through a Hispanic Transcultural Assessment before it was all over. The fact that in the summer of 1994, the Lord had “just happened” to place me in a small team at work where two of our (original) eight team members were Mexican-Americans did not hurt our cause.

On December 8th², CCCS finally obtains PCC. Christopher’s alleged birth-father, who claimed he was interested in obtaining custody of Christopher, did not even show up for the court hearing.

1.7 Trapped at the Red Sea

We learned that an Adoption Matching Meeting for Christopher was scheduled on March 16, 1995. The official result, as told to us by Janette Peters, was that “they were gathering more information” so that “no match was made”. Janette Peters wouldn’t answer my direct question as to whether or not we had been “disqualified” and they were looking for others, but later sources revealed that this was, in fact, the case. In general, Janette Peters was extremely evasive when asked questions — almost to the point of rudeness. I personally became very upset and mentioned that we probably would be seeking legal action against the agency.

The next morning, I awoke to the answering machine going off. It was Marie Callow, a department head in the Adoption Department of CCCS. She left no message except her number and a request that we return her call. I conjecture that Janette Peters told her what happened and that she was calling us back to urge us to be patient and/or otherwise refrain from taking any legal action against the agency. However, since Janette Peters had misconstrued almost everything that I had said the previous evening, I refused to discuss anything further with them on the phone. Instead I decided to mail them a letter. I worked

1. Although according to CCCS’s own experts that teach their “Caring for Hispanic Children” course that being Hispanic has nothing to do with race; that it is strictly an issue of a common culture. As they put it, there are white Hispanics, black Hispanics, Asian Hispanics, etc.
2. Note the real date.

through three or four drafts, faxed one to our attorney for comments, and got his comments early Monday morning. He said to shorten it to less than ¾ of a page, so yet another revision was in order. Confident that I now had the words that I wanted, Carol and I were getting ready to leave to go fax the letter to CCCS upper management when the phone rang. Reluctantly, I answered it; I had been avoiding it all morning because I was certain that Marie Callow would call back.

1.8 Victory at Last — The Red Sea Parted

The phone call turned out to be from Janette Peters. She asked if I could put Carol on the line too, and when I yelled down to her, I was so nervous I dropped the phone and accidentally hung it up. I dialed Janette Peters’s telephone number, but neither Carol or I were looking forward to the ensuing conversation.

That is when Janette Peters said “Congratulations! You’ve been matched as Christopher’s perspective adoptive parents”. Both of us must have been too stunned to say anything, because Janette Peters asked “Hello!?! Are you still there? Don’t you have anything to say?”. At that, I regained some of my composure and said “yes; praise the Lord!”.

We then proceeded to call perhaps 80 people that day, to thank them for their prayers and support.

On April 12th, Christopher was officially placed into our home. The Shannon’s brought him over and we had a mini-celebration. Afterwards, we had to meet with Christopher’s new CCCS caseworker once a month for the next six months, but the worst part was past. We now had Christopher in our home.

This past Monday, on Oct. 16th, the county probate court granted us custody of Christopher as his legal parents and guardians. But the Lord granted him to us before the foundations of the worlds. Praise be to our Lord Jesus Christ!

1.9 Finding the Heart of our Father

During this whole ordeal, my wife’s and my faith was tested like it never has previously. The same might be said for the Shannon family as well.

Personally, I wish that I could say that we had always remained steadfast and that our faith never wavered, but I can’t say that and still be honest.

At times, my faith crumbled like a castle made from sand. But at other times, I somehow managed to garner the faith that I would have once thought impossible.

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I would like to share some of the things that the Lord taught me during this time. I believe that it was the Lord, in His *faithfulness*, that allowed me to go through these trials, to test me and to mold me. Fortunately, though, He went through the trials with me, and sent along plenty of encouraging signs along the way.

In fact, although I am ultimately relieved that this whole ordeal is now over, in a rather strange way, I miss being in the pressure-cooker, if only because it was pressing me *closer* to my Lord.

I believe that the primary thing that the Lord was trying to teach me was to learn to *experience* the goodness of God. Of course, I knew (intellectually) about God's goodness from Scripture. However, when it came to a personal relationship with the Heavenly Father, deep down, I felt that maybe I couldn't really trust Him for *my* best interest. Jesus, I believed that I could trust, if only because He had made Himself human and sacrificed Himself for my sins. But the Father... well I had my doubts. After all, anyone who could send His only begotten Son to die for the likes of you and me couldn't fully be trusted to watch out our for *our* interests, right?

I think that much of this trouble relating to God, the Father, went back to my early childhood. There were many times when I longed for the company of my earthly father, but he was too busy, or nowhere to be found. In short, I felt somewhat abandoned.

To make matters worse, about a year before my father's death on December 8, 1988, my father and I somehow began developing the relationship between us that I had always longed for, but never really had. I'm sure that a large part of this reason is that shortly before this began to happen, my dad accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Lord and Savior and that experience forever changed not only his behavior, but his entire perspective on life. However, just as I felt that the relationship with him was heading in the direction that I had desired, he was snatched out of this world by the jaws of death.

Oh sure, the fact that he had accepted the Lord and was saved provided me with some comfort when he died. But for four years, I held back my anger and resentment against God. It took me that long to cope with it because, although I had wanted to "blame" God for taking my father, I knew that I could not resolve that attitude theologically. Eventually, I guess I figured "forget the theology" and I cried out in anger against the Lord. After that incident, the real healing actually began, and by the next anniversary of my father's death, I was no longer the bitter person that I once was.

