

America World's Statement of Mission, Vision, Values, Faith, and Principles on Adoption

Mission:

America World Adoption is dedicated to building Christian families according to God's design of adoption.

Key Verse: Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Vision:

America World desires for every adoptable orphan to be placed in a Christian home.

Values:

America World Adoption is committed to building strong relationships with staff and families while providing excellent social services that are guided by the following values:

- Integrity & Wise Stewardship
- Respect & Empathy
- Creativity
- Commitment to the best interest of Orphans and Families
- Dependency on God

Faith:

- **The Bible is the inspired, only infallible, written word of God.**

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16 (NIV)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away." Mark 13:31 (NIV)

- **There is one true God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

- **Jesus was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, died an atoning death, and was resurrected.**

"You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "Since I am a virgin?" Luke 1:31-34 (NIV)

"Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see decay." Acts 2:31 (NIV)

- **All are sinful and need justification by grace through faith and rebirth by the Holy Spirit for salvation.**

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us." Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)

Principles on Adoption:

We believe it is our responsibility to support families throughout the adoption process, especially the assessment phase, and to provide them with the resources which will enable them to become successful parents of an adopted child.

God is sovereign over all situations in life—including the lives of orphans. We believe that adopting a child is not a "mission," but rather a way in which God chooses to bless a family through one of His "good works" that He has pre-ordained for us to walk in.

We celebrate that adoption and birth are equally valid means of bringing children into families. God, through Christ, first adopted us into His family and demonstrated the mechanism of children being placed into families. We understand that Jesus was a birth child to His mother and an adoptive child to His father.

Because God values all of his children equally, no child should be defined by the way he/she enters a family. We do not assume that issues arising in the lives of adopted children are all attributable to being adopted. Just as children living with their birthparents often have emotional, physical or psychological problems,

so too, do children by adoption. We do recognize, however, that many issues faced by children by adoption are a corollary from the time these children spent living in institutions or broken homes. All children are unique and have specific needs. We believe that the problems faced by children, whether children by birth or adoption, should not define these children, but should be recognized as part of their personality, designed with a specific purpose for who they are and a part of their particular and unique place in a family.

It would not be remotely possible to outline, in detail, the many joys, principles and challenges involved in parenting a child (adopted or birth). We do, however, desire to briefly touch on some important biblical principles for caring for children that we espouse at America World.

Love and Relationship

We believe that all parents ought to love their child(ren) through what they say and do, thus building and maintaining a strong relationship with him/her. It is important that parents show their child(ren) unconditional love and tell them how much they're loved. We believe parents ought to treat every child equally—though with an understanding that every child is unique and has his/her own purpose, interests, desires, temperament and needs. We believe the greatest act of love a parent can show a child is to properly teach and train them to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Adoption is Natural

Adoption actually is just as natural as procreating, but it requires one thing that the enemy has hidden from the typical American couple. You actually have to see orphans before your heart goes out to them and your fathering or mothering desire kicks in. Perhaps that is why in James we find the command to visit widows and orphans in their distress. It takes nine months to have a biological child. Could you imagine what visiting orphans for nine months would do to your heart? In the same way that caring for your expectant wife and listening to the sounds of the baby in the womb turn your heart to your new baby, visiting orphans has the natural effect of turning your heart to them as well.

Training and Discipline

We recognize that there are many widely differing views on this topic, even among Christians, as to the best way to train and discipline children. At America World, we espouse what we believe to be a balanced, biblical-based approach to the subject.

We support biblical principles on parenting and discipline and believe they are effective tools for parenting children, when applied in a consistent and loving manner. Parents have the responsibility to discipline their children. The age of the child and the severity of the misconduct should determine the punishment.

Punishments can range from a time out or loss of a privilege, to reasonable corporal punishment.

Reasonable corporal punishment should only be administered in a consistent, sensible and loving manner with the sole purpose being to benefit the child. We also believe reasonable corporal punishment is beneficial to a child when applied appropriately. We define reasonable corporal punishment as the purposeful infliction of discomfort to a child as a means of modifying negative behavior. Reasonable corporal punishment should always be coupled with communication explaining the punishment as well as unconditional love for the child despite the need for discipline. Although we believe in and defend the parent's right to use reasonable corporal discipline, if any situation arises in which America World is aware of any form of child abuse or neglect, the proper child protection services shall be contacted.

Relationship with Jesus Christ

Just as we promote the practice of talking with a child about his/her origin and adoption from his/her earliest days, we strongly recommend parents to talk with their children about Jesus and the Gospel in the same way. Both the loving relationship built and the understanding of "right and wrong" inherent in proper discipline will form a solid foundation for his/her relationship with Jesus Christ. We believe it is important for parents to encourage their children to attend church, study the Bible and participate in individual and corporate worship.

America World's Responsibilities

As part of our initial guidance, we assess each family's situation, including current family makeup, living environment, parenting philosophies and other aspects of the family's framework to provide as much help in the areas of need as possible. Because of the tremendous impact of the parenting philosophy on the ultimate welfare of the child, we make a concerted effort to assess their philosophies within a biblical context and encourage parents to seek appropriate resources, including Christian and/or pastoral counsel, books, seminars, etc. to improve parenting skills.

We believe children should only be placed into families that abide by biblically mandated relationships (heterosexual marriage, or single non-homosexual parenthood). Above all, holiness unto the Lord should be strived for in all relationships.

We believe God has given us, as an agency, the responsibility to do our best to place orphans into safe and loving Christian homes where they will be given the opportunity to know Jesus as their Savior and to be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.