

Adoption in the Czech Republic

By: John and Kelsie Mullen

"The religious observance that God the Father considers pure and faultless is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being contaminated by the world." James 1:27

Meet Ester Moriah Mullen



God brought Ester Moriah our family in 2003, at the age of 90 days. We drove to Kolin and were thrilled to meet her for the first time! We brought her home approximately one year after we started the adoption process. The joy of taking her home and seeing God's answer to our prayer was also mixed with a deep sadness for all the other babies who are left in these homes with no family. The staff at the orphanage was professional and the rooms were clean, but there is simply not enough love for children in institutional care. In the Czech Republic there are simply not enough families who will take these children into their homes... (the Czech Republic has one of the highest per capita number of children in orphanages in Europe).

We would like to facilitate the adoption of Czech babies into loving Christian homes by providing information and support. If you are interested in adopting a Czech baby you may find helpful information on www.adopce.com.

Also, here is a link written by an American couple who recently went through the adoption process in Prague: <http://www.thomasfamilyweb.net/BabyJourney.htm>
Here you will find many helpful links and dialogue about what it is like to walk through the process.

Concerns about Adoption:

Concern #1: *“The process is too difficult.”*

There is a big misconception in this country that adoption is next to impossible and that couples will have to wait years to get a child. This is simply not true.

If you are open to receive a non-white baby, the waiting time is even less. Our experience was excellent and very positive. The process was reasonable, and for locals, without any fees.

Concern #2: *“There is too much risk involved in adopting an unknown child.”*

It is true that there is a risk involved. One must take risks in life. Anything worth having will involve a degree of risk and unpredictability. All babies and children are thoroughly examined and tested before placed in homes. Some things (Autism, for example) don't show up until later. However, there is also risk of disease and disability with any pregnancy. Adoption actually has less risk than pregnancy!

Concern #3: *“I am afraid I could not love an adopted child as much as my own.”*

The 'feeling' of love is subjective. Love is a decision put into action. Providing a loving affectionate home for a child that otherwise would not feel loved is a special gift to the child, and you will be blessed in return. Our experience has been we equally love our three children and biological differences do not change paternal feelings.

Note: We don't feel everyone should adopt. We advocate that Christian couples who have the emotional maturity and financial means to care for a child would prayerfully consider adoption. What would the world be like if every Christian couple adopted one child into their homes? There is no greater discipleship opportunity than adoption.

Where to Start?

For those who reside in the Czech Republic

For those wishing to adopt and who are either Czech citizens or foreigners who have a valid long-term visa to live and work in the Czech Republic, you must go to the city hall (Metsky Urad) closest to where you live. If you do not speak Czech fluently, you should bring a translator with you. There are usually social workers who work in these offices on Mondays and Wednesdays. This social worker will help you get on the right road to the adoption process. For non-Czechs, you may contact our church office if you would like to employ a local interpreter to assist you in the adoption process at pcf@praguefellowship.cz.

For Americans who live in the Czech Republic, there are two ways for the baby to become an American citizen. The first option involves cooperating with the INS office in Vienna and the American Embassy in Prague. This way is quicker, but more expensive (the tax savings from having an extra dependant on a US tax return can easily offset the extra cost).

The other option is to have the child live with you for two years and then apply for the child to come into the US with an immigration visa. It is cheaper, but the child cannot come into the US before completing the two years and obtaining an immigrant visa (about \$700). If you try to bring the child in sooner, for example with a tourist visa, you are forced back to option #1 with INS. It is difficult to obtain a social security number for your adopted child until you have obtained the immigrant visa (although we heard you can try opening a US bank account in the child's name).

For those wanting to go with option #1, adoption home studies require qualified social workers. Here is contact information for an American social worker (based in Vienna) that we found posted at the American Embassy in Prague (we have not met him):

Gerald Bowman, LCSW, ACSW
Tel./Fax: +43-(0)89-54639903
Email: homestudy@geraldbowman.de
Web: www.GeraldBowman.com

Here is the contact information for the American Embassy in Prague:

American Embassy in Prague:
American Embassy Citizen Services Unit
U.S. Embassy
Trziste 15
118 01 Prague 1
Czech Republic
Tel: (when calling from the states) 011 (420) 257 022 000
Fax: (420) 257 534 028
Web site: <http://www.usembassy.cz>

For Americans who reside in America

Because of the Hague Convention, Americans (who reside in America and not in the Czech Republic) may not adopt Czech and Slovak babies, yet. A source at the American Embassy told me that she believed that from the American side, Americans who reside in America will be able to adopt Czech and Slovak babies by the end of 2006! They will have to go through the International Office in Brno, address listed below.

Please read the American State Department website for more details:

http://travel.state.gov/family/adoption/country/country_371.html

You may contact our church office if you would like to employ a local Czech person to assist you through the process by emailing us at pcf@praguefellowship.cz.

For other nationalities who do not live in the Czech Republic

If you are another nationality, for example Danish, you must go through the International Adoption Office in Brno, Czech Republic.

Contact:

Agency of International Legal Protection of Children, Benešova 22, 602 00 Brno,
Director – statutory authority, door nr. 608 JUDr. Rostislav Záleský,

Tel.: +420 542 212 836
Email: rzalesky@iol.cz
www.adopce.com

If you are considering adoption, we recommend that you call upon your local Christian community/ pastor and leaders to support you in this high calling. We believe it is not only the calling of individuals, but the calling of communities of faith, as Bible-believing followers of Jesus. For those who have been unable to physically have children, adoption is an invitation to “use all things together for good” and glorify Christ in your situation. As we care for orphans we can be sure we receive the applause of Heaven and feel God smiling on us. ☺