However, because of all of my personal baggage, I didn't always believe in the "goodness" of the Lord... at least not as I measured goodness.

Thus when the Lord first spoke to my heart the first time I held Christopher and said "taste and see that the Lord is good", it was almost too much for me to bear. At that instant, I somehow knew not only was He promising me Christopher, but He was promising a whole lot more... He was promising me Himself as well.

Aside from that first incident, I had several other divine encounters with the Lord. Much to my humility, most of these were gentle rebukes.

The first among these was when the Lord made me aware of my idolatry: "You have been seeking Christopher more than you have been seeking Me."

The next incident occurred one night when we were baby-sitting Christopher when he was only about a year old. I was holding him, trying to get him to settle down and go to sleep. But Christopher kept on squirming, kicking, and screaming; he did not want to go to bed. It was then I "heard" the Lord say to me "sometimes you kick, squirm, and scream when I try to comfort you". In my heart, I knew it was true.

The following occasion on which I sensed the Spirit of the Lord was one where we were again baby-sitting Christopher when he was 15 months old. He had been up playing all day and was very tired. It was late afternoon and I decided to put him in his crib for a nap that he so desperately needed, but definitely did not want to take. I closed the door and Christopher cried and screamed for about 10 to 15 minutes at the top of his lungs. I knew that he needed sleep. I also knew that he wouldn't rest if I entered the room, so I left the door closed and let him cry. It was one of the toughest things that I had yet done as a parent. I heard every little whimper and each one tugged at my heart. I thought about calling out to him because I so wanted to comfort him, but knew if I did, it would only keep him awake longer. It was at that point that the Spirit of the Lord impressed me with this thought: "Sometimes when you cry out it moves me in the same way, yet I dare not answer because I am working in you a greater good. It is difficult for me too during those times, but I hear your every plea just as you hear Christopher's every whimper." I knew then that I simply had to trust my heavenly Father in this whole adoption ordeal, because like Christopher, there was no was that I could begin to understand my Father's good plans for me in this regard.

The final time that I remember clearly a divine impression happening was again when we were baby-sitting Christopher. (Gee, is this getting to be some kind of theme, or what? :-) This time it was during a pre-placement visit.

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It was 3:54AM, when I heard Christopher crying. I quickly got out of bed so Carol would not be awakened. When I came in, Christopher was standing up in his crib and crying loudly. He reached his arms out to me and I gladly picked him up. Almost immediately, he stopped his crying and became very relaxed and fell back asleep while resting his head on my shoulder.

Almost instantly, the thought came to me out of nowhere (whether it was my own or from the Lord, I do not know), and that thought was “This is what it means when the Scripture speaks of ‘entering the rest of our Father’.” Although this should have been a rather obvious thought, I really had never grasped the true depth of it before this night. I had always limited myself to a more surface view; namely, that it meant to “cease my striving and rest in the work that my Heavenly Father had completed in His work in Christ Jesus.” Of course, it means that, too. However, it is so much more than that. It means not only resting from my labor and striving, but also to simply *relax* and place myself in His arms. How foolish of me not to have ever seen this before. But how liberating as well! I was so over taken by it all that I had to sit down on the couch while holding Christopher. I sat there hugging him, knowing that God, my Father in heaven, wants to hug me the in the same way. After about 10 minutes, I was assured Christopher was asleep¹, and I placed him back in the crib, and said a prayer over him, asking the Lord to watch over him. I then returned to bed, and entered into my Father’s rest.

The final time which the Lord “spoke” to me was when He didn’t speak at all. Sometimes His very silence says more than words ever could. There was an interval of perhaps 2 months, just prior to the matching process in late March, that I went through a very dry spell spiritually. I tried increasing my Bible reading, my prayer time, and even my fasting for several extra days so that I might hear the word of the Lord. At that time, because of the pressures of the entire ordeal, I yearned to hear His voice more than ever — like “a deer pants for water” (Psalm 42:1). However, when we had learned that we had all but “officially” been eliminated and my wife and I spent time praying with her parents and Tom and Rose Shannon, I had the realization that this dry spell had also been of the Lord. I realized then that only He could totally quench the “thirst” that I was feeling, and that I desired His presence and sweet communion more than that of Christopher. Although (at the time) I did not know what the final outcome would be, I knew that He would be there for me when I needed Him. He would

1. Actually, I knew Christopher was asleep after the first minute; I just wanted an “excuse” to hold him while I was thinking!

not abandon me. (I will never leave or forsake you. — Hebrews 13:5)

I had finally found the heart of my heavenly Father. It is my prayer that this testimony will help you to find it as well.

2. CONCLUSIONS

I hope that by now, you are all convinced that the Lord’s hand is upon Christopher’s life. I also would wish that this testimony has played at least a small part in blessing you and increasing your faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I trust that all of you were able to share somewhat in the Lord’s blessing us with Christopher, especially in knowing that your prayers on our behalf was much of what made it all possible. Nothing we can say or do would be enough... this side of heaven. We will have to wait until our homecoming to thank all of you as you deserve.

May the Lord richly bless you.

In Christ Jesus,

Kevin W. Wall

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Appendix A

The following table contains a chronological accounting of the significant events in Christopher's adoption, most of which I feel where the Lord either directly or indirectly intervened on our behalf. For most of the events, I have tried to make a ultra-conservative estimate regarding the probabilities of each event. For some events, I had no idea how to even make a *guess* at the probability, so for those, I left them blank. A few other entries are really "milestones", so for them, a probability does not really apply (or, it could be equivalently, taken to be 1). However, since the highest probability of any specific discrete event is 1, so not assigning them a probability that factors into the total probability is equivalent to assigning them all a probability of 1 (i.e., certainty).

