

Starting an Adoption Agency and the Major Benefits of Adoption

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### Abstract

Adoption impacts families' lives. There are many benefits of adoption. Some key concepts of adoption are what the process of adoption entails and the different decisions potential adoptive parents need to make when starting the process, a philosophy and mission in terms of a business entity and their importance to an adoption firm, how to start a law firm as a business within the United States, and how to adapt that business to expand to areas like South Asia. South Asian etiquette issues need to be considered and understood from a business perspective. Another area to consider when doing international adoption is the legal facts as to how to start a business in India. Lastly, there are Biblical reasons for why adoption is important to God and adoption can potentially lead to the salvation of many people.

### Starting an Adoption Agency and the Major Benefits of Adoption

Child adoption is a growing need throughout the world. Many children are born today without a family to care for them and without a home to even live in. Weathersbee (2012) talked specifically about North Florida when he said that family is the most important thing missing in many children's lives due to drug abuse, domestic violence, and neglect. While many do not hear about what is happening all around the country to these children who are abused and neglected, these occurrences are quite common in the United States as well as in foreign countries. God tells the church through His word in James 1:27, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (English Standard Version). God has called His people to help the children of the world who are without families and without homes. One successful way to accomplish this task is through adoption. Every child deserves to belong to a family and to be loved, and adoption is a great vehicle and tool to allow this love to be displayed to orphans and other children who are without families. It is important to understand how adoption is beneficial and impacts families, discuss the process of adoption and how it works, solidify a strong philosophy and mission through starting an adoption law firm, view how an adoption law firm would look as a business entity, and look to how that firm could expand its scope and reach beyond simply domestic and single country adoptions.

### **Adoption's Impact**

Adoption is important and impacts families in tremendous ways (How to Adopt, 2003). Numerous examples exist of children giving testimony to how a family adopting them saved them from harm, death, and hopelessness. While "there is a broad range of

feelings and attitudes among adoptees” (Krementz, 1994, p. ix), many children who have been adopted have spoken about how they can now live happy and joyful lives.

One example is a young lady named Grace Rose Del (Del, 2011). Her birth name was So Yoon Kim and she was born in Korea. She described her family was a blessing and gift from God and she does not know where she would be if it were not for her Italian family that adopted her. She realized from a young age that her family looked different from her, but they still treated her the same. As she grew older and learned what adoption was and the true meaning of family, she was able to say that her Italian family was her true family. Grace Del (2011) stated in her article, “I have learned to believe that it does not matter where you come from, because a family is a special bond between people that live together, care for one another and love one another” (p. 20). Many other stories like Grace’s exist throughout the world because of families who are willing to reach out and help orphans and children who are in need of a family.

Another example of a child who has been adopted is thirteen-year-old Jake. Jake was adopted when he was a little older than two. He said he did not really understand the concept of adoption and how it worked, but after years of love and nurture from his adoptive parents, he realized that those parents were in fact his true parents. He personally has no desire to seek out his birthparents because he knows who his real family is and who truly loves and cares for him (Krementz, 1994).

Adoption within the United States is also beneficial to the community. States can even offer financial incentives to adopt (Craig, Cohen, & Pines 2011). Not only does adoption impact children’s lives, but it also impacts the lives of the family who adopts. A family can adopt for any number of reasons; some of the most common motives include

infertility, a desire to save a child's life, and a desire to have a child of another ethnicity. In an interview with Rhonda Redmon (2014, spoken interview)—a mother who recently adopted five Ukrainian children—she described how adoption impacted her and her family's lives. She noted that her family has now doubled because of the inclusion of the five new children, from five to ten. She talked about how much money they originally intended to spend and how much they spent in the end because of all the obstacles they had to endure. Her family's monthly expenses have now gone up tremendously, and because they do not have a car that can hold the entire family, they have to drive in separate vehicles everywhere they go. For their biological children, Rhonda noted that they have to share everything they own now with the new addition to their family. In regards to the adopted children, one of them could have possibly died from epilepsy if not brought to the United States, because he needed an MRI and no proper medical attention existed where the child was from. She said that the normal routines of life have changed, but one of the biggest impacts that adoption has had is on the community around them, from their church family, to next-door neighbors, to coworkers and even acquaintances. People have even come to know Christ throughout the entire process because of how God worked through their family to tell others about why they adopted and their radical obedience to God. Rhonda said, "Our faith was strengthened through God bringing us through the entire process. Our finances have been struggling but God is continuously faithful and everything we need is there because of his faithfulness, not ours" (2014, spoken interview).

