

10 Practices to Cultivate Anti-racism in the Local Church

*Published by Korean adoptee and therapist Cam Lee Small, MS, LPCC
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Anti-racism – brings us (and our neighbors) closer to home, not further.

Why is anti-racism and racial reconciliation so “divisive”? Especially to the local church, dialogue on anti-racism and practical steps to make it a reality in your body and neighborhoods should bring us closer to Jesus and the love-soaked truth with which he joyfully pursues each one of us.

I imagine anti-racism wouldn't be a threat to those in your church seeking to love their neighbors likewise. Would you disagree?

Who is it that's being divided in that?

For church leaders, please do consider how to make more of these conversations available to and for your congregation; that you'd be among the firsts to model what this interpersonal exchange could look like for those who would otherwise be trying to figure it out on their own.

Sheep without a shepherd aren't helpful conversation partners. And they certainly aren't equipped to love the way Jesus loves in the midst of the times we're in.

I've talked with hundreds of individuals and families through my clinical work and facilitating workshops/trainings. I've noticed a few patterns emerge and I wonder if they might resonate with your experience?

For anyone who appreciates lists, here are 10 Practices To Help Cultivate Anti-racism in Your Local Church:

1. Pray. Ask. And reflect on your own journey, what was most helpful to you? Can you name any points in which you can see a turning - or a re-orienting - of your mind and heart? How would you describe what “repentance” meant/means to you during that process? How were people, places, events, resources, seasons helpful to you as your perspective and worldview shifted regarding race-related issues that impact you and your neighbors?
2. I'll never forget this sermon illustration (I think from P. Paul?). There was an outhouse. Toilet plugged. Overflowing. A pastor came outside and emptied it out with their bare hands so others could access relief. I think anti-racism, as a heart and hands issue, is something that can start with the pastor. If the shepherd is walking the path intently, it makes sense the sheep would follow. I'm sure there are many other factors to consider and honor. I'm simply struck by how much it means to see our leaders inspire us by their show-don't-tell processes of relational transformation (paired of course with some degree of naming and verbalizing the heart and ethos behind your navigating words and deeds related to anti-racism in your own life and surrounding community-specific callings).
3. Book club. I believe you could start one without making it a big official type of thing, just a group of folks you trust (or you're open to becoming closer with somehow) who are willing to learn and share together.

Cam Lee Small, MS, LPCC is an international adoptee from Korea, an experience that informs and inspires his current professional work as an author and licensed professional clinical counselor. 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 adoption journey. Cam's vision for adoptee-centered advocacy is evident through his 1:1 counseling services, live workshops and support groups, Masterclass trainings, and his active content creation/collaboration in and through various media platforms. His work has been featured in Christianity Today, National Council for Adoption, University Minnesota School of Social Work, and Center for Adoption Support and Education. He is currently working on a manuscript for a book to be released through InterVarsity Press to address the intersection of adoption, mental health, and social justice. Cam brings value and much needed perspective to the adoption community, personally and professionally.

4. Small-group / affinity-group based on anti-racism and discussions related to racial reconciliation. [Be the Bridge](#) has some great places to start on this.
 5. Start a church podcast where members can listen to and be fed by these conversations (I've appreciated those from [TRC: The Redemption Church](#)).
 6. Embrace that "guest speaker effect" - sometimes the congregation is open to "new ideas" [in this case, anti-racism, unfortunately?] to a significantly higher degree when it's coming from a guest, a third party, someone trusted by the body but a bit more distant from "the way things are" in the body. It's an opportunity to shake things up toward the way things could be. As a regularly scheduled speaker I'm more than happy to provide that along with the hundreds of other professionals out here who pour extraordinary amounts of heart, time, and energies into this ongoing lifelong work. Any day of the week.
 7. Launch a blog where you write openly/ anonymously about anti-racism related issues; it gets shared with / reaches church members; it's an indirect way of planting seeds within your congregation.
 8. You can offer to speak or provide a training or workshop for your church community [get clear on your expectations though in terms of whether you're asking for compensation or providing it as volunteer work for your church].
 9. Broach or bring it up directly during your everyday 1:1 conversations (doesn't need to happen literally every day though) and those prayer partner meetings, as a curiosity/ vulnerability type of dialogue [aka not so much as a "gossip" kind of dynamic but your genuine expression of need and care and checking in on how others are experiencing life in fellowship these days]. We're not so much things that need to be fixed as much as we are people who need to be fed. Let's keep sharing those meals together.
 10. Continue steadfast in prayer. And continue steadfast in showing up emotionally, spiritually, physically to events that are important to you and to the communities who are impacted by effective anti-racism work (basically all communities). It's possible (probably inevitable) that you step forward and your personal ministry/advocacy is contagious. YES attend to daily needs for rest, self care, values and boundaries clarification, intentional and love-fueled boundaries, all the bread that comes with being a real person. You're not a martyr. And - you're not so dependent on what the "leaders" do that your light goes unseen by your siblings, and by the community into which you yourself have been placed. Something about the way Jesus elevates the people on the streets when they worship and work that gives me hope that change can come from the streets when we worship and work; it's not just from the pastor willing to clean out their outhouse [although I'm not saying that won't help!]. Vertical and horizontal.
- This is just a starter pack! The list is unfinished, incomplete, because I made it and church is more than just one person. What have y'all found helpful as you're actually doing it this season? How have you witnessed or found your self contributing to the growing and fruitful discussions in your church related to anti-racism and racial reconciliation? We'd be encouraged and strengthened so please send me a message if you can, thank you so much for being a part of this dialogue!

