

The Lovelight Stories

PODCAST

Ep: 19 | Adopting 7 Children & Saying "Yes" to God's Stories with Maria Hansen-Quine |
SHOW TRANSCRIPT

Please know this transcript has not been edited for quality in grammar, etc. We wish to be socially-inclusive and provide another means of accessing our podcast to those who have difficulty hearing, so please enjoy if that's you! 😊

00:02.63

lovelightstories

Okay, so far it looks good. All right, Let's just roll and see see if anything happens. But I think I think we're good. Yeah, maybe it was just the room something with a room. It seems like so okay.

00:10.64

Maria

It's working. Yeah.

00:19.66

lovelightstories

Maria it is so wonderful to have you on the love light stories podcast today. Thank you so much for joining me.

00:24.43

Maria

Hi Stephanie it's a delight honestly. So thank you for having me I'm excited about the conversation that we're gonna have and the stories that we're gonna talk about.

00:36.15

lovelightstories

Yes I have been wanting to have you on the show for some time I've followed you for a good while um, there's so much that you do that. We're going to get into. You are the global ethnic and racial healing manager at Hillsong Church and you're also a mental health counselor you have 9 children which most of them are adopted which we're going to get into and you are a huge advocate for adoption inclusion and so much more so I want to dive into your story today and. If you could help us start by looking back. Um on your life and you said that you can see the breadcrumbs that god has placed in your life ever since you are young that has led you to where you are today. So if you could kind of start us out by bringing us back to those those moments of young Maria.

01:25.60

Maria

Um, thank you I love that question because it so you know it makes us reflect back I think for all of us that we I bet you know anybody listening if they're really dig deep. And reflect back. They can see the ways the stories that god has used even from 1 word little so I love that question. Um, so for me I can and honestly I have to say that a lot of this reflection. It's happened in the later years it's not like I you know in my twenty s or thirty s had this like knowledge in my spirit. And so it's really been more so in my forty s and I feel like god's revealed it. But um I grew up in a little country between Scotland and Iceland called the faroh islands with an f and it's beautiful. Um, it's. Yeah, so many things about it. But at the age of 11 I immigrated into Canada so I spoke farise um have a lot of family there and just honestly love my life there and I am Caucasian or white. That's my race and as I was growing up there. Most of the people. Like 99% look like me. Um, and um and about so the story that I can kind of reflect on for both the work that I do with hillsonga healing and unity um around ethnic ethnicity and race and then also within my family is at about the age of 9 um I love dolls.

02:53.00

Maria

And my mom bought me a doll that looked nothing like me and it's a doll that became my favorite doll and I used to play with it all the time and the doll had beautiful brown skin brown Eyes brown hair for those you who look? um.

03:03.57

lovelightstories

Um.

03:08.50

Maria

My picture right? I've got blue eyes kind of more fair skin blond hair and you know that doll like I said just I loved it and saw such beauty in it and just was amazing and it recently i. Been having conversation with my mom and asking her like why because I have 4 sisters and 1 brother in my growing up family and none of them got a doll like that. So I was like why mom why did you just buy that doll for me and she just said.

03:35.29

lovelightstories

Yeah.

03:42.73

Maria

Maria I clearly heard the holy spirit say to get you that doll so that you so that you could see that the world was so much bigger than what you saw in the everyday. So it's like like just epic and testifies to.

03:55.28

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

03:59.51

Maria

Again, The stories that God writes for us and even on that day when she went to get the doll. It was like in the back of the shelf you know in the little store and was kind of wrapped and not the

prettiest paper kind of cringled up and in her spirit she was questioning it like why am I doing this and. Just kept hearing the holy spirit say get her that doll and so it's yeah, amazing.

04:18.15

lovelightstories

Um, wow. Yes, oh totally driven by the holy spirit that is just beautiful and incredible. And and you also told me too that you aspired to be like mother Teresa and I think still do today right? tell?

Um, yeah.

04:34.84

Maria

I know it's a little outside the box. You know a high schooler want want to be like mother Teresa when I grow up I don't know there's just something about like how much she loved Jesus through how she loved people and that she didn't see.

04:50.22

lovelightstories

Yeah.

04:54.43

Maria

You know it's this like tension of seeing people's brokenness but seeing the beauty of who they are in the midst of it and so for me, she was my hero as a high schooler I was like I Yes, let me move to calcutta or somewhere else wasn't sure if I wanted to get married or have kids and just.

05:03.26

lovelightstories

Ah.

05:14.26

Maria

Wanted to step into the brokenness with people and show them like tangible love and even the idea of being the hands and feet of Jesus and so um, yeah, that was this is that was that was my dream and that was um, yeah, it's one of the um, yeah. I was gonna say is one of the like dreams that I feel like god clearly gave me that I can look back on and you know sometimes we wrestle with like the tension again of our life. Typically if we go after god's stories looking nothing like we planned.

05:49.35

lovelightstories

Yes.

05:51.48

Maria

And even just a couple weeks ago I was kind of wrestling with that and I just heard the holy spirit say like Maria that's what you've spent your life doing and so the sweetness of that of just like um you know feeling seen by god and and the promise of that was that was in my heart.

05:58.98

lovelightstories

A yes.

06:10.40

Maria

And still is in my heart.