Adoption is important and as long as the reason a family wants to adopt is positive, the outcome tends to be the same—a child acquires a family to provide for him

or her, and God is pleased because of how one is following His command to love and help the orphans and those in need. Adoption of children here on earth is very similar to that of how God adopts those into His family who call upon His name and put their faith in Him. David Platt (2013) in his book *Follow Me* talked about how he and his wife went through the process of adoption. Platt described how he became more aware of how much God truly loves him because of the process he and his wife endured. The biggest lesson that Platt learned was that “adoption like this begins with a parent’s initiative, not a child’s idea” (p. 28). He went on in his explanation and said something truly amazing:

It seems obvious, but it is especially important: this precious ten-month-old boy did not invite us to come to him in Kazakhstan to bring him into our family; he didn’t even know to ask for such a thing. No, this orphaned child became our cherished son because of a love that was entirely beyond his imagination and completely outside of his control. He did not pursue us, for he was utterly unable to do so. Instead, we pursued him. This is the heart of Christianity, and we are prone to miss it when we describe becoming a follower of Jesus as inviting him into our hearts. The reality of the gospel is that we do not become God’s children ultimately because of initiative in us, and he does not provide salvation primarily because of an invitation from us. Instead, before we were ever born, God was working to adopt us. (Platt, 2013, p. 28-29)

This passage from Platt’s book speaks immensely to how similar God thought of His children before they were even born, and how many parents looking to adopt start the process before a child is ever born. To reiterate what Platt (2013) said, God initiated humans to come to Him; humans did not initiate the relationship because they are “utterly

unable to do so” (p. 29). Rhonda Redmon responded to the question of whether Christianity and adoption were paralleled, and answered, “Absolutely. Why wouldn’t it be?” (2014, spoken interview). Christianity and adoption both have a strong stance on redemption and love, and Rhonda captured that through her interview. Platt even went deeper into his discussion on adoption and talked about certain conversations he had with people who asked him if he ever met the mother of the child they adopted. Platt said that he always responds to this question with, “Well, yes, I’m actually married to her. Her name is Heather” (p. 97). With this illustration, Platt spoke about the struggle that all adoptive parents have when dealing with the idea of whether the child is truly “theirs.” Almost every adoptive parent will say that the child is in fact theirs and is a part of his or her family. Platt compared this with how God views His children and noted that Christians are in fact God’s children; they are not fake or pretend children. Platt (2013) made the following statement about his son and how God relates to Christians as his children:

Today, Caleb knows that I’m his dad and he’s my son—not just because of the love I showed by traveling to Kazakhstan years ago to adopt him, but because of the love I show him today. Without question, while his status in our family is based on what a judge declared years ago, his life is based on our relationship every day as we play cars, throw the baseball, run around the yard, and sing songs together. This picture of joy in earthly adoption provides just a small glimpse of a far greater joy found in heavenly adoption. Without question, our status before God was settled at the moment we turned from our sin and ourselves and trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord. But our lives are based on the love relationship we



enjoy and experience every moment of every day as God our Father saturates us as his children with his affection. (p. 99)

It is truly amazing to see how adoption and Christianity are not only so closely woven together, but also how awesome God is to provide for each one of His children a life that they do not deserve. Because of this relationship between adoption and Christianity, the act of adoption can provide even more freedom and potential to glorify God's name and be beneficial to any community in the world.

### **Process of Adoption**

The process of adoption can be grueling, but because of many differing laws in almost every state and country, one would need to examine the specific laws and procedures in order to do adoption in a certain state or region.

### **History of International Adoption**

International adoption first started in the United States in the mid-1950s with Harry Holt. He and his wife sent money to help Korean children shortly after the Korean War because of a film that described the situations these children were living in. After a while, sending money and clothes did not seem like enough for the Holts, so they came to the realization that bringing those kids (up to eight) to their home seemed more sufficient since they needed a family. The family soon learned that it would be impossible to adopt the kids unless Congress passed a special type of law. Shortly thereafter, the law was passed and the Holts started Holt International Children's Services. Many other agencies appeared quickly after, but the Holt's agency became the largest in the United States by the early 1970s. The Holts used faith and determination in God to allow them to forge a path of enacting new laws and bringing about a process of international adoption for

many families to use and benefit from in the future (Erichsen, 2007). While not every family who adopts is Christian or is adopting for Biblical reasons, the foundation of international adoption was based on faith in God and perseverance to save children's lives.

