



# The Adoption Journey



# Bethany envisions a world where every child has a loving family.

## INTRODUCTION TO ADOPTION

It has been said that childhood is an adventure, not a race. Similarly, adoption is a journey not just an event. Adoption is both a legal and an emotional process as families build bonds of love, commitment, and attachment. Like other journeys, planning and preparation are necessary. We plan so that we can take the path that best suits our abilities and our dreams, whether that be infant, foster care, or international adoption. We prepare so that we will be able to better meet the responsibilities and navigate the inevitable twists and turns of parenting.

The journey of adoption enriches lives and expands worlds in ways that we often cannot anticipate. While not always easy, the rewards are great.

It is our hope and prayer that this booklet will be an early guide for your journey as you choose your path and explore your options. We are here to walk with you as you travel toward your ultimate goal of bringing a child or children into your family. It will be life-changing for all of you.

*May God bless your family, today and always.*



Kris Faasse  
Vice President of Clinical Operations  
Bethany Christian Services



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## HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT...?

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### COMMON MISPERCEPTIONS ABOUT ADOPTION

#### I can't love an adopted child like I could a biological child.

Adoptive parents, with biological children and without, will consistently tell you that they love their adopted children as much as a biological child. Adoptive parents experience a full range of emotions, joys, and challenges with their adopted children, just as they do/would with biological children.

#### Adoption is really intended for childless couples.

While many couples choose to adopt in part because they have experienced infertility, they are joined by many couples with children, as well as single adults, all choosing adoption because they have love to share and have a desire to provide a home for a child who might not otherwise have one.

#### The child won't ever develop an attachment to us as parents.

Children who are adopted experience various losses and need a nurturing family to help them deal with those losses. All children, especially older children, need time and a repeated sense of safety and care to build attachment with their new families. While there may be issues that children who are adopted have to deal with—especially if they are adopted as older children—experience shows us that

adopted children can and do attach to their new families. Every journey toward attachment is unique and requires engaged and committed caregivers.

#### Adoption is too risky—there are just too many unknowns.

It is true that every decision to parent through adoption contains risks, some that can be anticipated and many that cannot. We strongly believe in the importance of parents who are prepared, trained, educated, and provided with mentoring opportunities to better understand the realities of the type of adoption they are pursuing. But ultimately, most of the critical decisions we make in our lives (marriage, children, and career) contain risk and unknowns. Families who are ready for adoption truly recognize and accept the risk, and commit to their decision to love and parent a child, no matter the outcome.

#### It is just too expensive to adopt.

Actually, out-of-pocket expenses can be substantially less than the initial cost discovered at the beginning of the process. Through several different methods, including government adoption tax credits and other sources mentioned in the Financing Adoption section of this booklet, thousands of families have found creative methods to meet the financial requirements of an adoption.

# DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION



Women who find themselves experiencing an unplanned pregnancy face many difficult decisions. Will they choose an abortion? Will they choose to parent their child? Or will they consider adoption? Each of these decisions carries significant consequences and impact throughout their life. Expectant parents (mothers and fathers) who choose adoption make a deliberate decision to relinquish their parental rights and identify another family to take this responsibility and parent their children. They make this difficult choice, not because they don't love or want to parent their children, but because they feel unable to be the kind of parent they want for their child at that particular time in their lives. Children do not wait for parents to be ready to meet their needs, and birthparents, those who choose adoption, are deeply committed to meeting their child's immediate needs.

Parents who make adoption plans come from all socioeconomic backgrounds, child-bearing ages, races, and walks of life. Many expectant parents considering domestic infant adoption want to meet and build an ongoing relationship with the families they identify to parent their children. These parents experience the pain of the loss of their parental role and connection to their children with the hope of a better future both for themselves and their children.