06:11.15

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah, what a gift too to be given that by god at such a young age I mean when you're in high school and um I can imagine you must have been nurturing the spirit inside of you as you were growing up and. And really following what he was speaking to you and and you're you're doing that yet today and um, while you're not in Calcutta. It looks different but you are embodying that that love of people and serving and loving and. In many ways like we said there's so many things that you do in your professional life but also in your home life like having 9 children 7 of them are adopted that is um, just a beautiful manifestation of living to love and serve others and so.

06:46.13

Maria

I suppose.

07:00.83

lovelightstories

Can you just share ah with us what led you to adoption or maybe we need to back up first and and talk about like what happened after high school to give us a backdrop of of you know some of your experiences leading up to that adoption. Period.

07:15.10

Maria

Yeah I mean there's so much right? that I could say about that but we just talk about that but um, kind of the summary of it is so it aligned you know it aligns with the other two stories that I already shared and.

07:17.82

lovelightstories

I know I.

07:30.81

Maria

I was also then the high schooler that I volunteered at a shelter for homeless or domestic violence or I did the homeless later but domestic violence in high school and volunteered a food bank and such and um I spent 2 summers in college. So I have an undergraduate in psychology. And minor and human services and so spent 2 summers in college doing inner city ministry with urban promise and in Camden New Jersey which was a ministry founded by Tony Campolo for those who know him and know his work. He he really dedicated it to social justice and um. Bruce Maine founded that ministry and is incredible. Incredible human. But so I spent 2 summers there and loved and it's really Camden is known as that inner city like the entire city. So really surrounded by kids and loved it and wanted to not get married and do that. And just heard the holy spirit say this is not the life that I've called you to do trust me and so um, yeah, and so kind of out of that had this like I think my passion and my heart got more focused on children specifically kids from hard places and their families.

08:32.30

lovelightstories

Um.

08:41.69

lovelightstories

Yes.

08:45.80

Maria

Um, and so I knew that if I were to get married that I would want to adopt it was just something that you know I felt like it was something that I could do um and when I met my husband it was in his spirit too.

08:56.23

lovelightstories

Yeah.

09:02.37

Maria

Um, and he's an adult adoptee he was adopted as a baby from South Korea and so even in our dating, you know that was for both of us a non-negotiable and a high value that we would adopt one biological child.

09:16.44

lovelightstories

Um, yes, it.

09:18.99

Maria

And then there was never this. It was just something that we that we could do there wasn't this um to us it is just like in the bible. You know James one Twenty seventh and says pure religion is this to take care of orphan and widows in in their need. Um, you look at the way that Jesus lived you look at the gospel stories full of adoption and god's adoption for us. So it was just you know we have. There's a need in the world and we can meet that need. It was pretty much that simple in our heart.

09:52.30

Maria

Our heart really for adoption is that people would consider it equally to have a biological kids really believe that all kids are god's kids which makes them ours because we're 1 big spiritual family. So anyways, that was a little bit I think I answered the question but.

09:57.12

lovelightstories

Yeah.

10:05.87

lovelightstories

Um, yes, you sure did and it's it's ironic to you can't go ahead without mentioning that your husband was an adoptee and that is um, again like part of those.

10:15.45

Maria
Mother.

10:22.97

lovelightstories

Breadcrumbs and how God leads you to what what you ultimately do in your life and and how he melded both of your hearts separately for adoption and then brought you together powerfully as a couple to be able to make that happen and um, that's really.

10:34.16

Maria

Yeah, yeah, it's amazing. It's amazing. You know and in a detail of that is when we both went to college he was living in Chicago Illinois and I was living outside of Toronto Canada and we both traveled to the other side of the country and again think about the stories that God writes for us. Well.

10:49.20

lovelightstories

Yeah.

10:53.80

Maria

Um, that's a story that God wrote you know to bring both of us together in alignment and heart and spirit and so yeah.

11:02.38

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, so I am I am sure everyone is wondering. Did you intend to adopt so many children I know you said at least 1 but um, how was it that you came to and ultimately end up adopting 7 children over time.

11:05.69

Maria

Okay.

11:15.13

Maria

We did not intend it. We did not plan it. But um, though I have to say that we both to this day live with an open heart of I think more than anything what we wanted was to live the life that.

11:19.86

lovelightstories

Nay.

11:33.37

Maria

That God had planned for us and say yes to her stories and so that is what I would say kind of drove each adoption. It wasn't let's have a bunch you know bunch of kids. Let's adopt. Ah a lot of kids. Let's whatever it might be It wasn't that. It was more of living a life that if Jesus asked us to

we said yes and so um, so we you know and we we had actually been married for five years before we had our first child which we were almost both 30.

11:57.13

lovelightstories

Yes.

12:11.34

lovelightstories

Okay.

12:12.52

Maria

Um, and again so almost 30 and we dated for about 4 So we've been together a while you know and um, so we still knew that we wanted to adopt and thought again that we would do one of each and so this story our first.

12:18.83

lovelightstories

Yes.

12:31.80

Maria

I did tell my daughter that I was doing this conversation today and I said you know normally I get asked about how did you know how did the adopt. How did we start adopting which is her story and she's now twenty one so you know again, her story.

12:41.13

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah.

12:46.60

Maria

Um, but inter interveves with ours and so we were living in New Jersey at that time and had moved from Washington State so we kind of you know, part of our stories that god takes us to unexpected places. Um, and so.

13:02.94

lovelightstories

Um.

13:03.27

Maria

And part of why we were there was when I was in Camden during college I heard the holy spirit say when you go to graduate school I want you to go to rutgers and so if you think about the detail of that that was you know when I was 22 right and now you're looking at seven years later I was living we were living.