Adoption has seen a tremendous amount of growth in recent years (How to Adopt, 2006). "Since 2000, there was a total of 2,058,915 adopted children in the United States" (Adoption Statistics, 2014, para.14). Within that number, 242,602 of those adoptions were inter-country adoptions (Statistics, 2013). Inter-country adoptions peaked in number in the year 2004 and have been steadily decreasing ever since (this statistic is based on adoptive parents being strictly within the United States adopting children from other countries). This occurrence most likely resulted from stricter laws and regulations being implemented around the world. The most common country American parents adopt from is China. In the past four years California was the state with the highest number of those adoptions (Statistics, 2013). "In 2013, 52% of couples adopted because of infertility and 16% of couples did so to have a sibling for their biological child" (Adoption Statistics, 2014, para. 14). Adoption has been effective in recent years, but most important, "[Nine] out of every 10 adoptive couples say they have a great relationship with their adopted child with 87% of them saying they would adopt again if they could" (Adoption Statistics, 2014, para. 15). From this one can infer that adoption is indeed powerful and worth the time and money a couple or family puts into it.

Negative ideas and comments surround the idea of international adoption. Some people think that adoption can seem like shopping for a child. Some people think that international adoption is unnecessary when there are children within the United States

who need homes and families. Others even think that adopting a child is not cost effective. However, based on Scripture, caring for orphans should never be replaced with excuses such as it costs too much money, or it is not feasible to adopt from other countries when we have children here who need homes, because children across the world should not be neglected. People need to respond to the needs of children and be obedient to God no matter the cost simply because there are children and families who are in need of the love of God.

### **Agency or Independent**

The adoption process starts with a choice of whether one would like to adopt through an adoption agency or privately. The statistics for agency and independent adoptions are split nearly down the middle year after year. When adopting through an agency, the agency coordinates between the parents who want to adopt and the child or children who are in need of a home. Through private, or independent, adoption, the lawyer will arrange meetings and communication between the birth parents and the parents looking to adopt (Parents Say, 2012). Deciding between the two forms of adoption really all depends on one's preference.

**Adopting through an agency.** In terms of adopting through an agency, the website Parents Say has a terrific set of steps for how to go about choosing the best agency that would be the most beneficial for one's family. The first step they suggested is to create a list of questions (Parents Say, 2012). These questions should be designed to narrow one's choices of agencies by asking questions such as, "What's the usual waiting time? What's the agency fee? What's the average cost of adoption with your agency?" (Parents Say, 2012, para. 5). The next step is to visit several different agencies to get a

feel for how that agency or firm handles their adoptions and specifically what their character and morals are that one may be looking for. Third, a person looking to adopt should “get recommendations from people who’ve been through it” (Parents Say, 2012, para. 7). A person who has already adopted and has gone through the entire process is usually a credible source for how a certain adoption agency treated that person and whether the agency did a thorough job. The last step is to find the agency that provides the service for the specific type of adoption one wants (Parents Say, 2012). For instance, if one wants to adopt a child internationally, he or she needs to find an agency that can perform international adoptions.

**Adopting through private or independent means.** “In a private or independent adoption, prospective adoptive parents are advised by an adoption attorney, instead of working with an adoption agency” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 3). People prefer this type of adoption because many view this as the more intimate option and “all of the services that are traditionally provided to the parties in an agency adoption can also be provided in an independent adoption” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 3). When dealing with an agency, the process can seem a little offsetting because one is just dealing with a business, instead of the actual parents of the child one may be adopting; however, if one lives in Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, or Massachusetts, he or she must adopt through an agency—unless that person simply performs the adoption through another state—because independent adoption is not authorized in those states (Independent Adoption, 2013). Many differences exist between agency and independent adoptions. During an adoption through an agency, the agency normally conducts research and identifies birthparents and no contact is ever made between mother and adoptive parents,

while “in a typical independent adoption, the prospective parents take an active role in identifying a birthmother, usually by networking, advertising, or by using the Internet” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 14). The adoptive parents and birthparents communicate, while the adoption lawyer merely facilitates the process and provides the legal services sufficient to complete the process.

Another major difference between independent and agency adoption is in how the birth parents give consent for adoption. “In an agency adoption, the birthparents relinquish their parental rights to an agency, and the agency, in turn, consents to an adoption by specific adoptive parents. In independent adoption, the birthparents give their consent directly to the adoptive parents” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 12).

