

Michael and Amy Monroe with their four children: (l-r) Miles, 7; Grant, 6; and twins Carter and Kate, 3.



An adoption journey

One couple's journey led to a new community of families called Tapestry, woven together to share God's blessing of adoption.

PART 1: CHOSEN FAMILY

By *Jim Henry*

For Michael and Amy Monroe, the adoption journey began with a pre-dawn phone call. Was this a dream? Or was the voice on the other end of the line really saying, "You don't know who I am, but I have a baby for you."

The Dallas, Texas couple had struggled for a year with infertility before deciding against the usual medical options, instead moving

ahead with the adoption process in April of 2000.

"We realized very quickly that it was going to take a lot of intervention, and that was not what we wanted," says Amy.

The couple decided to try an independent, private adoption. "We sent letters to 250 people, everyone we knew and our parents knew," recalls Amy. "About four months after our letters went out we received a phone call at about 5:45 in the morning."

The stranger who called the Monroes that morning had information about a baby boy being placed for adoption. It seems one of his employees knew the baby's birth mother and told her boss about the situation.

As it happened, the man's neighbors had received one of the letters. When the man mentioned the situation to the neighbors, he was given Michael and Amy's phone number.

Before making the call to the Monroes, however, the

man stayed up all night, praying until the early morning hours. "I think 5:45 was as late as he possibly could wait before calling," Michael says.

New parents generally have nine months to prepare. Amy and Michael found themselves facing parenthood and a newborn with almost no warning.

"It was hard," Amy recalls. "We didn't know what we were doing, but we felt this was an opportunity that had been put before us. We stayed up all night praying, soul searching and talking."

The Monroes decided to take the leap of faith. "We went to the home of the man who had called us and met Miles, our son, and his birth mom and then went back the next day and brought him home," Amy says. "We came home to a house full of friends and family and presents, and it was unbelievable. We just had tons of people there to love us and be excited for us, and that made it much, much easier."

Eighteen months later, in April 2002, the Monroes were ready to grow their family. They again sent out letters seeking a private adoption, but they also signed on with an agency, a decision that soon proved successful. In just three short weeks, the agency called and soon after, the Monroes were on a plane to pick up their second son, Grant, an infant.

"Even though we had adopted before, it was a surre-



Sharing a smile for the camera: (l-r) Carter, Miles, Grant, and Kate.

al and joyous experience," Amy said. "After a very short time at the hospital, we drove back to the airport and were home by 5 pm that same day. We had left earlier and returned with our new son and a new baby brother for Miles, in that seat."

Two years passed, and the Monroes were proud parents raising two sons from domestic adoptions, but they weren't finished yet. Still wanting a larger family, they decided to adopt again, this time internationally, and this time, a baby girl.

"We wanted to adopt from Korea," Amy says. "I was okay with not having a tiny infant, but I wanted a baby that was as young as possible."

Typically, children placed for international adoption are older, a year of age at least. "In Korea at that time, the

children usually came home at about four or five months of age," Amy says. "We wanted a little girl since we had two boys."

This time Michael and Amy found themselves waiting over a year before getting a call from their international adoption agency in the summer of 2004. The news was not what they expected.

Amy recalls the conversation: "They said, 'We don't have a little girl from Korea, but we have a little girl from Guatemala, and she has a twin brother. What do you think about that? Could you call us back in a few hours and let us know?' And I thought, I'm not sure a few hours is enough time to process all that, going from two children to four children."

At the time, Michael's career had the family living temporarily in Peru. "We →



Making memories: Grant and Kate enjoying a special moment together

thought we were going to have to move home,” Amy says. “We did a lot of praying and talking through the night and decided that Kate and Carter would come to our family from Guatemala. It was certainly not what we expected, but it’s been a blessing, nonetheless.”

Understandably, financial concerns weigh heavily for most couples considering adoption, but Michael sees the journey as profoundly spiritual.

“The adoption process will deepen your prayer life, beyond superficial prayers, because you’re talking about things like, ‘Will this child who’s not born to us become

part of our family forever?’ My Sunday school background didn’t prepare me for prayers along those lines.”

Michael says the process drove home the point that God redeems broken lives. “We were broken. We had experienced infertility, and yet, through the miracle of adoption, God allowed us to pursue the dream of having children that we could love and call our very own.”

Not that finances weren’t an issue for Michael and Amy. Average domestic adoption costs can reach \$20,000, while international costs may top \$30,000.

Amy’s parents, Richard and Ginger Sconyers, helped

the young couple financially and in the process created an instant bond with their new grandchildren.

“I thought it was fantastic,” Richard says. “I love my grandchildren and would take as many as they would give me no matter how they came to our family. Ginger and I discussed it and decided that there wasn’t anything better that we could have done with the resources God had blessed us with over the years.”

Amy reflects on growing up in a frugal household: “My mom used to joke that my dad was way too tight, but I think now she appreciates that my dad was very conscientious with their money and saved a lot.

“They absolutely have been very good stewards of their finances, never expecting to be paying for adoptions. They’ve told us they’d do it 10 times over if they could to have the grandchildren that they have. My dad always says, ‘It’s just money.’ They could not love our kids more.”

Editor’s note: In Part 2 of “An Adoption Journey,” see how Michael and Amy Monroe used their experience and passion to grow Tapestry, a ministry that provides support, education, and a sense of community for adoptive and foster families in the Dallas area.

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