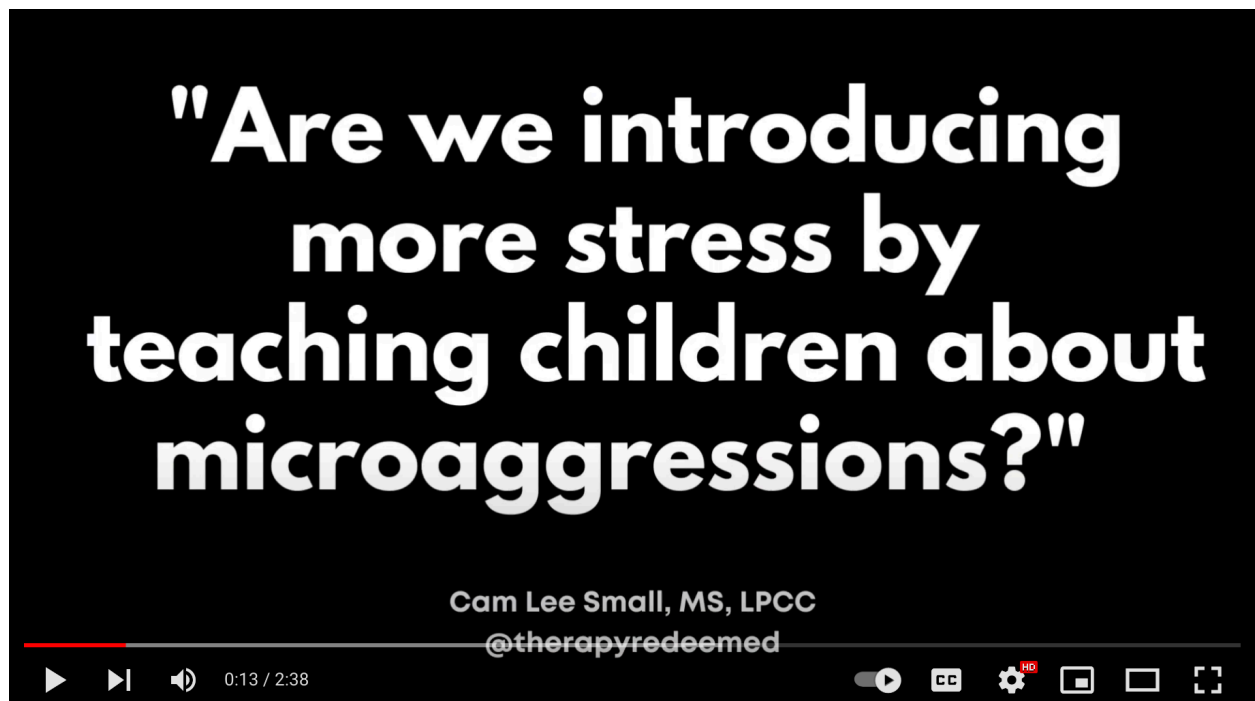
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. [Cam Addresses Adoption Trauma with CBS News](#)
2. [10 Facts about Adoptees](#)
3. [Currently accepting speaking requests for Summer and Fall 2023](#)
4. [An Ethos for Adoptee Speakers](#)
5. [Subscribe to Monthly Resource Package for important updates and exclusive support options](#)
6. [Access the January 2023 Resource Package](#)
7. ["Should we Teach Children About Microaggressions?"](#)



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Currently Booking for Summer/Fall 2023
[Schedule Your Event Directly with Cam Here](#)



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.



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