

Christian Ethics And
Compassion Ministry
To Orphans And Vulnerable Children
In The Current AIDS Crisis
In South Africa

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DECLARATION

As a requirement of the North-West University, I hereby declare that this thesis, submitted in compliance with the requirements set for the PhD degree, unless specifically stated to the contrary in the text, is my own original work, has been text edited and has not been submitted to any other university.

David J. Brown

ABSTRACT

The Republic of South Africa has the largest number of people living with HIV/AIDS in the world; the disease is classified as “hyper-epidemic” here. It is estimated that almost half of the deaths in the country are now from AIDS-related causes, and life-expectancy over the past 15 years has dropped from 64 to 49.3 years. As a millions of parents die from the disease, there is corresponding surge in the number of maternal, paternal, and double orphans, increasing by more than 2000 children per week and now believed to exceed 4 million of South Africa’s 18.7 million children. These bereaved children are battling grief, loneliness, hunger, poor diet, poor health, stigma, discrimination, molestation, abuse, the risk of disease, and the loss of education and property. The pandemic has exacerbated the already difficult situation faced by many of South Africa’s children due to poverty, fragmented families, poor service delivery, and moral decay. Collectively, these young ones have been designated as “OVC,” meaning orphans and vulnerable children. The South African government provides a basic grant for the households of about 25% of these children, and non-profit organisations, backed by private and business donors domestically and abroad, are caring for about 10%. Much has been done, informally and formally, but at a time when funding is diminishing, much more needs to be done, and the Christian community needs to be leading the way.

The aim of this study is to explore the Christian ethical basis for compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children, and to investigate other related ethical parameters for first-world volunteers getting involved in compassion ministry to largely third-world OVC in South Africa. The study involved both a comparative literary analysis as well as field research involving ten Christian orphan-care ministries, some over a period of four years. The study begins by documenting the most recent statistics regarding HIV/AIDS and the growing OVC population in South Africa. It then articulates the direct impact that the pandemic is having on OVC. Thereafter, compassion is defined and described from a biblical standpoint, and the ethical imperative for God’s people to show compassion to sufferers and orphans is established from the character of God, the image of God in mankind, the commands of God, and the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the early Church, and the revived Church in later centuries. Specifically, compassion is portrayed as one cord of the three-fold cord of gospel ministry that includes the

gospel message, ethical teachings, and compassion ministry. Next, the ethics of adaptive ministry are explored emphasising incarnational ministry, contextualising God's truth, understanding African worldviews, giving significance to cultural differences, and working wisely with the poor. Compassion can propel people to do right things in all the wrong ways, and it must therefore be paired with wisdom gained from the Scriptures and from Christians working in the field that helps to create ethical riverbanks so that damage is not done to the cause of Christ or to the communities in which OVC are found. Next, using an appreciative inquiry approach, ten Christian OVC-care ministries in three provinces were evaluated, five "outside the walls" and five "inside the walls," to identify the best in each organisation's philosophy, structure, methodology, and impact, and to highlight what is being done in the field of Christian compassion ministry to OVC.

The research concludes by reviewing an orderly process of ethical inquiry into human behaviour, establishing compassion as a prescriptive virtue in the theonomous norm of Scripture, and compassion ministry to orphans as highly meritorious and particularly favoured by God. Because the duty of compassion arises from an encounter with a sufferer, it was concluded that South African Christians have an elevated ethical duty to be more involved in this type of ministry. Research revealed that incarnational ministry is not a critical issue in the field of OVC care since very few first-world volunteers go into the African milieu for any length of time; Africans are the primary caregivers and care workers in the field. A conclusion was also reached that, although the mark of distinctively Christian OVC care organisations is spiritual discipleship, most OVC care ministries perform poorly regarding the spiritual welfare and training of children; OVC ministries that provide or arrange Christian education see discipleship as a critical need and a core value. A more detailed summary of findings is set forth in Chapter 7.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Melanie Prinsloo, George Snyman, and the other compassionising heroes who have faithfully been the eyes, mouths, hands, and feet of the Lord Jesus Christ to the precious orphans and vulnerable children of South Africa for more than a decade.

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Gratitude is wasted sentiment unless it is expressed, and thus, I wish to thank the Creator God who is my Heavenly Father for leading His servant on this enlightening and burdening journey over these past five years, using a foreign visitor to take me to a place where I first suffered with the little sufferers. He also brought me across His other servants, in writing and in person, to teach me more deeply about compassion, about adaptive ministry, about the plight of the orphans, and about His heart for them.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired immune deficiency syndrome
ART	Antiretroviral therapy
ARV	Antiretroviral medication
CBO	Community-based organisation
CD4	Cluster of Differentiation 4 (HIV blood count)
CYCC	Children's youth and care centre
DSD	Department of Social Development
FBO	Faith-based organisation
HCT	HIV counselling and testing
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPO	Non-profit organisation
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
RDP	Reconstruction Development Project
TB	Tuberculosis
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WHO	World Health Organisation (of the United Nations)

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CHAPTER 1

Christian ethics and compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in the current AIDS crisis in South Africa

1.1 Introduction

The first part of this thesis briefly presents the background of the AIDS pandemic and its effect on children in South Africa, specifies the problem to be addressed, sets forth the central theoretical argument, and the aims and objectives of the study. The research methodology will involve both a comparative literary study and field research.