Prospective adoptive families considering domestic infant adoption have the opportunity to not only provide a loving family for a child but also to affirm the difficult and loving decision made by their child's birthfamily through ongoing contact and relationship when possible.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

### *What is the first step to adopt an infant within the United States?*

To start the process, visit [www.bethany.org](http://www.bethany.org) or call our main office at **1.855.328.7951** to request an information packet. If you live in a state where Bethany has an office, you will be invited to attend an orientation. If we do not have an office in your state, our staff will suggest other resources for you.

### *How will Bethany help us in the adoption process?*

Once you have met with our staff personally at an orientation meeting and had the opportunity to ask any questions, Bethany's staff will work with you through the Home Study process that is required and completed according to state law. Once approved, we will help you in preparing your profile or photo book. Profiles, in a book or online, are one of the ways that you share information about your family with expectant parents who are considering adoption.

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

(continued)

### *How will Bethany help prepare us to become parents through adoption?*

The Home Study process is not just gathering information about your family, but it's also a time to help you understand adoption from the perspective of everyone involved. Our staff provides supportive and personalized education to answer your questions. You will also learn about the adoption journey through recommended books, videos, and by attending educational meetings.

### *How long will we have to wait for a child to be placed with us?*

Wait times vary and depend primarily on when you are identified by an expectant parent considering adoption. Your willingness to develop a relationship with the birthfamily can impact the length of time that you wait, as well as your openness to the various prenatal histories of expectant mothers.

### *How will expectant parents know that we want to adopt a child?*

Most expectant parents want to choose the adoptive parents for their children. They often start by looking through prospective adoptive family profiles, either at a Bethany office or on Bethany's website. Another way that expectant parents become aware of your desire to adopt is through personal contact with either you or a mutual acquaintance. Bethany also works with many hospitals, physicians, and pregnancy

care centers so that expectant parents will become aware that adoption is a life-affirming option and that there are many prospective adoptive families available to consider, including yours.

### *If we are identified by expectant parents for adoption, when will a child be placed in our home?*

Sometimes, placement occurs directly from the hospital. Other times, the baby may go to interim care—a caring, temporary home placement while the birthparents determine if they will proceed with the adoption decision. Bethany staff will help you understand and walk with you through the placement process.

### *When will the adoption be finalized?*

Your adoption will be finalized after the birthparents' rights have been relinquished and after a legally required period of supervision which varies from state to state.

### *When will the adoption fees be due?*

Fees are based on the services Bethany provides and are typically collected at specific times throughout the process—you will be provided with a detailed explanation of fees prior to beginning the adoption process. You will also want to check with your tax advisor about the availability of the Federal Adoption Tax Credit and any state adoption tax credits which may reduce your expenses.

### *How do we handle ongoing contact with the birthparents?*

Almost all adoptions have some level of openness or contact between the adoptive and birthfamilies. Bethany staff will help both families carefully consider the benefits and challenges that may come through open adoption relationships. The degree of openness is determined by the birth and adoptive families before placement. Some families are unsure about ongoing contact at first, but many adoptive parents discover that once they gain a better understanding of open adoption relationships and get to know the birthparents, they want to have an ongoing relationship for everyone's benefit.

### *Will Bethany help our family adjust to the changes in our lives?*

Bethany is committed to providing post-placement services for families. There is a required supervision period after placement, determined by your state law, when you will meet with your Bethany adoption specialist to discuss how you are adjusting to parenting a new child and to identify any further support or resources that are needed. In addition, Bethany is available to provide post-placement support, guidance, education, and referrals, if needed, long after your adoption is finalized.

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS – GOD’S SPECIAL PLAN

## DOMESTIC INFANT ADOPTION

*A picture of Eric and Angie’s family plays out like paint across a canvas of quintessential American life. It’s easy to picture both parents laughing as their kids run around the backyard at a family barbeque, or watch them spending long, weekend fishing trips together on the lake. But life hadn’t always been this picture-perfect and easy for the couple.*

*The high school sweethearts got married and after eight years of trying everything to have children, they decided to turn toward adoption.*

*As part of the adoption process, the couple was able to interact with other families who had adopted domestically through open adoption.*

