

ORPHAN MINISTRY



The Lord protects and preserves the strangers and
temporary residents, He upholds the fatherless
and the widow and sets them upright.

Psalm 146:9a



Mission and Vision Statement

The Orphan Ministry is an outflow of the mission and vision of Zionsville Fellowship through fulfilling the two mandates:

- desiring to have a redeeming effect on culture one child at a time by caring for orphans and foster children;
- connecting families and resources to graft children into a Christian environment whereby they may know the grace and salvation message of Christ.

*Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice
to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.*

Isaiah 1:17

History

Throughout the history of Zionsville Fellowship, its members have welcomed orphans into their families through domestic and international adoption. While we know that God does not need us to improve upon His working in the hearts of His people, we do know that we are called upon to come alongside to share His heart for orphans as we practice true religion (James 1:27).

The leadership of Zionsville Fellowship began praying in earnest and unanimously agreed that the church is the most well equipped to “visit the orphans in their affliction.” So a ministry for reaching out to orphans was birthed at Zionsville Fellowship. The sole purpose of the ministry is to support those couples who are interested in foster care and/or guardianship, have adopted, are pursuing adoption, or are considering adoption. These families will find support from this ministry team in the form of prayer, encouraging words, exhortation, shared experiences, and guidance about practical and pragmatic issues such as physical needs (from furnishings to diapers) and finances (from developing a budget to possible financial assistance through grants and tax credits).

The orphan ministry of Zionsville Fellowship supports the efforts of all those who wish to honor the call to care for orphans and is not affiliated with any particular organization or government entity or country of origin regarding the topics of foster care and/or adoption.

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Resource Partners

~ Carolyn Robinson ~

Carolyn Robinson is a pediatrician and the aunt of two children of foreign adoption. One child is from China and the other from Guatemala. She makes herself available to help adoptive parents with questions regarding the health of a potential child as well as answering general questions about the health evaluations produced by foreign nations.

~ Kim Orr ~

Kim Orr is a Guardian Ad-Litem/CASA for Boone County. She works with children who have been abused and neglected. Kim sees the tremendous need for loving, praying foster families in the Boone County area daily. While some foster homes become permanent ones for these disadvantaged children, often God needs willing families to give children in need a loving, stable home even for just a season.

Key Points for Prayer and Discussion

Choosing whether or not to adopt (or foster parent) is a key life decision, so you must seek God's specific direction as a couple. Prayerfully consider and honestly discuss the following topics (most of these topics also apply to singles considering adoption):

- Why do we want children? Or more children?
- What will our legacy be? What is the best way for us to impact the next generation?
- Is God leading us to remain childless or move toward "empty nest" in order to focus our energies and time elsewhere?
- How would we each rate our desire to adopt on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being a very strong desire)? Why?
- In what ways will this decision positively and negatively affect my spouse and current children?
- How would we each rate our family's readiness, on a scale from 1 to 5, to cope with struggles and adjustments in adoption (5 being very ready)? Why?
- What physical, mental, and emotional issues or developmental delays are we truly not able to handle?
- Are we thoroughly committed, with a sure calling from God, so we will hang in there when life gets tough?
- Have we sought the wisdom of our elders?
- Have we sought input from family and friends?

Other areas to pray about and discuss:

- Adoption, foster parenting, or a combination
- Local or international adoption (which country)
- Length of process
- The requirements
- Locating a reputable and reliable agency or attorney
- Sources of funding
- Age range, gender preferences, and sibling groups
- Level of openness and involvement with birth parents

Adapted from: Family Life

The Adoption Process

Every adoption experience is unique. However, there are certain steps common to every domestic adoption as listed by the North American Council on Adoptable Children. Steps for international adoptions will vary by country. Be sure to seek God's guidance through this entire process!

- Educate yourself about adoption.
- Determine what type of adoption you want to pursue.
- Investigate ways to cover adoption expenses.
- Select an adoption agency (public local agency, private local or international agency, independent attorney-assisted).
- Let your agency know that you are serious about adopting.
- Complete an adoption application.
- Begin the home study process.
- Attend adoption and parenting classes.
- Begin searching for a child.
- Select a child.
- Prepare for your child's arrival.
- Have the child placed in your home.
- File a petition to adopt.
- Finalize the adoption.