As was mentioned earlier, to calculate the total probability of all these events happening so that it is "statistically correct", Bayesian methods and conditional probabilities should be used. However, since that kind of math is (comparatively) very difficult to compute (and makes my brain hurt :-), I have decided to oversimplify and treat each table entry as an independent, discrete event. This may throw off the final result by several orders of magnitude, but hopefully, I've somewhat compensated for it by using ultra-conservative probabilities to begin with. (If you have no idea what I am mumbling about, that's okay. It would probably make your brain hurt too.)

Anyway, to calculate a total probability P , from probabilities P_1, P_2, \dots, P_n , when we are dealing with discrete and independent events, we simply take the product of all the probabilities, P_1 through P_n . In this case we just multiply all the numbers in the "Probability" column of the above table for each row together. (Entries with no probabilities given, ignored.) Thus treating each of the following table entries as an independent and discrete, we arrive at a total probability of:

$$Probability = \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^9 \times \left(\frac{1}{10}\right)^6 \times \left(\frac{9}{10}\right)^6 \times \left(\frac{1}{4}\right)^2 \times \left(\frac{1}{100}\right)^3 \times \frac{99}{100} \times \frac{1}{1000} \times \frac{1}{10^4} = 6.4 \times 10^{-24}$$

That is, 6.4 in 1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000. (That's about one trillion times the national U.S. debt, which is about 5.5 trillion dollars!) Like I said, even if this calculation is off by TEN orders of magnitude, that would still be 6.4 chances in 10 trillion! Praise be to our Lord and Creator! **WOW!!!**

If there are any serious mathematicians in the crowd who would like to assist me in estimating conditional probabilities for each of these events, and then apply Bayesian methods to the analysis of this calculation, I would be glad to offer my assistance. If you are interested, you may contact me at:

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
1992 / 1993	1/2	The Lord separately and individually tells both Marilyn Brizz and Carol that He was going to give us a baby boy.	Word of knowledge / prophecy, or just a guess? If this were just a guess, the probability of guessing correctly would be 1/2. However, Marilyn first made this statement at least two years before Carol and I together decided that we wished to rear children.
5/12/93	9/10	Christopher's birth-mother carries him to full-term (actually, 7.5 months) rather than aborting him.	When she was told in the hospital that he appeared to have fetal alcohol syndrome or some other birth defect, his birth-mother commented that it was no big deal since she had thought about aborting him anyway. (Note: This was an unplanned, and probably unwanted pregnancy from the start. What percentage of unplanned / unwanted pregnancies are carried to term? I guessed 90%, which I think is a bit high.)
Early 6/93	1/100	Christopher is placed into the foster home of our friends, Tom and Rose Shannon as their foster child. At first the Tom and Rose were reluctant (because they had not fully "recuperated" from their previous foster child), but then they decided YES! Praise God!	Rose says that there are approximately 500 foster homes in the area under the jurisdiction of CCCS., about 150 of which might be willing to receive a special needs infant such as Christopher.

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
9/93 - 10/93	1/1000	<p>Christopher is originally diagnosed has having fetal alcohol syndrome, and thus an appointment is made with a specialist. The specialist, a world famous child geneticist, diagnoses Christopher as having mucopolysaccharidoses (MSD). (MSD is a genetic disease that normally appears in children around the age of two, and it is ultimately fatal, generally killing the child by the time they are between 6 to 10 years old.) The initial diagnosis was based on his appearance (shape of head, hairy body, leathery skin, bloated stomach / liver, etc.), and then later confirmed by an ophthalmologist (and witnessed by several residents) by the presence of clouding in Christopher's corneas. Because of this, Christopher undergoes a series of tests to pinpoint the exact variety of MSD that he had. After MUCH prayer for Christopher by at least 8 different churches, Christopher's health dramatically improves and the Lord confirms His healing miracle by the fact that ALL 8 tests came back negative. Furthermore, the doctor had to officially list Christopher as "at-risk until two years of age", because most symptoms of MSD do not manifest themselves until at least two years. Thus the Lord kept Christopher listed as "special needs (medically fragile)" so that we could adopt him. Praise the Lord for His wondrous plans.</p>	<p>For those with little faith who do not consider this to truly be a miraculous healing, consider this: If the world famous geneticist actually misdiagnosed Christopher, it was only because the Lord provided directly measurable physical symptoms (i.e., the corneal clouding). So either the Lord worked a miracle and fooled a famous doctor so that Christopher would be officially listed as "at risk" or indeed, He truly healed Christopher. Either way, the end result is the same. Had Christopher been listed as healthy, there is no way that we would even had a CHANCE at getting him!</p>

