

# ADOPTION

## & ANSWERS TO PRAYER

*After many heartaches, our family grew in ways we hadn't anticipated.*

By **Patrícia Samways Abilhôa**

**O**n a beautiful September afternoon in 1999, my husband and I were sealed in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. A year later, we were hoping to have a child.

I loved the children I worked with in Primary, and I longed to have a child of my own. I had embroidered a layette, and the nursery in our home was ready. After months of attempts and frustrating examinations, I finally became pregnant. I will never forget the joy I felt that day. We told everyone we saw, we dreamed, we cried, and all our thoughts turned toward that baby. We learned that our baby was a boy, and we decided we would name him Eduardo.

### **Fighting to Save Our Baby**

Just before Easter, I started feeling very sick, even more than normal. One morning when I woke up I discovered I was losing a lot of blood. I started praying, desperately, for God to save my son.

At the hospital, the doctor told me the bad news: at five months into my pregnancy, I was miscarrying

the baby. There was no way to have known my condition before the pregnancy, and I learned that there was just a very small chance of saving him. I had to stay in bed until the baby was born, without getting up for anything.

We tried for five days. I vomited and was in pain. When I had contractions, I was given medication to stop them. It made me sleep. My husband gave me a blessing, and I remember him whispering into my ear, over and over, "With God, nothing is impossible." This brought relief to my heart, and I knew God could save my baby. I fought for him and asked the Lord to take me but save my baby.

But all the attempts to save him were in vain. My little baby could not stand so much medication, and he died. Then I had a negative reaction to the anesthetic used in the surgery, and I became very sick. I stayed in the hospital for 15 days, and I remember having my husband praying by my side or giving me a blessing.

It was terrible returning home and seeing everything we had prepared for the baby who would never arrive. Many times I asked, "Why me?" But my heart was calmed as I recalled that one of my Church leaders had counseled me to avoid thinking that way.





## WE BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

"We believe in families, and we believe in children. . . .

"What a wonderful blessing we have to receive sons and daughters of God into our home. . . .

"Families are central to God's eternal plan. I testify of the great blessing of children and of the happiness they will bring us in this life and in the eternities."

Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Children," *Ensign*, Nov. 2011, 28, 31.



*Above: Camilla and her family at the São Paulo Brazil Temple on the day she was sealed to her adoptive parents, March 13, 2004. Right: Camilla dressed in white at the temple. Far right: The Abilhôa family at the Curitiba Brazil Temple in 2015.*



## Another Setback

A few months later I was pregnant again. We planned a surgery to help with my condition, and I was hopeful that everything would go right. Every day that passed increased my confidence. But before I could have the surgery, when I was three months along, I suffered another miscarriage.

I felt devastated as a woman. I thought that I must be so bad that God didn't want me to have children. When I saw beggars on the street with five or six children asking for alms, I thought, "God will not give a child to me; why does He give so many to them?" We tried innumerable and exhausting treatments, and the stress was immense. Although everyone told us that we were young and that we would have many children, I did not believe them. But we continued serving the Lord. Even when I did not feel like serving, I knew that there was work to be done, and my Church calling brought me joy.

## Considering Adoption

I remember about this time saying a fervent prayer to the Lord asking for help and then falling asleep. The ring of the telephone woke me, and it was my aunt. She said she had dreamed about me, and she felt that I should consider

adopting a child. I felt that the call was an answer to my prayer, and the possibility of adoption brought me peace. In my family there are many adopted children. My husband was reluctant at first, but after we talked, we looked into it. I was undergoing treatment again to try for another child, but we got on the list for adoption too. We decided that whatever happened first we would accept as the Lord's will.

We talked with a very beloved Church leader and told him of our difficulty in having children. He kindly reminded us that what we needed for exaltation was a solid marriage, whether or not children came to us. This helped to alleviate our anxiety.

We completed the paperwork for adoption, and about three months later we found out that there was a newborn baby girl who had been abandoned. She was in the hospital, and if she survived, she could be ours. A few days later we found out that she was out of the hospital and in an orphanage about five hours away from us.

We drove to the orphanage to meet her. When we walked in the door we heard a baby crying. When they put her into my arms, she stopped crying immediately and smiled at me in a way I have never seen from a newborn. I immediately



## CONSIDERING ADOPTION?

*When looking at the possibility of adoption, it's important to be well informed. Consider these suggestions from LDS Family Services.*

If you feel inspired to adopt a child, be sure you know and conform with all the laws and requirements of the governing agencies involved. This will almost always require you to seek advice from an attorney specializing in adoption or from a licensed adoption agency. You should also seek to educate yourself on the biological, psychological, and social aspects that are often a part of the adoption experience.

called her my daughter, my sweet Camilla. I was nervous and apprehensive until we were able to bring her home one week later. When we brought her into the nursery, she looked around and went right to sleep, just like she knew she was home. When seeing her, people said that this child fell into a cradle of gold, but we always said, “No, it was she who brought gold into our lives.”

### Trusting in God

I do not know why things happen the way they do, but I have learned to trust in God. He heard every word that I said to Him and knew everything that happened to my babies. I felt in my heart that the Lord was giving me what I had asked of Him. I went through so much to have my Camilla with me. She is an angel sent from God. I know that she is my daughter but that for some reason she could not be born from my womb. The Lord provided everything for her to come into my arms.

When Camilla was seven months old, I discovered I was pregnant again. I did everything the doctor told me to and remained in bed for the greater part of the day for eight months. We rejoiced when our son, Murilo, was born.

When Murilo was four months old and Camilla was 18 months old, Camilla was sealed to us in the newly rededicated São Paulo Brazil Temple. Our daughter smiled like an angel and kept repeating “eternal family” over and over again.

I felt strongly in my heart that we should have another baby. My husband was reluctant at first, but he soon received spiritual confirmation as well. After a difficult and complicated pregnancy, we were blessed with another baby boy, Gustavo. Soon after, my husband became seriously ill, and although he eventually got well, a side effect of the treatment was that we could have no more children. We knew that Gustavo had come at just the right time. If we had not heeded our feelings, we would not have had another chance to have our little boy.

Each of our children is a miracle, and now our eternal family is complete. Without a doubt, God is the safe harbor when there are storms in our lives. I have learned that my prayers do not need to be answered when and how I wish. I have to trust in the timing of the Lord. Even when requests are righteous, it is He who decides when and how to bless us. ■

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