Adapted from: Family Life

The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless...

Psalm 146:9

Zionsville Fellowship ~ Adoption Stories

~ Jay and Roberta Parks ~



Jay and Roberta Parks began thinking of adopting in the early 1980's when they lived in Argentina. Considering their ages – both were in their early 40's – they didn't have a preference of a boy or a girl or domestic or international. They just wanted to make their two-some a family. "We felt we would be good parents," explains Roberta. "We were committed to raising children in a nurturing home. At that time in our life, Jay's career was settled, and the opportunities for both quantity and quality time were evident."

Jay and Roberta worked with an adoption attorney who had been retained by the birth parents and clung to God's sovereignty throughout the entire process. They believe God's timing was perfect and feel both of their children are gifts from God.

"Both our children came from two entirely different directions," explains Roberta. "John is the answer to prayer for a child; Laura was a gift which absolutely shocked medical science. There is no difference in our eyes between the children because of how they arrived in our family."

Jay and Roberta want to encourage others who are interested in adoption by reminding them that great joy comes from raising children.

~ Steve and Betsy Walker ~

Sometimes God makes the call even when we're not on the phone. This was true for Steve and Betsy Walker, who had no children of their own but hadn't really considered adoption until the opportunity was presented to them. "We jumped into His plan while it unfolded in front of us," says Betsy.

Their first opportunity to adopt came from friends at church who had connections. The prospect fell through but the couple knew they needed to consider adoption again. The Walkers didn't know many others who had gone through the adoption process so they felt they were forging a path on their own. Fear of the unknown wasn't enough to stop them from moving ahead while following their life verses of Psalm 46:10 and Jeremiah 29:11-13. "Both of our kids came through friends who sought us out," explains Betsy. "Our first adoption took six weeks total. Not the usual circumstance!"

Both admit that they have been stretched further than they expected but knowing God has a plan for their children increases their faith. Steve and Betsy recommend anyone considering adoption meet as many families that have successfully adopted as possible to learn about their journey. They say to ask questions – lots of questions. They also suggest not forcing the process.

"Seek the will of God for your life and give God an opportunity to amaze you with His plan," Betsy says. "If it is to happen, it will happen, and maybe in a way you never expected."



~ Paul and Diane Brooks ~



There was one thing missing in their marriage of 17 years: children. Paul and Diane Brooks knew there were so many children waiting for a forever family. They also wanted a forever family and decided to answer the call. And in the end, they added not just one child to their family, but two.

After attending an informal meeting at their agency of choice, they felt drawn to adopt internationally from China. "At that time, the wait was only seven to 10 months for an infant," explains Diane. "We were blessed to adopt our twin daughters in October 1999."

Like so many others, Paul and Diane had initial fears about the international adoption process. But they trusted in the Lord. "It's an amazing process to see the Lord direct your path to that special child," says Diane. "Each step was treasured and an affirmation of God's pleasure in the process."

The couple has delighted in the growth of their girls and they want others to believe that there is a child(ren) waiting for them. "Adoption will allow you to experience God's love at an even greater level," she says. "You will know personally what it means to be adopted into the Kingdom."

~ Doyle and Kathy Dunshee ~

The loss of a child is a parent's worst nightmare. Doyle and Kathy Dunshee lost two children. After their twin sons died in 2004, an inability to have a successful pregnancy and a year or two of uncertainty, the couple decided to adopt. Both wanted to have children but faced a great deal of insecurity.

"We both come from very large families," explains Kathy. "And not one family member had ever adopted. We were unsure how the family would bond with the child. Plus we had heard all the terrible news stories about birth mothers coming back to get their children."

Their worst fears were never realized. After a referral to a law firm that handles adoption, the Dunshees decided they wanted to experience the joy of bringing a newborn from the hospital, all along clinging to the Scriptural promise that God would provide them the "correct" child.

"We truly believe that our son was given to us by God just as biological children are given to their parents," says Kathy. "We are amazed at how our son fits so perfectly into our family."