Another difference is that independent adoption lawyers tend to always put the interests of the person who is adopting first. This fact creates an atmosphere of openness between adoptive parents, birthparents, the lawyer and his or her firm, and possibly even the child or children who are being adopted. Some of the reasons people tend to prefer independent adoption include “a perception that agencies are bureaucratic; a desire to play an active role in selection of the adoptive parents; and a desire for the child to go directly into the physical custody of the adoptive parents rather than into temporary foster care” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 5). Some other benefits that can come from independent adoption “include the possibility of avoiding the long waiting periods that may occur with agency adoptions and the ability to adopt even without meeting the sometimes arbitrary standards that may be imposed by agencies” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 9). However, risks do exist with independent adoption. “While on average adoptive parents complete independent adoptions within 12 to 18 months, some wait

years for a baby, or even give up on adoption” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 9).

There is always the risk of a birthparent deciding not to go through with the process the moment before papers are to be signed. “Fewer than 1% of final adoptions are contested, however” (Independent Adoption, 2013, para. 9), showing that the likelihood of something happens is rare when dealing with an attorney or firm that is knowledgeable of the law and efficient at what they do.

### **The Process Can Be Difficult**

“International adoption can be long and in many ways grueling. Some have described it as a paperwork pregnancy” (Platt, 2013, p. 26). Rhonda Redmon even described she never desires to have to go through the process again for the rest of her life, even though she would do it again if the Lord called her to. She talked about how the process can be corrupt no matter what country one is adopting from (she adopted from Ukraine); the process is not monitored and not streamlined; the laws are not held to; someone always wants something; and there is a price for everything, and that price is always more than it is supposed to be. She even claimed that no one cares for the child or children; the people just want money and see an opportunity to take advantage of someone and make a little extra money for themselves. Adoption is continuously changing every year in almost every nation. Nations join and leave the Hague Convention for several reasons, but a majority of countries do not enforce laws and regulations for adoptions between countries. Many countries do not see the process as important. Because of this very reason, something needs to be done to not only change the mindset of nations, but to also provide a way to create sustainable and unchanging modes of adoption between countries, so children can have homes and families that they deserve.

Craig et al. (2011) said it perfectly when they stated, “Adopting a child from a foreign country is wonderful. However, starting the process at home is a true display of love” (para. 6).

### **Philosophy and Mission of an Adoption Law Firm**

When looking at starting a business that assists with the process of adoption, the first step is to decide between starting an adoption agency or an adoption firm that provides independent adoption services. As discussed earlier, independent adoption seems to be a better and more likely choice by those looking to adopt, so an independent adoption firm would more than likely be the best option. After the decision has been made to establish an independent adoption firm, a major decision must be made on what the mission and philosophy of the firm will include. Because of the importance of the adoption process to families and those looking to adopt, a firm must stand strong on its foundational principles and always aim to bring its mission to fruition. For instance, a lady by the name of Deborah talked about her family’s decision on which adoption firm they were going to choose and she stated that the one they chose was “a nonprofit organization that focuses on the birth mother, not on moving babies from birth families to adoptive families. This was important for us; we never liked the idea of the ‘baby-selling racket’” (Parents Say, 2012, para. 10). Potential adoptive parents want to make sure that the adoption firm they choose is one that is going to edify, protect, and help with the intense process they are about to go through. An adoption firm needs a mission and philosophy because of the extreme emotional complexities that come with adopting a child. So when deciding on what the mission and philosophy of the firm are going to endorse, it is important to keep in mind the attitude, beliefs, and intentions behind the

people the firm are going to help, and, most important, who the firm intends to extend its services to.

### **Philosophy**

Almost every business operates within a framework or mindset. This framework can be considered the philosophy of how the business thinks. For an adoption firm, a philosophy needs to include several aspects, the main factors being why the firm exists and how the firm will operate in terms of ethical standards. First, the firm must understand why it is doing business. A good reason for why an adoption firm would want to do business is to bring children from places of corrupt violence and inhospitable environments without families and homes to a place where a loving family is waiting to bring them to a safe and secure home. One adoption firm called Adoption Network Law Center (ANLC), based in California, has a great philosophy and view of adoption. Their website stated, “ANLC is able to help pregnant women through crisis situations while assisting hopeful Adoptive Parents in attaining their ultimate goal to parent;” it even had a slogan; “Saving Babies. Building Families” (About Adoption Network, 2013, para. 2). An adoption firm must have a strong attitude and stance for who it is and what it stands for as an entity. ANLC also stated, “We are not an adoption agency. Our services may be similar to those of an adoption agency but we offer much more, including the protection and peace of mind of reputable legal services” (About Adoption Network, 2013, para. 4). As a business that provides adoption legal services, it must have a strong foundational principle of what it wants to accomplish and be true to that.