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
9/93 - 10/93	1/2	CCCS attorney failed to file appropriate paperwork with the court, so that CCCS fails to get permanent court custody of Christopher. Therefore, Christopher stays in Shannon's home, giving us the eventual opportunity to adopt him.	<p>Special paperwork needed filed because the whereabouts of Christopher's birth-father is unknown. One could only assume that the CCCS attorney should have known that this was the case and that he needed to file this extra paperwork.</p> <p>One would normally think that this is a (or should be) a rare occurrence. However, it seems a all too common occurrence for CCCS attorneys. Theories I've heard regarding this range from total incompetence on part of the CCCS attorneys to speculation that CCCS is really <i>not</i> all that eager to obtain PCC on children in their temporary custody, since that means that the agency will soon be losing the child to an adoptive home, and thus also losing the agency's federal subsidies for that child.</p>
9/93 - 10/93	1/2	Since Shannon's normally only keep foster children for 3 months, CCCS decides to try to place Christopher in a "resource" (i.e., foster-to-adopt) home, but no such homes are available at the time, so he remains in the Shannon's home.	Again, it appears as though the Lord as arranged so that Christopher remains in the Shannon's home, without which, it would have been very difficult to adopt him.
12/26/93	9/10	The Lord finally brings us together in our decision to have children. We decide that we both would like to adopt, rather than being birth-parents.	Apparently, this was the result of much prayer (behind our backs :-)) by many. Interestingly enough, when we first discussed it, we discovered that we both had wanted to adopt for maybe one or two years prior to that point, but for many reasons, we had never communicated that to each other. I was baffled, and somewhat distraught over "wasting all that time", but Carol assured me that the Lord's timing was perfect. Indeed! Had we discussed adoption years earlier, we probably would not have been open to adopting Christopher now because we would have likely already had a child, or at least been in the process of obtaining one. Praise the Lord; His timing is perfect!

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
12/93 - 1/94	1/2	Lord tells Carol (several times) "Nothing is too difficult for me", or some variation thereof.	Word of knowledge / prophecy? This was the word that the Lord gave Sarah regarding Isaac in Gen. 18:14.
3/94	1/2	Rose asks us if we are interested in being a "backup couple" to adopting Christopher. Mark and Laura Stringer, also from our church, were first in line to adopt him.	
3/94	1/2	After being asked that to be a backup couple to the Stringers, but BEFORE they backed out, the Lord tells Carol that He is going to give us Christopher. When Carol first shared this with me, she was not sure that if this were the enemy, or from her own mind, or from the Lord. We can believe with all of our hearts, that this was from the Lord.	Word of knowledge / prophecy?
3/94	1/2	After attending about 2 or 3 CCCS classes, the Stringers later back out of adopting Christopher. Despite the fact that the all loved Christopher, they courageously backed out because Mark "felt that it just wasn't God's will".	We know how attached they were to Christopher and how hard of a decision this was for them. However, we believe the Lord will bring some other blessing to the Stringer family for being obedient to His will.

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
3/24/94	1/10	Carol is watching a videotape of her sister giving a testimony for the Lord about the son that He had miraculously given them. While watching the tape, the Lord tells Carol again "Daughter, I am going to give you Christopher". FIVE MINUTES LATER, Rose calls Carol and tells her that the Stringer's had decided to back out because Mark felt it was just not the Lord's will, and Rose then asked Carol if we would like to adopt Christopher. YES! Praise Jesus! Carol called me and thereafter we called Claudia Clump, the CCCS Special Needs Recruiter, to inform her of our interest. (Rose had previously talked with her about us.) Claudia Clump was very positive. She told us that only a woman from Marietta, OH. was interested in Christopher and that we would have precedence over her because we were in the same county. Claudia Clump tells us to spend time getting to know Christopher and to bond with him.	<p>Word of knowledge / prophecy?</p> <p>Note that neither of us knew of the Stringer's decision prior to Rose calling Carol.</p> <p>Also, Claudia Clump probably "crossed the agency's line" when she made such statements, especially when she suggested that we try as much as possible to bond with Christopher, as if we were assured of becoming Christopher's parents. However, had she not made such statements, we likely would have given up before we even started.</p> <p><i>But as surely as our God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me, and Silas, and Timothy, was not "Yes" and "No," but in Him, it has always been "Yes." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are always "Yes" in Christ. And through Him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. — 2 Cor. 1:18-20 (NIV)</i></p>
3/26/94	1/2	We are given the opportunity to baby-sit Christopher while the Shannons attend a Melaleuca convention. The first time that I hold Christopher, I almost break down in tears of joy as the Lord tells me in my heart "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8).	Indeed He is! I took this to be a promise from the Lord that He was going to give us Christopher. In fact, at times, despite all the other things that the Lord did for us in showing us His sovereignty in this situation, this was the only "promise" that enabled me to continue walking in faith.
3/28	9/10	Carol talks to Lydia (her cousin) and tells Lydia we are trying to adopt a baby boy. Lydia says that she has a crib, playpen, high-chair, etc. that we can have to keep!	The blessings from the Lord continue. Thank you, Lord!

