

Adoption: God's Wonderful Plan

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The purpose of this article is threefold. First, to give readers a brief overview of the process of adoption from the perspective of couples who have adopted. Second, to present factors and issues with which parents of adopted children have to concern themselves. And, finally, to discuss the Scriptural references to adoption, both natural adoptions and our spiritual adoption by God.

After being married for some years it seemed evident that it was not in the Lord's plan for us to bring children into our homes in the usual manner. So, we began to consider the possibility of adoption. After much prayer, we decided that adoption was the means by which God would bring children into our homes, and more importantly, into His church.

We proceeded by contacting Bethany Christian Services, an adoption agency in Grand Rapids. We were required to provide the agency with personal references, a statement of faith, medical information, financial information and a written autobiography. We were also required to participate in a series of interviews with a caseworker. This process, referred to as a home study, took approximately 6 months. Once approved as adoptive couples we began the wait for our children. The Lord answered our prayers sooner than we expected and within a year our children were born. For each of us the process of adoption was a wonderful and special experience.

During the interview process we were asked to consider a great many factors. Would we accept a child with a handicap, a child of mixed race, a child whose mother had abused drugs or alcohol, etc. However, never once during this process did we consider not adopting a child in the event that as an adult the child might leave the church. Nor did we feel that the child's biological parentage was an important factor. What is important is that the Lord has placed these children into covenant homes by way of adoption and they are being raised as members of His church. There seems to be an assumption that because these children are not born into the church they are more likely to leave the church when they become adults. Since an actual study has not been done which documents that this is indeed the case this assumption remains unsubstantiated. Many biological children, that is to say children born in the church, do not remain in the church as adults. Did their parents consider not having a biological child in case that child should leave the church one day? We do not believe this was a consideration for these parents. One must also keep in mind that only after much prayer was the decision made to adopt. Now we place our faith in our heavenly Father and His will be done concerning the children He has given us.

In Reverend Flikkema's article in the May issue of the Beacon Lights he refers to the fact that adoptive couples must be content knowing that "though they can make that child legally their own they can never make such their own flesh and blood." Speaking from personal experience, not only are we content but overjoyed with the children the Lord has so graciously given us. Yes, they are adopted and not our own flesh and blood but this makes no difference to us or our families. (Just ask their grandparents!) We insist that this fact make no difference to the people in the church where our children will grow in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. If the knowledge that these children would never become our own flesh and blood was a factor we could not have considered adoption.

Some couples who adopt also receive the added blessing of conceiving biological children. Occasionally it is felt that if these couples had been more patient and had waited for the

biological child with which the Lord had blessed them adoption would not have been necessary. We do not feel this is the case. In His infinite wisdom the Lord led us to adopt our children. It was His plan that these specific children be placed into our homes by this special means.

Although it is true that Scripture neither encourages us nor forbids us to adopt, God's Word does make several references to adoption, both to natural adoption and to our spiritual adoption by God. References to adoption can also be found in our baptism form and the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day XIII.

Exodus 2:10a refers to the adoption of Moses by Pharaoh's daughter. ". . . and the child grew and she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son." Esther 2:7 refers to Esther's adoption by Mordecai. We also know that Jesus was raised by Joseph though he was not Jesus' natural father.

Throughout the New Testament one can find references to our spiritual adoption by God. Ephesians 1:5, 6. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." Romans 8:15 refers to the fact that we "have received the spirit of adoption." Galatians 4:5 and 6 reads as follows "To redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons; And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." One must also keep in mind that as Gentiles we are not the physical seed, but the spiritual seed of Abraham. God's covenant with His people is a covenant of grace not of blood. This is clearly stated in Galatians 3:7 and 14. "know ye therefore that they which are of faith the same are the children of Abraham." And verse 14, "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith," Our baptism form refers to us as "his children and heirs." Through Christ's blood we have been adopted and accepted by God as His children and heirs. The fact that we are not God's natural children (this is true only of Christ) does not exclude us from all the blessings of salvation.

We view the adoption of our children as a picture of our spiritual adoption by God. These children have become legally our children and as such are entitled to all the benefits of being members of our families. Such is the case spiritually with us. Though not God's natural children His adoption of us entitles us to all the benefits of being a part of His family, the church. We view God's adoption of us as a wondrous privilege. We view the adoption of our children in the same way.

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