

TOGETHER *for* **ADOPTION**
2013 NATIONAL CONFERENCE
In partnership with the Orphan Care Alliance of Louisville

ONE STORY.

OCTOBER 4-5 | LOUISVILLE, KY
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary



/TOGETHERFORADOPTION



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Dear Adoption and Orphan Advocates 2013,

In the Apostle Paul's day, when people heard the word adoption, their thoughts usually moved horizontally, not vertically. Since adoption was a word that came from the ancient world of law, people usually thought about the Roman or Greek practices of adoption. Their thoughts primarily moved along a horizontal plane and not a vertical one.

But then there was Paul . . .

Paul essentially commandeered the word adoption from the world of law and intentionally filled it with meaning from the story of redemption. He gave adoption a central role within the unfolding story of redemption, from its pre-temporal beginning (before God even created the world; Eph. 1:4-5) all the way to its consummation (when believers enjoy the full privileges of life as co-heirs with Jesus in the new heaven and new earth; Rom. 8:23).

Paul knew that if people learned to think vertically about adoption before they thought horizontally about it, not only would the depth of their communion with the Triune God be transformed, but also the depth of their engagement in the pain and suffering of this world.

Much like people did in Paul's day, we often don't realize that adoption is a story-word. When most of us see the word adoption, we first think about families adopting children. Too often our first thought is not about the story of God's work to renew the heavens and the earth, freeing all creation from its bondage to decay. If we understand adoption as a story-word, we'll find ourselves better equipped theologically to address the global orphan crisis holistically.

For example, since God's work of adoption means the eventual renewal of all creation and the complete eradication of every last trace of the Fall, helping parents who live in poverty provide for and protect their children is a way of bringing God's renewing work of adoption to bear upon the present. What an amazing story that would be!

As I've written many times before, the Bible's story of adoption is the story of God's visiting us in our affliction (in all of its various forms), like he once visited Israel (Exo. 4:31), in order to deliver us from it.

To visit orphans in their affliction (James 1:27), then, means that we work hard to address all of the causes (i.e., natural disasters, unjust social conditions, personal moral failures of community members, etc) and forms of affliction. We visit orphans and widows in their affliction because through adoption God first visited us in ours (see Exo. 4:31; Luke 7:11-16; Rom. 8:21-23).

It means we work hard for orphan prevention through family reunification and preservation, and when reunification is not possible, we actively support indigenous adoption efforts. For some children, though, adoption (both indigenous and international) becomes the way we "visit" them.

The T4A team thanks you for joining us for this year's conference in Louisville as we continue to reclaim the word adoption for the sake of the poor, the marginalized, the widow, and the orphan.

Dan Cruver and Jason Kovacs



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

- 8:00 – 9:00 am Registration / Check-in
- 9:00 – 10:45 am General Session One
The Story Gone Wrong
Mike Reeves, Dr. Jon Bergeron
- 11:00 – Noon Breakout Session 1
- 12:00 – 1:30 pm Lunch/Expo
- 1:30 – 2:30 pm Breakout Session 2
- 2:45 – 4:15 pm General Session Two
Stories of the Fatherless
Dr. Sharen Ford, Teresa C. James
- 4:15 – 5:30 pm Expo, Bookstore, Prayer Room, Networking Break
- 5:30 – 7:00 pm Supper Break
- 7:00 – 9:00 pm General Session Three
The Story Re-Written
Dan Cruver

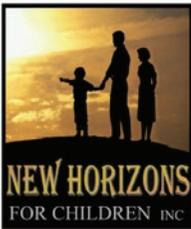
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

- 8:30 – 10:00 am General Session Four
Our Lives Re-Written
Mike Reeves, Dr. Susan Hillis
- 10:00 – 11:00 am Break / Expo
- 11:00 – Noon Breakout Session 3
- 12:00 – 1:15 pm Lunch | Expo
- 1:15 – 2:15 pm General Session Five
Stories of the Fatherless Re-Written
Vernon Pierre
- 2:30 – 3:30 pm Breakout Session 4
- 3:45 – 5:00 pm General Session Six
When Everything Sad Comes Untrue
Scotty Smith

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SPEAKERS



Scotty Smith

Scotty Smith is the former Senior Pastor and current Founding Pastor of Christ Community Church in Franklin, TN, Professor at Covenant Theological Seminary and Reformed Theological Seminary, and author of six books: *Speechless*, with Steven Curtis Chapman; *Unveiled Hope*, with Michael Card; *Objects of His Affection*; *The Reign of Grace*; *Restoring Broken Things*, with Steven Curtis Chapman; and *Everyday Prayers: 365 Days to a Gospel-Centered Faith*. Under his leadership, Christ Community Church has reached thousands in the Nashville area and planted several daughter churches. Scotty and Darlene, his wife of thirty-nine years, have two adult married

children and one grandson. He enjoys fly-fishing, cross training, classic rock and roll, Motown Music and cooking. Scotty blogs daily at Heavenward. <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/scottysmith>

Scotty's general session topic: **When Everything Sad Comes Untrue**



Mike Reeves

Until recently, Mike was Head of Theology for UCCF, providing theological fuel for student mission and supporting undergraduates studying theology. Before that he was an associate minister at All Souls Church, Langham Place, in London. He is married to Bethan, and together they have two daughters, Lucy and Mia. Mike's new role is Theologian-at-Large. His duties include directing the development and delivery of new online degree, developing a new theological resources website to sit alongside WEST website, campus teaching at all degree levels, maintaining research, writing and preaching,

and supervising PhD candidates in areas of Systematic and Historical Theology.

Mike earned the following degrees: MA, Cambridge University; BA (Hons), Oak Hill Theological College/Middlesex University; PhD, King's College, London. He's also written the following books: *The Unquenchable Flame: Introducing the Reformation* (IVP UK, 2009); *The Unquenchable Flame: Discovering the Heart of the Reformation* (B&H Academic, 2010); *The Breeze of the Centuries: Introducing Great Theologians. From the Apostolic Fathers to Aquinas* (IVP UK, 2010); *On Giants' Shoulders: Introducing Great Theologians. From Luther to Barth* (IVP UK, 2011); and most recently *The Good God: Enjoying Father, Son and Spirit* (Paternoster, 2012) and *Delighting in the Trinity: An Introduction to the Christian Faith* (IVP, 2012).

Mike's two general session topics: **The Story Gone Wrong and Our Lives Re-Written**



Dr. Sharen Ford

Throughout her career, Sharen Ford has shown a commitment to helping children find permanent, loving homes. She has been employed by the Child Welfare Division of the Colorado State Department of Human Services for 28 years and currently serves as manager of the department's Permanency Services Unit. In her role as manager, Sharen oversees a number of the state's critical programs, including: the Foster Care Program; the Adoption Program; Kinship Care; Relative Guardianship Assistance Program; Recruitment and Retention of Foster and Adoptive Families; the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children; the Interstate Compact on Adoption Medical

Assistance; and Child Welfare – Protective Child Care. In addition to earning a B.A. in English Literature, she holds a Master's of Education in Counseling and a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology.

Sharen's general session topic: **Stories of the Fatherless**



Vernon Pierre

Vernon is a graduate of Princeton University and has a Master of Divinity from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. After Trinity, Vernon served as a pastoral intern at Camelback Bible Church before being called to serve as lead pastor of Roosevelt Church in Phoenix, AZ. Vernon also actively participates in the local community by serving on the board of Roosevelt Row. Vernon is the first generation of his family born in the United States. Both of his parents were born in Haiti. He grew up in a Christian home and was blessed to know Christ at an early age. Vernon and his wife, Dennaë, live in downtown Phoenix and are the parents of three wonderful children. In addition

to this, they are foster parents and provide short term, emergency respite care for foster children. Dennaë is a frequent contributor to Together for Adoption's blog.

Vernon's general session topic: Stories of the Fatherless Re-Written



Dan Cruver

Dan oversees Together for Adoption and provides thought-leadership on the theology of adoption as a team member of ABBA Fund. Before co-founding and directing Together for Adoption, Dan was a college professor of Bible and Theology. He has also served as a pastor of family ministries. Dan co-founded Together for Adoption to equip churches and educate Christians theologically about orphan care and horizontal adoption. Dan regularly writes and speaks about the Gospel and its implications for solutions to the global orphan crisis. He is the editor and primary author of *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father*, *Martyrdom: The Final Triumph of*

Faith (with Scott Anderson) and wrote the foreword to *Heirs with Christ: The Puritans on Adoption* by Dr. Joel Beeke.

Dan's general session topic: The Story Re-Written

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AN INITIATIVE FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE FOR ORPHANS

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Dr. Jon Bergeron, Director of FamilyCare, Hope for Orphans

Jon is a clinical psychologist and adoptive parent. He and his wife, Shelly, have been foster parents and have adopted special needs children both domestically and internationally. After working for 10 years in a private psychology practice, Jon joined Hope For Orphans as the Director of FamilyCare giving leadership and vision in developing tools and resources for families in crisis and to help the local church

and counselors meet the needs of families adopting at-risk kids. Jon also serves on the board of his local CASA organization, Voices for Children, and has helped to form an orphan care ministry in his local church as well as a regional orphan care alliance, Churches for Children – Brazos Valley.



Teresa C. James, Commissioner, Department for Community Based Services

Teresa James was appointed Commissioner of the Department for Community Based Services in September by Governor Steven Beshear. Prior to accepting the role as Commissioner, she has been the Acting Commissioner since December of 2011 and the Deputy Commissioner since 2008. A native of Midway, Kentucky, she received a bachelor's of Social Work from Eastern Kentucky University and a master's degree in

Social Work from the University of Kentucky. She has been a licensed clinical social worker since 1993.

She has over 25 years of clinical social work experience, including more than 22 years working with severely abused and neglected children, their families and vulnerable adults. She began her career as a front line child protective service worker with the Kentucky Cabinet for Human Resources in 1986 in Danville, KY.

Commissioner James is a proud and passionate social worker who has a wide range of experiences in the field of social work and child welfare. She is committed to the Cabinet's mission of protecting our most vulnerable children and adults as well as insuring that every child has an opportunity for permanency and a forever family. She is a collaborator who is committed to working with community partners to promote safety, stability, and well-being for each and every citizen of the Commonwealth.



Susan Hillis, Ph.D.

Susan has been a believer for 38 years, married to a godly servant for 35, a mother for 26, a US government federal official for 20, and a university professor for 10 years. She and Brian have 11 children, 8 of whom were adopted from Russia. Brian is a CPA and has spent many years as an at-home dad. Susan participates widely as an invited speaker at scientific and Christian conferences. She has published more than 80 articles in scientific medical journals and is considered one of

the leading infectious diseases experts on the HIV risk among vulnerable youth around the world.

Johnny Carr, Emcee

Johnny is a conference speaker and orphan care advocate to denominations, national religious associations and conferences including Saddleback Church, Catalyst Conference, The Idea Camp, Q Ideas, and others. He is also author of *Orphan Justice* that challenges churches to rethink how they have handled



social justice issues directly related to orphan care (March 2013). He and his wife have visited many orphanages and have also helped bring attention to a deaf

school in central China that was in dire need of aid. Today the school is better than it has ever been and all of the teachers and their families are now believers in Jesus Christ.

Johnny understands the complexities of ministry and the demands of being a pastor, as well as a pastor's role in empowering and motivating the laity to do the good works of the Gospel. He believes that the Church must take the lead in the world's orphan crisis. His goal is to inspire the Church to truly understand and obey James 1:27, which calls believers to care for orphans.

Kaleb Scharmahorn, Conference Worship Leader

Kaleb serves as Pastor of Family Groups and Worship at Oasis Church in Ormond Beach, FL. He and his wife, Meagan, founded and direct 'The Igniting Hope Foundation' that specifically exists to serve and support the people and orphans of Nicaragua. They



have two beautiful little girls and are hoping God would bless them with many more. Kaleb graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Biblical & Theological studies from Mid-Continent

University and when he is not leading worship, writing, or spending time with his family, you can be sure to find him out cycling or trying to surf.