On Him we have set our hope that He will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
4/16/94	1/4	<p>Early in the morning, the Lord again tells Carol, "I'm going to give you Christopher! Now BELIEVE IT!". At the time, Carol does not know why the Lord speaks to her with such emphasis. However, later that day, while we were baby-sitting Christopher, we get a phone call from Rose that we had to bring him back because Claudia Clump needed to use him as a representative in the CCCS Media Day for Special Needs children and Claudia Clump couldn't get enough children. Claudia Clump had invited the local newspaper and three local TV channels to the event that was to be held at a McDonald's in Worthington. Carol is relatively calm and has a peace (from the Lord) during this ordeal, but I essentially break down and give in to fear. Before entirely losing it, I manage to call a few friends to ask them to pray that Christopher would not be shown on TV, but all I reach are three answering machines. Reluctantly, we meet Rose at another McDonald's just down the street, and watch Chrissy while Rose takes Christopher to the other McDonald's and to the CCCS Media Day. Rose tells us to stop by with Chrissy in about 45 minutes. When we get over to the McDonald's where CCCS is meeting, we discover that NOT A SINGLE representative from the media shows up! The Lord also gives us an opportunity to meet Claudia Clump in person and to talk briefly with her.</p>	<p>Another word of knowledge / prophecy?</p> <p>This was a DIRECT answer to prayer, answered more miraculously than I could have ever even conceived of asking. Praise God for His faithfulness and protection and reassurance. Out of this trial, I gained much strength.</p> <p><i>Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. —Eph. 3:20,21 (NIV)</i></p>
4/20/94	1/10	<p>Carol is shopping at Toys-R-Us. While there, a woman minister, whom she has never met starts talking to her about children's clothes. Carol mentions that we are in the process of trying to adopt an infant boy. The woman minister, passes through the check-out line and almost leaves the store, but then turns around and comes back to Carol and offers her \$20. When Carol says that she can't take the money, the woman pastor becomes insistent saying "The Lord told me to give this money to you for your boy, and I do what the Lord tells me to do!" Carol, eventually takes the money and uses it to buy clothes for Christopher.</p>	<p>Wow! This is getting weirder and weirder!</p>

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— 2 Corinthians 1:10b, 11 (NIV)

Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
4/27/94 or 4/13/94 (?)	1/10	Carol “accidentally” bumps into Sonja Weiner, a Christian Jew, in the Northern Lights Library. (Actually, it was the other way around; Sonja initiated the conversation.) As it turns out Sonja “just happened” to work for Dr. Pauline Winthrow at Columbus Municipal Hospital. Dr. Pauline Winthrow was the child geneticist specialist who originally diagnosed Christopher as having MSD. Sonja was used by the Lord to not only tell us that Dr. Pauline Winthrow was one of the best and most famous in that field in the world, but He also used her to provide us with information on MSD.	(Occurred on ate of snow storm and the April “New Roots” meeting. Look up date!)
5/1/94 (?)	1/100	We learn that 2 godly woman in our church (Sue Clark and Terry Nierman) dreamt that the Lord had given us Christopher as our as our adoptive son even before we had mentioned to them that we were interested in adopting ANY children at all!	<p>Actually happened on 2 separate dates; this is about the date that we learned about the second, from Sue Clark. My understanding is that Terry Nierman had actually dreamt in October, 1993 that we were adopting Christopher. This was prior to our even deciding to adopt!</p> <p>Later on, we learn that a third Christian women had a dream about me and Christopher, but this was all the detail she would give us until CCCS selected us to be matched as Christopher's parents. Of course, this is as remarkable as these first two, since this third woman at the time knew that we were trying to adopt Christopher.</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
5/14/94	1/2	<p>During an afternoon break at the second to last CCCS classes, the Lord tells Carol “2 and 1/2 weeks”. That’s all. We puzzled over the meaning: What’s going to happen in 2 and 1/2 weeks? And starting from when? From today? From the last class? From when? Because we didn’t know what it meant, we didn’t dwell on it. However, during the following week (our last class), our instructor, Matilda DeStresse, came around and asked us “when would you like to do your first home study?” I replied that she should pick a date and time that was convenient for her, since I had flex time and also had plenty of vacation days left and therefore could accommodate almost any date that she chose. So she said, “well, how about at 9:00am on May 31st?”. I said “fine”, and as she was moving on to make the next appointment, I wrote it down in my calendar. I then noticed that from 5/14 to 5/31 was 17 days. Two and 1/2 weeks is 17.5 days, so the Lord couldn’t have made it much closer!</p>	<p>Coincidence, or another fulfilled word of knowledge / prophecy? The Lord has made me a believer! Oh that I would only stop doubting him and trust him completely.</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
5/26/94		The Lord tells Carol not just once, but at least 1/2 dozen times over the next 2 weeks “30 days and I’m going to wind this up!” and “In 30 days and I’m going to have Christopher in your home!”.	<p>We had to wait until around 6/26 to see what the ultimate outcome of this “word of knowledge / prophecy” was, but judging by His past performance, we began by praising the Lord.</p> <p>We also requested prayer that our lack of faith would not hinder the Lord from working yet another miracle and fulfilling yet another word of knowledge / prophecy. He had been telling us, “trust me and believe” despite the apparently insurmountable circumstances.</p> <p><u>Result:</u> This didn’t happen, either because it wasn’t a word from the Lord, or because of some unbelief on our part. I now tend to think that it was just wishful thinking. Yet it taught us to stand on the <i>written</i> Word of God and His character, and not to rely too much on subjective impressions for guiding our faith. The only “sign” that we received after 30 days was that of a rainbow as we were taking Christopher back to the Shannon’s home. (See 6/26 entry.) Note however, that this was the only such impression which either of received that did not come to pass. It is not as though I have simply omitted all such mistaken impressions.</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/2/94	1/10	The Lord again postpones the Permanent Court Custody (PCC) hearing that was scheduled for Christopher and his half-sister. The reason for the postponement was that the CCCS attorney AGAIN failed to file the appropriate papers with the court. (And possibly, he may not have even shown up for the court date; we are unsure about that!) The night before the trial, on my way home from work, I knew in my heart that CCCS was not going to get permanent custody on 6/3, but the Lord gave me reassurance that He was in control. Thus when it happened, I was able to have nothing but peace about the situation.	Even now, it is not 100% clear WHY the Lord chose to have this PCC hearing postponed, but we speculate it was to allow us time to become approved as adoptive / foster parents. (As of 6/3, only our first home study had been completed, but the references had not been mailed, the credit and police reports had not been received, the fire inspection had not been scheduled, etc.) Had CCCS received permanent custody on 6/3, some other couple may have been approved as adoptive parents because we were still going through the approval process. I also think that I hadn't learned all the spiritual lessons that the Lord was trying to teach me through all this. Even had we been approved and the agency received PCC, I suspect that I would not have remember the spiritual lessons so vividly.
6/9/94	1/10	Suzanne Holmes "just happens" to call Carol to thank her for the cards that she had been sending over the past 6 months.	We hadn't talked to the Holmes and they hadn't written back in perhaps 5 or 6 months prior to that.

