

A Solution Focused Prayer for a Community Supported Problem

Published November 1st 2022

By Cam Lee Small, MS, LPCC

Adoption happens because something else didn't. This is too often overlooked. It is a systemic response to a systemic problem. Relinquishment and family separation can happen during times of national, community, local and relational crises; effected by and effecting loss, disempowerment, destabilization, and barriers to structural reconciliation. The tendency to blame birth parents alone on a micro-, individualistic scale, for the absence of support and resources every child needs to thrive, strongly influences the direction of reparative inquiry; legally, economically, institutionally, bio-psycho-socially, and spiritually.

In many cases it leads clinicians and child welfare professionals to seek an explanation - for that collective dysfunction - in the mental health assessment of the person most affected by it: the adoptee.

“You have a disorder.”

Some would say that's a client problem. I say it's a community problem. Adoption is a community problem because it holds us back from empowering communities. How do we set captives free from injustice if all we do is diagnose the people hurt by it?

Yes, we each bear responsibility for our individual choices and our lives that result thereafter. And a thoroughly accurate recognition of needs can more effectively help us address them. And, we can't pursue justice for adoptees and remain complicit with the antecedents of adoption. We cannot fully invest in our neighbor's tribe and forcibly remove their children at the same time. We will grow to love one more than the other. That does not picture the God of Scripture, who loves and visits child and parent together.

The labelling of pain is not what I'm against. It is the minimizing of those who feel it. The dismissal of emotions born unseen and unacknowledged by an overly sterile caricature of adoption and the ones who've relinquished us.

Whether they have relatives living or dead is certainly an issue. Equally important, I believe, is whether they have allies, partners, and attuned representatives who are willing to actively champion and press for life. For housing, healthcare, education, economic stability, legal representation, mental health resources - for the parents - and for the communities into which their children are knit together and raised to life.

The fellowship of believers could be marked by that love - and generous justice - in the midst of such a collective groan for help.

A Message for Neighbors and Nations

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.” (Proverbs 17:17)

What prevents us from being those friends?

Proverbs 17:5 Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker;
whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 17:6 Children’s children are a crown to the aged,
and parents are the pride of their children.

Verse 17 comes after 5 and 6. It’s a solution-focused passage in the sense it presents a problem and gives a model for how we could respond to it.

It’s an invitation to join - as a blueprint for prayer:

Lord, Rock of Ages, help us crown the aged the way you designed them to be crowned. Preserve multitudes of parents to be the pride of their children. And of their Makers who dwell triune.

Show mercy where we’ve been tempted to gloat. Give grace where we would laugh at the poor instead of liberate the poor. We mock as if the good news you brought was only for the haughty and rich. As if each one of us had not been needy recipients of Living Water ourselves. In that pride we deem ourselves fit in places where our hearts are deceived. The father of lies tells us who’s entitled to parent and who deserves to relinquish. We’ve believed it too many times.

And yet, thank you for loving us at all times, and especially during times of adversity.

Are there neighbors and communities for which we were born to meet and love? Please widen our hearts and soften our hands, that the Word made flesh would not be partial to some flesh and neglect others. That our touch would not erase but esteem.

Fulfill the law where we wish it could be abolished. Abolish the lawmakers where they’ve shown contempt for the Maker; where they’ve abolished people who bear your image instead of incarnating your Love in the midst of those people.

“Oh how they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger.” (Matthew 23:4)

Father, you love at all times. Your Son was born for this. Your Spirit empowers such relief. Adversity kneels before Advocate. You are present help and you send beautiful helpers. You are near to hearts that have been broken. Whether by disaster or deed, help us weep with those crushed in spirit and then give us heart to repeal those who've crushed them; who have crushed us.

Us - as the needs and strengths of your fellowship are bound up with one another.

Us - as we invite strangers in, children and parents included.

Us - as we give food to the hungry and water to the thirsty.

Us - as we clothe the body, look after the sick, and honor the incarcerated. As if it were done to the King himself.

Us - as we're united with you in your suffering – and so rise with you in resurrection.

Us - as the least of these.

You rebuke the wind and the waves, how much more will you address those who gloat over disaster? And is it not a delight to them? They cannot care? For their anger is absent. It turned into contempt - for you - rather than a love – timely love – for your friends.