*Eric shared, “Once we were there and saw the birthmother and adoptive parents together, and how their love for that child and desiring the best for the child was the main goal, we knew that we wanted a better life for someone and to be in the kind of situation where we are making a family, not destroying one.”*

*Eric and Angie grew close to both of their children’s birthmothers. They learned about their lives, their fears, and their passions. The bond was so close that the couple was present in the delivery room when their son was born and had the honor of cutting the umbilical cord.*

*“When the kids were little, I made a little pocket photo album storybook and it’s called their miracle story,” says Angie. “Since they were babies, they knew that they were adopted and I have pictures of us standing with each of their birthmothers when they were pregnant.”*

*Their closeness did not come without its challenges. After the birth of their son, his birthmother had doubts about her decision to choose adoption. For Eric and Angie, it spelled*

*anxious and trying times. But the couple put their faith in God. In the end, the birthmother did decide to continue forward with the adoption.*

*Tragically, both of the children’s birthmothers passed away—one, a few months after birth and the other, in a car accident.*

*“We were blessed knowing that God had a plan for the children,” says Eric. “He knew before anyone else. That’s why I say we were blessed to know these young women, because even though they didn’t know what their lives would entail, they made sure that their children were okay.”*

*Each child’s middle name bares a connection to their birthmother, but beyond a name, their birthmothers’ legacy can be witnessed in the smiles, laughs, and talents of the children.*

*The couple believes that their family is the greatest gift that God could provide them.*

*“Without Him we would never have made this journey,” says Eric. “We held on to our faith and a little at a time, He revealed His grace to us.”*





# FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

Another type of domestic adoption is the adoption of children who are in the custody of the state through the foster care system. More than 100,000 children in the United States are available for adoption because they have been removed from their birthfamilies due to abuse or neglect. For safety reasons, they often cannot return home or be placed with their extended families. Once their parents' parental rights have been terminated, these children need new families to love and care for them.

Many of these children waiting to be adopted are older, are part of a sibling group, or are of a racial minority. Some children have developmental delays and medical issues; others display emotional and behavioral challenges. Yet, all of these special children need a loving and caring home where they can heal.

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

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### *What is the first step in becoming an adoptive family?*

To start the process, visit [www.bethany.org](http://www.bethany.org) and complete the contact us form to receive an electronic welcome packet, or call our main office at **1.855.328.7951** to request an information packet. If you live in a state where Bethany has an office, you will be invited to attend an orientation. If we do not have an office in your state, our staff will suggest other resources for you.

### *How will Bethany assist us throughout the foster care adoption process?*

There are many phases to the foster care adoption process and Bethany staff will be there to help you navigate each phase. Once you have been trained, assessed, and approved for foster care adoption, we will help you identify a waiting child or children in need of an adoptive family. Bethany will connect you to an extensive list of profiles of children

waiting to be adopted near you or around the country and we offer full support to your family during the matching process. Once your family is matched with a waiting child, we will assist with planning for the transition into your home and provide support to ensure your family is adjusting well. After the adoption is finalized, our staff will continue to provide post-adoption support as needed to assist your family and as required by your state.

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

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### *Do I have to be married to adopt from foster care?*

You do not have to be married to adopt a child from foster care. You can be married, single, divorced, or widowed. Some states may have exceptions to this rule to allow a person in a legally separated marriage to adopt. Please check with your local office for clarification.

### *What are the financial requirements to adopt? Is there financial assistance available?*

Although each state's requirements may vary, the requirements are all based on the financial stability of the family and their ability to care for themselves with the addition of an adopted child. Many families are concerned about the potential cost that they may face when adding to their family through foster care adoption. The actual cost differs by state, but overall, the foster care adoption expenses can be very minimal to the family. With the help of grants, corporate scholarships, and contracts with the state, Bethany is able to help keep costs down. Some states may even fully cover the costs of adoption, while other states may only cover partial costs.

### *Who are the children who are available for foster care adoption?*

The children available for adoption, in the United States, are generally between the ages of 8-18, are part of a sibling group, are from a racial minority group or have emotional, mental, learning, and/or physical needs.