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FEATURED BLOGGERS



Noël Piper

Noël Piper is a speaker, adoptive mom, and the author of *Treasuring God in Our Traditions*, *Faithful Women and Their Extraordinary God*, and several other books. Noël has been married to John Piper since 1968. They have 4 sons and a daughter, 4 daughters-in-law, and an increasing number of grandchildren. Their children grew up in Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, where John has been a pastor since 1980. Talitha, a teenager, is the only one still living at home with Mom and Dad. Noël travels for missions and speaking as often and as far as possible and is steadily involved with the ministries and activities of Joni and Friends, both locally and internationally. Noël blogs at NoelPiper.com.



Kim de Blecourt

Kim de Blecourt is a media veteran, experienced writer, and expert on international adoption. Kim heads a ministry called Nourished Hearts (nourishedhearts.com) to encourage, inspire, and create community around those who are adopting or have adopted and provide foster care and/or work in orphan care internationally. Her first book, *Until We All Come Home: A Harrowing Journey, a Mother's Courage, a Race to Freedom* (FaithWords) was released November 6, 2012. Kim and her husband, Jahn, are the parents of two children, Jacey and Jake. They live in Michigan.

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WHAT IS YOUR STORY?

by Justin Buzzard



In 2011 I moved my wife and three sons to Silicon Valley to pursue a dream. I wanted to start a new church that would engage my city with the gospel (the story of the Bible) in a new way. The day we moved, I had just three people committed to my dream and just three thousand dollars in the church bank account. I'd never felt so excited or so scared. It was a move of faith. I had no guarantees. But it all felt so right, like the next chapter in the story that God was writing for my life.

I've always sensed that my life is part of a bigger story. It's the times when I've forgotten this bigger story that I've felt the most lost in life. Life is full of seasons. Whether I've been navigating a season of excitement or suffering, it's always been my grip on what I call the "Big Story," or the Big Story's grip on me, that has help me make sense of life's ups and downs.

Austrian philosopher Ivan Illich was once asked about the most revolutionary way to change society. He answered the question this way:

Neither revolution nor reformation can ultimately change a society, rather you must tell a new powerful tale, one so persuasive that it sweeps away the old myths and becomes the preferred story, one so inclusive that it gathers all the bits of our past and our present into a coherent whole, one that even shines some light into our future so that we can take the next step . . . If you want to change a society, then you have to tell an alternative story.

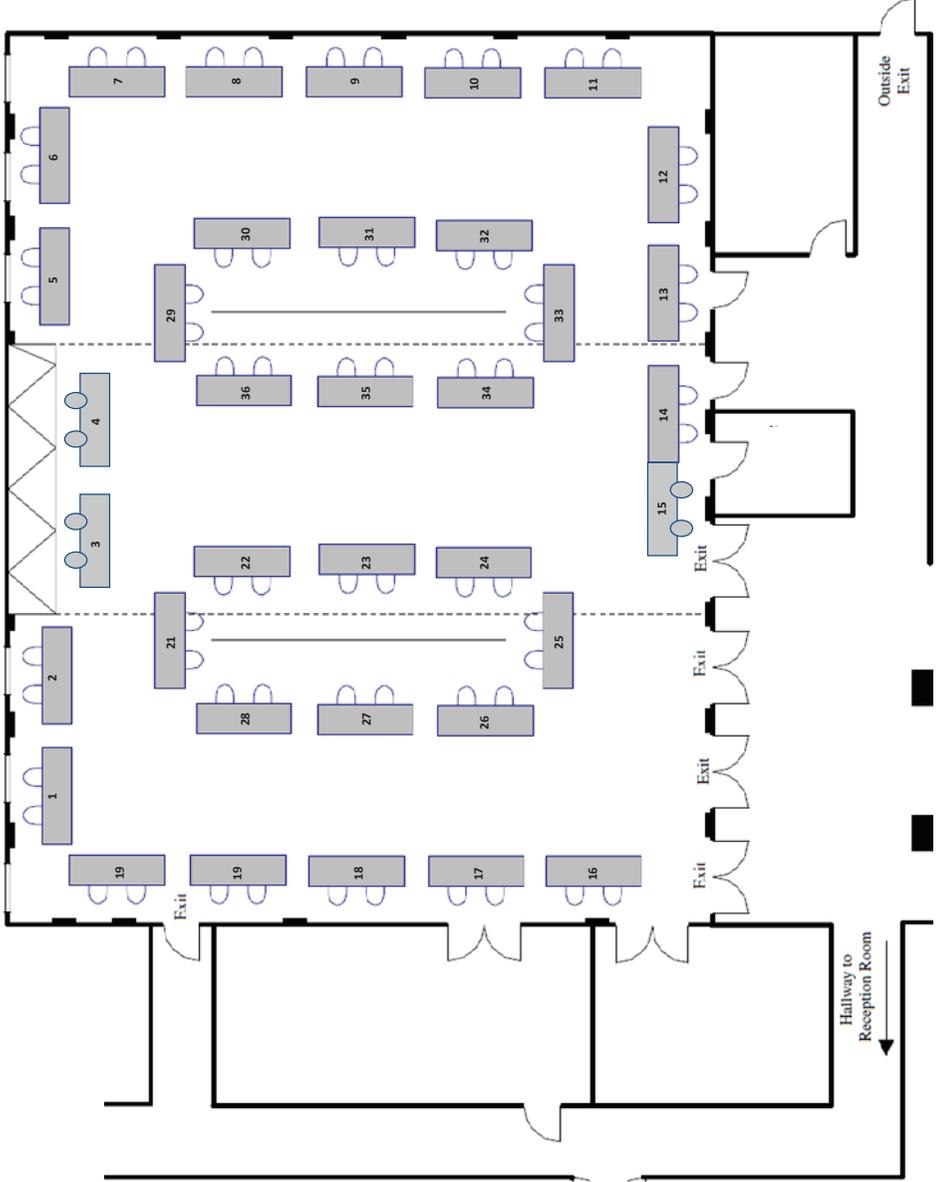
Most of you reading this care about seeing change happen in the people in your city. As I seek to love and touch people in my city, I've realize I must focus my energy on two main things: 1) listening to their story 2) telling them an alternative (better) story—the Big Story.

During the last two years, God has been using me more than ever before to lead people to place their faith in Jesus and experience new life in Him. It's thrilling. I'm no more equipped than you to do this. I don't have any secrets. My only "secret" is that I believe God can save anyone's life, and I work hard at listening to people's stories and telling them a better story.

If you want to change a society, then you have to tell an alternative story.

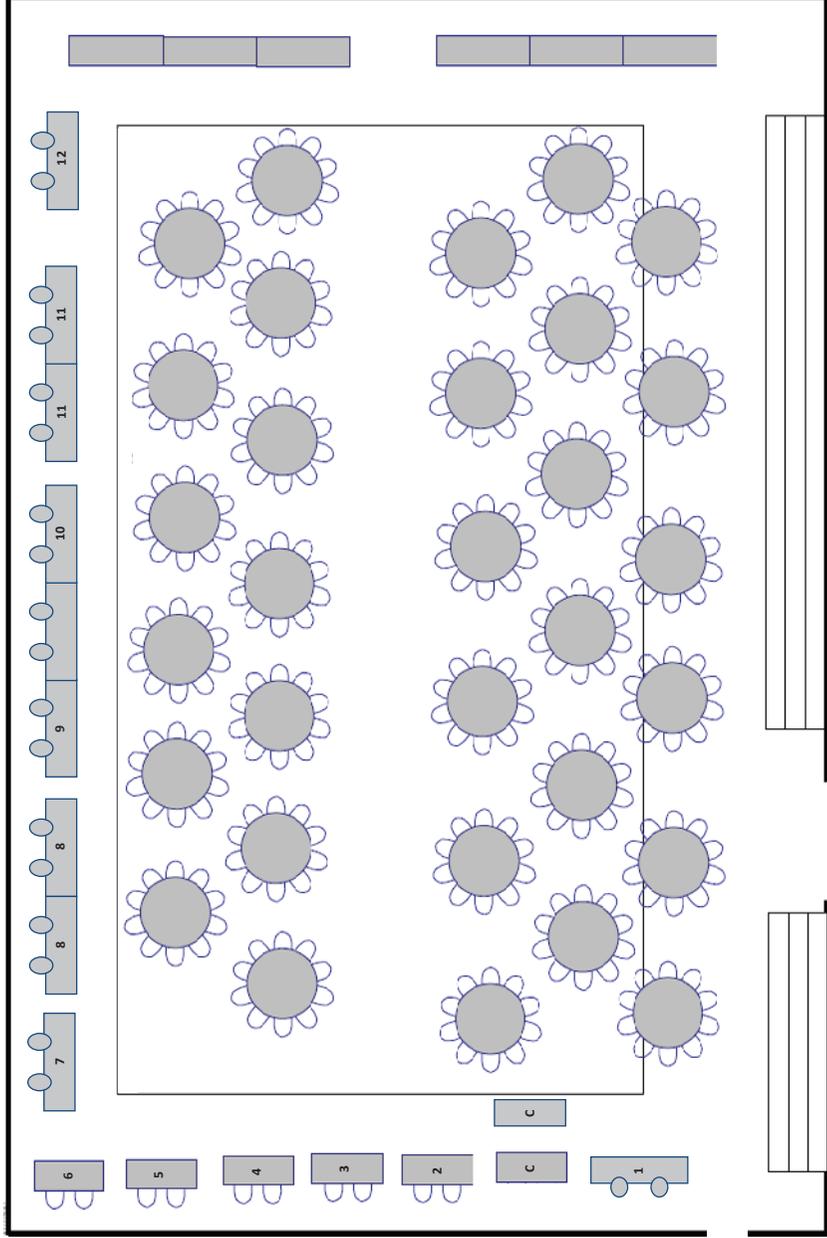
*Justin Buzzard is living in the Story as a husband, father, pastor, and author. You may purchase his latest book **The Big Story: How the Bible Makes Sense Out of Your Life** at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).*

EXHIBITOR MAP – HERITAGE HALL



1. Food for Orphans
2. Abort73
3. Safe Families
4. Show Hope
5. Adoption Airfare
6. AFC Travel
7. America World Adoption
8. Bill's Tax Service - Adoption Tax Credit Specialist
9. Both Hands Foundation
10. Challenge Farm (via Globe Int'l)
11. Christian Alliance for Orphans
12. Compelled Designs
13. Created for Care
14. EAC, Inc.
15. Embrace Texas
16. ABBA Fund (1)
17. ABBA Fund (2)
18. Every Orphan's Hope
19. Families Outreach
20. Generations Adoptions
21. Heart Gallery of KY
22. MercyFound Ministries
23. Moody Publishers
24. A Helping Hand Adoption Agency (Nightlight Christian Adoptions)
25. ONEless Ministries
26. Orphan Voice
27. Project Hopeful
28. Sermon Audio
29. Signs for Hope
30. Sunrise Children's Services
31. The Archibald Project
32. The OrphanCare Network
33. Village to Village Int'l
34. Walking With Orphans
35. World Orphans
36. Focus on the Family

EXHIBITOR MAP – MAIN GYM / CAFETERIA



- C Mist Valley Coffee
- 1. EthHOPEia
- 2. Loving Shepherd Ministries
- 3. MLJ Adoptions
- 4. Bethany Christian Services
- 5. MKI Travel
- 6. New Horizons for Children
- 7. Pure Charity
- 8. Ornaments4Orphans
- 9. Lifeline Children's Services
- 10. Lifesong for Orphans
- 11. Orphan Care Alliance
- 12. Saddleback Orphan Care