13:15.62

lovelightstories

Yes.

13:23.26

Maria

Um, in New Jersey and we actually had made plans to move away from New Jersey moved back to Washington State we had bought tickets for Europe we were gonna move back and right? yeah I'd finished school. Um, and so.

13:33.57

lovelightstories

Wow.

13:40.70

Maria

And then it was you know we were really good friends with a couple there that we had met through a church and they had 2 beautiful daughters and through adoption and we used to babysit for them so they could go on date nights and and such and so um. They had mentioned that the birth mom was pregnant again and was considering adoption and we had just said in passing you know if she looks and explores at adoption. We would 100% be open because we love their daughters daughters and because this was in us like we just we knew.

14:12.33

lovelightstories

Yeah.

14:14.55

Maria

This was something that we wanted to do eventually when we were ready to have kids and so it was a um tuesday and I remember them calling and saying you know she's gonna have the baby in a couple of weeks. We think you should talk to an adoption agency or something and both of us. Like yes, yes, but did nothing because you just dumped the reality of that you know and so and then a Friday night we went over to their house to babysit so again, they go on a date night and I remember walking in the door and then just saying she had the baby and.

14:36.30

lovelightstories

Yeah.

14:48.80

Maria

And she wants to meet you tomorrow. What are you doing you want to drive to Pennsylvania I was I was at a different state and both my husband and I just knew in our spirit this this was the story that god was writing and we had to step into it and so the next morning we got up at like 5 or 6

14:51.50

lovelightstories

Yeah.

15:01.93

lovelightstories

A.

15:07.25

Maria

Got in the car with them and drove a couple hours and spent the whole day at the hospital with this beautiful birth mom and what would become our daughter and so I remember holding her that whole day and just the holy spirit saying she will be 1 of the best gifts that I will ever give you and ah. I'm getting all emotional hearing my own story but ah it happens every time I honestly tell this story because it is just so covered by god's details sin I think at that point too. Oh after did I catch myself here.

15:25.84

lovelightstories

That that is yes, that's just fine.

15:43.64

Maria

Ah, you know I wasn't even sure if I wanted to have kids and so and and just the traces of that of that now I have 9 kids like god's radically changed my heart and which is where the term precious jewels you know I call my kids precious jewels because I believe they're sacred gifts like entrusted.

15:45.28

lovelightstories

A.

15:52.64

lovelightstories

Yeah.

16:01.79

Maria

And trusted by God but just brilliant little humans in their own right? and so we spent that whole day of the hospital on at the end of the day. Um, her mom said I want you to have her and I get out of the hospital tomorrow.

16:14.70

lovelightstories

Wow wow.

16:16.43

Maria

So in a literal weekend we became parents. We drove back home to New Jersey couple hours I remember that night we had some dear friends and um, they had some baby stuff for us. They had a car seat. You know all, but you can't can't take a baby from a hospital without a car seat. Neither should you? um.

16:32.77

lovelightstories

Yeah.

16:34.61

Maria

But and then leaving again the next morning. It's really like a ah movie you know, stopping at walmar to get some so bait diapers and such and then driving to the hospital and we were parents and just brought her home and I mean we had 1 child for 3 years and just the sweetest the sweetest.

16:41.10

lovelightstories

Yes.

16:49.71

lovelightstories

And.

16:54.30

Maria

Um, baby girl and just yeah, so we did it then backwards in case of those of you that know adoption law so we had to have temporary papers drawn up by a lawyer lawyer the next day because you can't pass actually state state borders without ah.

17:10.19

lovelightstories

Okay.

17:12.13

Maria

Um, legal documents in place and then did the home study and kind of do all the things a little backwards but that is tends to be a theme to my life so that was our first adoption. Our first adoption our first child pretty epic.

17:22.52

lovelightstories

Um, yes, and in a yes and just the fact that in a weekend you became parents and you weren't um, you were preparing for it in your heart over all this time but you. It sounds as though you were not fully prepared like you really had to lean in and trust God and step into what he had for you and um, how much of a beautiful like you said sacred gift that that turned out to be for you. Just um.

17:51.70

Maria

Yeah, me.

17:55.87

lovelightstories

Just such a ah good testimony and example of of the joy and love and greatness that abounds in life when you when you lean into god.

18:02.71

Maria

Yeah, and you know this is gonna I know this detail is gonna sound crazy to some people but of December of that year I heard the holy spirit clearly say next year you're going to have a child and I was like what first of all I thought that was crazy like did I make that up or was that god and.

18:16.51

lovelightstories

Ah.

18:21.82

Maria

And then wrote it down but didn't could not even have begin to imagine so we'd actually even considered stepping into foster care and just had heard again. Got say no this is not what I have for you So there was this seed and so when it happened I was like you know I essentially got already foretold and.

18:37.71

lovelightstories

Yes.

18:38.71

Maria

Prepared us for this and we knew it was from him and so still lots of big emotions you can imagine in that weekend. But um, so yeah, that was that was our first daughter and our first adoption.

18:45.20

lovelightstories

Oh my goodness.

18:52.23

lovelightstories

Yes, oh thank you so much for sharing that story I mean the whole podcast could be over just by that story. It's it's so beautiful. But I want to keep going because you do you have adopted 6 other children and I'm sure we can't get into every one of those. But.

19:02.30

Maria

Yet.