### *What happens for birthfamily members of children adopted through foster care?*

In many cases, children adopted out of foster care lived with their biological families for part of their lives and the child's relationship with them is very important. Some birthparents have struggled with addiction to controlled substances, extreme poverty, and/or mental illness, which significantly affected their ability to provide appropriate care for their children. These are often the main contributors to having a child enter foster care and having parental rights terminated—not a lack of parental love.

The termination of rights is a legal process that eliminates the option of a birthparent reclaiming his or her child. However, engaging in relationships with biological family members, when this is safe and appropriate, can be an advantage for some adoptive families because they have a better understanding of the birthfamily history as well as a possible additional support system for the child. Bethany staff will be ready to help you navigate these relationships for the benefit of your child.

### *Can I/we adopt more than one child?*

There is a significant need for families who are willing and able to adopt sibling groups, and these adoptions are encouraged. In most cases, it is not encouraged to adopt more than one unrelated child at a time.

### *Can I/we adopt a child or sibling group from another state?*

There are more than 100,000 children in U.S. foster care available for adoption. It is not uncommon for families to adopt children from outside their state. Sometimes these adoptions can take a little longer because of the process involved with moving a child from one state to another.

### *Why are some children available for so long?*

Children who have been available for adoption may have been available for a significant amount of time due to a number of variables such as having challenging behaviors, being part of a sibling group, experiencing a disrupted adoption, having significant medical, physical, and/or learning impairments, or being older (than 10 years); there are fewer families willing to consider these children but their need for a family is still great.

## IN THEIR OWN WORDS – MEANT TO BE

### FOSTER CARE ADOPTION

*“Are you open to adoption?”*

*This is the question Tim found his girlfriend (and future wife), Michelle, asking him one evening. They weren’t engaged, but she needed to know before their relationship progressed further.*

*His answer? “Yes, I’m all for it.”*

*For Michelle, her desire to adopt began when she was around 10 years old, when her aunt adopted two children. It sparked something in her—a desire that ran deep and could not be denied; adoption was something she felt God called her to do. So, she knew that the person she married would need to be fully on board too.*

*After marrying, buying a home, and settling into married life, Michelle and Tim contacted Bethany to learn about adoption. “At the first meeting, I thought it would be a great idea to adopt one kid at a time and see how it goes,” explains Michelle.*

*Well, that was until the discussion about adopting a sibling group came up. Michelle looked over at her husband, who comes from a large family of five siblings, and tears were rolling down his face. “I realized the rest of my life was going to be different!” she laughs.*

*It certainly does look different. Instead of focusing on infant adoption, Tim and Michelle decided to do foster care adoption, and when they finally became “Mom” and “Dad,” it wasn’t to one child—but three! Craig, Autumn, and Devon (14, 11, and 7) were part of a sibling group, and now they are part of Tim and Michelle’s forever family.*

*Like much of parenthood, the road to adoption wasn’t easy. There were legal hurdles to overcome, and lots of emotions involved, especially since the children were a bit older. Yet, God’s faithfulness has been so clear through every step of the way. “We praise the Lord how He worked it out,” Michelle says.*

*Michelle recalls with deep emotion the moment she found out their adoption would be finalized. She and Tim were in Florida on vacation with Craig, Autumn, and Devon, and she was sitting by the swimming pool with the phone. The sun was dipping below the horizon, and Tim was playing with the kids in the pool. That’s when Michelle’s phone rang... with the good news.*

*It’s been over a year since the kids were adopted, and it’s been a wild ride, but it’s been one that Tim and Michelle have eagerly experienced by opening their hearts to wherever the Lord directs them. Adoption has drastically changed their lives as a married couple, catapulting them into the busyness of a family of five.*

*Tim and Michelle have taken their children camping, kayaking, mountain climbing, and they have watched the wonder in the children’s eyes when they saw the ocean for the very first time. There have been a lot of firsts—for the kids and for Tim and Michelle. Yet, their family life continues to grow sweeter with time.*

*“I love what we do,” says Tim. “This is a lot of work, but I wouldn’t change it for the world.”*



# INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION



Millions of children worldwide are living without the hope of ever knowing what it is like to be loved by a family. International adoption encompasses children from various countries, of various ages, and with varying experiences prior to adoption.