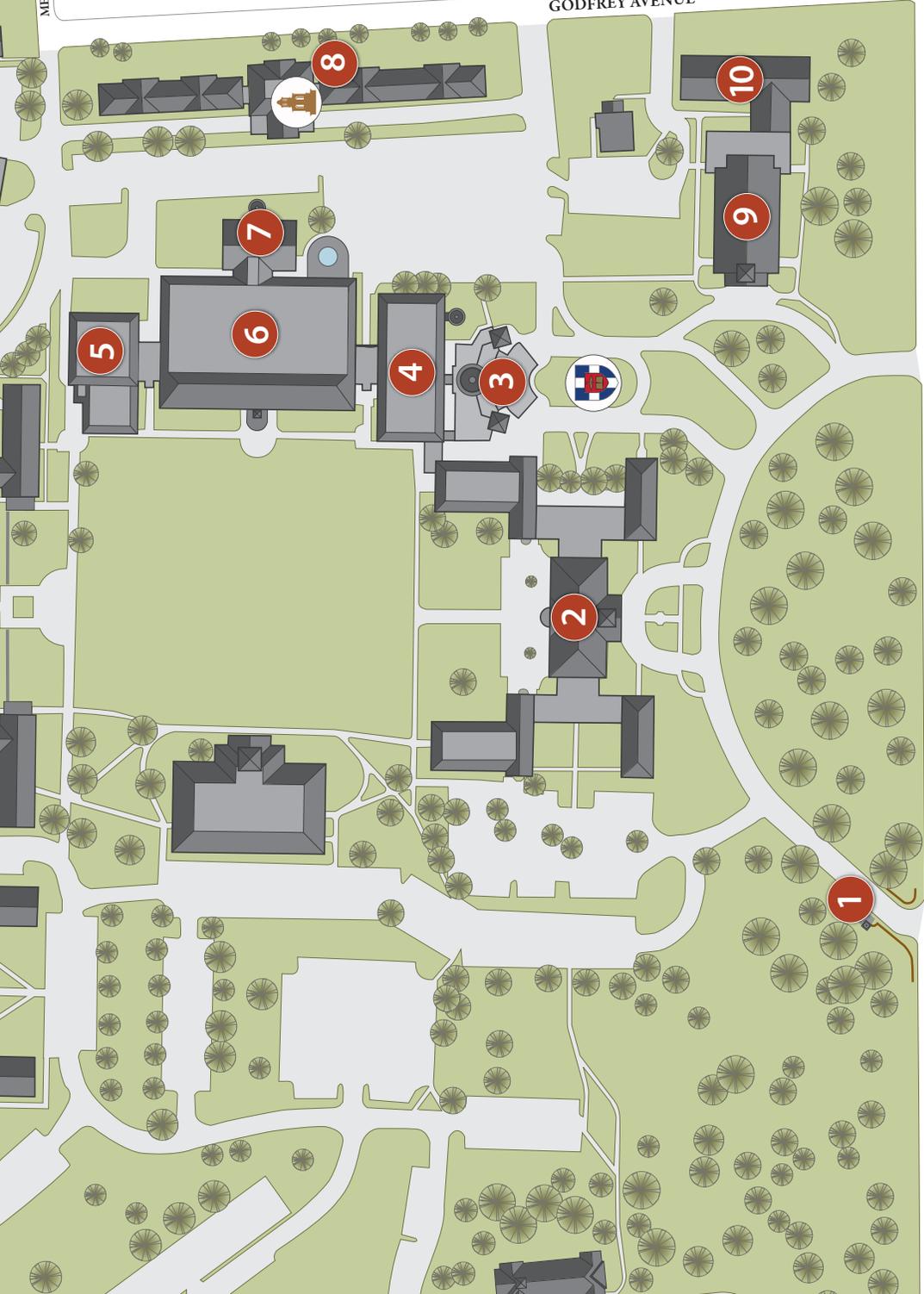
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CAMPUS MAP

1. **Main Entrance**
2. **Norton Hall**
3. **Duke K McCall Pavilion**
4. **Honeycutt Campus Center South**
 - 5th and Broadway Campus Store and Post Office (lower level)
 - Lifeway Campus Bookstore (lower level)
5. **Honeycutt Campus Center North**
 - Heritage Hall (upper level)
 - Cafeteria (lower level)
6. **Honeycutt Campus Center**
 - Founders Café (lower level)
 - Main Gym (lower level)
7. **Levering Gym**
8. **Legacy Hotel**
9. **Alumni Memorial Chapel**
10. **Cooke Hall**



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THE PROBLEM WITH THE ANTI-CHRISTIAN ADOPTION MOVEMENT

by Johnny Carr

Adoption is really getting a bad rap these days. Since the release of *Child Catchers*, by Kathryn Joyce, she and others have questioned the ethics, motives, and even the intelligence of evangelicals who would dare to adopt or challenge other Christians to do the same. As I have read blogs and tried to keep up with all of the discussions, I have noticed that there is a lot of misunderstanding and misrepresentations taking place.

Many of us are accused of misrepresenting the numbers given by UNICEF. But, the reality is, the statistics are complex and complicated as related to orphans and vulnerable children, and only a very small percentage of the 153 million given by UNICEF (this number has been revised over the past several years including 143 million and 163 million) need adoption as their answer. Additionally, we know there are some unscrupulous people in the world trying to take advantage of children producing trafficking issues. We also can't ignore family stabilization problems produced by extreme poverty. We are not afraid to talk about it, and orphan ministry leaders all over the country are consistently discussing these matters. We too want to see it end. While considering these issues we also believe that every child has a right to a family, either through their birth parents or by adoption.

For years many Christians wanting to help orphans only saw child sponsorship, packing a suitcase for a mission team to leave at an orphanage, or building an orphanage as ways to do that. As we have grown and continue to learn, we have seen that sending a suitcase of things may not be the best thing to do. It can actually harm the local community by taking away from its economy. We have also learned that orphanages are also not the best answer. It's a complicated world out there and there are no easy answers when it comes to child welfare. On the other hand, sponsorship has just been given a huge thumbs-up from some recent studies.

In the early 1990s many started adopting children. In my church, my family was the first "obvious adoption" where anyone could look at our family and know that our son was not born to us – we had two children born to us and then adopted our third child from Asia. My wife is a deaf educator and we felt uniquely qualified to adopt a deaf child who needed a family. Two years later we adopted a deaf girl also from Asia. The last child we adopted came to us through the foster system. Born at 25-weeks gestation he has multiple special needs. As a result of this, we saw some incredible things happen in our church. We saw an "adoption culture" grow. Critics have viewed this term negatively.

One family adopted a child that was bi-racial out of the foster system – even though they were getting ready to be empty nesters. As a matter of fact, several families became involved in the foster system, which included the adoption of a 12-year-old, a 4-year-old girl, two teenage sibling girls, and a few others. Another family adopted a boy from China who had albinism and was losing his eyesight at the age of four. Another couple adopted a boy from China who had a birth defect in his intestines. One couple adopted a boy from another country then came home and changed the entire direction of their life. The father was a young, successful attorney. He

quit, and they moved to a rural section of Alabama to be house parents at a home for troubled boys. My brother-in-law and his wife are in the process of adopting a child with Down's Syndrome as I write this.

IF THAT IS AN "ADOPTION CULTURE" THEN GIVE ME MORE.

Time doesn't permit me to share what we are seeing happen in Ethiopia, Ghana and China. I have been part of a movement through Bethany Christian Services that emphasizes indigenous foster care and adoption. These types of solutions are slow and culturally specific. In African countries we have to deal with tribal boundary issues. In Asia there are challenges associated with mystical beliefs about children with special needs. In Haiti there is a restive culture so indigenous foster care and adoption must be approached carefully. These are the long-term and lasting solutions, but what about the kids who need a family today? Do we let these children age out of the orphanages and become fuel to child soldering, sex trafficking or other forms of human servitude?

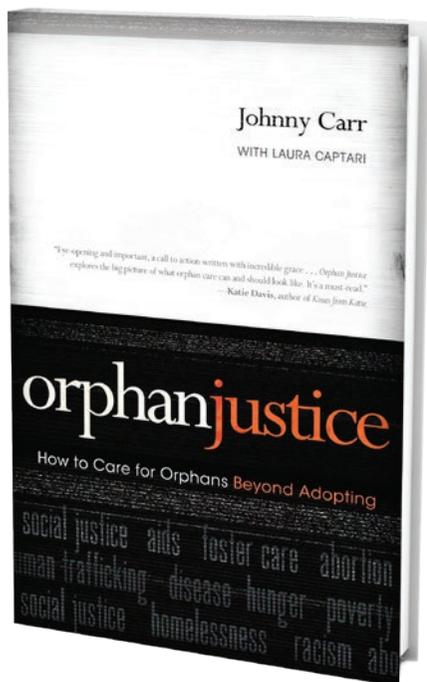
One Sunday morning my oldest adopted child walked into our living room. I signed to him that we were visiting a different church that day. He asked if I would be preaching, and I told him no. His eyes welled up with tears and he signed back, "Why are you not preaching? You need to tell them to adopt and help my friends." He was four when we adopted him and remembers being abandoned and living in the orphanage. He prays often for his friends.

A few years ago we took our first two adopted children back to visit in their country. As we walked into our daughter's former orphanage we knew it would be emotional. She was excited about the visit but the smiles turned to tears when she saw some of her old friends. When she finally settled down and was able to communicate she summed up her feelings by signing one sentence to us, "I thought they would all be adopted and have families, but they are still here."

There will always be corruption in the world. Unfortunately, the most vulnerable are the ones who are the most exploited. If we really want to help them, let's have some adult conversations. Let's not bloody someone in the nose by calling them a "child catcher" and then say that you are only trying to make a point. The people I work with have devoted their lives to the welfare of orphaned and vulnerable children. The ones who are not following the rules need to be caught and punished. We will never all agree on exactly how to take care of orphaned and vulnerable children. That's okay. We can learn from each other but let's do it without misrepresenting motives and try to keep the best interests of children at heart.

Johnny Carr is the author of *Orphan Justice: How to Care for Orphans Beyond Adopting* (B&H Publishing Group, March 2013), which is aimed at educating readers on the complex issues of orphan care and engaging individuals and larger communities. For more information, please visit www.orphanjustice.com.