19:11.88

lovelightstories

I'm curious to know what that discernment was like through adopting the other children because you like you said you intended to adopt one and have one biological and I'm sure with every adoption. It's It's been different but what are some of those thoughts that had have gone.

19:24.96

Maria

You know.

19:31.67

lovelightstories

Through your minds as you've been discerning whether to open your arms to another child.

19:33.76

Maria

I think for each one if I'm being completely transparent except for our first adoption. There was a wrestle with god and there was a wrestle of I know this gonna sound wild because now I have nine kids. But so we had a biological son three years later so you know.

19:51.78

lovelightstories

Oh.

19:53.30

Maria

Nice space. You know, good good. All the things and then thought this was perfect because this was the plan that we had and quite frankly, a lot of the plans that we saw other people having 2 kids you know.

19:58.44

lovelightstories

Yep.

20:05.47

lovelightstories

Yeah.

20:07.29

Maria

Very much the the north american dream. But even beyond I mean I support globally now very much global thinking you have you know, 2 kids and and such so um, so we did that and so each wrestle honestly Stephanie was around god do you want us to have three kids.

20:17.80

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

20:26.46

Maria

want us to have 4 you want us to have 5 and I kid you not that did not stop with each child and I think part of that tension was again. It came against what we thought our life would look like and also what others thought.

20:28.43

lovelightstories

Yeah.

20:39.99

lovelightstories

I.

20:42.79

Maria

You know and society and cultural norms and even even within Church. You know it's within the Christian church religion. All those things. Um it. It was outside the box. It was outside the ideas. And so and it wasn't and honestly every time we adopted. There was somebody who we cared about who said, what are you doing like we don't think you should be doing this. You know? And yeah, we'd question our motives and all the things like so it wasn't this like seamless. Oh yes, and then.

21:04.47

lovelightstories

Wow.

21:17.45

Maria

You know all this support. So I think though the thing that radically there was 1 adoption that of our so our fourth so we had ah adopted first had a biological son and then adopted a daughter from China and um.

21:31.62

lovelightstories

Yeah.

21:35.46

Maria

Her story so that was our first international adoption and really show hope a ministry by Mary Beth and Stephen Curtis Chapman and it's a ministry that's still out there advocating for adoption providing adoption support providing brain-based trauma-based parenting support. Really they've done a lot and so it was god used their ministry and actually a song by Steve in Kurish Chapman years ago through their adoption. A music video that this is maybe I'm gonna just share this but I was in the faroh islands my my daughter our daughter was like 3 in our our biological son was like 1 and we saw this music video in the fair islands because we were travel. We traveled there from a video that they made from Tennessee that my cousin showed and just kind of wild and god just kind of opened our heart towards that. To see the needs of kids in the world. You know through that and so we traveled about a year later for our daughter feeling like this was crazy. We named her faith because to us we were so taking such a crazy step of faith to have three kids and um, but.

22:34.60

lovelightstories

A.

22:47.89

lovelightstories

Yeah.

22:51.23

Maria

Um, for our fourth child we were we traveled to Ghana West Africa again led by god and like so many little steps in saying the face story and even our oldest that you know that I could detail but I won't.

23:04.52

lovelightstories

Matthew.

23:06.80

Maria

That kind of brought us there. But for our fourth child which is our son who's now 16 um, and so Ghana is a country in West Africa which means the predominant race is black and and 1 of them my main struggles because of the experiences and things got ah you know, given me a front row seat to was. You want me as a white mom to adopt a black boy and you want me to raise him in our nation and so that was the wrestle it wasn't the fourth it was you think god you think I have what it takes to raise a confident black man because that was so in my heart. Um, and so.

23:30.19

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

23:44.66

lovelightstories

Um.

23:45.20

Maria

On that trip to which we traveled to Northern Ghana which is like very national geographics. You know the homes remain of mud and grass roof roofs that was again, not so much the city but up north um.

23:52.85

lovelightstories

And.

24:02.67

lovelightstories

Yep.

24:03.80

Maria

And we were reading the book crazy love by Frances Chan and talking about how um ah the most of the wealth of the world is actually owned I think the statistic is like 1% or something like that is owned by.

24:08.30

lovelightstories

Ah.

24:17.19

lovelightstories

Yeah.

24:19.30

Maria

And so and then that scripture in Matthew where god says to who much is given much is required and so god kind of used all the those kind of circum. All the things that were happening. Ah you know the things I kind of mentioned to reveal to reveal to both my husband and I that we have been given much and.

24:23.60

lovelightstories

Yes.

24:38.99

Maria

And just you know I think the adoptions after that because it it I'm going to be honest, it costs a lot to adopt like financially, there's paperwork and things involved and then to raise kids cost um like I'm not going to. You know it just does and so.

24:39.30

lovelightstories

Ah.

24:51.73

lovelightstories

Yes, yes.

24:57.35

Maria

It was to whom much is given much is required and Maria and say um I've given you much and do you want the life that I've called you to then you have to trust me in this and that's our story right? So I'm not putting on another people but um, and so there was a radical shift when we so like.

25:08.90

lovelightstories

Yeah.

25:16.81

Maria

Man saw you know I've traveled to different places and gone on a mission trip and such but that was probably the deepest extent of poverty that I've I've ever seen our son who's now 16 like there was no hospitals I mean had he stayed just.

25:26.17

lovelightstories

A.