1.2 Background of subject matter to be researched

1.2.1 Summary of the nature and spread of AIDS

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, commonly referred to as “AIDS,” is a disease of the human immune system caused by the human immunodeficiency virus, commonly known as “HIV” (Sepkowitz, 2001:1766). This virus progressively reduces the effectiveness of the human immune system and leaves individuals susceptible to opportunistic infections and tumours. No one actually dies of AIDS; they die of the diseases that overtake the body when the capacity of the immune system has been compromised.

Genetic research indicates that HIV originated in west-central Africa around 1900 (Gallo, 2006:72). AIDS was first recognized as an illness among humans by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 1981 and its cause, the human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV, was identified in 1983.

HIV is transmitted through direct contact of a mucous membrane or the bloodstream with a bodily fluid containing HIV. The three main body fluids are blood, sexually-associated fluids, and breast milk. Transmission can come from sexual contact, blood transfusions, use of contaminated hypodermic needles, a fluid exchange between a mother and baby during pregnancy or childbirth, breastfeeding, or internal exposure to one of the above bodily fluids (SFAF, 2006). The virus is not easily contagious like many forms of influenza. There are no

documented cases of casual transmission via airborne particles or mosquitoes (CDC, 2006).

Although treatments for AIDS and HIV can slow the course of the disease, there is currently no vaccine or cure. Antiretroviral therapy, commonly referred to as “ART”, reduces both the mortality and manifestations of HIV infection, but these drugs have been prohibitively expensive for the budgets of third-world households, and are often simply not available in remote areas. Recently, the South African government’s efforts to provide ART to 80% of its HIV-infected citizens by 2011 have suffered from a lack of funding, personnel, and logistical problems (Govender, 2009).

Now in its 28th year, the AIDS epidemic has continued to spread and has reached pandemic proportions worldwide (Kallings, 2008:227). According to the very conservative estimates of the United Nations World Health Organization (hereinafter referred to as “WHO”), approximately 33.4 million people were living with HIV-AIDS worldwide in 2009, and it is believed that the cumulative AIDS-related death toll now stands at 34 million (UNAIDS, 2009:6). Data collected over the past decade seems to indicate that the spread of HIV worldwide peaked in 2006 when an estimated 3.5 million new infections occurred (UNAIDS, 2009:7).

Sub-Saharan Africa is currently the most heavily affected region in the world, home to approximately 67% of those infected with HIV. More than 24 million of the world’s 34 million total AIDS-related deaths have occurred in sub-Saharan Africa, and 22.4 million of the world’s 33.4 million people living with HIV live there (UNAIDS, 2009:21). In 2008, 1.4 million people in sub-Saharan Africa died due to AIDS, an average of 3,835 deaths each day (UNAIDS, 2009:11), which accounted for 72% of the world’s AIDS-related deaths in that year (UNAIDS 2009:8). This has eliminated 17% of the workforce and reduced economic development in the region (Bell, 2003:7). In 2008, an estimated 71% of all new HIV infections in the world, a total of 1.9 million people, were in sub-Saharan Africa. Things are the worst at the southern end of Africa. Among adults ages 15-49 years, Swaziland has the highest HIV percentage in the world, with an estimated 25.9% infection rate in 2007, Botswana and Lesotho trailing with 25% and 23.4% infection rates respectively (UNAIDS, 2009:19).

In the 1990s, many wrongly concluded that HIV/AIDS was a “disease of poverty”, and that poor people were at greater risk for infection. But oddly enough, in sub-Saharan Africa, HIV prevalence was highest not in the poorest countries, but in South Africa and Botswana, two of the region’s wealthiest countries. In 2008, UNAIDS reviewed eight national surveys and found that in South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland, HIV infection was highest among adults with higher levels of wealth than among those with the lowest levels of wealth and that “wealthier and better educated individuals tend to have greater sexual autonomy and higher rates of partner change (due to their greater mobility) and greater likelihood of living in cities (where HIV prevalence is generally higher)” (UNAIDS, 2008:89). It is possible that over the past five years this prevalence data may be changing because wealthier individuals are more likely to have access to infection prevention methods.

