

THE *Spirit* of Adoption

— By Taryn Hodgson

EVERY MONTH ABOUT 60 COUPLES visit the Tygerberg Fertility Clinic in Cape Town, desperate to receive treatment that will enable them to conceive a child. About two out of every ten couples in South Africa need fertility treatment in order to conceive a child. Yet, 85 000 pre-born babies were aborted last year and there are currently 2.5 million orphans in South Africa. Every year, thousands of babies are also abandoned on rubbish dumps, in municipal toilets and in hospitals. Only 2 606 children were adopted last year.

Is God trying to tell us something?

Despite fertility treatment and the strong desire for their own child, many couples are not able to conceive. Perhaps God is calling them to join one of the greatest and most important rescue missions on earth – the task of rescuing pre-born babies from abortion, *“those being led away to death”* and *“those staggering towards slaughter”* Prov 24:11 and looking after *“orphans in their distress”* James 1:27.

Dr James Kennedy writes in his book, *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?* that one

of the ways Christians transformed the Roman Empire at a grassroots level was by adopting babies abandoned by the Romans. It was a dangerous thing for a baby to be conceived in classical Rome or Greece, just as it is becoming dangerous once more under the influence of modern paganism. Abortion was rampant and abandonment was commonplace. Parents abandoned virtually all deformed babies. They often abandoned female babies because women were considered inferior. Could it be that Christians could turn the chaotic immoral situation in South Africa around simply by





loving, raising and discipling orphaned and abandoned children?

From the News Media it would seem as if celebrities, like Madonna, are championing the cause of adoption, yet, it is a fact that most adopting couples are average Christians.

Waiting has been one of the hardest things to do

Adopting mother, Louise, has experienced both the trials and the joy of adopting a child. "Waiting has been one of the hardest things to do as we have waited for our children. Even so, God has done so much in our lives during our adoption process. Our first adoption screening process took two years and I found myself often struggling with God as far as His timing was concerned.

While I was struggling with these hormonal emotions and strong desire to be a mother, I kept myself busy by painting each room in our house a different colour. Eventually my sister-in-law told me my house looked like a smartie box. All of this because I was trying to deal with the fact that I wanted to be a mother right away and needed some form of distraction to keep me busy.

I eventually thought of trying to hurry things along and I can remember God telling me clearly, while I was reading my Bible one day, that I was trying to make an Ishmael instead of waiting for Isaac. In other words, I was trying to make my own plan, instead of waiting for God's plan. And now that I look back I am so glad I waited for God's plan, because His plan was far better than anything I could ever have done.

Our adopted daughter is an amazing little girl who looks just like me. So many times when I look at her I see God's perfect plan and His provision. There is no doubt in anybody's mind that she was meant to be our daughter. We had to go through a lot before she arrived in order to be ready to be her parents and it was all worthwhile. I cannot even describe in words the awesome experience it has been to be part of God's plan and to see that His timing is perfect and His plan is wonderful."

Another couple, Deon and Wanda, decided to adopt after 10 years of praying

and being unable to conceive a child. A year ago they were blessed with the first of two wonderful miracles. His name is Joshua. "We held onto God's promises for dear life and patience and waited a year on Abba Adoption's waiting list and our son was born on 12 March 2005. His birth rang all the bells of joy in our house, family and circle of friends. What a miracle of joy and God helped that we could receive him two days after birth. To us he is the most beautiful and special little boy in the whole world. To God be the glory."

It is Christians who are on the forefront of this rescue mission and Christian families who can provide the best homes for orphaned children to grow up in. Some couples have even gone so far as to dedicate their lives to raising abused or orphaned children in their own home. Already parents of five, Gerhard and Elmane Le Roux have adopted three children from abused situations. They have called their home on a farm, the Moreson Children's Haven. Their vision is to adopt more children from abused backgrounds. "We believe this is a calling from God," says Gerhard. "It hasn't been easy" says Elmane, "but we have the help of our community here at the Mission to look after the children."

Why are so few adoptions taking place?

Katinka Pieterse, Managing Director of Abba Adoptions, says cultural myths and perceptions in South Africa have led to a negative view of adoption from some sectors. "Adoptions were seen as a White thing and it was mostly about White infertile couples wanting to adopt a perfect White baby. Now we mostly need families for children from other race groups and we do not have enough parents."