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Lifesong for Orphans brings JOY and PURPOSE to orphans and vulnerable children through indigenous ORPHAN CARE initiatives in seven countries and FOSTER CARE initiatives in communities across the United States. We facilitate no-cost CHURCH ADOPTION FUNDS nationwide and provide ADOPTION grants and loans to adoptive families. lifesongfororphans.org

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Bethany Christian Services

A full-service agency offering pregnancy counseling as well as domestic, international, and embryo adoption. Bethany's mission is to manifest Christ's love and compassion while offering quality social service. bethany.org

MKI Travel

MKI Group Travel exists to serve those who have been called to travel internationally. Are you adopting internationally? Serving with a missions agency? Working with any other NGO, non-profit, or humanitarian aid organization? By contacting us personally for your travel needs, we will be able to compare all currently published sale fares against our private contracts – specifically negotiated for those who are traveling with a purpose. Of course, if you are traveling for business, or even on vacation — we also offer consolidated airfares, in addition to access to all published sale fares worldwide. mkigrouptravel.com

New Horizons for Children

The mission of New Horizons for Children (NHFC) is to identify school age orphans in other countries who have an ability to integrate with and temporarily live in a functional family environment through a 4-5 week hosting program with American Christian families who show the love of Christ. Orphan hosting is inviting an orphan from another country to be a member of your family for a period of time. NHFC offers orphan hosting twice a year, a 5-6 week summer program and a 4-5 week winter program. Hosting focuses on single orphans ages 8-16 from Ukraine and Latvia and ages 4-13 from China, orphans who are part of sibling sets from ages 3-16 and some special needs orphans. These groups of orphans have about a 1% chance at international adoption and are truly the "least" of the "least of these." newhorizonsforchildren.org

Ornaments4Orphans

Ornaments4Orphans' vision is to bless orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda through the generosity of Americans during the Christmas season. Ornaments4Orphans' mission is to provide American Christians with a seasonal opportunity to support God's growing kingdom work in East Africa. When individuals purchase an ornament from Ornaments4Orphans the funds are directed toward annual operational costs and development projects of gospel-centered orphan and children's ministries in Uganda. As the ornament hangs on your Christmas tree, it serves as a reminder to you and your family to pray for the physical and spiritual wellbeing of the children of Uganda. Ornaments also make meaningful Christmas gifts for your family members, colleagues, and friends. All ornaments come specially packaged with information about the ministries and the children the proceeds benefit. ornaments4orphans.org

Orphan Care Alliance (KY)

OCA's vision is for the Body of Christ to lead the efforts of caring for the fatherless in Kentucky and Southern Indiana. OCA equips Christians and connects them to opportunities to care for the fatherless. In the Kentuckiana region alone, more than 2,200 children live under the state's care without stable parents to love and provide for them. OCA is unique in 3 ways: (1) OCA's ministries work to create synergy among a community of churches to unite the entire Body of Christ for Orphan Care. (2) OCA communicates with Kentucky and Indiana on a governmental level and connects the state's need and the church to work together on behalf of the fatherless. (3) OCA creates the opportunity for collaboration among churches, orphan care partners, and state governments. orphancarealliance.org

Pure Charity

Pure Charity is a collaborative, social, and personal giving community built to inspire and encourage a movement of generosity where everyone can engage and make a real difference. With Pure Charity you can discover, fund, and share projects from your favorite charities and earn money back to give just by shopping and sharing like you already do. Personalize your philanthropy today. Join with us in this growing movement of generosity! purecharity.com

Saddleback

Did you know there are more than 163 million orphans in our world right now? Most of us have a tough time imagining the life of an orphaned child. It's difficult to fathom a day without food, clean water, education, or the presence of a loving parent. The Church is the answer that will change the lives of these children forever. The Bible mentions caring for widows and orphans over forty times. Saddleback Church has chosen to make the care of orphans and vulnerable children a signature issue of our church. We are providing meaningful ways for every person to engage in caring for orphans through local churches at home and around the world. orphancareinitiative.com

COFFEE STATION SPONSORS

Mist Valley Coffee

We established Mist Valley Coffee company to provide coffee as it should be. Freshly-roasted, full-bodied, flavorful coffee that tastes just like it smells! Choose coffee from around the world – Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Brazil, and other countries. We hope Mist Valley Coffee will impact those around us through the enjoyment of coffee as it should be. mistvalleycoffee.com

EthiHOPEia

To demonstrate the love of God to orphans in Ethiopia, restoring their hope and investing in their future by providing advanced educational and job opportunities. EthiHOPEia is a non-profit Christian organization that is dedicated to providing quality education and job opportunities to orphans in Ethiopia. We envision a future where outside assistance is no longer needed, and the people of Ethiopia will have the tools and training to create a thriving environment for themselves. By educating orphans, empowering them with job opportunities that benefit the entire community, and spreading the teachings of Jesus Christ, we are doing our part to create hope for a struggling population. ethihopeia.org

Loving Shepherd Ministries

Families are the solution to the orphan crisis. God's best for children is that they be raised with a mother and father. LSM places children in families via helping US couples adopt and empowering indigenous believers to adopt. Our model is Gospel-centered and emphasizes having a father in the home. We also operate a ministry in Ethiopia that has rescued hundreds of women from prostitution – all to the Father's glory! lovingshepherd.org

MLJ Adoptions

MLJ Adoptions, Inc. is dedicated to providing attentive and competent adoption service. MLJ Adoptions, Inc. is happy to serve families across the United States and around the world who are interested in international adoption. We are a Hague Approved Licensed Child Placing Agency (LCPA) based in Indianapolis, Indiana. We have successful inter-country adoption programs in Ukraine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nicaragua, Honduras, Bulgaria, Samoa and a growing list of other countries. We are also able to provide adoption services for many other countries, including but not limited to Mexico, Russia, China, and Ethiopia. We are a member of the Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS). We are also experienced in readoptions and adoption disruptions. Contact us to find out how we can make your adoption dreams a reality. mljadoptions.com

AUDIO/VISUAL SPONSOR

Rhino Technologies

Rhino Technologies provides on-site conference CD and MP3 recording and duplication. We want to be your first choice for audio and video production. rhino-technologies.com

EXHIBITORS & SPONSORS

A Helping Hand Adoption Agency

A Helping Hand Adoption Agency is a Christian interdenominational ministry dedicated to serving orphans around the world through adoptions and orphan relief. We specialize in domestic adoptions and international adoptions from China, Hong Kong, Panama, Nicaragua, and Uganda. ahelpinghandadoption.org

ABBA Fund

ABBA Fund provides interest-free adoption loans to maximize the Federal Adoption Tax Credit (\$12,170 per child) through a self-perpetuating fund. We establish and administer Church Adoption Fund partnerships and administer loan and grant funds for the church. We provide online resources through our website www.abbafund.org and also host national Together For Adoption conferences. Legacy Child is another ministry of ABBA Fund that creates a living legacy on memory or in honor of a loved one. abbafund.org

Abort73

Abort73 is working to eliminate abortion through education. We do that through the maintenance and promotion of Abort73.com – a website that offers what is perhaps the most comprehensive, engaging and accessible abortion-education in the world. Though we're not formally involved with placing children for adoption, our work serves as an important precursor to adoption. Since adoption and abortion are mutually exclusive, it is imperative that abortion-vulnerable women better understand what abortion actually does. So long as abortion remains an abstraction, many of these women will continue to maintain the absurd conviction that adoption is a worse fate for their child than abortion. Thankfully, the case against abortion is massive and compelling, and Abort73 is educating thousands of people every single day. Stop by our table to learn some of the many ways you can help us expand our reach! Abort73.com

Adoption Airfare

Adoption Airfare provides missionary and humanitarian airfare for families who are adopting internationally! We hold your hand all the way through the adoption travel process with personalized care, prayers, and service. adoptionairfare.com

AFC Travel

AFC Travel offers discounted international travel to help you make the most of your next journey. Spend less on getting there so you can enjoy being there. afctravel.com

America World Adoption

America World Adoption Association (America World) is a Christian based, nonprofit organization, dedicated to helping families adopt children from around the world. Our organization is run with the adoptive family at heart. As parents of three children by adoption, we know firsthand all that it takes to bring home your child. We know that if you make the decision to adopt you too will be blessed by one of the greatest gifts from God – a child by adoption. awaa.org

Bills Tax Service – Adoption Tax Credit Specialist

Have you claimed the Adoption Tax Credit? Many adoptive parents are unaware of the Adoption Tax Credit available to them. Last year in our tax firm we saw a desperate need to inform adoptive parents who have adopted a child between 2005-2011 that they can amend their returns and claim this wonderful credit. It became refundable in 2010 & 2011. This is not just about business for us. Alan and Jaime, owners of Bills Tax Service – Adoption Tax Credit Specialist have been foster parents for many years and adopted two children from foster care. I have been in the youth, jail, and prison ministry for many years. Children and young people are very near to our hearts. We are also campaigning to help save the Adoption Tax Credit for current and future adoptive parents to be able to claim this valuable credit. billstaxcentralia.com

Both Hands Foundation

Both Hands mission is “to serve widows, orphans, and adoptive families.” Our purpose is to help people raise funds for orphans while serving widows through home improvement projects. There are 160+ million orphans in the world and while we can't change the world, we can make a world of difference to some. One of the main reasons people don't

proceed with the adoption process is because of the huge price tag, often times between \$15,000-\$30,000. Our vision is that there will be Both Hands projects happening every weekend, in every state in the US. bothhandsfoundation.org

Challenge Farm (via Globe International)

Challenge Farm's mission is to heal the wounded spirit, body and soul so that our children return to society as happy, productive citizens with a great sense of worth and dignity. The Challenge Farm offers hope and healing for the street children of Africa as a place of prayer, worship and healing. Located on ten acres of fertile farmland near Kitale, Kenya, The Challenge Farm was started by Dr. Richard Thompson and his wife, Cheri Thompson, as a ministry to street children. The idea was to teach them about the love of Jesus Christ, help them to discover God's purpose for their lives and prepare them to transition back into their communities as productive citizens and mature followers of Christ. Today, Challenge Farm is home to more than 130 children. challengefarm.org

Christian Alliance for Orphans

The Christian Alliance for Orphans unites more than 100 respected Christian organizations and a national network of churches. Working together, our joint initiatives inspire, equip and connect Christians to “defend the fatherless” (Isaiah 1:17). Ultimately, we seek to stimulate and help grow Christian communities committed to adoption, foster care and global orphan care in the local church. Our united efforts include the national Summit, the Orphan Sunday campaign, monthly webinars, and an array of other initiatives. As the Alliance helps Christians understand God's call to care for the orphan and equips them for effective response, the impact reaches far beyond a single program or met need. Rather, an ever-expanding army of passionate advocates invest time, talent and treasure in a personal and sustained commitment to caring for orphans in the name of Christ. cafo.org

Compelled Designs

Compelled Designs is a company that has custom jewelry to offer families as adoption and missions fundraisers. Most of our packages are a “no upfront cost” to the family adopting or going on a mission trip. compelledesigns.com

Created for Care

Created for Care is a non-profit ministry designed to encourage, equip and bring rest to adoptive families through yearly retreats. Because leaving little ones can be difficult, we began our ministry with retreats for moms—but we record all of the sessions so both parents can benefit from the time of encouragement and insight shared from counselors and other adoptive moms. Our retreats always fill up quickly, and we truly believe God is in the midst of doing something amazing through them. He loves orphans too much to leave them orphans. And He loves your family too much to not lead you, love you and carry you on the rest of your journey as you raise your sons and daughters for His glory. Come join us at the next retreat. . . createdforcare.org

EAC, Inc

Margaret Cole, Founder and Executive Director of EAC, is both a biological and an adoptive mother. Margaret became active in the adoption process after her daughter, Alicia, died at six weeks of age from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Robert Cole, Alicia's uncle, was instrumental in founding the Ukraine and China Program. It is with prayer and with love that this agency is dedicated to the memory of Uncle Robert and little Alicia. It is our hope, that out of this family's tragedy and loss, might come many good things for families in the United States and orphaned children throughout the world. easci.com

Embrace Texas

Embrace is the church reclaiming the care of orphans and waiting children. Embrace focuses on recruitment, support, education and advocacy efforts for children and families while providing training and resources to churches to build and sustain their own efforts in meeting needs in their communities. embrace texas.org

Every Orphan's Hope

Every Orphan's Hope shares the love of Jesus Christ to widows and orphans affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Zambia. We don't build orphanages; we build homes so that they may build new lives together as a family. Guided by a "mama," the children are raised to life in Christ through daily devotionals, worship and prayer. 100% of your donation provides for the care of your sponsored child. everyorphan.org

Families Outreach

The mission of Families Outreach is quite simple- bring hope to the fatherless. Families Outreach seeks to follow the command of James 1:27 by doing our part to care for the over 163 million orphans worldwide. Our approach is threefold: assist couples adopting through financial grants, develop active partnerships with orphan care providers, and mobilize the Church to become adoption/orphan advocates. familiesoutreach.org

Focus on the Family

At Focus on the Family, we believe that every child deserves to know the love of a forever family and that every family deserves the chance to thrive. Therefore, our goal with the Adoption & Orphan Care Initiative™ is threefold:

1. Raise awareness of and recruit permanent families for legal orphans in foster care.
2. Create awareness of the plight of orphans worldwide.
3. Provide post-placement resources and assistance for adoptive families and the churches that support them.

iCareAboutOrphans.org

Food for Orphans

Share your meals with an orphan. Pledge just a few cents each day to save the life of a hungry orphan. Food for Orphans supplies the funds to purchase food for orphans around the world. We are currently feeding orphans in Asia, Africa, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. We seek out and evaluate new orphan care projects that need assistance in providing food to hungry orphans. Our goal is to make sure that every orphan receives at least one nutritious meal per day. foodfororphans.org

Generations Adoptions

Generations Adoptions provides loving Christian families for orphans around the world. Generations exists for ministry - to birth mothers choosing adoption; to adoptive parents following God's call to care for orphans; and to children in need. Generations is a non-profit agency licensed in Texas, and Hague Accredited by Council on Accreditation (COA) to offer international adoption programs for families in all 50 states. Our current programs include Uganda and Ghana. generationsadoption.org

Heart Gallery of Kentucky

The Heart Gallery is a traveling photographic and audio exhibit created to find forever families for children in foster care. The Heart Gallery of America is a collaborative project of over 120 Heart Galleries across the United States designed to increase the number of adoptive families for children needing homes in our community. Now, in its twelfth year, the Heart Gallery model is being replicated in many communities across the country. Although many of our children were removed from abusive and neglectful situations, they still have hope. They love to laugh, to learn, and to be with their friends. Most of all, they dream of finding a forever family to be their own. heartgalleryofamerica.org

KANZI

KANZI supports and promotes East African artisans with fair traded prices for goods sold internationally. Profits from the sale of these goods go directly to support orphaned children in Uganda and to Ugandan community building. kancizcraft.com

Mercy Found Ministries

MercyFound Ministries exists to walk alongside Christian adoptive families by offering financial support through matching grants and emotional support through Christ centered community during and after the adoption journey. mercyfoundministries.com

Moody Publishers

The vision of Moody Publishers is to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ and a biblical worldview in such creative and powerful ways that individuals worldwide will live in increasing measure as His fully-devoted followers. Our mission is to educate and edify the Christian and to evangelize the non-Christian by ethically publishing conservative, evangelical Christian literature and other media for all ages around the world, and to help provide resources for Moody Bible Institute in its training of future Christian leaders. moodypublishers.com

Nightlight Christian Adoptions

Since Nightlight Christian Adoptions pioneered embryo adoptions in 1997, our agency was thrust in the media and political spotlight for our strong pro-life position. Nightlight also lights the path toward loving homes for children living as orphans. Since 1959 we have helped women in crisis pregnancies make the sacrificial choice of an adoption plan. "God settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children." (Psalm 113.9). nightlight.org

ONEless Ministries

ONEless leads a movement of freedom for the defenseless. ONEless is both proactive and reactive to human trafficking. ONEless is proactive by providing adoption grants to aid in the adoption process. An adopted child in a forever family makes the adopted child no longer vulnerable to trafficker once he/she ages out of the orphan system. ONEless is reactive by helping human trafficking victims once rescued by providing direct aid to meet their immediate needs to keep them safe and protected from being re-trafficked. Direct aid can include but is not limited to: food, safe housing, medical aid, counseling, and legal aid. onelessministries.org

Orphan Voice

Enabled by the love of Christ, Orphan Voice brings hope and salvation to orphans, special-needs children, children with medical emergencies, and youth at-risk for sexual trafficking. Orphan Voice ministers in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. orphanvoice.org

Pearl Ministries

Pearl Ministries' mission is to advance the kingdom of heaven in Uganda by providing a gospel-centered, holistic approach to address the critical needs of Ugandan communities, beginning with their orphans and vulnerable children. PearlMinistries.org

Project HOPEFUL

Project HOPEFUL's Mission is to educate, encourage, and enable families and individuals to advocate for and adopt children with HIV/AIDS. projecthopeful.org

Safe Families

Safe Families for Children (SFFC) extends community support by hosting vulnerable children and strengthening their families in crisis through a network of volunteers motivated by compassion. The SFFC movement is based on the perspective that the safety and health of our community children are the responsibility of each one of us and that parents are the key to providing long term safe environments for their children. safe-families.org

SermonAudio

SermonAudio.com is the largest library of free MP3 audio sermons from conservative churches and ministries worldwide. sermonaudio.com

Show Hope

Show Hope is a movement to care for orphans, restoring the love of a family to orphans in distress. We mobilize individuals and communities to provide waiting children with loving families through adoption aid grants and to provide life-giving medical care to orphans with special needs. showhope.org

Signs for Hope

Signs of Hope International is a non-profit foundation focused on providing an education for every deaf child in Ghana, West Africa. Since 2004, we've been raising money and creating programs that not only improve access to education but also enhance the quality of education. We've established an alliance with the Ghana National Association for the Deaf, giving us the official backing to help enact

change in a country that supports our commitment to making life better for deaf and hearing-impaired people. signsofhopeinternational.org

Sunrise Children's Services

Sunrise Children's Services cares for children and families. Our goal is to: keep families together when possible; find children temporary or permanent families when it is not safe for them to stay with their families; and to bring about the healing and hope that prevents the cycle of abuse from continuing into future generations. sunrise.org

The Archibald Project

The Archibald Project exists to advocate for the orphan. Our stories serve to educate and inspire people towards adoption, and because we exist fewer children will be called orphans. thearchibaldproject.com

The OrphanCare Network

The Orphan Care Network exists to resource, support and celebrate the calling of God on His people to care for orphans. With Gospel-centered resources we strive to equip and mobilize the Church to eradicate the orphan crisis. orphancarenetwork.org

Village to Village Intl.

Village to Village International exists to bring hope to the global orphan crisis by caring and advocating for orphans and providing financial solutions for adoptions. Village to Village believes that everyone can be a part of the solution to the global orphan crisis. When 1,000 people (a village) give \$10 a month it adds up to \$10,000 a month to fund orphan care. It is our desire to see as many villages giving \$10,000 a month as possible. villagetovillageintl.com

Walking With Orphans

Walking With Orphans is a nonprofit organization that provides holistic relief aid to orphans and vulnerable children throughout Eastern Europe and Russia. walkingwithorphans.org

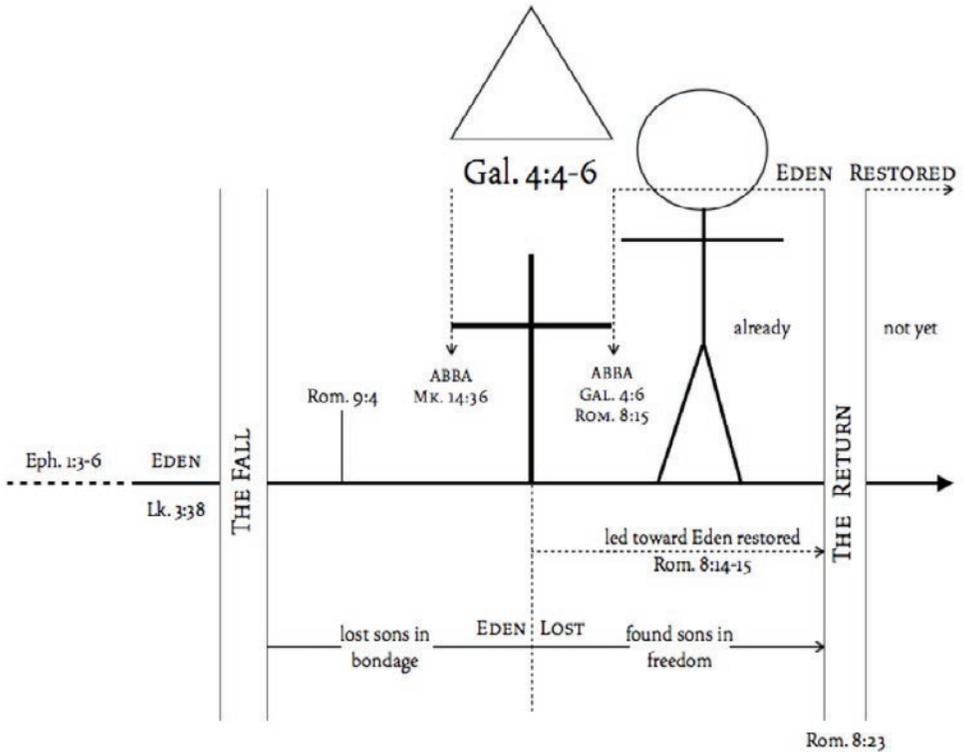
Wiphan

Wiphan Care Ministries [Widows+orPHANs] is an African-based ministry that exists solely to nurture and develop widows and orphans in the compounds outside of Ndola. Wiphan's desire to "look after" widows and orphans comes directly from God's word in James 1:27. "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress." The mission of our ministry is to love and care for the materially poor in Ndola, Zambia. Our aim is to relate to the children and ladies in our program through the love of Jesus Christ. As we develop these relationships through love, service, and community, their spirit is strengthened and we see firsthand how we are made to love others. wiphan.org

World Orphans

World Orphans is committed to rescuing orphaned and abandoned children, strengthening the local church, and impacting communities with the Gospel of Jesus Christ through church-based, family-focused programs. We seek to equip, inspire, and mobilize the church to care for orphaned and vulnerable children. worldorphans.org

ADOPTIVE-HISTORY: THE BIG PICTURE



Ephesians 1:3-6 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

Luke 3: 38 the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

Romans 9:4 They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises.

Galatians 4:4-6 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Mark 14:36 And he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Galatians 4:6 And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:14-15 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!"

Romans 8:23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.

THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

by Gerrit Dawson

The Apostle's Creed has everything to do with issues of life. For the Creed tells us of God, and who God is directly determines how we see the world, and how we regard all life. "I believe in God the Father Almighty," it begins, and immediately we have affirmed something revolutionary. God is Father.

The Old Testament has just enough references to the Father to establish the possibility. But among these fifteen uses of Father for God, only two are direct addresses by people toward the Lord. Not even the Psalms, for all their intimacy, directly pray to the Father. It is only with the coming of Jesus that the gift of calling the Almighty "Our Father" is given.

God in relationship

The arrival of the Son of God in the flesh revealed what had before only been hinted: the one God is not a solitary monad, but a three-personed God, who has his very being in an eternal relationship of love.

God is Father means that God lives in relationship to his creation as the one who creates, sustains, protects, disciplines, nourishes and guides. But more: there is a relational quality at the very heart of God.

This relational quality is built into us as human beings made in the image of God. We are not here as isolated individuals seeking independent fulfillment of our personal destinies. We are creatures made through the relationship of our fathers and mothers, who were able to survive only because of our relationship to others and who continue to live in the world as those necessarily in relationship to other people. An essential part of who we are is our relatedness to others: to parents, siblings, spouses, friends, children, caregivers and care-receivers.

All familial relationships are derived from God the Father

This seems so basic, and so obvious: in the image of God we relate to others. God eternally relates in love as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That love, when creation, and thus time, began, opened out to make us, those who live in the image of God. In Ephesians 3:14-15, we read, "For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." Literally, the Greek text may be translated, "the Father from whom every fatherhood . . . is named."

In other words, that God is Father means that all fathering, all familial relationships, are derived from him. We do not project human fatherhood back to God, as radical feminism claims. Rather, we derive our understanding of all fatherhood from God the Father. That places us profoundly in relationship: we have access to our Father, the privilege of calling him Abba, by the grace of his only Son Jesus, to whom we are united by the Holy Spirit.

All our familial relationships draw their life and pattern from the Triune God. So marriage is seen further on in Ephesians as flowing from the Son who laid down his life for his bride, the church.