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/13/94	1/100	<p>I took the previous Friday (6/10) off as my day of not working. (Normally, I don't work on Thursdays, but I switched it for this particular week, for some mundane reason that I no longer remember.) Anyway, Friday, we call Matilda DeStresse and learn about the upcoming meeting, but she did not give us the date or tell us who would be in attendance. We then called Claudia Clump about the Caucasian Adoption Picnic scheduled on 6/11, specifically to learn the location. As an aside, I asked Claudia Clump if she knew anything about a meeting and she told us who was invited and that it was on Wednesday, 6/15. However, we also found out that Claudia Clump would not be able to attend the 6/15 meeting, and we learned that Colleen Herman wasn't able to attend either. We therefore set about calling several prayer chains and friends to ask them to pray about it. Friday night, I made a list of people that I wanted to call about the prayer request, and I listed Tom and Cathy Snow, good friends of ours that we probably hadn't talked to for about 2 years. Carol called 4 or 5 numbers Friday night, and I intended to call the rest on Saturday, or maybe Sunday. However, on Saturday, we were busy most of the day (at the adoption picnic, and over at a cookout of our new friends, Skip and Bronka Flowers), so I didn't start calling until around 8:30 or 9:00pm. I called my mother, and talked for 2.5 hours so didn't get to call anyone else that Saturday. Sunday, we got to baby-sit Christopher, and we visited our friends the Doan's (with Rose's okay). By the time we got back home from the Shannon's, it was about 10:30, so I only called my sister and brother-in-law that night. I was planning to call Tom Snow at work first thing Monday (6/13) morning, but I couldn't find his work number, so I thought I'd wait until I got to work to look it up. Lo and behold, when I got to work and listened to my voice mail, there was a message from Tom Snow (whom I hadn't talked to for about 2 years) calling about something completely different. And of course he left his business number and pager number. When I finally got a-hold of Tom, he listened, gave me a couple scripture verses (Colossians 3:2,15), and prayed with me.</p>	<p>Of course, Tom didn't know why he REALLY called, but I did.</p> <p>Even stranger was at the very time we were speaking, Tom's wife Cathy was appearing in court as a witness for CCCS. That very day, CCCS was trying to obtain permanent custody of a boy that the Snow's had been trying to adopt for the past 5 years. Thus, I was able to return the favor and pray for and with Tom about the trial.</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/14/94	99/100	Sue Clark calls us around 8:30 and shares scripture and a word from the Lord that was the same essentially message that my sister and Tom Snow had shared with me: stop focusing on your circumstances (the meeting on 6/15) and focus on praising the Lord for His attributes (goodness, kindness, compassion, mercy, power, omniscience, etc.) and for all the miracles that he had already done for us up to this point.	Scriptures shared: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phil. 4:5-7 (rejoice, relax, and rest) • Ps. 37:4; 56:3,4 • Heb. 11:1,6 • Neh. 9 (whole chapter, but especially vs. 1-4) • Isa. 26:3 • John 14:18,26
6/14/94	1/10	Carol goes to Cornerstone Christian Bookstore and “just happens” to meet Gregg Sopp while he was on his UPS route. Gregg offers her encouragement, and told us to focus on the Lord and not on circumstances.	Is it just coincidence that all these people are giving us the same message (i.e., to focus on God's character and not on our circumstances), or could the Lord be trying to tell us something? Or maybe it was just that obvious what the lesson we needed to hear.
6/14/94	9/10	We get a card of encouragement from Bob and Betty James saying that they are praying for Christopher, and that Lord has truly watched over him since the day he was born and He will finish the work.	Another timely word of encouragement before the “big meeting”.