The Adoption Procedure

Most couples who adopt are unable to have children of their own. For adopting parents the adoption process can take from six months to a year and involves screening and preparation processes. A couple needs to feel convinced that this is the right decision for them before they bring a new family member into their home. In a disclosed adoption, the birth mother is able to select the couple she would like to adopt her child and can receive photographs of the child and letters from the adopting parents. In America, couples are placed on waiting lists sometimes for years before they are able to adopt a child. Many of them would want to adopt children from Africa but are prevented from doing so by strict international policies that are currently monitoring child trafficking.

The South African government does not consider adoption services a worthy child welfare service to subsidise. More focus is placed on foster care. There are very few adoption agencies in South Africa, most adoptions are organised through adoption sections of welfare agencies, authorised social workers and Christian Crisis Pregnancy Organisations. Abba Adoptions, a Christian adoption agency, is currently lobbying government for support on the adoption issue and believes more should be done to promote adoption as a loving alternative to abortion.

The other side of the story: birth mothers

Many women think they could never go through with adoption. The emotional pain of bonding with a child for nine months and then separating seems unbearable. Along with that there are the »



questions of: "What would happen to my baby?"; "How could I live knowing that my child is somewhere, but I don't know where?"; "What if the adoptive family doesn't treat them well?"

Also everyone will know that the woman is pregnant, unlike with an abortion. But despite all the difficulties and pain of choosing adoption, there are many positive aspects to making this decision. The woman can carry on with her schooling, studies or career. There is no extra financial burden. If she is not ready to have children, she does not have to feel forced into early parenting.

If a woman decides to give her child up for adoption, she will remember giving birth and giving life, whereas if she decides to abort her child, she will always remember killing the baby growing inside of her. *"This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you Life and Death, blessing and cursing. Therefore, Choose Life, that both you and your children may live."* Deut 30:19.

Why do so few women choose adoption over abortion?

Adoption is not promoted in state hospitals or health care clinics as a better option to abortion. Thus few women facing an unplanned pregnancy are offered a chance to fully consider this alternative. If most women who decide to abort do so reluctantly, and some even under coercion, and if most suffer physically and psychologically afterwards, then why is abortion presented by Women's Health Groups and the Department of Health as such a liberating "reproductive choice"? Very little

is said in public school life skills education about the risks of abortion, when life begins, or about what happens in the abortion procedure. Dust bins lining the streets display adverts for Abortion Clinics, but there are few adverts for Baby Homes and Adoption Agencies. This makes one wonder if Women's Rights groups are really interested in choice at all, since abortion is promoted as the best and only choice and little is said about the alternatives. In view of the positive benefits of adoption as opposed to the terrible after-effects of abortion, why do so few women with unplanned pregnancies choose to find a new family for their unborn child? Rennie Joubert of New Life Centre Mothers' Home in Cape Town says, "Some South African cultures are still very opposed to adoption. We need to inform and educate people as to what adoption really is. Many people seem to view giving your child up for adoption as 'throwing your child away'. Many mothers would rather go for an abortion that no one knows about, rather than having to face disapproving relatives."

Christians who decide to adopt can be encouraged that they are imitating Christ through whom we received the *"Spirit of adoption"* and by whom we cry *"Abba, Father"* Rom 8:15.

"Rescue those being led away to death, hold back those staggering towards slaughter." Prov 24:11. ■

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To find out more about adoption or to support the work of Adoption Agencies, contact:

Door of Hope ministry cares for abandoned babies. Visit: www.holeinthewall.org.za or phone: (011) 432 2913

Pro-life Resources and Activism

To mobilize your congregation in the **Fight for Life**, contact **Africa Christian Action** for Pro-life resources such as books, videos, DVD's, CD's and tracts. Tel: (021) 689 4481

E-mail: info@christianaction.org.za

web: www.christianaction.org.za

Abstinence educational programmes: **True Love Waits**:
Tel: 083 799 9901, E-mail: mail@truelovewaits.org.za,
Web: www.truelovewaits.org.za

Pre and post abortion counselling:

Africa Cares for Life: Tel: (031) 903 2340

E-mail: africacares@global.co.za. Web: www.tereo.org/africacares

Abba Adoptions, visit www.abbaadoptions.co.za
or phone (012) 3437721