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ing the child in the first few months. The challenges of an international adoption include language and cultural barriers. How do you feel about having a child who may look a lot different from you, and the questions and comments that will bring?

Would you be interested in fostering to adopt? This option is significantly less expensive, as you avoid agency fees. There are often adoption tax credits and medical subsidies available. Parents would have time to observe how a child does in their home, and with siblings. The median age of adoptable foster children is over eight years old, and there are more boys than girls. The challenges to consider include a child's difficulty developing trust, since they have often been bounced around from one foster home to another. Would you consider a special needs adoption? While this choice is honorable, parents have to contemplate whether they would be financially prepared for the medical bills, and emotionally prepared for the extra patience required.

7. PRAY! Of course! Pray for God to direct you. It's not a right or wrong. Looking after orphans (spoken of in James 1:27 as pure and faultless religion) can be done in many different ways besides being adoptive parents. Get advice from trusted disciples who know you best, and from adoptive parents you know as well. How did they decide?

Once you have decided to enrich your family through adoption, you undoubtedly will have many other questions.

- How do we start the process? First, you will need to select an adoption agency. Go online and research agencies in your state. You may choose one out-of-state, but you also have to work with one in your state for the home study. You may wish to narrow the list down to two, and contact both of them, noticing what you like or don't like from your initial meeting. The agency you select will walk you through the process and offer valuable resources and classes.
- What is a "home study?" Good question! A home study is a report made about the adoptive parent(s) including criminal background checks, finances, and even personal relationships. A social worker will come to your home to interview you. The agency wants to determine that you are fit to be stable, responsible and loving parents.
- How much does an adoption cost? Another great question. The bad news is that international adoptions cost an average of \$42,000, with domestic adoptions for a U.S. newborn costing \$37,000! The good news is that the Adoption Tax Credit is over \$13,000, which is like cash back to you! Adopting from the foster care system will likely cost less than \$3,000. The financial costs can be quite disheartening. There are many ways to raise money. One family asked church members to donate large items, furniture and electronics to a garage sale they were having to fund their adoption. God blessed them with thousands of dollars toward their expenses. Another family wrote in their annual Christmas letter that they did not wish to receive Christmas gifts that year, only donations toward their adoption. They received more "gifts" than any other year!

I certainly hope you are not overwhelmed by now. From my experience with the scores of adoptive families that I have known, God shines in making clear paths and providing the funds needed to "set the lonely in families" (Psalm 68:6).

Kathy Boger is an Adoption Coach who can be reached at www.embracingchildadoption.com or on the Forever Families Facebook Group designed for parents who have or want to adopt.

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INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL NEWS BULLETIN

To Inspire, Inform, Unify and Grow the International Churches of Christ

DT DISCIPLES TODAY

WWW.DISCIPLESTODAY.ORG • ISSUE 608 • MAY 28, 2017

To Be (Adoptive Parents), or Not to Be?

Written by Kathy Boger

That is the question! The emotional heartache of a second miscarriage led to a myriad of questions, the most daunting of which was "Should we adopt?" Wow! How do you answer that one? For my husband and I, and several other couples with whom I have had the pleasure of working, there is no quick, easy answer. It is not a "one-size-fits-all" proposition. Here are some ideas to get you started if you are considering adopting a child.



1. Why do you want to adopt? Is it because you and your spouse are infertile and want a family? Or perhaps you have biological children, but want to give an orphan a home. If you can't have children, you will want to allow yourself time to grieve that loss.
2. How would adopting a child change your life? If married, how would it change your marriage? If you already have children, how would it affect them? Are you willing to accept those changes in order to bring a child into your family to love as your own?
3. How do you think your close friends and extended family would react to your announcement to adopt? The decision is yours, not theirs, but you will need a network of support around you. If you are considering adoption of a child of a different race or nationality, how open would your family be?
4. Are you willing to accept the unique challenges many adoptees face, such as the empty feeling of not knowing where he belongs, or wondering why she was abandoned? Are you willing to patiently work through any bonding difficulties your adopted child may have, as well as any developmental delays, in some cases?
5. What age and gender would you consider? I suggest you make a list of the pros and cons of each age group and gender. The older the child, the more "baggage" often comes along with him. She may have developed habits or actions that you don't find acceptable. The older child will experience more loss himself.
6. Would you prefer to adopt domestically or internationally? Again, a pros/cons list is helpful. If domestic, would you prefer an open or closed adoption (having contact with the birth parents, or not)? In domestic adoptions, depending on the state, a birth mom may change her mind about relinquish-

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Ed Anton, Hampton Roads, VA, USA — Tuesday, 16 May 2017

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Dr. Jorge Diaz, Mexico City, Mexico — Thursday, 11 May 2017

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 International News reprinted
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KNN@DToday.org
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