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/15/94		<p>CCCS meeting to decide what to do about us and Christopher (the pretense for the meeting was whether to allow us to proceed with "resource" or keep us in adoption). The following were invited: Marie Callow (head of adoption), Matilda DeStresse (our instructor and home study worker), Colleen Herman (Christopher's case-worker), and Claudia Clump (special needs recruitment). We were rather anxious about this meeting because as of 6/14, it appeared that the two people (Colleen Herman and Claudia Clump) who we felt might be our advocates were not able to attend. (Colleen Herman had vacation scheduled and Claudia Clump had a prior meeting scheduled.) The other two appeared to be rather dead set against us at this point.</p> <p><u>Result:</u> CCCS decided that Shannon's have partially violated confidentiality, and a real spiritual struggle ensues. CCCS apparently decided that we could only go for adoption, but NOT for RESOURCE. This seems like at least a temporary set-back, but the Lord will eventually show us all how this works into His perfect plan.</p>	<p>Whatever it is the Lord had planned, He certainly appeared to have stacked the deck against himself this time. Our initial reaction was to worry and to attempt to somehow take matters into our own hands. However, after much prayer with our brothers and sisters in Christ, we become convinced that the Lord likes the long-shot odds (e.g., see Gideon's battle with 300 men against the Midianites). With God, "all things are possible"; as he originally told Carol "is anything too difficult for me?" Whatever happens, I am convinced that it will be as a direct answer to the prayers of God's faithful, and that it will no doubt glorify Him and confuse the enemy. I am SO thankful that the Lord has taken it COMPLETELY out of our hands. (We would have otherwise messed it up big-time!) The Battle Is The Lords! Praise Jehovah, the Almighty God!</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/21/94		Second home visit. Matilda DeStresse almost immediately tells us that the agency will not allow us to proceed as “resource”, but will accept us as “adoption” prospects. I tried to argue the logical inconsistency of this, but Matilda DeStresse refused to (or couldn't) see this inconsistency, so reluctantly, we decided to proceed with adoption. Matilda DeStresse tells us that Christopher's next PCC date is in August; she says that our home study should be approved by sometime near the end of July. Also, Matilda DeStresse mentioned that the agency would prefer to place Christopher in a Hispanic home. We'll see; we think that we have a big enough God that he can work things out for us. If God is for us, what does it matter who is against us? Lastly, I asked if we could still see Christopher. She replied that she didn't think that we should “because we were setting ourselves up for disappointment”. We said we were willing to take that risk, and to live one day at a time, so she did not prohibit us from seeing him. (Besides, at that point, it was already too late! Christopher had already captured our hearts!)	During almost the whole time, I felt as if Matilda DeStresse was “drilling / interrogating” us, as if to find something wrong with us. However, we answered each question truthfully, and it seemed as if many questions pointed to the Lord in our marriage. I think she found our strong faith disturbing. However, we believed that we honored the Lord with our words, and that He ultimately will also honor us. Therefore, we thank the Lord from giving us the courage for not compromising our faith.
6/24/94		Janelle Doan called with encouragement and to say that she was praying for us.	The Lord continues to provide us encouragement through the prayers of His saints.
6/26/94		On way to Shannon's we see a rainbow, which gave us encouragement at the very moment that we needed it.	Thanks Lord! We needed that! (Note: This was 30 days after the impression Carol received on 5/26/94, q.v.)
6/28/94		Rose calls; she had just talked to CCCS person named Diana Matthews (some regional director). She gave Shannon's a lecture on confidentiality. Also, she was asking all kinds of strange and accusatory-sounding questions.	The storm before the calm? It seems that Satan is grasping at straws. The 3 of us pray together on the phone, and bind Satan, and ask the Lord to change Diana Matthews's and Matilda DeStresse's hearts.

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
6/29/94	9/10	Rose calls again, but this time with more encouraging news. Diana Matthews somehow gets the impression that we think that we are being persecuted by Matilda DeStresse and the agency because we are Christians. This time, Diana Matthews was very positive. She talked about the grievance procedure, and also mentioned that she saw no reason why we shouldn't get Christopher.	Wow! This is a direct, and very quick answer to prayer. The Lord comes through again just when we needed it! If this were mere coincidence, I think the odds would be much greater, say at least 1/2. But since I'm certain that prayer had something to do with this, I'll calculate it as a likely event at 9/10.
8/13/94	1 / 10 ⁴	Carol and Rose decide to take a day and hit the Saturday garage sales. They find themselves out on the far west side in an area where Rose swore she would never return to (she was there about 5 years prior and found only junky stuff for high prices). While at one of the garage sales, Carol hears a woman mention "adoption" and Carol then asks the woman "are you adopting?". The woman replies "no, but I work as a case worker at east CCCS". Rose says "really, I'm a foster parent for CCCS and my baby is from the east branch." The woman then asks the child's name, and when Rose tells her, she says "The Smith's! I've known them for 30 years". She (name is Denise Needles) then tells Rose and Carol all the "dirt" on the Smith's family. Rose and Carol also learn from her that Christopher's birth father lives in town and that his birth father's sister wants to adopt Christopher. Two days later (on Monday, 8/15), Rose learns of this "officially" via Christopher's case worker Colleen Herman.	This encounter was NOT coincidence, but rather it was a divine appointment set up by the sovereignty of God. Had we discovered that Christopher's aunt was trying to adopt him via Colleen Herman, all of us would have been totally distraught. As it is, we now have an assurance that the Lord is STILL in control of this situation. We don't know what He is doing, but we do know that He is in complete control. Note: See Appendix B for a description at how I arrived at an estimate for this probability.
10/6/94	9/10	Diana Matthews introduces Rose to Sam Johnston, the director of CCCS and Rose gets to tell him everything about Christopher's case.	As one FCCS caseworker remarked to Rose, "I heard you got an audience with the Pope." Apparently, it must be a somewhat rare occurrence for non-agency foster parents to get a private, uninterrupted conversation with the CCCS director.
11/4/94		Rose learns that Sam Johnston asks William Edwards to look into Christopher's case. William Edwards is a Christian and is also the director of the Adoption Dept. at CCCS.	

