



Adoption - God's Heart for Orphans

A call for a new paradigm of orphan ministry
and a fresh approach to world missions

Not all are called to adopt, but anyone can help other families adopt

The Home for Good Foundation

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Anyone can give an orphan child a home for good, by helping to sponsor their **adoption**.

A missionary friend in Asia wrote, "I have come to realize that volunteering and trying to share Christ's love with the children at the orphanage is like putting a band-aid on their real problem. The only solution that will work for any of these children is to belong to a family." The same holds true for all man-kind, the only solution that works is to belong to God's family.

Many loving families long to adopt, but the cost is prohibitive. Adoption sponsorship enables anyone to love and care for orphans in a practical and meaningful way, simply by helping *other* families adopt.

It can cost over \$50,000 to adopt 4 children



Families like this deserve all the help they can get

The problem is not that we fail to care for orphans, the problem is that we simply don't understand that children *don't want to be orphans*. It's hard to get a life without belonging to a family.

The Hard Truth Of Life Without A Family

"Theft, prostitution, homelessness, substance abuse, incarceration, and suicide affect the lives of the vast majority of children who grow up as orphans (or foster children) and never find permanent, loving homes." Source: www.howtoadopt.org/TheGreatNeed/

From A Child's Perspective: Why An Institution Is Not A Home

How can we explain these negative outcomes above when so many loving people have given so generously to provide for these children in institutions? Years of experience working with orphans have convinced me that the answer lies not in the quality of the care we give them but is deeply rooted in how the children perceive our care. Though we sincerely try to love and help these children, we simply don't recognize that their perception hinders them from believing our care is an expression of love. Without a strong sense of self-worth that comes from *belonging* to a family, and the security of a permanent relationship to establish a basis for trust, orphan and foster children feel unloved and unwanted. They instinctively know they don't belong to anyone, and desperately long for a loving family and a home for good to fulfill their emotional and spiritual needs.

Visiting An Orphanage

I witnessed first hand why orphans need to belong to something more than an institution. When visitors arrive at an orphanage they are invariably greeted by smiling children who are eager to lavish their affection. Though the children appear to be happy, their joyful smiles reflect little more than their heart's desperate hope that this might be the day someone has come to give them a home and loving family. But too many times their hopes are shattered by yet another visitor who never realized the broken hearts they left behind.

Our Story, And Our Heart For Orphans

For six years my wife Maureen and I worked with the children at a mission orphanage in the Philippines. We gave them lots of attention and affection, and did everything we could to love and encourage them and improve their living conditions. Whenever we could we even brought them to our home for extended stays, but we *always returned them to the orphanage*. We gave them time and attention, but not permanence. We built relationships but never gave them a sense of belonging. We told them we loved them, but leaving them behind in the orphanage convinced them we didn't. We gave the children everything except what they really needed.

My job included regular visits to the orphanage, and the children always greeted me with eager smiles. Even a little blind girl would run toward the sound of my clapping hands and leap into my arms. But I always returned to mission headquarters and left the children behind at the orphanage. I wasn't there to see the pain on their faces, their hopes shattered and their little hearts broken, but each time I returned to the orphanage I couldn't help but notice how their behavior was changing. One by one they all lost hope as they realized I was never going to give them my heart and my home. Eventually they no longer greeted me, and some even shunned me. There were no tears in their eyes either; their eyes had run out of tears!

I weep when I consider how I failed those children, and I pray often that God will rescue them from almost certain self-destruction. That's why I've devoted the rest of my life to helping more children to be adopted.



Not long after this picture was taken, this little orphan sweetheart wanted nothing more to do with me. Leaving her behind at the orphanage convinced her I didn't really love her at all.

God's Model For Orphans

For centuries orphan ministry has focused on institutional care, but the resulting negative outcomes are indicative of children whose emotional and spiritual needs have never been fulfilled. Matt 6:31-33 clearly states that the kingdom of heaven is far more important than food and clothing, and James 2:15-17 is an allegory that also refers to matters beyond food and clothing. Indeed, these verses instruct us to look beyond the superficial to the more important emotional and spiritual needs of orphans that will ultimately lead them to the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As the Spirit revealed this hidden truth, I wept as I began to understand why the children at the orphanage didn't believe I loved them, and I asked God to show me how to love them *His way*. As He began to reveal His heart for orphans and show me that adoption is His model of love and acceptance, I couldn't help but question my own approach to orphan ministry.