In many countries, political turmoil, limited resources, poverty, and cultural attitudes contribute to the need for loving, adoptive families. When there are no extended family members to care for children whose parents cannot care for them, adoption may be an option.

Some children are orphaned because their parents have died of AIDS or other diseases. Other vulnerable children are abandoned due to cultural stigmas related to their special needs. Still others need a family because of oppression, injustice, and/or the impact of poverty.

Bethany works in many countries on five continents to unite waiting children with loving families in the U.S. through adoption. Adoption specialists prepare families to meet the needs of a child from another culture, and they guide adoptive parents through the entire adoption process.

The practice of international adoption is regulated by The Hague Convention on Protection of Children

and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and the Intercountry Adoption Universal Accreditation Act (UAA), which requires that agencies be accredited and meet specific standards.

Why is this act so important? It protects both children and the families who want to adopt, regardless of the agency they use or the home country of the child. For example, in countries that have chosen not to be a part of the Hague Convention and therefore are not bound by the Hague Convention's standards, agencies can go into the country, meet with administrators from private orphanages, and offer to pay the orphanage to release children for adoption. The temptation, then, is for those orphanages to "find" more children who may or may not be actual orphans. The UAA makes it much more difficult for orphanages and agencies to engage in this unethical practice.

Bethany has been accredited under the Hague Convention since April 2008, and has worked to support the passage of the UAA as it made its way through Congress. In fact, Bethany is accredited by the U.S. Department of State's Council on Accreditation for all of the specific services we provide including compliance with the Hague Convention requirements. We work hard to ensure that high ethical standards are upheld in each and every adoption we are involved in.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

### *What is the first step in becoming an adoptive family?*

To start the process, visit [www.bethany.org](http://www.bethany.org) or call our main office at 1.855.328.7951 to request an information packet. If you live in a state where Bethany has an office, you will be invited to attend an orientation. If we do not have an office in your state, our staff will suggest other resources for you.

### *How will Bethany assist us in adopting a child?*

Once you have received an orientation from our staff and had an opportunity to get answers to any questions you have, you will participate in a process known as a Home Study. This study involves a series of interviews and home visits. Upon approval, a Bethany adoption specialist will help you prepare a dossier (legal documents necessary to meet requirements for international adoption), immigration pre-filing papers, and other needed paperwork. Bethany also assists families through providing and recommending high-quality training opportunities that help ensure parents are better prepared to care for an adopted child.

### *Where does Bethany provide international adoption services?*

Bethany has adoption programs in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, and Latin America. Details about adoption programs in specific countries are available at [bethany.org/internationaladoption](http://bethany.org/internationaladoption).

### *How long does the international adoption process take?*

The process varies from country to country. Your adoption specialist will discuss specific country processes with you.

### *Are there expenses involved in an international adoption that differ from those in a domestic adoption?*

Yes, there are country fees and expenses related to travel, visas, etc. Adoptive parents are required to travel to the child's country to complete the adoption. Your adoption specialist will provide detailed information about the fees associated with adopting from your specific chosen country.

### *What kind of special placement needs do most of these children have?*

Many children who are awaiting adoption internationally have a wide range of special placement needs. Some children have a cleft lip and palate; others may have Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, a heart murmur, or missing or malformed limbs. Some children have experienced physical or emotional trauma, malnutrition, or they may have medical or physical conditions not yet diagnosed. Older children and children who need to be adopted together—such as brothers and sisters—are also considered to have special placement needs.

### *Will Bethany help our family adjust to the changes in our lives as a result of the adoption?*

Yes. Bethany is strongly committed to providing post-adoption services to our adoptive families. Following placement, a Bethany adoption specialist will make follow-up contact with your family and send reports to the country from which you adopted. Post-adoption services such as education, support for family members, and referrals to additional services are also available.

