

TOGETHERFORADOPTION

Planting Gospel Seeds: Why You Should Support Together for Adoption

There are many great orphan care and adoption organizations to which you can donate money that will go directly toward helping an orphan. I have donated to organizations like these before and strongly recommend that you consider doing it as well, especially if this is not something you have done before. Orphans have profound physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. Because of the absence of the care and protection of a mother and father, they often lack shelter, food, clothing, tender affection, and godly influence. Fortunately, there are great organizations that provide us with the opportunity and privilege of meeting some of these basic needs. All we have to do is click a button, and we can donate money that will help provide what these orphans lack.

So why would someone want to donate money to a ministry that does not *directly* meet the needs of orphans? Why should Christians consider donating to an organization that equips Christians to think theologically about adoption but does not directly provide humanitarian aid to orphaned children? In other words, why would someone want to give to Together for Adoption? Together for Adoption is an organization that equips Christians by teaching primarily on what it means for Christians to be adopted by God and secondarily on how our adoption in Christ should affect and inform how we understand and practice orphan care and earthly adoption. We are a teaching ministry first. It is not our primary mission to provide humanitarian aid to orphans directly. So why give to us when your dollars could provide almost immediate relief to an orphan(s) if you donate elsewhere?

The Gospel: God's Power Unto Salvation

Scripture teaches that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16). This means that God meets our every spiritual need through the Gospel, and ultimately our every physical need (Romans 8:23). Every fraction of spiritual growth, every increase of spiritual desire and godly obedience within the Christian happens as

a result of the message of the Gospel. All growth in the Christian life flows out of the good news of God's grace to us in Christ. It is the Gospel that bears the fruit of Christian growth in us as we deepen in our understanding of it (Colossians 1:4-6).

J.I. Packer has written that adoption is the highest blessing of the Gospel, higher even than the gift of justification "because of the richer relationship with God that it involves." He continues, "Justification is a *forensic* idea, conceived in terms of *law*, and viewing God as *judge*...Adoption is a *family* idea, conceived in terms of *love*, and viewing God as *father*. In adoption, God takes us into His family and



fellowship, and establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by God the father is greater" (*Knowing God*, 186-188).

The highest blessing of the Gospel—the Gospel by which believers are transformed and from which all true Christian obedience flows—is adoption. We can even argue that the Gospel is the good news of adoption. Scripture clearly teaches that it is through the Gospel that we become sons of God and co-heirs with Christ. God sent His Son to redeem us, Paul writes, that "we might receive adoption as sons" (Galatians 4:4-5).

Think about it: Paul says that the goal of Christ's redemptive mission was our adoption into the

family of God. God's Son was born of a woman, lived, died, and rose from the dead that he might be "the firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29). Adoption is not just the highest blessing of the Gospel; it is also the goal of the Gospel. Therefore, if we want to deepen our understanding and appropriation of the Gospel itself, we would do well to explore Scripture's teaching on God's gracious provision of adoption.

Mobilizing the Church to Care for Orphans

Christianity has a vertical to horizontal movement. First, consider how forgiveness works within the Christian faith. We forgive others because God has first forgiven us in Christ (Ephesians 4:32). Forgiveness moves vertically before it moves horizontally. It is even more accurate to say that forgiveness moves horizontally *because* it moves vertically.

Second, consider the vertical to horizontal movement of love in Scripture. The Apostle John writes, "we love because [God] first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We are moved outward in love to others because God has moved downward in love to us. God's vertical love produces horizontal love in us.

If Christian growth in forgiveness and love is the result of this vertical to horizontal movement, and this God to man vertical movement is made known to us in the Gospel, clearly what is needed to equip and mobilize the church to greater Christian obedience is the proclamation of the Gospel. Therefore, if anything is to mobilize the church "to care for orphans . . . in their affliction" (James 1:27) and to better address the plight of 143,000,000 orphans worldwide, it will be the Gospel. The Gospel proclaims that when we were "strangers . . . having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians 2:12), God brought us near by the blood of Christ and placed us in His household (Ephesians 2:13, 19). The wonder of the Gospel is that God looked upon us in our profound plight of hopelessness, came to us in the Person of His Beloved Son, and graciously adopted us into His family.

Together for Adoption believes that a deepening understanding of how God has come to us in *our* affliction as revealed in the

Gospel will result in a greater compassion for orphans in *their* affliction. If we want to see the current movement of churches and organizations that are caring for orphans grow exponentially over the next several years, not just quantitatively but qualitatively, the good news of adoption, that is, the Gospel, must be at the center of everything we do in the area of orphan care. Think of what could happen over the next several years if we intentionally and comprehensively approach the ministry of orphan care informed with an understanding of and commitment to Christianity's vertical to horizontal movement. We would see the needs of orphans being met like they have never before been met.

Think "Both / And" Not "Either / Or"

Should Christians give to organizations that can provide immediate relief to orphans? Absolutely. Orphans have daily needs, urgent needs, that the church has the responsibility and opportunity to meet. So yes, please seriously consider donating money to organizations that are positioned to care for orphans in their daily affliction right now.

But if we desire to see the church's ability to care for orphans improve exponentially over the next few years, the Gospel must be explicitly at the center of all we do in this critical area of Christian responsibility and ministry. Together for Adoption exists for the primary purpose of seeing this very thing happen. Our mission is to serve the church in her ministry of orphan care by preaching the Gospel and exploring its profound implications for the care of orphans and earthly adoption.

As you consider donating in order to meet the needs of orphans, let us encourage you to think and pray in terms of "both/and" giving rather than "either/or" giving. When you donate to the ministry of Together for Adoption, you are planting Gospel-seeds that, Lord willing, will bear much fruit as the church is further equipped and mobilized to care for the 143,000,000 orphans in our world (Colossians 1:4-6; James 1:27).

Article written by Dan Cruver, Director of Together for Adoption. Contact Dan via e-mail at: dan.cruver@togetherforadoption.org