

Exploring Adoption

by Kurt Bruner, *The Center for Strong Families*

Should you adopt a child? Millions of children around the world need homes. Many homes seem to have something missing that adoption offers to fill. As you process feelings of hope and eagerness in your heart, the practical questions can often seem paralyzing:

What's this going to cost?

Which route is best — domestic, international, or foster care?

Is there a chance the biological parents will complicate things?

Exploring adoption means weighing all of your practical concerns in your head against the often inexplicable tugging of your heart. With so many significant factors to consider, where do you start?

STEP ONE: Understand God's heart for orphans

It's easy to grow anxious when you explore adoption in your own limited strength and understanding. There is peace, however, in seeking to know and reflect God's heart for adoption. You can do that by reading and meditating on verses in the Bible about adoption and care for orphans (for example, Deuteronomy 10:18, Exodus 22:22-24, James 1:27, Job 29:1-12, Esther 2:7, and 2 Samuel 9:3). As you read these Scriptures, consider setting aside time for fasting and seeking the Lord's will for your home.

As you pray, consider the possibility that part of God's plan for your home could be a child "temporarily placed" with another birthmother—whether in the next town or across the ocean. Then consider the impact you could have in the life of a child who would not otherwise have a

mother or father. How might God be leading you to change their circumstances? What kind of home and family might you be able to provide?

Seeking God's heart for orphans will stretch your perspective. It will change the kind of cost/benefit analysis you bring to your decisions. It also can give you peace and patience for the details of adoption and can grow your trust in God's ability to provide for you in what He's calling you to.

While seeking God's heart for orphans, you might find yourself considering entirely different approaches to adoption. You also may discover opportunities to show care for orphans in ways other than adoption.

STEP TWO: Educate Yourself

Much about adoption has changed in the past few decades. New opportunities have emerged alongside new challenges. At the same time, various churches and non-profit ministries have expanded their support for orphans and adoption, providing a broad range of information and services about things such as federal tax benefits and financial assistance through grants available to adopting families.

One of the best ways to increase your understanding of both the head and heart issues of adoption is to spend time with others who have adopted—to hear from them the joys and challenges of each step along the way. Take advantage of the *Going Further* suggestions to learn from those who have walked this path before you.

GOING FURTHER – Resources

(Available from Bellevue Christian Bookstore or Library)

Recommended Books:

Successful Adoption: A Guide for Christian Families (by Natalie Nichols Gillespie) provides a comprehensive Christian guide for adoptive families. It is an outstanding resource for families considering adoption

Fields of the Fatherless (by C. Thomas Davis) inspires readers to share God's heart for orphans and offers a broad range of helpful resources and organizations. (Out of print, but available as used copies from Amazon.com)

Recommended Website: HowtoAdopt.org is a service of Shaohannah's Hope, the organization founded by Christian musician Steven Curtis Chapman. It provides background information, responses to myths about adoption, and practical steps for pursuing adoption.

GOING FURTHER – Church Support

Visit Bellevue's website at www.bellevue.org for maps which will help you locate this class:

Life Groups – Sunday, 8:00 a.m.

20s-30s Couples Adoption/Orphan Care (Harms) E348

Bellevue's Care Groups offer support and guidance to those facing life challenges. Over 20 different groups are offered each semester to address many of the issues that face individuals, couples, and families. There is no fee to attend. Some groups have optional curriculum materials available for purchase. Childcare is provided for groups that meet on Wednesday evenings. You do not have to be a Bellevue member to attend. For more information about Care Groups, call (901) 347-5830.

Print Date: 3-Nov-10

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