Abortion is a family matter

To recognize that God is the Father reminds us that our human relationships are derived from him. We are not individuals in isolation. Certainly we are not isolated when we unite sexually and a child is conceived. Therefore, abortion is never just about a woman and her body—it always, profoundly, concerns a man, a woman, and their baby. This familial relating is grounded eternally in the God whom we meet in Jesus as Father.

Issues of life derive from God's Fatherhood

God the Father Almighty is the founding safeguard of all human life. We come into being by relationship, after the pattern and image of the Triune God, eternally related as three in one being of love. Issues of life, then, derive from God's Fatherhood. This "father to the fatherless" (Psalm 68: 5) is the creator, protector and sustainer of all life. We are each conceived in relationship and reared in constant relating. Abortion arguments attempt to isolate one individual, the woman, from fathers, motherhood, and children. God the Father, whom we confess with our first breath in the Apostle's Creed, will not allow this to be done.

Gerrit Dawson is leading two breakout sessions at this year's conference: "Getting Over Myself: By Cultivating a Blessing Life" (session 1) and "Praising Into Christ: The Engine That Powers Our Pilgrimage" (session 3).



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Saturday, October 5
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ADVOCACY THROUGH LIFE:
No matter your season of life -- you CAN be an orphan advocate!

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Lifesong for Orphans has been blessed with a partner that underwrites all US administrative and fundraising costs (TMG Foundation and other partners). **That means 100% of your donation will go directly to the need...helping orphans.**

HOW IS THIS GOING TO WORK OUT?

by Michelle Radford



Artists often have to visualize the end product of a project before it is completed. An interior designer can see a swatch of fabric, a paint chip, and a magazine photo of a chair and convince a client that these will go perfectly together. A painter can see a clump of grass and mud on the side of the road and know just which brushstrokes and colors she will use to capture the feeling she has about this view. The painting is already in her head; she's got this.

When I'm working on a painting, it is sometimes impossible for me to explain to others, even artists, just what I have in mind for the piece. My husband is good at saying something like, "I'll take a look at it when you're finished. I trust you." When it comes to my life, though, I often can't visualize how all this is going to work out, or at least how it's going to be beautiful in the end. I can't get into God's head and see what He has in mind. But He does have it all in mind. There is not a single detail of my circumstances He hasn't planned.

Psalms 139:13-18 recounts the way God has planned out the total composition of our lives. I love that it uses the language of an artisan and an author.

*For you formed my inward parts;
you knitted me together in my mother's womb.
I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Wonderful are your works;
my soul knows it very well.
My frame was not hidden from you,
when I was being made in secret,
intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
Your eyes saw my unformed substance;
in your book were written, every one of them,
the days that were formed for me,
when as yet there was none of them.
How precious to me are your thoughts, O God!
How vast is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more than the sand.
I awake, and I am still with you.*

What strikes me about these verses is that He planned out each bit of me (my DNA, my talents, and my personality) at the same time that He planned each day of my existence. Why is this so profound? Because so many days it does not feel at all like they fit together. "My personality and abilities are not a good fit for what is being asked of me today!"

When my daughter, our firstborn, was born, it was a huge shock. I did not find that baby-care came naturally. I certainly didn't expect that every single waking moment of my life would be occupied with caring for another human being, as is often the case in those early days of a newborn. If someone had told me that I would some days have to choose between trimming my fingernails, showering, and eating, I would have suspected melodrama. But the biggest struggle for me? I wasn't making any art!

I remember telling my mom, "All I do all day is stuff I am not good at, and I'm not allowed to ever do anything I am good at." It feels much easier to me to pick up my brush and put paint to canvas. Being a mother is hard, and it doesn't always feel like a natural fit to me. (I have friends who are what I call "baby baby people" and parenting is still hard for them.) It's easy for me to be tempted to think, "This is not a very good fit for me. I mean, I have TWINS now, and I'm not even a baby baby person!" God knew that. He knew that I have an artist's drive inside me that is unquenchable, that burns my insides during the long months of newborn care when I cannot make art. He knows I would love to have time to develop my abilities as an artist, to travel to conferences on art, to write about art, to make more art, to have shows. To "gain the whole world," basically. (Don't we all want that?)

Stop. He planned each day. He planned the ones where I have a 30-minute block of time to go down to my studio and make stuff. He planned the days when the care of others takes every ounce of effort, every bit of energy, every single moment of the day. It doesn't make sense some days why God would give me abilities and desires in art, but not the means and time to use them, but His ways are higher than my ways; His thoughts are higher than my thoughts. Earlier, in verse 6 of the same psalm, this is stated:



Do Something Special this Christmas.

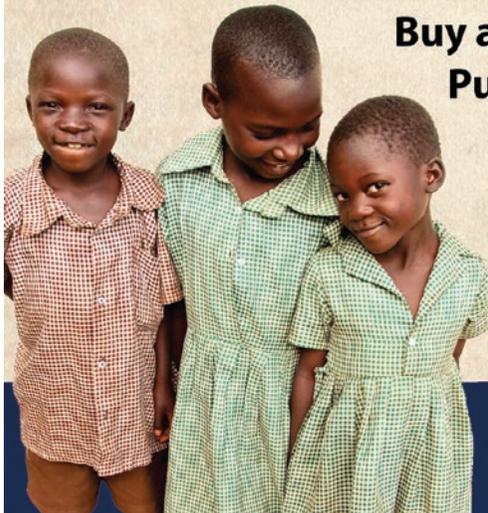
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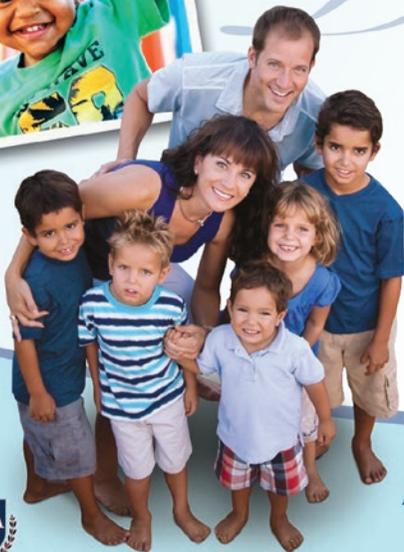
PEARL  **MINISTRIES**

*Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high; I cannot attain it.*

His plan is custom-built for me! He knows what I need. He's taught me so much through my kids. I have grown to really love being a mother. I have learned to chill out. I have learned to deny my own desires in new ways. I have learned what a blessing children are, and that I can find beauty and satisfaction in learning to do new, hard things, even things that aren't art. None of these things have been easy to learn, but they are what I need so badly! I do love being a mom, and I still love being an artist, even if I don't have as much discretionary time as I used to.

God has my best interest in mind. I can be sure of that. But there's a bigger picture here. He has a plan for how He is going to use my small story-- imperfect and insignificant--and blend it into The Story. In His Story, all the really mundane and "unimportant" bits of real life have real significance. In His Story, I don't have to become a big name in art or impress others. I don't have to manipulate my circumstances to paint my own perfect little story when I am part of the greatest Story that will ever be written.

He has the whole Story in His mind. I can't visualize the outcome, but He can! I can relax. He's got this.



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BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 1 - Friday, 11 - Noon

Adoption 101	Laura Beauvais-Godwin	Cooke Hall, Heeren Hall
Caring for Families Facing Attachment Disorders	Dr. Timothy Jones	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Engaging in the Local Orphan Ministry	Heather Sewell	Norton Hall, Room 205
Expanding the Story: How to end the Orphan Crisis	Elizabeth Styffe	Norton Hall, Room 195
Families in Crisis: Addressing the Unique Challenges of Struggling Adoptive Families	Dr. Jon Bergeron	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Fierce Compassion: The Story of Donaldina Cameron	Kristin & Kathryn Wong	Legacy Hotel, Room 312
Getting Over Myself: By Cultivating a Blessing Life	Gerritt Scott Dawson	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 222
Hair, Bonding, and Identity: One Mama's Journey Learning about African Hair	Karen Hutcheson	Norton Hall, Room 207
How Can the Adoption Tax Credit Help Me?	Rebecca Wilmoth	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 246
International Adoption	Herbie Newell	Legacy Hotel, Room 303
Orphan Justice in the Local Church: Practical Ideas for any Orphan Ministry	Johnny Carr	Legacy Hotel, Room 310
Special Needs: Trading in Fear for Faith as You Consider Serving	Shelly Roberts	Norton Hall, Room 103
The Benefits and Challenges of Home Based Orphan Care	Jeremy Resmer	Norton Hall, Room 105
The Interstate Adoption Maze: Navigating the ICPC	Sam McLure	Norton Hall, Room 104

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 2 - Friday, 1:30 - 2:30

Adopting Transracially and the Theology of Adoption	Vernon Pierre	Norton Hall, Room 195
Adoption is War: Principles of Spiritual Warfare Applied to Adoption	Dr. Jon Bergeron	Legacy Hotel, Room 310
Adoption Process for the State of Kentucky Foster Care System	Diane Underwood	Legacy Hotel, Room 312
Becoming an Adoption-Friendly Church: 20 Ways to Look After Orphans	Paul Golden	Legacy Hotel, Room 303
Don't You Already Have Kids? Adding to your Existing Family through Adoption	Dr. Randy Stinson	Norton Hall, Room 105
Family First: Family Preservation, Reunification, Foster Care, and Adoption	Jason Kovacs	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 246
HELP! Our Adoption Isn't Going According to Plan	Kim de Blecourt	Norton Hall, Room 205
Innovative Adoption Funding Solutions & How the Churches can Respond	Rich Metcalfe, JT Olson	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Ministering to Birthmothers through Domestic Adoption	Herbie Newell	Norton Hall, Room 103
Navigating Foster Care	Lisa Prather, Emily Deitrick	Norton Hall, Room 207
POSITIVELY Adopting with HIV/AIDS	Debra Steiner	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 226
The Mega Issues: Breaking Down People's Perceptions of Orphans	Alan Hunt	Norton Hall, Room 104
The Unique Educational and Spiritual Needs of Adopted Children	Donna Thoennes, Laila Bechtle	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
When the Story is Struggling How Do We Love?	Elizabeth Styfe	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 222

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 3 - Saturday, 11 - Noon

Adopting the PERFECT Child and Other Fairy Tales: How to Have Realistic Expectations when Adopting	David Wooten	Cooke Hall, Heeren Hall
Big Brother/Adopted Sister: Then and Now	Nemili Johnson, Matt Wiebe	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Brush-to-Berries: Creating a Business that Sustains Orphans	Keith McAfee	Norton Hall, Room 104
Caring for the Millions of (Un)adopted Orphans Worldwide	Herbie Newell	Norton Hall, Room 195
Fear: Not-So-Common Discussion Regarding All-To-Common Concerns	Kim de Blecourt	Norton Hall, Room 105
Getting Started in the Right Direction - Helping Pre-Adoptive Couples Make Sound Decisions	Becky Funk	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Gospel Rest for Weary Moms	Donna Thoennes	Legacy Hotel, Room 312
How to Adopt Debt-Free	Julie Gumm	Legacy Hotel, Room 310
Moments for Moms: Seeking Gods Heart and We Nurture the Little Hearts He Placed in our Families	Shelly Roberts	Norton Hall, Room 103
Orphans, Missions, and the Unreached Peoples of the World	Jason Kovacs	Legacy Hotel, Room 303
Praising Into Christ: The Engine that Powers our Pilgrimage	Gerritt Scott Dawson	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 226
The Archibald Project: A Visual Approach to Adoption	Nick and Whitney Runyon	Norton Hall, Room 207
The Story of Rwanda: Transferable Truths	Elizabeth Styffe	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 246
Towards a Violence-free and an AIDS-free Generation: When Love and Science Converges	Dr. Susan Hillis	Norton Hall, Room 205
When Your Heart Collides With the Heart of God	Rhonda Littleton	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 222