How can I tell orphan children that "*My God will supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus*" (Phil 4:19) when I don't give them the home and loving family they need? How can I tell them God will never leave or forsake them when I leave them to languish in an institution? How can I tell a child Jesus loves them when they don't believe *I love them*? How can I answer the child who asks, "If Jesus loves me, why do I have no family?" How can I tell a child that God answers prayer when their prayers for a family have never been answered? How can I speak to an orphan child about a loving Father God when the memory of their father evokes only pain and anger? Children instinctively know that actions speak louder than words. (1Jn 3:17-18) The only gospel orphans want to hear is the gospel of adoption.

The Gospel Of Adoption

The Gospel of Adoption is found in (Gal 4:4-5) and (Jn 1:12): "*But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*" "*And as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become Children of God.*" Our adoption is the ultimate expression of God's love, and was the ultimate purpose of Jesus' life on earth and death on the cross. With His blood, Jesus paid the ransom to make our adoption possible. God brings us into His family by adoption, and He knows where orphans belong. Psalm 68:6 says, "*God places the lonely in families.*" Adoption is God's heart for orphans, and He created us with an unquenchable need to belong to a family - ultimately to His family.

I weep in humble joy when I consider that I am an adopted child of God, and that He is my Abba, Daddy, the perfect Father who can't wait to forgive this prodigal son. I couldn't make it without knowing this one, simple truth about God. It's the most powerful gospel message I can imagine.

Adoption Support As Ministry

Many scriptures indicate that adoption is God's heart for loving orphans. Not everyone is called to adopt, but to one degree or another, most of us can help someone else adopt. Overwhelming cost makes adoption impossible for many to even consider, but adoption ministry creates a connection that enables anyone to love and minister to orphans in a practical and meaningful way by helping to sponsor adoption costs for families they already know.

Adoption by a Christian family is the best way to lead orphan children to Jesus Christ, and Christian families who adopt are the missionaries best qualified to bring the gospel to orphans in a form they can understand and accept - the gospel of adoption. Rom 10:15 asks: *"How can they proclaim the gospel unless they are sent?"* Adopting families deserve our support (Mat 10:10), and they are no less evangelists than those who preach to thousands. Evangelizing orphan children is the very heart of adoption ministry. Helping families raise funds for adoption is more than just a good thing to do, it can literally be a matter of life and death for many lonely orphans who have never experienced love and belonging, and may never have a chance to discover how much God loves them.

When children need a home, will an orphanage do? When they need a mother and father, are foster parents good enough? When they need love and belonging, will food and clothing suffice? Consider Matt 7:9-10. *"Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he?"*

There are no orphans in heaven, only adopted children, and there is no biblical model for institutional care of orphans. Jesus himself said, "I will not leave you as orphans." (Jn 14:18) If God's will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven, adoption must become the new paradigm of orphan ministry.

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Maureen
with two
arms full
of love



Letting Our Light Shine

Adoption ministry is a wonderful way to let our light shine by living the gospel in our daily life. (Matt 5:13-16) People are inspired by genuine love that cares, and many are drawn to the light and into God's Kingdom as well.

Six months after we helped a family adopt a teenage girl from Africa, she recognized the amazing grace of her adoption and expressed her desire to return to her homeland when she grows up to help other orphans find a loving family just as she did. Imagine how many other orphan children may come into God's kingdom as a result of this one girl's decision that was rooted in the fact that she too was loved by the people who helped sponsor her adoption.

Many orphans self-destruct as adults because we just don't understand their need to belong to a family. There may always be orphans and foster children, and I praise God for those who minister to them in institutions, especially those who strive to build life-long relationships that focus on giving the children a sense of belonging. But, if we could begin to focus more resources on adoption, there would be far fewer children languishing in institutions, and far fewer who self-destruct.

Will You Be An Answer To Prayer

Every day thousands of children reach the age where they are no longer adoptable. Their greatest fear is being forced to leave an institution with no-one to belong to and no place to call home. Ask yourself, will this be the day you become the answer to an orphan's prayer? Will you help give an orphan child a home for good by helping someone you know to adopt? Your sponsorship will help answer the prayers of many families, and you'll share in the joy of bringing God's love to many orphans who *don't even know there is a God, let alone a God who answers prayer.*

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