25:36.19

Maria

Another week in the village. He would not even have lot have lived his birth mom passed away and so they don't have formula and bottles and so the depth of malnourishment and the things that happen in his story and the the miracles that god did too were so radical. Like so radical.

25:39.60

lovelightstories

Wow.

25:53.49

lovelightstories

Yeah.

25:55.27

Maria

And so I think a lot of again, it was still the constant wrestle of um, you want us to do this. You want us with each child. But I think the rest of the wrestle of if we could do it or all the other things in that moment. Um.

26:13.10

lovelightstories

He.

26:15.40

Maria

In Northern Ghana in Africa kind of out in in the middle of nowhere god just shifted a lot of things and my husband and i.

26:22.20

lovelightstories

Yeah Wow and I'm I'm trying to imagine too as he's grown up and you've watched him grow like just knowing that he probably would not have survived and had had this life this in I Imagine this. This boy growing up and just seeing the world through his eyes and all the experiences and the excitement and the joy and like all that he is giving to the world and um, just such a blessing and a gift to have been able to play that part to nurture him. So that he can have a place in the world and and ultimately serve others in the world. It's really beautiful.

27:03.56

Maria

Yeah, it's such a you know the complexity and the tension of adoption is that there's brokenness and loss and trauma with every story and so you know the the loss that he could not you know.

27:11.50

lovelightstories

Um, yes, yes.

27:19.35

Maria

Be raised by his birth family or his birth country is a tremendous loss. Um, and then the tension of the the beauty that God writes and just allows us to step into is yeah Beyond description and and so there's so.

27:26.28

lovelightstories

Um.

27:30.57

lovelightstories

Yes.

27:37.60

Maria

The beauty and the ashes all in 1 but he's amazing and he was an amazing baby and at the age of eight months we we brought him home from Ghana and just like sweetheart and to this day that's who he is and so yeah.

27:38.00

lovelightstories

Yes.

27:53.20

lovelightstories

Um, yes, yes I love that you brought up that tension. Ah, essentially of the darkness and light too because that's something that is a theme throughout these stories on the love light stories Podcast is.

28:03.83

Maria

I none.

28:07.96

lovelightstories

Is how the the light penetrates the darkness and without the the darkness the light isn't so bright and lovely and um, and just that tension. Um, you also mentioned to me something that you learned about orphans in China.

28:12.22

Maria

Really.

28:23.52

lovelightstories

Um, in the boys with special needs waiting longer than girls. Can you just elaborate a little bit on that or um, just clarify because I thought that was really interesting.

28:31.66

Maria

Yeah, and the reality is so I'm going to just kind of state. The fact is that actually globally not just in China but boys tend to wait longer than girls. But then if we zoom in on China.

28:41.31

lovelightstories

Oh.

28:46.26

Maria

Now a lot of things have changed in adoptions from China in the last few years because we have four kids from China and so but when we traveled for our daughter. A lot of the stories because of the one-child policy from China.

29:00.49

lovelightstories

Yes.

29:02.11

Maria

Um, and because of that policy and just cultural norms within that society girls were valued more than boys. Um I'll leave that us I'll leave the just like I'll set aside whether that's still true today. But um, but so.

29:15.49

lovelightstories

E.

29:20.42

Maria

What happened then as a result is that a lot of girls were orphaned because again the 1 ne-child policy and the value of boys and then special needs girls as well, especially as well. But also so people tend to so I'm kind of I'm making a a.

29:28.63

lovelightstories

Yeah.

29:38.99

Maria

Short story really long. But so then when people think of adoption from China as they think of girls but what they what they didn't know what we didn't know until we started our adoption for China and traveled there for our daughter. However, many years ago now I think like eighteen years ago was that there's actually a lot of boys that wait.

29:56.50

lovelightstories

A.

29:57.22

Maria

And especially boys with special needs because they're not people don't even consider it. You know if that kind of makes sense and so um, so when we traveled for our daughter we learned about the plight of boys specifically in China but it's also true around the world.

30:05.28

lovelightstories

Ah.

30:13.50

Maria

Um, I think there's also a notion I don't even know how to describe this but there is a notion of sometimes girls over boys and I don't I don't even know how to explain that without it coming off offensive. But so ah. We learned about the plight for boys and god really opened our heart towards that and towards boys from China and so we have 2 boys from China and 2 girls all with varying special needs. But this seed was planted on our spirit The first time we went specifically for boys and.

30:32.88

lovelightstories

Yeah.

30:50.71

Maria

Our last 2 adoptions from China actually was such child number 8 and again like really radical cool god details of bleeding us to go to China again and to have eight kids. But as we were on that journey and began that journey. Our kids also knew that boys waited and so in their like crazy like really they started advocating. We should adopt a boy too mom dad and that's the only like god used that. That's the only reason.

31:10.60

lovelightstories

A.

31:17.80

lovelightstories

Oh.

31:24.17

Maria

That we even started praying so we did which this is crazy too and against for good reasons against most adoption literature and recommendation. But we adopted 2 kids from China at the same time that were not this isn't even good to say but that we're not siblings. Um, but for about a year China allowed that and then they shut it down and so we were in that year timeframe which yeah, which our kids now are so our youngest is 10 so that was eight years ago so for about a year back then they allowed two kids.

31:45.51

lovelightstories

E wow.

31:58.54

Maria

Um, at the same time that did not know each other with a high level of special needs was kind of the the qualifying category of that and so but really, that was our kids that were adapt advocating for that and so so God That's the beautiful thing too is that God aligned. Sorry.