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Session 4 - Saturday, 2:30 - 3:30

Adoption Blogging: Not Just your Diary Anymore	Melissa Peduzzi, Stephanie Cole, Sofia Jindoyan	Cooke Hall, Heeren Hall
Advocacy Through Life	Rich Metcalfe	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 246
Brokenhearted: Walking with the Man of Sorrows	Kristin Wong	Norton Hall, Room 103
Disrupted Adoptions: What to Do When it is Not Working Out	Laura Beauvais-Godwin	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 222
Faithfully Funding Your Adoption	Daniel LaBry	Norton Hall, Room 195
Global Orphan Care through Church-to-Church Partnerships	Alan Hunt	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
How SCOTUS and ICWA Impact your Adoption	Trey Ingram	Norton Hall, Room 205
Leading Your Church to Have a Heart for Adoption	Herbie Newell	Legacy Hotel, Room 305
Life Coaching	Mike Hazelwood	Norton Hall, Room 207
Made in Whose Image? Is Your Family Ruling out Special Needs Adoption for the Right Reasons?	Salem Richards	Legacy Hotel, Room 312
Older Child Adoption: Perspectives from 3 Experienced Panelists	Karla Williams, David Henry, Bruce Kendrick	Legacy Hotel, Room 303
Opening the Door to Adoption by Closing the Door to Abortion	Michael Spielman	Norton Hall, Room 105
The Power of Orphan Sunday: How You Can Impact your Church...and the World	Megan Terry, Teri Fromann	Honeycutt Campus Center, Room 226
Walking through the Fields of the Fatherless: With His Eyes for Special Needs	Robert and Lisa Braniff	Norton Hall, Room 104
What Do YOU Want to Know About Attachment?	Karen Hutcheson	Legacy Hotel, Room 310



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INTERVIEW WITH DR. DAVID B. GARNER

Dr. Garner is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary.



Dr. Garner, what do you cherish most about the doctrine of adoption?

The doctrine of adoption, in its full biblical scope, is vast and rich. To answer this question about what I cherish most is like asking me to choose one thing I love most about my wife... not an easy task. However, you asked the question, so I guess I'll try to answer it. If forced to isolate the most cherished aspect of adoption, it would be how it divulges the extent to which God cherishes his children. The love of God for me is not abstraction; it is not intangible or unreachable. God's adoption love is real – determined in the infinite counsel of God's wisdom and incarnated in his own Son. His love for

me is eternally determined, historically demonstrated, personally accomplished, and irrevocably certain. I cherish adoption as a doctrine, because it reveals the unfathomable: God actually cherishes us, his children. He has revealed this love over the course of history, and ultimately and most cogently, in his Son. My adoption is secure and binding in the Sonship of Jesus Christ.

Do you believe that the doctrine of adoption has received its due attention within the history of the church?

While it is safe to say that adoption has suffered neglect in the history of the church, the answer must be nuanced a bit, because attention to adoption has varied throughout church history. We find an initial grasp of adoption in the writing of 2nd century church father, Irenaeus, who as the first biblical theologian, views adoption as a synonym for salvation. After Irenaeus, with negligible smatterings here and there, adoption endures an astonishing drought. This remains essentially true until the mid-17th century, when we find it for the first time in history set apart in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

This unprecedented expression of adoption by the Westminster divines served two discernible functions – first, to elevate the doctrine in the life of the church, but second, ironically (and unintentionally, I might add), to diminish it. As attested in the Puritan tradition, Chapter 12 of the Westminster Confession of Faith, entitled, “On Adoption,” launched this doctrine into common pastoral consideration. Puritan pastors frequently included adoption in their writings, and preached the doctrine as the crowning component of redemptive benefits.

However, while the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Puritans wonderfully explored and applied the familial privileges of adoption, the result of isolating adoption as an element of the *ordo salutis* (the application of salvation) was unwittingly to truncate the doctrine from its fuller redemptive-historical scope. Adoption found its home as a doctrine of redemptive benefit with marvelous privileges and assurances. But, by taking status as an element of redemptive privilege, its fuller character was eclipsed. Essentially we can say that adoption has been ignored both by its absence in theological discourse and by its pruned existence in theological discourse. To bring light on to the riches of adoption, the church is now beginning to carry out more careful analysis of adoption in Pauline literature; this growing attention divulges adoption's more expansive reaches, as it unfolds the loving purpose of God in salvation – from its pre-temporal foundation to its climactic consummation.

Do you see a difference between the apostle John's model of entrance into God's family and Paul's?

As we consider both our finiteness and fallenness, and recognize our epistemological and psychological limitations for understanding the mind of God, we accept the fact that we only know "in part," as the apostle Paul puts it. This limitation doesn't mean that we don't understand truly, as some would assess the Creator/creature distinction (a perspective destined for unbounded cynicism), but it does mean that we cannot understand wholly. God alone possesses exhaustive knowledge, and this fact drives us to humility and gratitude for his self-revelation. A critical element of such posture is recognition that God has spoken decisively in his Word, and by using human language as his means of self-revelation, he has accommodated himself to us. Accordingly, the task of the disciple is to pursue the mind of God, to study his Word, and to live in obedience to his revelation by the power of the Holy Spirit. We know God truly because he has condescended, and revealed himself in human language; Law, prophets, history, narrative, and other literary forms in Scripture serve God's gracious purpose of self-revelation.

All of these background comments drive us to the question of how Paul and John perceive the filial character of our relationship with God in Christ. Neither author speaks exhaustively of the character of the Gospel, of the scope of God's love to us in Christ. But both authors assert the grace of God revealed in Christ as relational, indeed as familial. God's work in and through his Son accomplishes his sovereign and loving purposes: the securing of a people, a family for himself. The authors of Scripture convey this blessing, using differing terms, themes, metaphors, and models. However, Paul is the only biblical author to use the Greek word for adoption (*huiothesia*), and his use of this term communicates with extraordinary richness the redemptive-historical purposes of God in loving his people in and through his only Son. We are the sons and daughters of God, the select children of God, because we are Spiritually (yes, the capital "S" is intentional) united to the unique Son of God. Adoption brings us before the face of the Triune God – from before the foundation of the world (Eph 1:4-5), in his elective grace when he chose Israel as his Son (Rom 9:4), in the historic work of Christ as messianic Son (Gal 4:4-5), in the Spirit's work of sanctification (Rom 8:15-17), and in the consummation of the ages when Christ returns (Rom 8:22-23). Paul uses the language of adoption to portray the full scope of God's familial grace to his chosen children.

The apostle John uses a different model of sonship, that of rebirth. We are born into the family of God by receiving the Son of God in faith (John 1:12, 3:1ff), a reality that is nothing short of staggering to John himself (1 John 3:1-3). John presents the critical need for new birth (John 3), a Holy Spirit wrought birth that grants us access to the Father. This regenerative work, creating our new life in Christ, launches us onto the pathway of transforming obedience and then, ultimately, brings us face to face with our Savior.

Despite the persistent use of John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1-3 as proof texts for adoption in systematic theologies, it is far from self-evident that John shares identical concerns with Paul. To force John into an adoptive sonship model blurs the richness of Johannine concept in its own right, and obviates the unique Pauline perspective of Gospel reality in adoption. Scriptural unity is not compromised by suggesting differing familial ideas between these two authors; on the contrary, we only begin to understand the fullness of God's familial grace to us as we consider the nuanced ideas among biblical authors, as they rejoice in the astounding revelation of God in Christ: his life, death, resurrection, and ascension.

Paul's references to adoption (Eph. 1:4-5; Rom. 9:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 8:15-16; 8:22-23) seem to serve as markers along the path of redemptive history. Would it be a fruitful exercise to view redemptive history (i.e. creation, fall, redemption, consummation) through the lens of the doctrine of adoption?

You have hit the nail on the head. Not only is it fruitful, but it is essential. This is precisely the way Paul puts the term to work. As I responded to question #3, adoption is not a static notion of redemptive benefit (though it indeed embraces the elements expressed in a statement like that in the Westminster Confession), but a richer, more dynamic term that unfolds the character of God's love from before time to the end of time and beyond. Only when adoption is grappled with in these more expansive terms will we capture the essence of God's adoptive love.

What difference should the doctrine of adoption make in a Christian's spiritual life on a daily basis?

Love of a parent for a child is mysterious, powerful; it is edifying and restorative; it is securing and enabling. Likewise but in divine splendor, grasping God's love is always invigorating and encouraging. When we begin to ponder the fact that God's adoptive grace is rooted in his pre-temporal decision to love us, typified in his elective love of Israel in the Old Covenant, brought to us fully in the loving obedience of his Son, applied to us in the ministry of the Holy Spirit, and consummated in us at the consummation of the ages, we can only be drawn to worship, gratitude, and awe.

God's adoptive love then is motivation for us to love Him, serve Him, and to emulate Him. As hymn writer Isaac Watts put it, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

More and more couples are considering adopting transracially adoption. What might the doctrine of adoption contribute to our thinking on the issue of transracial adoption?

I would actually like to answer this question two ways. First, because all of us are descendants of Adam, we are actually all one race. Language, cultural, or ethnic distinctions do not trump the central truth of our common heritage. The sons of Adam are alone those who become the sons of God in Christ.

Scripture attests, however, that the ethnic divide between Jew and Gentile dominated the historical landscape. Many became convinced that biological connection with Abraham sealed divine favor. Jesus' ministry and the book of Acts confirm the work of the Gospel in clarifying the blessing of Jewishness, and then proclaim this Gospel reality: God's promise - not genetics - serves the evangelical purposes of God.

It is not surprising then that the relationship between Jews and Gentiles plays a central role in Paul's thought. In keeping with the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12, Paul recognizes that God's purposes for blessing the world are realized in Jesus Christ, the eternal and messianic Son of God. All those who are in Christ are Abraham's children (Gal 3) and are true Israel (Rom 9). God's elective grace is manifest across ethnic lines.

With this in mind, trans-ethnic adoption is reflective of the heart of God, who has set aside for himself people from every tribe, tongue and nation (Acts 2; Rev 5-6). From the promise to Abraham (Gen 12), to the commission of Jesus (Mt 28:18-20), to the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2), and then to the consummation of God's purposes (Rev 4-7), we discover that God's people are extraordinarily diverse. The singular voice of God's people in Rev 7:10 divulges how the glorious diversity of God's people finds powerful unity in the worship of the Lamb. International and/or trans-ethnic adoption provide a visible, tangible representation of Christ's Church in action. Trans-ethnic adoption is, in this way, a living, Gospel sermon.

**"I delivered the poor
who cried for help,
and the fatherless
who had none to help
him."
Job 29:12**



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Most people who read this have adopted children, are considering adopting a child, or are just interested in adoption. What implications might the doctrine of adoption have for couples who have adopted or are interested in adopting a child?

Created in God's image and restored to that image by the redemptive work of the Son of God, we, as God's children, are privileged to emulate our Father. Imitating our Father is truly a form of worship, and the decision to adopt a child is a crisp Xerox of our Father's love for us. What a great blessing to seek out a child, whose life is charted for misery, and to bring that child into the warmth, security, and discipline of a Christian home. What a privilege to intervene – to reverse inevitable circumstances of abuse, neglect, or worse – and to transfer a child from darkness to light. What a clear picture of God's adoptive grace to us: to propel our own adopted child on the pathway of holiness, to bring blessing to our own heavenly Father!

A further reflection might also prove helpful. I have heard through the years, and indeed witnessed at times, how married couples begin to look like each other the longer they are together. The force of love produces features of likeness. It is noteworthy that the apostle describes the goal of our adoption in Christ to be holiness (Eph 1); divine elective love has as its goal God-likeness. This fact is further developed in Rom 8:29, where Paul uses the same verb of "predestined" in terms of the believers' conformity into the image of the Son.