### *When will the adoption be finalized?*

The adoption may be finalized in the country from which you are adopting. Some countries also require you to complete the adoption in the state where you reside, after which you will receive your final order of adoption.

To request an information packet on international adoption, visit [bethany.org/contact](http://bethany.org/contact)

To complete an online Preliminary International Adoption Application, visit [bethany.org/prelim](http://bethany.org/prelim)

# IN THEIR OWN WORDS – A CHANCE TO RUN

## INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION

Tom and Nancy had three biological sons and an adopted daughter from China. They were very happy with Esther's adoption process and eventually decided to adopt another child from China—specifically a boy with special placement needs.

"We're both runners," Nancy explains. "We wanted to give the gift of running to a child who would never be able to walk otherwise."

The couple decided to accept the first child Bethany referred to them, trusting that he would be the one God had chosen for their family. Soon they received a photo of a little boy who had significant disabilities. His left leg was missing its fibula and was several inches shorter than the right. And his left foot had three toes while his right foot had four.

"Okay, this is it!" Nancy and Tom said.

And that's how this couple found themselves at a Chinese orphanage waiting to meet their new son, Eli (2).

Nancy clearly remembers the moment she and Tom were taken to meet Eli, who was asleep in a room with other children.

"There were 15 sweet little angels sleeping there, all bundled up in their cribs," she says. The temperature was chilly, and when Eli was awakened and handed to his new parents, he was "shaking like a leaf."

Nancy wrapped blankets around him and held him. Eli was too young to know it, but he now had a loving family—and a brighter future.

When Eli came home, he required the amputation of his left foot so he could be fitted with a prosthesis and learn to walk with it.

Today, having a prosthetic foot doesn't slow Eli down at all. He's full of energy and moves quickly—even without his prosthesis. However, he has begun to notice that he is different from other children and has been asking his parents where his missing foot is. "We tell him the foot was broken and it didn't work, so we fixed it with a new one," Nancy says.

She adds that Eli's active nature is often more of an issue than his physical disability.

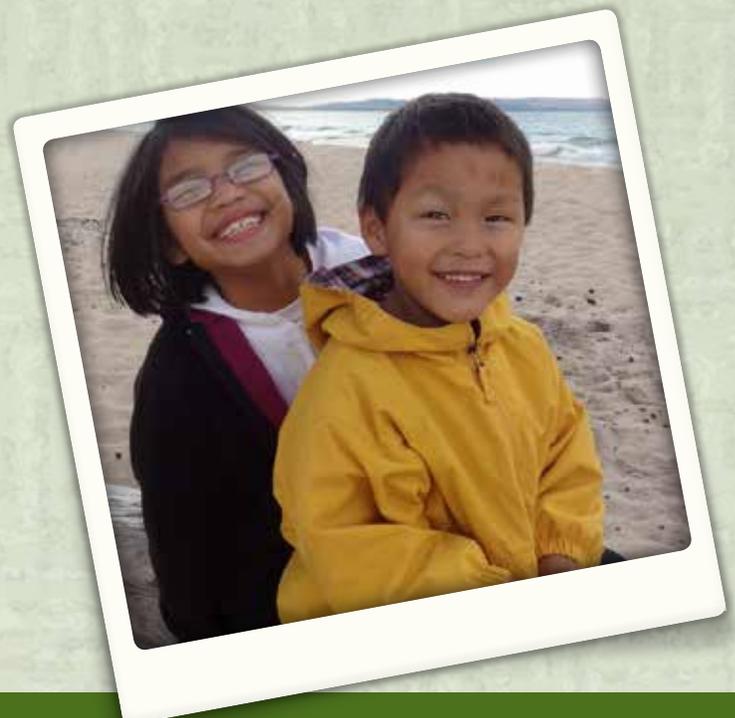
"He's so incredibly busy. If you turn your back and he's quiet, he's into something."