32:04.27

lovelightstories

Um, yeah, right? and.

32:15.83

Maria

Um, got aligned the hearts of our kids for adoption like put it in theirs to their hearts as well. Our son from Ghana that only again it wasn't like Sam and I were like yes, let's you know it was different. Different stories. But even our third child our son from Ghana was because our oldest for about six months said mom we should adopt a little boy from Africa and after six months I was like okay maybe the holy spirit's using her and we start to pray into it and then that kind of birthed the story of.

32:42.67

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

32:50.32

Maria

Her son. So.

32:50.58

lovelightstories

Right? And that's what's so beautiful too is that your children were seeing the value in these adoption stories and like instead of saying like well we have enough siblings. There's enough going on at home they were saying like let's open our heart. Let's open our home and like.

33:06.11

Maria

You.

33:10.47

lovelightstories

Just those um experiences and learnings that they were gleaning from this life of saying yes to God that you are leading. It's It's really neat. Um, so ok, um I am sure everyone is probably wondering. Do you.

33:12.81

Maria

Yeah. You fuck.

33:27.10

lovelightstories

Plan to adopt more children or or are you open to the idea where you add on that.

33:31.20

Maria

Um, I would say for us I mean we're always open to the stories that god writes right? It's how we live but I would say honestly Stephanie that I really feel like in in my spirit that we're we're done.

33:45.80

lovelightstories

And.

33:47.25

Maria

Um, we did foster we did have ah 2 other kids with us and we did that for a couple years and they ended up going to a different family so we've had different journeys you know that we've um, stepped into but I feel like.

33:59.35

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

34:03.30

Maria

Feel like we're in a different season of life and I feel like God shifted things and so and I had shared too I think and I don't mind being completely honest too that like transparent we have a daughter with significant mental illness and so there's just other you know. Needs of our kids that we feel like that's it's a different season So We we want to encourage and rally other people but I don't feel like and we have a grandson so we're definitely entering like a different season of life but are still both of us My husband and I are still.

34:23.60

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

34:30.60

lovelightstories

Right? right? ah.

34:36.66

lovelightstories

Right.

34:40.89

Maria

Huge adoption advocates.

34:44.24

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, that makes so much sense. So like you'd mention that you have ah a child with mental health and you're also a mental health school counselor. So I would imagine that your experiences between adoption and being a mental health counselor.

34:51.44

Maria

Okay.

35:01.51

lovelightstories

Have melded together and that those experiences help pour into both of those aspects of your life How you.

35:05.14

Maria

Yeah, a hundred percent I know there's so much I could say to that and I think an important thing to say for us for me to say as well is we're huge adoption advocates and we're huge trauma based parents or brain pests. Base parents or tbri you know is which is trust-based relational intervention came out of Tcu a book the connected parent or the connected child. Sorry their more recent book was connected parent but that came out maybe fifteen years ago and so.

35:25.60

lovelightstories

A.

35:41.52

Maria

I and I went and did that training with Dr Pervis and she is amazing and has since passed away and um so all to say all this to say that that radically um, shaped how we parented as well as yes, my background. And my training you know with my degree and my licensing and I feel like we've used everything that that I know and shared with my husband and more and definitely believe that we're just in the idea of being lifelong learners and so constantly changing.

36:02.29

lovelightstories

Yep.

36:17.83

Maria

Um, things for our jewels and the things that are needed because for each one. Yes, there's trauma. There's a trauma history There's trauma stories and most of them have some kind of medical diagnosis. Um, and so. Yeah I don't know honestly, how people do it with like if we didn't know all the things that I was trained in and educated in um and continued as well. So like the tv I was huge. Um Deborah Gray is also a leading therapist out of Seattle area Washington state and.

36:38.16

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

36:51.20

Maria

Written a lot of books on attachment and we've also been heavily involved in the adoption foster care community and I spoke for years at the refresh conference and actually developed a friendship with Deborah Gray and so all again, just constantly gleaning different things and learning and fine tuning and. Being reminded of and and my trauma approach so I take it with my family but I also take it to my job as a school counselor which I think I do still do one day a week and honestly even my understanding around ethnic and racial healing understanding that racism.

00:03.11

lovelightstories

So the fact that you do have a child with mental health I you're also a mental health counselor. So I assume those 2 experience the experience that you have and the knowledge that you have intertwine. Um.

00:18.72

Maria

I I love that you asked that question because it highlights something for me that I'm also really passionate about which in my husband as well which is trauma parent-based parenting or brain-based parenting and so yeah. I am a counselor and um I have a daughter with significant mental illness and then I'd say a couple of my other jewels also have mental health you know as well. So um, part of our journey too is that we've been very involved in the adoption foster care community and. I have a tbri trained as a trained practitioner from Tcu to access christian university and Dr Purvis and her team. Um, just have done incredible work and incredible research around this that came out.

01:03.68

Maria

About fifteen years ago and and at that point was like new information around the brain and how the brain's impacted um in a significant way and sometimes if we can approach trauma through that lens it radically changes things. And so as in my role as a counselor and as a school counselor. That's the perspective that I bring and I've seen that be you know, invaluable. Um, or if that's the correct word email but really valuable. Um. Because I work also very closely with administration and the schools that I've worked with and so setting that tone in a school to really be trauma- informed. Um and then in our home and so we like I think I said this already. But I'm going to say it again. We're we're advocates for adoption. But we're just as equally adoption.