Doyle and Kathy were so pleased with the process and end result that they're ready for their next adoption journey. And they encourage others who are considering it to run, not walk. "You will never regret your decision."



~ Scott and Stephanie Payton ~

Scott and Stephanie Payton were blessed with three children despite being told there was a distinct possibility she would never be able to conceive. The couple had talked of adoption even before they were married and revisited the topic after their third daughter was born. They just didn't feel that their family was complete, but Stephanie wasn't sure she could handle another difficult pregnancy.

"There's no doubt in our minds that, as Christians, everybody has a responsibility to be involved in orphan care in some form or fashion," explains Stephanie. "And we were sure that this was God's call for our particular involvement."



The Paytons decided to adopt internationally and eventually settled on Russia as many other countries had limits on the number of children adoptive parents could already have in the home. Finding an agency with strong Biblical foundations was essential for them as they knew they'd want a strong support system.

"Many people say that the 'gift' is given to the adopted child," Stephanie says. "Quite the contrary.

The gift and growth mostly occurs in the lives of the parents, the family and those closest to them. Through it all, we continue to see God's faithfulness, His ever-tender care, and His enduring love demonstrated time and time again."

Scott and Stephanie have strong advice for those considering adopting. They recommend prayer, research agencies carefully then pray some more.

"With God's 'yes', step out boldly; trusting in the plan He has for you and your family. Know ahead that Satan is intent on keeping the orphan in bondage, and there will most likely be roadblocks along the way. Allow others to pray for you along the way. Know ahead of time that there will be times of doubt, discouragement and weariness but there are also many high points along the way."

Adoption Agencies

All God's Children International: www.allgodschildren.org

AGCI is a licensed international Christian non-profit adoption and relief agency. Started in 1991, it has served hundreds of families, uniting loving parents with orphaned and abandoned children.

America World Adoption Association: www.awaa.org

America World is committed to helping America's families and the world's orphans experience the love of God in Jesus through the "**Spirit of adoption.**" We are a Christ centered organization that values the right of every child to have a family and believes adoption is a God ordained way to build a family.

Bethany Christian Services: www.bethany.org

Bethany is a nationwide organization that has placed more than 14,500 infants, young children, and older special needs children into Christian adoptive homes.

Christian World Adoption: www.cwa.org

CWA is a non-profit international adoption agency. In conjunction with local social workers and agencies, CWA places children in families throughout the United States and abroad.

Dillon International Children's Services: www.dillonadopt.com

Dillon is a licensed, non-profit intercountry adoption agency. The agency has led in establishing professional standards for international adoption. Over 4,200 children have been placed with adoptive families in the U.S. alone.

Holt International Children's Services: www.holtinternational.org

Holt is a non-profit organization licensed to work in all 50 states through a network of local direct service agencies in the field of international adoption and permanency planning for children.

Orphans Overseas: www.orphansoverseas.com

OO is a licensed, non-profit children's adoption and relief agency seeking to honor Christ by promoting the welfare of orphans domestically and internationally.

Reece's Rainbow: www.reecesrainbow.org

Reece's Rainbow is a registered 501(c)3 charity which promotes and facilitates the international adoption and rescue of children with Down syndrome exclusively.

Reference herein to any specific agency, process, service or trade name, does not necessarily constitute or imply its endorsement, recommendation, or favoring by Zionsville Fellowship or any entities thereof.

Helpful Adoption Organizations

Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) at www.adoptachild.in.gov
working through the Indiana Foster Care and Adoption Association at www.ifcaa.org

The Children' Bureau working in Boone, Hamilton, and Marion counties at www.childrensbureau.org

The Villages, Inc., working in Marion, Clinton, Tippecanoe, and Hancock counties at www.villages.org. The Villages places the most children with developmental issues in the State. The CEO is Sharon Pierce who lives in Zionsville and attends Zionsville Presbyterian.

National Adoption Information Clearinghouse: www.calib.com/naic
Congress established the NAIC. The NAIC publishes and distributes fact sheets, directories, literature searches, resources lists, and bibliographies tailored to various needs. An introductory packet is available.

North American Council on Adoptable Children: www.nacac.org
Founded in 1974 by adoptive parents, the NACAC is committed to meeting the needs of waiting children and adoptive families. Children, even those labeled unadoptable or hard to place, all need loving families.