Parenting a child with such high energy levels requires patience, but Nancy feels that being an older parent helps her in this regard. Plus, she's a high-energy person herself, so she enjoys the activity and the busyness. "God knows just which child you need," she says.

Parenting young children for the second time around—her biological sons are 15, 18, and 21—is a great experience, says Nancy. "What an awesome responsibility we have to teach our younger children about Jesus. We get the honor and the privilege of doing it again."

To anyone considering adopting a child with special placement needs, Nancy says this: "Go for it. God will give you the direction. If He's called you to it, go for it. He has blessed us far beyond our imagination...Our life is very full."

Nancy says that she and Tom are providing opportunities for their kids to connect with their cultural heritage through language camps, a Chinese immersion program at school, and by celebrating Chinese holidays. "Maybe someday they'll be missionaries to China," Nancy says. "I know God has special plans for them."



# RELATIONSHIPS IN ADOPTION

There are many topics that can create anxiety for a prospective adoptive family, but relationships with birthfamily members and others who were important in the life of your child prior to adoption, are often at the top of the list.

We know that a family's initial thoughts and anxieties about openness and relationships can influence the decisions they make in early stages of considering adoption. We'd like to put your mind at ease and inspire you to enter into this unique aspect of adoptive parenting with an open heart and a child-centered focus.

As you move forward in your journey, our staff will share specific details about the types of relationships with birthfamily members that are common in the type of adoption you select, and provide you with guidance and support in developing and maintaining relationships.

While it can be easy to assume that connection and relationships with birthfamily and other important people are really only possible in domestic infant adoption and don't apply to foster care adoption or international adoption, the reality is that this is not always the case. In fact, connections and relationships in adoption are becoming more the norm—when possible and safe for the child and all involved. Research, and personal experiences, are consistently showing that all members involved in an adoption plan benefit when there is ongoing connection, honest communication about adoption, and mutual respect for the role that each plays in the adoption relationship.

Adopted persons, as children and later in life, benefit from maintained relationships with birthfamily and other influential caretakers. The access they have to birthrelatives and their own medical, genealogical, and family histories helps them come to terms with the reasons for their adoption, find real answers to the common questions about identity and belonging, and promotes more honest discussion about adoption with their adoptive parents.

Adoptive parents have found that maintaining relationships actually leads them to feel less fearful and more confident in their role as parents. They experience greater empathy for the birthfamily and are better able to understand their children, answer their questions, and respond to their feelings about adoption.

This is not to say that relationships in adoption aren't challenging, complicated, and with varying levels of closeness and connection that may even ebb and flow over time. This is a reality in many of the relationships we maintain. But the love and commitment of parents to the short and long-term well-being of their child means that these relationships are worth the risk and worth the hard work.



# FINANCING ADOPTION

One of the primary barriers for many families who are considering adoption, is the cost. While these fees can be a barrier for many families, we have helped thousands of people achieve their goal of adopting. Through generous gifts from our donors, adoption tax credits, and other sources mentioned below, thousands of families have found creative methods to meet the financial requirements of an adoption.

## SOURCES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

### Caring Connection

Bethany's Caring Connection provides financial assistance to Bethany families committed to adopting children with special placement needs. Grants are awarded based on the child's special placement needs and on the financial need of the family interested in adopting.

For more information, visit [Bethany.org/CaringConnection](http://Bethany.org/CaringConnection), call 1.800.BETHANY, or e-mail [caringconnection@bethany.org](mailto:caringconnection@bethany.org)

### Adoption Grants

Families without the finances to cover the full cost of adoption may be able to apply for grants through several organizations. One example is Show Hope, founded by Steven Curtis and Mary Beth Chapman, who are public advocates for adoption. Show Hope awards adoption grants to qualified families already in the process of adopting. The size of the grant awarded is determined by several factors, the most important being financial need.