Adoption firms should also be heavily interested in how to make the process of adoption as simple as possible for those looking to adopt; this idea can include making



the firm's services affordable and cost effective for the family, possibly even providing the services for free (while of course being funded from an outside party). Another factor to consider for the firm is what type of people it wants to assist. A substantial number of people who cannot have children are looking to adopt, and this may be a specific demographic the firm can look to help by providing services for mainly those who physically cannot have children and are passionate in pursuing adoption for the sole purpose of having children. While it may seem obvious, an adoption firm must also operate under strict legal and ethical parameters. Because of these boundaries, an adoption firm must foremost have a mindset of always doing what is best for the client, as well as doing what is best for the child or children who is or are being adopted. Making money should never be of utmost importance in this type of firm, mainly because money has the potential to corrupt the actions and attitudes of attorneys within the firm, as well as the leaders and managers of the firm. If the firm maintains a strict adherence to protecting the lives of the innocent children and working to do everything in its legal power to provide homes for these children, the firm will be able to succeed and avoid unethical and demoralizing events that can ruin the firm's reputation and business.

### **Mission**

A mission or mission statement is different from a philosophy of a business in that a mission reflects the goals a firm sets forth to achieve and what the firm intends to accomplish. ANLC also had a great mission statement: "Set the Gold Standard by which every adoption entity nationwide will be measured. Motivate one another to perform at 100% of our capability" (About Adoption Network, 2013, para. 4). ANLC's mission is outstanding for an adoption firm because it encompasses a standard that the organization

wants to achieve and also sets the example for every other adoption agency or firm to look to for direction. Since adoption is a strategically challenging process, a firm must have a mission that is all encompassing, but clear enough for its employees to know how to behave. The statement should be understandable and thoroughly memorized by every individual within the firm. The mission statement should also be the last filter for every decision made by a firm. No decision should be made that goes against the mission statement or does not benefit or progress the originally intended goals and pursuits of the organization. A strong mission for an adoption firm would include ideas such as maintaining a steady focus on the importance of adoption and how it benefits families, and that no matter how tough a journey or where it might lead, the firm will remain faithful to God first, the children second, and the client's third, with everything else following after. Another good idea for an adoption firm would be to incorporate a code of ethics for all the employees, managers, and owners to live by in order to ensure that the tough decisions are handled in a manner that is consistent with the mission of the firm.

### **Adoption Law Firm as a Business Entity**

#### **Type of Business Entity**

An adoption law firm can potentially become many different types of business entities. For instance, the firm could become a partnership, LLC, or possibly even a corporation; however, when first starting this type of firm, an entrepreneurial viewpoint could be the best option. In essence, this business would be a sole proprietorship and maybe eventually a partnership. This choice is based on the idea that it is easy to create, the owner could make his or her own decisions on what God is leading him or her to do, and the sole proprietor would not have to answer to anyone, so flexibility in making

decisions would be more achievable. A sole proprietorship is beneficial in various ways, but the most important is that the owner has complete control over the business. While remaining fully liable for everything that happens under the business' name, the owner can be sued for any action taken by the business, but as long as risks are mitigated, the business can operate at a very efficient pace in whichever way the owner would like it to. If the business only hires very few people who are trustworthy and respected, the organization can thrive to meet its goals and maintain the integrity of its mission statement, especially if the business hires an expert or professional in the field of adoption. As a partnership, these same goals and benefits can be achieved and taken advantage of, but it will be easier because liabilities and management would not be so heavy on just the sole proprietor. Deborah's family chose their adoption firm because of one single lawyer who had a great reputation as an adoption lawyer. Deborah stated, "We chose a lawyer by word of mouth. He has 32 years of experience and only does adoptions. We feel he has experience and wisdom on the subject" (Parents Say, 2012, para. 12). Through this statement, one can see that credibility goes a long way with many people, especially when concerning something as life changing as adoption. With this in mind, one could also team up with a firm who is already doing adoption and has made for itself a reputable name. A majority of key relationships happen because of association, and if a firm can associate itself with another firm that is highly respected, the new firm can get started off on the right path. For instance, by teaming up with Holt International or WorldHelp, a firm could learn the concepts and skills needed to become effective and efficient within the practice of adoption. One ministry that exists today is called Graffiti Legal Ministries (Graffiti3) in New York City. This business is a law firm that functions

as a sole proprietorship that provides legal services for free, while reaching its community with the gospel. Their mission statement is, “To serve the unserved. To provide faith-based legal services to people in difficult situations” (Graffiti Legal Ministry, 2013, par. 2). This ministry is truly a voice for the voiceless and a defender of the defenseless. An adoption law firm modeled after Graffiti Legal Ministries is also another possibility.