01:35.34

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

01:49.11

Maria

Advocates for trauma-based parenting and um, even when I speak to this day I speak at conferences I however, many times I hear depending on the year right? but I give out that book. Um that connected child because which was released fifteen years ago um by Dr proves and at this moment I cannot remember the other author which is awful but um I have met both of them and actually like I said I feel like I learned at her feet so to speak because god anointed her for such a time as this you know she has since passed away. Um.

02:16.95

lovelightstories

Yeah, yeah.

02:26.12

Maria

And actually the connected parent is a more recent which Dr Perviss did with actually a really good friend of mine Lisa Qualls and is a really really valuable resource for parents and then also I think you and I talked a little bit about how um, debah gray is also a leading. Therapist and has written a lot of literature in the attachment world and I was a part of the refresh conference as a repeat breakout speaker for about 10 years and so was able to develop a friendship with her all to say is.

02:58.75

Maria

All to say is that I've just we're on this journey of constantly gleaning and learning and being lifelong learners and so that's an approach and an attitude that is needed by adoptive parents. Um as we kind of step into this to meet the need of our kids.

03:08.43

lovelightstories

Yeah.

03:14.96

Maria

Because they'll be there. You know so brainbased parenting is how we approach our day to day if someone was to come and and you know on We're not perfect. So we make mistakes we have to say we're sorry and sometimes we get things wrong? Um, but that's how we approach things and it it's.

03:25.10

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

03:32.74

Maria

You could see it. You could see pieces of it throughout our day and so yeah, um so I don't know how parents and the adoption Foster care Community. Do it without um, all that was was gonna sound what it sounds like but I've done so much education around this and I use. All of it and more and I so I don't know sometimes my husband and I will talk about I don't know how other people do it because there's just right a lot of foundation that God's given me and in the education that that I've had and ongoing. So um, yeah, totally they.

03:56.80

lovelightstories

Yeah.

04:11.15

Maria

They both um, intersect and my my personal life and my work and my ministry. Um, even within um, ethnic and racial healing and unity the understanding that God's given me of the trauma individual and collectively that's.

04:23.29

lovelightstories

Yeah.

04:28.25

Maria

Um, intertwined with racism and people of color in different people groups um has really been insightful in eye-opening in the recent years especially to be able to connect that and bridge that and so um, yeah, there you go.

04:41.88

lovelightstories

Wow Wow! Yes, Well thank goodness for your personal interest in the schooling and the learning and everything that you've done to um, Meld this all together. It sounds so powerful and I'm going to make sure to. Make a note in the show notes for those who are interested in finding those books and resources is there anything else that you would say to someone who's considering an option and that you want to leave them with encourage them or or even other resources anything of that sort.

05:13.31

Maria

Um, I would say there's so many resources out there like I could list a lot more. There's a lot of books and um so I guess I would say don't enter I'm a huge adoption for for adoption. Let's start with that.

05:30.27

lovelightstories

Yep.

05:31.13

Maria

And more than anything when people ask me, It's if you and your husband if if I mean single parents though as well can adopt right? So if it's you as a single or you as a married couple just make sure that you really feel called to it.

05:36.12

lovelightstories

E.

05:48.56

Maria

Because you're going to need that calling when things get challenging because they will. There's you know there's beauty. But um, there's also brokenness and loss and different needs sometimes that come up more so with trauma histories right? Whether it's so first of all I start with that and then yes I'm a huge.

05:49.65

lovelightstories

Yeah.

06:02.11

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

06:08.50

Maria

Advocate and I would say I'm clearly so incredibly um, blessed my life like to this day I Still think of my kids as Jewels right? and I've got the upper young adults. So um, but then secondly is is almost don't enter it naively. Um, realize that you are more likely going to have to um, take your kids for therapy possibly consider medication Now. That's not true for all of my kids right? as I'm speaking this but to have an open spirit.

06:36.46

lovelightstories

Yeah.

06:42.21

Maria

To learn all the things that you can about trauma-based parenting which includes the sensory like if we understand the brain um sensory holistic is very much a part of that and so read read. The books if you're a reader or listen to the podcast or the Youtube videos There's so many different resources depending you know, depending on what type of learner you are go to the conferences um, connect with other adoption foster care. Um, families is really really valuable.

07:01.79

lovelightstories

Yeah.

07:14.38

Maria

Because to have that kind of understanding. Um, and so I think for me, that's yeah, that's what I would say is is hugely encourage people to do it but also hugely encourage people to to enter it into it with as much trauma based um. Education as they can have to as they start and then continue continue on that journey. You know as you that journey of learning and there's about I'd say about 4 fairly established adoption. Um.

07:34.48

lovelightstories

Yes.

07:53.10

Maria

Conferences that happen annually right now in the United States but also in other places so there's definitely resources for for parents.

07:53.66

lovelightstories

Okay.

08:02.68

lovelightstories

Right? Yeah, thank you for sharing that I think it's really helpful to to understand as you're going in what to expect a little bit and of course we can't get into the details here today but just knowing that um it might not all be easy in that.

08:09.77

Maria

Ever.

08:20.42

lovelightstories

There are resources available to help and so thank thank you for that encouragement for anyone who is in the process of adopting or fostering or is considering that um I think I think we could tell from our conversation today that um.

08:21.86

Maria
Letter.