To learn more, visit [showhope.org](http://showhope.org)

### Short-Term Loans

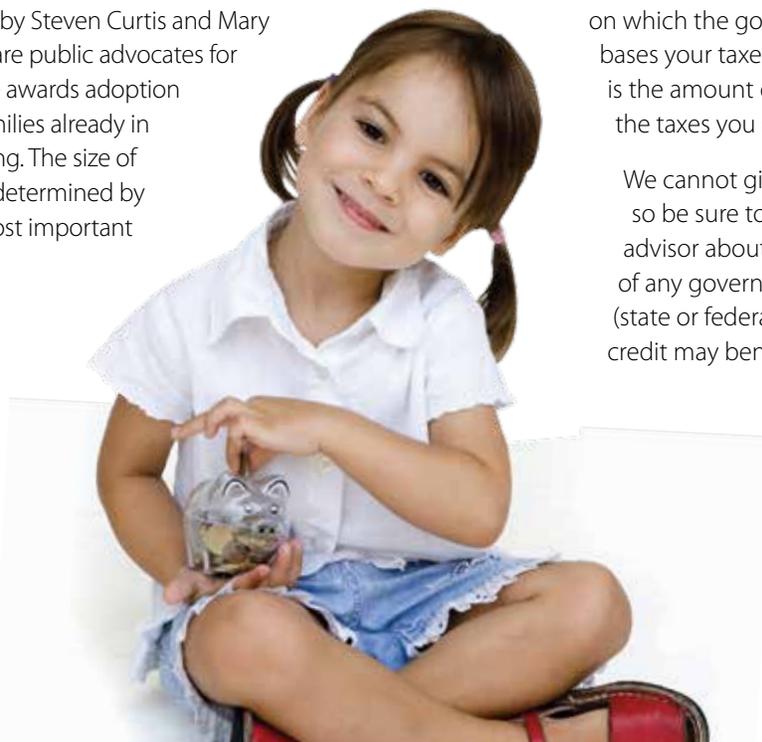
America's Christian Credit Union is one example of a financial institution offering an affordable, adoption loan program to help obtain the funds you may need.

For more information, visit [americaschristiancu.com](http://americaschristiancu.com)

### Adoption Tax Credits

In recent years, the federal government ([irs.gov](http://irs.gov)) and many state governments have offered incentives to adopt children by providing tax credits. It is important to understand the difference between a tax deduction and a tax credit. A tax deduction reduces the amount of income on which the government bases your taxes. A tax credit is the amount deducted from the taxes you owe.

We cannot give tax advice, so be sure to consult your tax advisor about the availability of any government tax credit (state or federal) and how that credit may benefit you.



# THE JOURNEY AFTER ADOPTION



**B**ethany encourages adoptive families to view adoption as a unique, lifelong experience that will be part of their new normal way of life rather than an experience that ends with finalization. Striving to change the perception that something must be “wrong” when challenges arise, we want families to feel comfortable seeking assistance and feel empowered and supported when addressing a variety of needs.

**Post-adoptive families may seek support and services for a variety of reasons.**

**Some common areas include:**

- Processing grief and loss
- Navigating open relationships
- Building attachment and improving family bonds
- Adjusting family roles and dynamics
- Healing from trauma, abuse, and neglect
- Addressing challenging behavior
- Developing identity through life stages of adoption
- Planning for birthfamily search

There is a diverse array of post-adoption support and services that are beneficial for families at various times in their adoption journey. Many supports and services are offered through Bethany’s local branches and through other providers within your community.

**Some examples of post-adoption support and services that are commonly utilized include:**

- Support groups, mentors, and camps
- Referrals for specialized medical and developmental service providers
- In-person and online education
- Case management for challenging situations
- Mediation between adoptive family and birthfamily members
- Counseling and specialized mental health services
- Recommended resources for adoption-related or child-specific topics
- Birthfamily search and homeland travel services

During the adoption process, Bethany’s adoption specialists work with each family to identify local supports and services. Our staff will continue to be a source of support after adoption. Remember, your adoption journey was never designed to be traveled alone. Post-adoption care is an opportunity to enhance your family’s strengths and can help navigate challenges along the way.



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