### **Key Concepts to Understand When Starting an Adoption Law Firm**

When first starting the business, some key concepts need to be adhered to, especially when starting an adoption firm. First, the owner needs to understand that no one is perfect, and he or she needs to be open to constructive criticism, particularly from the first few clients that person receives. These comments are crucial and can help further the firm’s progress and understanding of things through the actual experience that may have been different from what was originally anticipated. The second notion to keep in mind is to start slow. Building a large clientele too rapidly can deteriorate the effectiveness and usefulness of the firm. When consumed by a large number of people who want to adopt, the firm can work itself too much and undoubtedly create a negative reputation from not doing a good and thorough job. This idea leads to the next notion, which is to only accept clients that the firm originally intended to help. By doing this, the firm will stay true to its mission and will also be passionate about helping a few people within the demographic of its mindset, as well as not taking on too many clients. Last, the firm needs to always keep in mind the client and what he or she desires. Just like any other business, the consumer needs to be satisfied in order to stay in business. With an adoption firm however, another major stakeholder is the child and the child’s

birthparents. When dealing with independent adoption, the firm needs to remember to be fair and go beyond the call of duty for all of its stakeholders, passionate about the work it is doing for its clients, and loving to every person the firm comes into contact with.

### **Expansion and Broadening of Scope**

Starting an adoption law firm in the United States can be a difficult task with legal principles and laws to adhere to, but when looking to expand that firm into other countries and trying to establish various branches, or possibly new firms, further ideas and obstacles need to be considered. While these obstacles include legal aspects and making wise business decisions, the biggest factor to consider is culture and how that is going to affect not only adoption processes, but also how it is going to affect the business entity. When looking at furthering the law firm into South Asia, business etiquette needs to be highly considered in terms of culture and how it impacts various facets of doing business. If business etiquette is not studied or thoroughly assessed, many mistakes and problems can arise from ignorance of those differences. Some cultures can stonewall a person because of lack of knowledge of that culture or even physically kill a person because of offenses that one person did not even know he committed. Business etiquette is important and needs to be understood before doing any type of business in a foreign country.

Business etiquette in the United States is very different from other countries around the world. Etiquette is different for many reasons, but culture is one of the primary influences for why etiquette varies between nations. Specifically within South Asia, culture has transformed the idea of business etiquette into something that may seem strange to the average American. By being able to do business with proper etiquette and

poise, the people of South Asia will have a greater respect for individuals looking to do business there. Good etiquette skills and practices will help any person looking to expand his or her business, especially in South Asia. Specifically with an independent adoption firm, etiquette is useful in order to remain positive in the minds of those within the area of South Asia one is looking to expand into.

### **Culture's Impact**

Cultures around the world are shifting in many different directions. Within South Asia, the cultures within businesses are shifting, mainly because of the changes happening within the various cultures. Burke talked about India and how the culture is slowly moving toward one that is centered on self-improvement. Burke (2012) even stated, “nothing seems to stop the boom” for the drive to improve self-image (p. 27). People within India and all over South Asia are increasingly becoming more concerned about how they can boost their confidence within the business realm. One of the ways that this is being done is through learning. Burke talked about this through the growing demand for courses and classes on communication within India. People are taking these classes because one standard that is becoming prevalent with businesses in India is being able to “make a pitch in 30 seconds” (Burke, 2012, p. 27). Businessmen and women are required to be able to stand up in front of their peers and give a solid presentation impromptu. The people here believe that by becoming better at public speaking, they can improve their confidence as well as increase their competitiveness. Burke (2012) also spoke about how competitive the business environment is in South Asia. Competition is fierce mainly because of the lack of large corporations. In these areas small businesses dominate the market, but people who live there and want to succeed believe that the only

way to truly do so is to work for a large corporation. This fact is also a growing part of the mindset of the business culture in South Asia.