Adopt: Assistance Information Support: www.adopting.org
Adopting.org contains information on how to begin the adoption process. Selecting an agency, determining child types, handling legal procedures, and completing applications are addressed.

Office of Children's Issues: www.travel.state.gov/adopt.html
This office coordinates policy and provides general information on international adoption to the public. Specific adoption information is made available for more than 80 countries.

Adoption: www.adoption.com
This web site has combined a wealth of quality resources and adoption information into one central location.

Family Life: www.familylife.com
A Christian organization helping couples build healthier marriages and families.

Focus on the Family: www.focusonthefamily.org
A Christian organization with adoption resources.

Intercountry Adoption: www.adoption.state.gov
This website provides information needed about the adoption process.

The Adoption Guide: www.theadoptionguide.com
Adoption help & guidance from "Adoptive Families" magazine.

Books & Resources

- [The Adoption Decision](#) by Laura Christianson
15 things you want to know before adopting
- [Is Adoption for You?](#) By Christine Adamec
- [Adoption for Dummies](#) by Katrina Carlisle And Tracy Barr
- [The Complete Book of International Adoption](#) by Dawn Davenport
A step by step guide to finding your child
- [Risk and Promise](#) by Ira J.Chasnoff
A handbook for parents adopting a child from overseas
- [Toddler Adoption](#) by Mary Hopkins-Best
A guide for adopting and parenting a toddler
- [Attaching in Adoption](#) by Deborah D. Gray
- [Before You Were Mine](#) by Susan TeBos & Carissa Woodwyk
Discovering your adopted child's lifestory
- [The Handbook of International Adoption Medicine](#) by Laurie C. Miller
A guide for physicians, parents, and providers
- [Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew](#) by Sherrie Eldridge
- [Successful Adoption](#) by Natalie Nichols Gillespie
A guide for Christian families considering adoption
- [Adopted For Life](#) by Russell D. Moore
The priority of adoption for Christian families & churches
- [Forever Fingerprints](#) by Sherrie Eldridge
An amazing discovery for adopted children
- [Thriving as an Adoptive Family](#) General Editors: David & Renee Sanford
Real-life solutions to common challenges
- [The Connected Child](#) by Karyn B. Purvis, Ph.D., David R. Cross, Ph.D., and Wendy Lyons Sunshine; For parents who have welcomed children from other countries and cultures, troubled backgrounds, with special behaviors, or emotional needs

Financial Assistance

Adoption Tax Credits

Internal Revenue Services

800-829-3676

www.irs.ustreas.gov

Grants and Loans

Lifesong for Orphans

309-747-3556

www.lifesongfororphans.org

Offers: Grants & Loans

Show Hope

615-550-5600

www.showhope.org

Offers: Grants

Gift of Adoption Fund

877-905-2367

www.giftofadoption.org

Offers: Grants

(Hague Compliant countries only)

National Adoption Foundation

www.Nafadopt.org/how-we-can-help/how-we-can-help.shtml

Offers: Grants & Loans

(donation required)

Wide Smiles

www.widesmiles.org

209-942-2812

(children with cleft-lip-palates)

A Child Waits

866-999-2445

www.achildwaits.org

Offers: Grants & Loans

(5 years or older & special needs only—
applications not accepted after travel)

A Child's Desire

www.achildsdesire.org

Offers: Grants

(Special needs & children over the age of 8)

Grants and Loans Cont'd

God's Grace Adoption Ministry

209-572-4539

www.ggam.org

Offers: Grants & Loans

(annual household incomes of \$60,000 or less)

Sea of Faces Foundation

www.seaoffaces.org

Offers: Grants

(can apply up to 6 months after return home)