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Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
12/8/94		<p>CCCS is finally granted permanent custody of Christopher by the courts. Christopher's alleged father, who was stating that he was going to challenge the issue, never even showed up in court! CCCS did not get PCC on Christopher's half-sister, Pamuela.</p>	<p>PCC was scheduled for 2 days: the 12th and the 13th. However, PCC on Christopher was actually won on the 12th.</p> <p>God's timing is again shown to be more perfect than ours. Had PCC been granted earlier, we would not yet have been approved. Actually, even at this point, we still had to complete the Hispanic Cultural Assessment, which the agency seemed in no particular hurry to complete.</p>
3/16/95		<p>CCCS has an adoption matching meeting for Christopher. Margaret Beak informs Rose that no decision was made as "they were missing information from a few people". We were never officially informed of what was happening. We called our attorney, and then Janette Peters, our CCCS caseworker. This results in a big stink at the agency. Marie Callow calls back the morning of 3/17, but we planned to respond via a letter, to be mailed after our attorney reviewed it. The miracle (?): God has chosen to harden their hearts.</p>	<p>We know 3 things from this. One is obvious, because we know our enemy Satan. That is, that they have decided that they didn't have any "acceptable" (read Hispanic) adoptive parents for Christopher, so they are still recruiting. The other 2 are things that the Lord has impressed upon us through the prayers of those close to us. That is: 1) it was the Lord that had chosen to harden CCCS hearts, just as He had did with Pharaoh, so that He may be even more glorified (confirmed: by message earlier that day by Pastor Jack Hayford on Christian TV; prayer between myself and Sia; a word from the Lord from my sister, Lael) and 2) this is a <i>spiritual</i> battle and therefore the victory will only come through spiritual means (confirmed by prayer with Sia and with Steve Weiner). As a result of the second, we decided separately (further confirmation) that we should <i>not</i> bring a law suit <i>at this time!</i> It is becoming more and more evident that the vision that my mother had of Jesus cleaning trash out of an old dusty attic (i.e, cleaning out demonic forces out of CCCS) may really have been from the Lord. Personally, I don't think it's too much fun being a broom, but if the Lord gives us the strength, we will do it for Him.</p>

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Miracles of the Lord in Christopher's Life

Date	Probability	Miracle / Event	Notes / Comments
3/20/95	1/4 or a miracle?	The Lord grants us a partial victory as CCCS decides to choose place Christopher in our home! Janette Peters calls at approximately 10:15am to tell us that we have been matched as Christopher's parents. We are required by CCCS to wait at least 24 hours to make our final decision (like were are going to change our minds after going through all of this; NOT!).	Thank you, Jesus! Lord, you did it! I wished that I could say that we never wavered or doubted, but I thank you that you are completely faithful even when we are not. You promised Christopher to us and you did it! Thank you for your goodness and your faithfulness.
4/12/95		Placement day!	Christopher is officially placed into our home. Because we had spent so much time with him (more than 1,000 hours up to that point), CCCS decided that they would immediately place him into our home rather than making the transition to acclimate him slowly, over a period of months like they usually do. The Shannon's brought him over and we had a victory party and gave praise and thanks to the Lord.
10/16/95		Finalization Day	The "icing on the cake": the referee (Samuel A. Peppers, III) turns out to be a born-again Christian. What a way to wrap things up, Lord! It is all finally over. Or as Jesus put it, "It is finished!"

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Appendix B

This appendix contains a description of how I estimated the probability of the “chance” meeting (or, divine appointment, as I believe).

Let $P_{\text{meeting}} \equiv$ probability of Carol and Rose meeting someone who from CCCS who had knowledge of Christopher’s birth-father at a garage sale;

Let $P(\alpha) =$ probability of Carol and Rose going to such a garage sale during that particular week where someone had this knowledge;

Let $P(\beta) \equiv$ probability of someone who from CCCS who had knowledge of Christopher’s birth-father *holding* a garage sale;

Assumptions:

- All events are independent and discrete, so that $P(a|b) = P(a) \cdot P(b)$.
- There are approximately 1,000,000 people in the Columbus metropolitan area.
- Each family has an average size of 4 people / family. Therefore, there are approximately 250,000 families in the Columbus metropolitan area.
- On any given weekend, 1% of these families hold a garage sale. Thus there are approximately 2,500 garage sales per weekend in the Columbus metropolitan area.
- The probability of Carol and Rose attending all garage sales in the Columbus metropolitan area is equally likely. (Note: again, this is probably not realistic, since there is almost certainly a higher probability of them visiting the closer garage sales. However, this assumption also has the effect of maximizing P_{meeting} .)
- There are approximately 500 employees at CCCS.
- I assume that each employee represents one family. (I.e., no two employees are in the same family.) Note that while this is probably not a reasonable, it does have a tendency to maximize $P(\beta)$.
- At most 5% of the CCCS employees were privileged to the information regarding Christopher’s birth-father.¹ Therefore, this meant that there were 25 people (or, equivalently, families) from CCCS who had such knowledge.

Then, $P_{\text{meeting}} = P(\alpha|\beta) = P(\alpha) \cdot P(\beta)$.

I estimated $P(\alpha)$ and $P(\beta)$ as follows:

Estimate for $P(\alpha)$:

$$P(\alpha) = 1/2,500 = 1/2.5 \times 10^3$$

Estimate for $P(\beta)$:

$$P(\beta) = 1\% \times 25 = .25 = 2.5 \times 10^{-1}$$

Therefore,

$$P_{\text{meeting}} = (1/(2.5 \times 10^3)) \times (2.5 \times 10^{-1}) = 1 \times 10^{-4} = 1/10^4$$

1. And, note, the caseworker who Carol and Rose met was not *just any* such caseworker, but one who had significant case experience with Christopher’s birth-mother’s family.