Through understanding some of the relevant factors that are attributed to the business culture in South Asia, one can derive some ideas on how the culture impacts business etiquette. First, the concept of self-improvement directly flows into business etiquette in South Asia. People who want to improve their self worth will only do things that are worthwhile. This idea is seen in business meetings in South Asia when employees will answer their cell phones without leaving the room or asking to be excused (Burke, 2012). While this may seem very rude and strange to Americans, this is the norm in South Asian business settings. Workers will do whatever is necessary to move up the social and business ladders to be more successful in achieving self-confidence. Secondly, business etiquette can be tied to the drive to better communicate in South Asian businessmen and women. People in this culture who want to be better communicators want to excel and get better at becoming more effective speakers. Truly listening to these people and giving solid feedback that is constructive is a sound principle of good business etiquette in this culture. Lastly, because a competitive nature is strikingly prevalent in South Asian business culture, good business etiquette practices should include fostering a sense of healthy and edifying competition. A way that this can be done is through, again, constructive criticism and building trustful relationships. By being a trustworthy person, people within this culture will listen and take heed to what one has to say.

### **Proper Business Etiquette Practices**

Etiquette has a standard universal definition, but the practices of good etiquette encompass a range of many different facets. Practices specifically in India are a good place to start since the practices within the culture of India translate well to most South Asian countries. When doing business in India, one of the most important etiquette practices that Americans should be aware of is respect for religion. While the dominant religion in India is Hinduism, other religions exist as well, such as Islam and Sikhism (India, 2013). Being aware of their religions, as well as respectful of their practices, the people of South Asia will treat one with more respect in return.

Another etiquette practice to focus on when doing business in India is to always be punctual. Shukla noted that punctuality is a key concern for most Indians who have meetings with foreigners; however, Indians themselves are usually very casual and do not always make it to appointments on time. Shukla (2006) pointed out that the reason this happens is because Indians care more about events and people than they do about time. Doing business in South Asia in general can be tough because of the very fact that Indians are often late to meetings. By understanding that they are not being disrespectful and by embracing the culture and those differences, one will be able to survive. Good etiquette in this situation would be to still arrive on time no matter what, because if the Indian that one is meeting with happens to be on time, he or she will respect the foreigner even more because of the foreigner's punctuality.

The last major etiquette practice that one should remember when doing business in South Asia is to be prepared for personal conversations. In America's business setting, many people go throughout their days with very little interaction among employees



(unless it is a company that demands this through exercises like team building). In South Asian culture, people are very open and will share openly about almost anything. It is culturally acceptable, specifically in India, to ask questions about very personal matters, for example, family. Shukla (2006) stated, "Often enquiring about the other person's family is seen as a sign of friendliness" (para. 11). It is important to remember that some questions that make Americans very uncomfortable are used in everyday conversation in South Asia. By understanding this fact, one can avoid feelings of obtrusiveness by another, and move on to having discussions that make one seem culturally fit.

Communication with Indians is an important aspect to making business deals in India. Building relationships through strong, sincere conversations is how many Indians create business partners and clients. Privacy is not a very big issue with most Indians, so by being open and responsive to others' questions and statements is a great way to build rapport and trust with Indian business people. Respect is a vital aspect of South Asian culture. Indians specifically respond to people they can respect. This respect can be challenging to acquire, but by following the etiquette practices discussed in this paper, one can attain it. Therefore, rapport and respect can be viewed as the foundations to truly making a profitable business succeed in South Asia as well as ensuring that an adoption law firm is looked at in a positive way. Not only will the Indian people do business with one who builds this foundation properly, but also they will want to help grow one's business, thus increasing the company's effectiveness within the country and rapport with the country's government. In case a situation may get awkward or one does not know what to do in a certain circumstance, Slayter (2006) explained that blending in to the

environment and atmosphere is always the best solution. By doing what everyone else is doing, one is able to not stand out in the crowd.

### **Legal Aspects of a Business Entity in India**

Specifically focusing on India, starting a business in this region has some specific laws and regulations that one must abide by. In order to create the desired law firm in India, a few of the concepts must change from what was discussed previously concerning a law firm in the United States, primarily the legal aspect. According to Doing Business: Starting a Business in India from the World Bank's website, several steps must take place in order to start a business in India, which are the same steps needed to start a law firm in India. The first step is to obtain a Director Identification Number online, and to do that one must have a photograph of the applicant and proof of identity, residence, and date of birth (Starting a Business, 2014). This means that one must live there to start a business there. A way to avoid complications and legal suits against the firm is to hire an Indian lawyer who has a passion and drive to complete the same tasks and mission as the business. By hiring a domestic lawyer in India, one can elude and mitigate the risks that come when transferring legal degrees, business forms, and the fact that someone has to live there to create the business, allowing the owner of the business to not have to travel and live in India. The next step is to obtain a digital signature certificate from one of seven Certification Agencies in India. Third, one must register the name of the company with the Registrar of Companies (ROC) online. If done by the same person who gave the first part of information (from step one), then the company name (if not already used and no copyright issues) will be approved immediately. The fourth step is to "pay stamp duties online, file all incorporation forms and documents online and obtain the certificate