08:36.21

lovelightstories

There is so much blessing and love that comes out of that and you're just a wonderful example of that and showing showing that um to everyone who may feel called to that. So thank you so much. Um, as we close out. Um I I wanted to just touch like so quickly.

08:47.22

Maria
Prince and.

08:55.13

lovelightstories

On your role at Hill Song for the global healing and unity and I know your role is pretty big there. So it's it's not something that is super quick to touch on. But if you could just tell us what you're trying to do there that would be really helpful because I think it is so interesting.

09:11.87

Maria

Yeah I know right? we're we're finishing up this is the the probably the last question you might have another you know, small 1 but what not so how do I summarize this now. Huge calling really has is defining a lot of areas of my life even though so I you know what.

09:16.53

lovelightstories

Yes.

09:31.30

Maria

I Feel like what we're trying to do and what I'm in my role is we're trying to align ourselves up with God's word more than anything right? like sometimes um, there's pushback. Let's be real. There's pushback in this work in this space and people sometimes to feedback us.

09:37.50

lovelightstories

Um, yeah.

09:49.31

Maria

You're doing what's popular in culture. No actually what we're doing is for the first time in history I would argue not just hillssong church but other churches and there's something called the mosaics conference that was started fifteen years ago and it's a movement um started um his name is Mark demise just doing incredible work. Um, and I've gotten the privilege to know him and so what actually what's happening is that the church whichever church that is is worth the

first time in history aligning ourselves up with god's word because if you look at scripture from genesis to revelation. You will see a consistent theme. For god's heart for unity for his people right? We can go to genesis and look at the creation story well god created each one of us every race every ethnicity right? Which means it's not till we all come together that we collectively reflect the glory of who god is.

10:41.65

lovelightstories

Yes.

10:44.70

Maria

God didn't categorize or put 1 race or ethnicity over another. We go to Abraham and see the prophetic promise that god gave him that he would become the father of many nations that was radical at that time. We can go to the new testament and see the fulfillment of that promise in the early church and in Jesus right? if we look at the ethnic and racial diversity of the new testament church. It was wild and the things that you know you could look at the writings of Paul or others. And they speak directly to this this topic again when you look at it through that lens. Um, it's been especially eye opening to me as well as I've studied scripture and um and I think I told you and maybe for others that don't don't know you know I do have a d at. Diversity equity and inclusion certificate from Cornell University so when I entered this role a lot of mine was based on research and what god's done in the last year is just make scripture come alive and that is our why that's what we're going after discipling the heart of our people and so of our staff primarily.

11:36.70

lovelightstories

A.

11:51.64

Maria

And our key volunteers at first. But what's been really interesting to me. Um, or god's just done this aha is um as Jesus was going into the garden of kissemani um his last prayer for his people. His church was for unity. That's what he prayed for.

12:08.27

lovelightstories

Um, yes.

12:10.93

Maria

You know there's a lot of different things that he could have prayed for but that's what he prayed for and in that prayer in the words of Jesus he also says so that then the world will know. Essentially it's my paraphrase that you're mine like through your unity the world will know that you are mine.

12:24.64

lovelightstories

Ah, yes.

12:28.91

Maria

It says that um and then in revelation arguably we get a picture revelation seven nine when it says every tribe and every from every tribe tongue and nation um, coming together and bringing you know that picture wide robes.

12:42.82

lovelightstories

Yes.

12:46.50

Maria

Bringing glory to god and so argu arguably we get a picture of what that unity looks like and if we connected 1 more one more scripture here is when we look at the Lord's prayer well you know. Jesus teaches us to pray that kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

00:08.28

Maria

So yes, we can look to scripture. We can look at it throughout and it's amazing to me to the Lord's prayer that I think all of us know where it says um. You know that kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. So this heart for ethnic and racial unity is god's heart for now. It's not We're not meant to wait till heaven and so really, that's what we're stepping into um, again remembering too and walking in the authority of that jesus united ah very ethnically diverse new testament church. This is something that god's been about like all the way back to the bible and the time that jesus was on the earth and so there's a lot of authority and hope in that and it's just.

00:49.25

lovelightstories

Yes, yes.

01:02.84

lovelightstories

Yes, oh thank you? What a way to end this podcast and we can see how all of the things that you've devoted your time to and all of the experiences are melding together in this.

01:03.35

Maria

Beautiful.

01:17.93

lovelightstories

Inclusion and ethnic diversity and adoption and trauma parenting and all that it all comes together with a heart for the lord and um, it's It's just been so exciting and encouraging to hear from you today and I know that those listening are very very blessed by our conversation and so Maria I thank you? Um, before we say goodbye do you want to share where people can follow you online and how they can keep hearing from you.

01:46.23

Maria

Yeah, and Stephanie you want to say thank you for having me. It's really like it's been fun to talk about really god stories ride. So it's been an honor I was just saying on social media on Instagram or Facebook and my handles my name Marie Hanson Quine and so yeah, would love to. You know for people to connect send me a message sometimes it takes me a while but send me a

message that you hurt this podcast and would love to connect and support people. Um, and wherever they are on the journey and all the different topics that we've we've talked about today.

02:19.30

lovelightstories

Yes, yes, and that is actually how I found you initially I do not know how I stumbled upon you but I have followed you for a good number of years and so um, definitely you have a lot of content and just lots of your heart that you share there and so I would encourage people to go find you there.

02:37.60

Maria

Yes, thank you Stephanie.

02:37.70

lovelightstories

Um, thank you again. This has been just a lovely conversation.