In a mysterious way, human adoption is similar. The adopted child never receives new genetics, but his life is so impacted, so directed, so influenced by his adoptive parents that he assumes parental and sibling likeness. When he takes on his new name, he takes on new love. When he takes on new love, he never looks the same because he never is the same. Adoption is not merely a legal contract; it possesses irreversible conforming impact.



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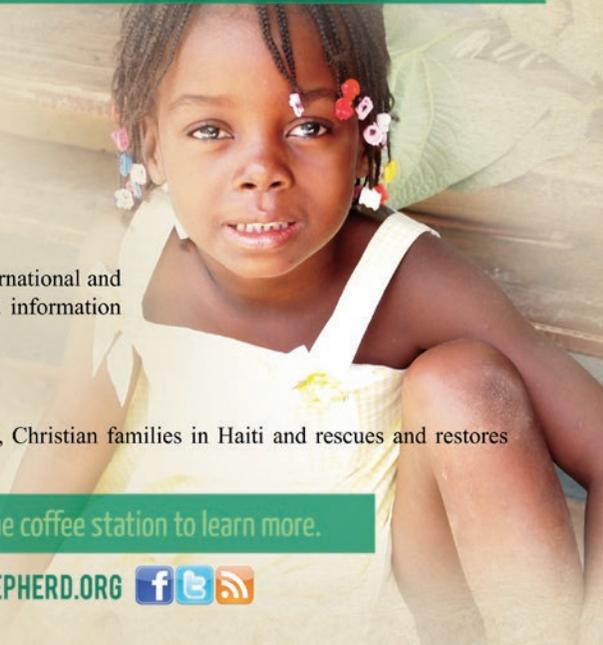
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STORIES WITHOUT SUFFERING ARE BAD STORIES

By Dan Cruver

Romanticizing adoption is so very easy to do.

But adoption always involves suffering. Just ask any birthmother or any child who is one of three hundred orphans in a Chinese orphanage or any adoptive couple who has lived with infertility for years or any adoptive couple who is experiencing the high-ups and low-downs of the adoption process. Sometimes the suffering is deeply intense and ongoing—like that of an orphan languishing each day in a nightmarish orphanage—while other times it’s the heavy heart of the couple waiting to bring their child home. There is no such thing as adoption (or stellar story) without suffering.

The same thing is true of our Adoption through Jesus Christ. The Adoption to which we were predestined (Eph. 1:5) could not have happened without Jesus redeeming us “through his blood” (Eph. 1:7). There is no such thing as being Adopted into God’s family apart from the suffering of Jesus. Jesus cried “Abba! Father!” in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:36) so that we could become sons of God who cry “Abba! Father!” by the Spirit (Rom. 8:15). Our Adoption necessarily involved suffering—infinite and glorious suffering.

I love windows. They allow me to sit in a small “world” (in an airplane, for example) and look out into a big world. Through windows we can see beautiful beaches, lush green meadows, and towering snowcapped mountains.

I once sat in a small room in China looking out through a window that allowed me to see a beautiful mountain vista. I was very thankful for that window because the room I sat in was hot, humid, and confining. The window allowed me to see a “world” that I would not have seen otherwise; and it opened up for me an experience of joy that my little room could have never given me. But in order to look through that window I had to sit in a room of uncomfortable and sometimes suffocating humidity.

Our suffering now as the children of God is a window that provides us with the opportunity to get glimpses of a world more beautiful and more wonderful than can be imagined. Paul writes, “we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for Adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies” (Rom. 8:23). You don’t groan unless you are suffering. Happy people don’t groan. Suffering people do. **Orphans groan. Poverty stricken families groan. Birthmothers groan. Adoptive families groan. A broken world groans.**

But with the eyes of faith suffering people who have been given the Spirit of Adoption (Rom. 8:15) can look through the window of their suffering into a future world where all things are made new. Because of the gospel, our window of suffering provides us with the opportunity to get glimpses (with the eyes of faith) of a future world that “will be set free from its bondage to corruption,” a world that will “obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (Rom. 8:21).

Yes, we still suffer, but we do not suffer as those without hope (1 Thess. 4:13-14). Because of Jesus and the gift of the Spirit of Adoption, God turns our suffering into a window that allows the eyes of faith to get glimpses of what will one day be.

Though there is no such thing as Adoption without suffering, for the Christian there is also no such thing as Adoption without glory and unspeakable joy. Right now we live in "the sufferings of this present time" (Rom. 8:18), but there is coming a day when all who have been Adopted by God through the suffering of Jesus will "be glorified with him" (Rom. 8:17). We will one day share in the glory of the resurrected Jesus. **This means that the day is coming when everything sad will come untrue (Yes, Sam, everything sad will come untrue).** This is the good news of the gospel. This is the hope that moves us forward in "the sufferings of this present time."

So, whatever kind of suffering you are being confronted with in the adoption of a child (whether the "you" is the birthmother, birthfather, child, adoptive parent, or even the biological child of the adoptive parent), don't lose sight of the gospel. Only the gospel can fill you with fresh hope, endurance, and, yes, even joy in the midst of your heartache now. Your Adoption through Jesus Christ has profound relevance for the adoption of a child (and all the suffering involved in it). And it's part of the best Story ever told, a Story told by God himself!



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THE TOGETHER FOR ADOPTION TEAM



Dan Cruver, Director | Founder

Dan oversees Together for Adoption and provides thought-leadership on the theology of adoption. Before co-founding and directing Together for Adoption, Dan was a college professor of Bible and Theology. He has also served as a pastor of family ministries. Dan founded Together for Adoption to equip churches and educate Christians theologically about orphan care and horizontal adoption. Dan regularly writes and speaks about the Gospel and its implications for solutions to the global orphan crisis. He is the editor and primary author of *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father, Martyrdom: The Final Triumph of Faith*

(with Scott Anderson) and is a contributor to The Gospel Coalition Blog.



Jason Kovacs, Advisor | Co-Founder

Jason is the Cofounder of Together for Adoption and Director of Ministry Development for The ABBA Fund. He also serves on staff as Pastor of Care and Counseling at the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, TX where he and his wife live with their five children (four adopted and one biological child). It is Jason's passion to see the church gripped with the adoptive heart of God and practically living out the Gospel through adoption and orphan care. He is a contributing author of *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living Through the Rediscovery of Abba Father*, writing on 'Missional Living and Adoption.' Jason is passionate about seeing a

global movement of churches caring for the fatherless and loves writing, speaking, and consulting on topics such as the theology of adoption/orphan care, resources and financing for adoption, transracial adoption, and how to care for adoptive families.



Scott Crawford, Exhibitor Coordinator

Scott and his wife, Jo Anna, reside in Lewisville, NC with their 2 biological daughters, ages 11 & 13 and their adopted (Philippines) sons, ages 5 & 3 years old. Scott is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Pharmacy and currently works as the Operational Coordinator for the Comprehensive Cancer Center Pharmacy at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. He has been involved with T4A conference production and served as the Exhibitor Coordinator since 2010. Scott is involved with his church, Salem Chapel in Winston-Salem, serves as one of the Christian Alliance for Orphans – Orphan Sunday Coordinators for the state of NC

and is an outspoken advocate for the fatherless & the vulnerable. Scott enjoys traveling, music, cooking, and sports (especially the Pittsburgh Steelers and Pitt Panthers).



Nemili Johnson, Educational Coordinator

Nemili was adopted at 18 months from southern India and grew up in southwestern Wyoming. She is the second generation of adopted woman in her family. Nemili and her husband, Niles, have one biological son and are currently in the process of adopting a child from Honduras. Nemili is CoFounder and former President of Chosen for Life Ministries (ChosenforLifeAthens.com), connecting and educating parents within the Athens, GA community about God's awesome gift of adoption.

Nemili has a Bachelor's of Science from The Johns Hopkins School of Nursing and a Masters in Medical Informatics from Northwestern University. Nemili loves to listen to and educate adoptive couples, so feel free to ask her your questions!

Jessica Carpenter, General Session Assistant



Jessica and Travis Carpenter were introduced to Together for Adoption in the summer of 2011 after reading Reclaiming Adoption just a few weeks into their adoption process of

their daughter. They immediately realized that God was calling them not just to adopt their daughter; but also to understand more fully the Father's love and adoption of them as children of God. They attended several adoption conferences where Dan was speaking and hosted several T4A's Live in the Story Events in their community. In 2012, the T4A team invited them to join our conference team. Jessica is serving this year as the General Session Assistant for our 2013 Conference.

The Carpenters are also founding board members of Journey Together Ministries (www.journeytogetherministries.org), a missional community that also functions as a non-profit for families in the process of adoption, fostering and caring for orphaned and vulnerable children in the Charleston, SC area. They are active members of Seacoast Church (www.seacoast.org) where Jessica served on staff in various full-time and part-time positions for over 8 years. In March of 2013, Travis and Jessica traveled to China to bring their daughter, Meili Joy (2), home to meet her brothers, Austin (6) and Justus (2).

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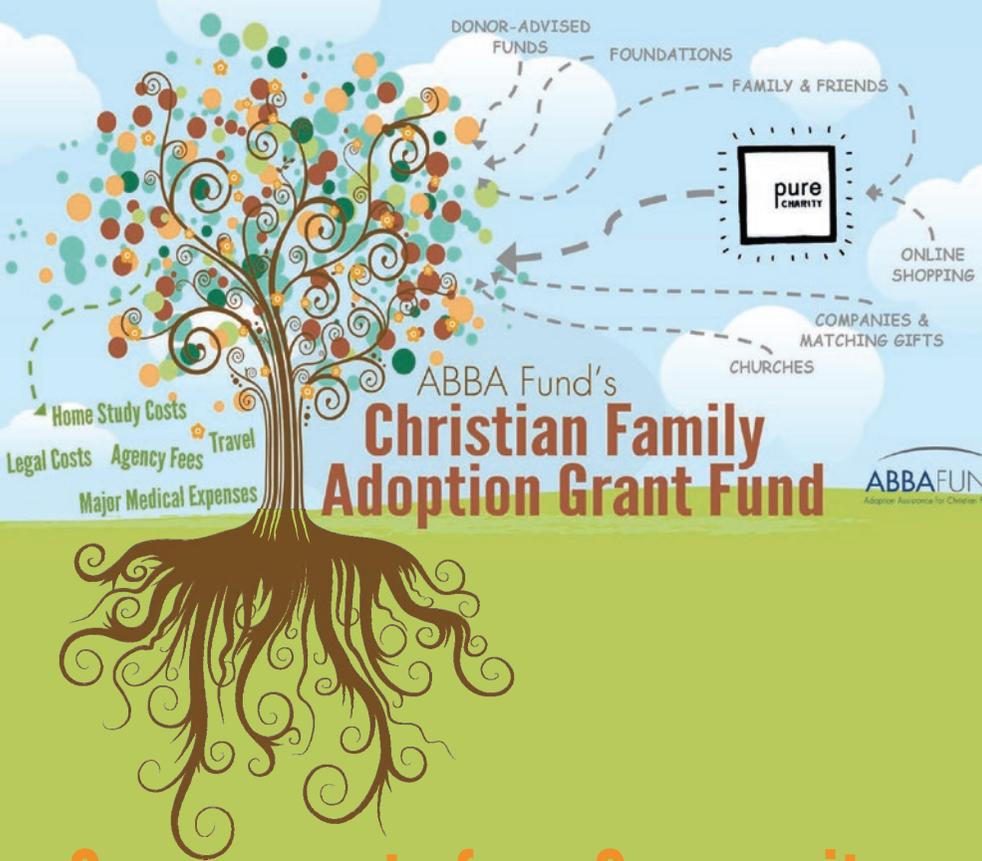
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