of incorporation” (para. 12). This step includes three forms one must fill out, and pay the taxes on those forms and the electronic stamps needed to send them in to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). The next step is to make a company seal (although not legally required), so the government or the company can issue share certificates. Step six is that one must acquire a Permanent Account Number (PAN). This is a ten-digit number given by the Income Tax Department on a laminated card to prove the validity of the company. The next step and the rest of the steps should be done simultaneously with step six. In step seven one must acquire an Income Tax Account Number so the government can make sure the company is paying its income taxes. Next, “a statement containing the employer’s and manager’s name and the establishment’s name (if any), postal address, and category must be sent to the local shop inspector with the applicable fees” (para. 22). This step proves that the company has employees, and depending on the amount of employees the taxes vary (more employees, more taxes). The ninth step is to register for Value Added Taxation (VAT) online. In order to do so one must have a certified copy of the articles of association of the company along with all the previous documents filed. The tenth step is “Register for profession tax” to prove that the business is viable to the country. The last two steps are to register for Employees’ Provident Fund Organization and for medical insurance (Starting a Business, 2014).

As one can see, the process of starting a business in India seems tedious, but the cost of doing so is relatively cheap, especially since the exchange rate is significantly different in comparison to the U.S. dollar. The mission and vision of the business one could start in India could be the same of that of the U.S. law firm; the only difference would be the legal side of it and the type of children and families one could reach out to.

Since the idea is to create a better family for the children, allowing adoptions to happen solely within India between Indian families and allowing Americans to adopt these children would both be possible. Being in an impoverished country, one could mainly reach out to help those who desperately need help and who are getting hurt by the government or city. According to Global Edge the gross domestic product per capita in 2011 in India is only \$3,652, but one could simply keep his or her prices relatively low to reach those who are less wealthy (India, 2014). One could also help missionaries who are coming to the country or who already live there. For instance, a man by the name of Biju Thomas started a ministry called Transformation India Movement (TIM) a few years ago who desperately needs help in the legal aspects of his business. The ministry digs wells for neighboring villages and cities in Bihar, India. They have led many people to the Lord by providing clean water as a gateway to share about the living water of Jesus Christ. His situation is something a lawyer could take part in and help him keep his ministry running, without the government getting in his way. A law firm in India could potentially help a significant amount of people, especially as an adoption firm.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, adoption dramatically impacts families' lives in many different ways. The benefits of adoption are numerous and potentially beyond imagination. Although the process of adoption can be tough and costly, the payoff is tremendous and primarily whatever a family makes of it. An adoption firm is a viable business in the world today, especially to address problems such as child hunger and family abuse all across the globe. While not every country is apt to understand the importance and credibility of adoption and the feasibility for how it can truly change lives, the world still

needs advocates who are willing to step into battle and defend those who cannot defend themselves. Just like Graffiti Legal Ministries, legal help with adoption is a way to reach the world for Christ and make a difference in the lives of many people. Adoption is a tool and vehicle for lives to be saved, and lifestyles to be radically changed forever. Families say continuously that no matter how devastating or harsh the adoption process may be, adopting a child changes lives for eternity. An adoption firm that can duplicate what Graffiti Legal Ministries is doing can become a great tool for God and His plan for what He wants to do on this earth. If the firm remains loyal to Him and goes wherever He may lead, the firm will not only be successful, but will also lead souls to what they truly desire, and that is God. Just as God adopted people into His family and provided a way for humans to live joyously and in harmony with Him, humans can adopt children from all over the world to live joyously and at peace within safe homes with a loving family. The adoption process is by no means perfect, nor will it ever be; however, when lawyers are passionate about children and winning souls to Christ, then adoption will be the gateway and passage for these lawyers to take. In Rhonda Redmon's interview, when asked the question: "If you could sum up the entire process of adoption, your emotions through it all, and the result of what happened in five words or less, what would they be?" she replied, "We are all very blessed." Statements like these deserve to make the news and be read in newspapers all over the world, but they are not. Adoption is not being held constrained by the world media though. Adoption has made an impact in many lives and is slowly becoming more prevalent throughout countries like the United States; this needs to continue to happen. Adoption has changed lives in the past, is

changing lives right now, and with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit and God Almighty, adoption will continue to make an impact well into the future.

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