

# TOGETHER *for* ADOPTION

## Do we really have time for theology when orphans need our help now?

Occasionally, when people hear about Together for Adoption's emphasis and stress upon theology, they sincerely ask, "Do we really have time to study the theology of adoption when there is so much to be done for orphans *now*? Isn't it enough that Scripture commands us to care for orphans? Shouldn't we *just do it*?"

If we think of theology merely as information about God, as the mental collection of facts about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, then this question is legitimate. But if by theology we mean a real knowing of God, an ongoing and growing relational engagement with God, the question loses its teeth. Yes, theology necessarily involves information about God. Scripture is full of it. But theology is never *merely* information.

In Matthew 11:27 Jesus says, "All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one *knows* the Son except the Father, and no one *knows* the Father except the Son *and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him*" (emphasis mine). Believe it or not, Jesus is talking about theology here. If you think about it, theology did not begin with the creation of man. It has always existed in the eternal mutual knowing of the Father and Son. For all of eternity past the Father has known the Son and the Son the Father.

Understood like this, theology is a gracious gift to humanity. In reality, theology is actually a sharing in the mutual knowing of the Father and Son. It is a *participation* in the communion of love that the Holy Trinity is ("God is love"). There is no greater gift that can be given to man.

So, do we really have time for theology when orphans need our help now? Yes, we do. If theology is ultimately about our participation in the love between the Father and the Son, then nothing can better mobilize and energize us to care for orphans *now* than theology. Nothing.

Rightly understood and practiced, robust theology produces robust action. Just look at the life of Jesus. He enjoyed an infinitely robust theology and no one did more for the poor and marginalized than he did. If you think about it, what orphans need, then, is Christians who are deeply theological. This is why Together for Adoption stresses theology when we talk about orphan care.

Theology is much more than gathering facts about God and arranging them into a system of thought and belief. Now granted, theology is not less than true statements about God, but it is certainly and infinitely more than true statements about God. As James says, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!" There's much more to theology than a collection of biblically gathered facts about God. Theology is ultimately our *real* participation in the mutual knowing and loving of the Father and the Son in the communion of the Spirit. This is why I said that theology is infinitely more than true statements about God. The study of theology and communion with the Triune God must go hand in hand.

No one—absolutely no one—was and is more theological than the Son of God. He has forever known the Father through-and-through, even as he is and has been known. For all of eternity past the Son perfectly knew and communed

with the Father. Remarkably, this is the Son who became man, who became incarnate and lived among us! By becoming the incarnate Son Jesus brought his communion with the Father *into* the world of men—into the very heart of *our* broken and devastated world! That's the good news of the Gospel!

Suddenly, communion with the Father became a very tangible and possible reality for fallen humanity. Never before—not even with Adam and Eve—had mankind ever known God the Father like the man Christ Jesus knew him (and knows him!). Jesus was a one-of-a-kind man! He is *the* true man. Jesus was as deeply and profoundly theological as it is possible to be. No matter where in the infinite corridors of eternity you search for someone like the incarnate Son, you will never find anyone enjoying the same level and intensity of communion with the Father as he does. If ever there is someone who is without peer, it's Jesus—well, except for the Father and the Spirit (both of whom, of course, share his same stratospheric, otherworldly level of communion in all its mind-blowing fullness)!

In light of all of this, do you know what's truly remarkable, though it really should not seem that remarkable to us? Nobody—and I mean absolutely nobody—cared more for the poor, orphaned, and marginalized than Jesus. Rather than his robust theology weakening his social engagement with and commitment to the outcast and neglected, his robust theology unceasingly fueled and sustained his social engagement. As such, Jesus is the truest of human beings! Through the Son's incarnation, he became what we were and are supposed to be, and he became such *for us* and *in our place*!

What must we learn from this? As orphan care advocates, one of the worst things we can do is neglect or overlook theology. If we do neglect it, we, and the orphans of this world, will be the poorer for it. But if we embrace theology as ones who live in vital union with *this* amazing Jesus, we, and the orphans we serve, will be the richer for it. What orphans need most, then,

is Christians who do not *merely* know a ton of true statements about God, but who by the power of the gospel daily participate in the mutual knowing and loving of the Father and the Son in the communion of the Spirit.

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