

## Why aren't celebrities adopting US kids?

by *Roland\_S\_Martin*

Pop star Madonna is back in the news. This time, she's heading back to the African nation of Malawi to adopt her second child.

You might remember all of the drama a few years ago, when Madonna adopted a Malawian boy. Now she wants to adopt a girl, and a judge has said she will have to wait until Friday to see whether she will get the go-ahead.

Madonna has been quoted in the Malawian newspaper Nation as saying, "Many people — especially our Malawian friends — say that David should have a Malawian brother or sister. It's something I have been considering but would only do if I had the support of the Malawian people and government."

It seems that anytime we hear about celebrities such as Madonna adopting, the children are from another country. I'm not at all opposed to children being adopted from Africa, China or anywhere else, but what's wrong with adopting American children?

Now, I'm not against anyone providing a secure, loving home for a child, but it seems to me that these stories often reinforce a growing public image of adoption for many Americans — that of a rich, famous individual going to a developing country to adopt a child.

According to various adoption and governmental agencies, more than 500,000 American children are under foster care, and many of them are waiting for adoption. From coast to coast, babies, toddlers and teens desperately are looking for homes where they can be loved, nurtured and provided for.

Now, it would be easy to blast these celebrities by saying it's the hip thing to walk around with an international child, but truth be told, we've got a serious adoption problem in this country.

Single mothers have a difficult time adopting children, and several I know personally have gone overseas. And let's not even talk about the red tape and bureaucracy!

American parents are made to jump through enormous hoops, and the process takes years instead of months. And all too often, single people and married couples simply grow disenchanted with the process.

We can sit here and criticize Madonna all day, but enough with ripping her. Our energy should be put into a call for massive adoption reform. Don't just bang out an e-mail or blog and get caught up in the celebrity hype.

If you think it should be easier to adopt American children, demand that your local, state and federal election officials clear the pathway to make the process easier. And let's have more consistency. Having 50 different states set their own policies is nonsense. With so many rules, no wonder folks throw their hands up and move on.

The goal of adoption is to put children in loving homes and not have them be the responsibility of the state. Making it harder to adopt affects you in your pocketbook because taxpayer money is spent to care for the children. So changing the laws not only helps the children but also is fiscally prudent.

So what are you prepared to do?

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