Loans Only

Capital One Bank

888-961-4455

www.capitalone.com

Offers: Credit Card Option

Adoption Network Law Center

800-FOR-ADOPT

www.adoptionfunding.com

Offers: Loans

Bank of America

888-628-7700

www.adoptioncouncil.org/resources/financeadoption.html

Offers: Loans-In conjunction with National
Council for Adoption

Chase Bank

866-345-7687

www.chase.com/adoption

Offers: New Additions Home Equity Loan

Abba Fund

www.abbafund.org

Offers: Loans

First Union Bank

888-314-KIDS

Offers: Loans

MBNA

888-500-6268

Offers: Loans

Financial Assistance

Employment Benefits

Dave Thomas Foundation

877-777-4222

www.adoptionfriendlyworkplace.org

Offers: A list of “adoption friendly employers”

AdoptLink

www.Adoptlink.com/benefits.htm

Offers: Information concerning employee adoption benefits

Military Personnel Benefits

Military Adoption Reimbursement Program

[www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?](http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=home_familylife)

[pagename=home_familylife](http://www.nmfa.org/site/PageServer?pagename=home_familylife)

Offers: Adoption Benefits for full-time personnel (Refer to DD Form 2675)

Asian Adoptions

The Asian Bridge

630-665-4053

www.theasianbridge.org

Offers: Grant to families who are raising funds to finance an adoption from Asian countries.

Russia and Eastern Europe Adoptions

The Domo Foundation

650-969-1980

Offers: Interest free loans and financial assistance for families committed to adopt from Russia and Eastern Europe.

Indiana Adoption Program

Some of the children in the Indiana Adoption Program are eligible for the Federal Adoption Assistance Program, which can provide a monthly payment and Medicaid for the child after adoption.

Also, certain family support services, such as training in managing disabilities and even respite, may also be available through the Indiana Adoption Program to qualified adoptive families.

For more information, call:

1 (888) 25-ADOPT **[1-888-252-3678]** or

email the Indiana Adoption Program at adoption@iqquest.net.

Adoption Fund Operating Guidelines

THIS ADOPTION FUND OPERATING GUIDELINES is an overview of the general procedures and practices agreed upon between Church name, Churches address, ("LocalChurch") and LifeSong for Orphans, an Illinois not for profit corporation, whose address is P. O. Box 40, 202 North Ford Street, Gridley, Illinois 61744 ("LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS").

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- I. Local Church is a local body of believers in Christ organized for the purpose of glorifying God through worship and service within its body and through missions and evangelism to the world.
- II. LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS is an Illinois not for profit corporation, recognized as a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, whose purpose is to glorify God by providing financial assistance in the form of matching grants and interest free loans to Christian families who have been called by God to grow their families through adoption.
- III. Local Church and LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS desire is to cooperate with one another in ministering to Christian families and orphans by establishing and administering an Adoption Grant fund and an Adoption Loan fund (the "Funds") to help Christian families overcome the financial hurdle posed by adoption expenses.

TERMS OF GUIDELINES

- A. Application Form. Local Church and LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS will work together to develop an application form and application process which is acceptable to both organizations.
- B. Family Approvals. All applications for financial assistance shall be submitted to LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS, and LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS will provide a copy of the application to Local Church (if requested). LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS will seek input from the Local Church to the extent the Local Church desires involvement. LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS will have final decision making authority regarding the grants. Any family approved for assistance is referred to in these Guidelines as an "Approved Family". The use of the word "family" in these Guidelines shall include both families who already have children and families who are childless.
- C. Funds.
 1. Composition. The Funds will be comprised of money sent to LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS for the purpose of providing matching grants or interest-free loans to Approved Families, the Adoption Grant Fund. All money received directly from LocalChurch, plus all money received from individuals who clearly indicate that their donation is intended to be a part of the Funds, will be considered to be a part of the Funds. All money received as "repayments" from interest-free loans will also be allocated back to the Fund. Any reference in this paragraph to "money" shall include "gift in kind" donations of other property, such as stock, real estate, jewelry, etc. LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS shall not be obligated to accept any such "in-kind" property if there is a reasonable basis for declining the gift. However, if LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS does accept any such "in-kind property", then it shall be responsible for converting the property to cash by public or private sale, in its sole discretion.
 2. Reports. As needed, LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS will provide a report to LocalChurch regarding the status of that portion of the Funds administered for the LocalChurch. Copies of LIFESONG FOR ORPHANS tax returns, audits or similar outside financial evaluations are available to the LocalChurch upon request.