We would not bargain with you. As if there was even one righteous person in whatever family, you would spare the whole city. Instead, we trust you sent and became that Righteous One, that families from all nations would be spared. We yearn to wash their feet because - in your kindness and humility - we saw the way you've washed ours.

Lord, we search for justice with you. We rejoice at what you've done through Christ crucified and resurrected. Even if we would stay silent, the stones would cry it out. We rejoice. And, we request. We petition and we bring our appeal to you. Help us bear your image here and now for your name's sake. That those who encounter the love of your people would know the community-keeping essence of your name. That triune relationship that woos and delights and satisfies and adores us, and makes us shine like stars in the universe. Not predicated on whether an adoption is finalized, but to first help children see their mothers and fathers and caregivers - never for a last time but for their first time and always. For all times. Adversity through Advent. To the Joy set before us. For You are the way, the truth, and the life.

“A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity.”

You've given us that birth. Please, now, in these times, O Lord, show us Your Jesus.

Amen.

BIO

Cam graduated from University of Madison-Wisconsin with a BS in Psychology. He then served as the adoptee summer camp director for Holt International, before earning his Master's in Counseling Psychology. After earning his clinical licensure, he self published his memoir [This is Why I Was Adopted](#) as an interactive workbook for adoptees and families to explore grief, loss, restoration and hope. He earned his [Permanency & Adoption Competency Certificate](#) through the [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#), and is partnered as a vetted clinician both with [MNAadopt](#) and the post-masters directory curated by [Training for Adoption Competency](#). Cam is trained in [biblical counseling](#), certified in [non-violent crisis intervention](#) and is a member of the [American Psychological Association's Minority Fellowship Program](#).

Cam has written adoption-informed essays for [Christianity Today](#), [National Council for Adoption](#), [University Minnesota School of Social Work](#) (p. 19), and [Center for Adoption Support and Education](#). He has also been interviewed on [podcasts/radio/video shows](#) such as Empowered to Connect, The Cha Show, Let's Grab Coffee with University of Memphis professor SunAh Marie (WYXR 91.7), The Archibald Project, The Forgotten Initiative, and Asians for Mental Health with Dr. Jenny Wang ([access all interviews here](#)).

In addition to appearing on panels for [Angela Tucker \(This Adopted Life\)](#), Holt International, Catholic Charities, [Be The Bridge](#), [I Am Adoptee](#), [Expert Voices in Adoption Conference](#), and [Camp Choson](#), he has also taught and facilitated workshops and video trainings for churches, universities, and child-welfare organizations around the nation, including Children's Bureau, Replanted Ministries, Southeast Christian Church, Foster Love Project, Catalyst Foundation, United for Adoption, Korean American Adoptive Family Network, The Minnesota Society for Clinical Social Work, and Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development System ([view full list and access presentations here](#)).

WHERE YOU'VE SEEN CAM



Cam's personal experience as an international adoptee from Korea has informed and inspired his professional path, through which he formed his own private practice Therapy Redeemed, in 2018, to raise awareness and respond to the mental health needs of adoptees and their families wherever they may be in their own adoption journey.

Therapy Redeemed's mental health and education services are accessible 100% online and uniquely tailored for individuals and families on the adoption and permanency spectrum. Cam produces and provides all of his services from Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he lives with his wife and family.

You can follow Cam on instagram @therapyredeemed - view his show Office Hour with Your Therapist on YouTube - and access his adoption-informed mental health content/resources at the websites listed below.

Services

[Letters of Recommendation](#)

[Workplace Open Forums](#) are tailor made for your team to process themes and gain tools related to AAPI and BIPOC experiences.

[Masterclass courses for adoptees and parents](#)

Register for the next monthly parent training
[Online Adoptive Parent Workshop](#)

[Join the next online Teen Adoptee Group](#)

[Hire Cam for your next event as your keynote speaker and trainer](#)

For counseling and consultation,
visit <https://therapyredeemed.com/wordpress>

Free mental health training videos at
[Office Hour with Your Therapist](#)

[Free General Resources & Discussion Guides](#)

[Visit the Shop for full resource catalog](#)
including the workbook for adoptees.



For questions, contact Cam
at therapyredeemed@gmail.com
<https://therapyredeemed.wordpress.com>
Connect on IG: @therapyredeemed