1.2.2 The Impact of AIDS on South Africa

The Republic of South Africa has the largest number of people living with AIDS in the world, due in part to its relatively large population estimated in 2009 to be 49.3 million people (STATSSA, 2009:4). Although South Africa accounts for 0.7% of the world’s population, the country carries 17% of the global HIV/AIDS burden, which is 23 times the world average (Patton, 2009:882). Because HIV/AIDS is still not a notifiable disease in South Africa, because of poor record-keeping in rural areas, because doctors run the risk of lawsuits if they note AIDS on a death certificate, and because no one dies of AIDS but rather from opportunistic infections that occur when the immune system has been compromised by AIDS, assessing a total or an annual death toll in South Africa due to HIV/AIDS is impossible. Many believe that the statistics, due to the social and political stigma, are being grossly under-reported (Lancet, 2005:2).¹

¹ According to researchers from the Medical Research Council of South Africa (MRC), annual figures are massively underestimated because the majority of deaths due to HIV are misclassified. People whose deaths are caused by HIV are not killed by the virus alone, but the MRC argues that HIV should be recorded as an underlying cause if it initiated the chain of morbid events leading directly to death. In other words, if someone contracts tuberculosis and dies from it because their immune system has been weakened by HIV, then HIV should be noted among the underlying causes.

The spread of HIV in South Africa has been measured primarily through two methods: 1) annual antenatal HIV prevalence surveys conducted among pregnant women ages 15-49, which have been conducted since 1990, and 2) various population or household-based surveys typically done every three years. According to the South African National HIV Prevalence, Incidence, Behaviour and Communication Survey, conducted in 2008, approximately 10.6% of South Africa's population, or 5.2 million people, are HIV positive (Shishana: 2009:30). UNAIDS placed this figure at 5.7 million people in 2009 (UNAIDS, 2009:27). Among adult South Africans ages 15-49, there was a 16.7% HIV prevalence (STATSSA, 2009:6). South Africa's HIV epidemic is now classified as "hyper-endemic," meaning that HIV prevalence exceeds 15% in the adult population and is spread through "extensive heterosexual multiple concurrent partner relations with low and inconsistent condom use" (South Africa, 2010:10).

While over a quarter of South African men ages 30-34 are living with HIV, the hardest hit demographic is women ages 20-30, for which the HIV prevalence is almost 30% (Dorrington, 2009).² The annual antenatal surveys for 2006-2009 confirm that the HIV prevalence among women ages 15-49 is 29-30%, and the numbers have been stable through that period. The women of KwaZulu-Natal have had the highest prevalence in the country with as high as a 41% infection rate in 2004 (Anderson, 2006:4).

Statistics South Africa has estimated that in 2009, 263,900 of the total 613,900 deaths in South Africa, or 43%, were due to AIDS-related causes (STATSSA, 2009:8). They note that the almost 100% increase in deaths from 316,559 in 1997 to 613,900 in 2009 is primarily among young adults ages 25-49, the years of

² One must use great care in researching statistics in the area of HIV/AIDS. In many southern African countries, particularly in rural areas, record-keeping can be poorly done, household surveys do not occur with enough frequency, and statistics often depend upon the number of women attending antenatal clinics. Statistics are, therefore, estimates with high and low numbers differing in the hundreds of thousands, and governmental, statistical, and international bodies will differ in their figures. Further, statistics are often based on studies of a specified group, such as adults ages 15-49 rather than the general population, or orphans rather than AIDS orphans. Likewise, studies done in certain years attempt to make projections for future years, and often have to later revise that data. Media reports and popular compilations of statistics often fail to note these distinctions, making great overstatements, causing over-reactions, and irritating those carefully at work in the field.

the highest HIV prevalence. If their estimate is correct, AIDS-related illness is claiming the lives of more than 1,000 people each day in South Africa. The ASSA2002 Model developed by Dorrington and the Actuarial Society of South Africa projected that in 2009, approximately 400,000 people, almost 1,100 people per day, would die of AIDS-related causes. One needs only to visit the villages to see that the funeral business is booming. South Africa's population is not diminishing since the birth rate is still keeping ahead of the death rate (1,044,900 births compared to 613,900 deaths in 2009), and immigration into the country is still strong (STATSSA, 2009:8).

It is hoped by many that the AIDS pandemic has reached, or is reaching, its peak in South Africa since the number of deaths is beginning to exceed the estimated number of new infections each year, but Dorrington (2009:3) believes this is merely due to differences in survey methodology. Part of the obvious answer to turning around the epidemic is a change in beliefs and then in behaviour. From a Christian standpoint, there must be a compassionate and continual call back to a restored relationship with the Creator, to the transforming gospel, and to a moral and ethical orientation concerning sexual purity, justice, forgiveness, and compassion that extends from the character of God, flows through the example and commands of Christ, and is set plainly before us in the text of Scripture. While no biblical or theological response to the causes of HIV and AIDS will be undertaken in this study, it must be noted that the sinful actions of fallen humanity, namely pride, unbelief, lack of love, lust, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, drunkenness, violence, and debauchery, among others, have contributed largely to the rapid spread of the disease. According to a national survey of more than 7000 adults in South Africa, pervasive social norms encourage both concurrency and a rapid turnover in sex partners, with little peer support for commitment to a single partner. Significantly, only 21% of survey respondents said "sticking to one partner and being faithful" could prevent HIV transmission, and only 5% identified reducing the number of one's sex partners as a sound HIV prevention strategy (Cadre, 2007:16). The country's shamefully high incidence of rape further compounds the problem (Jewkes, 2009:18). In sub-Saharan Africa, heterosexual transmission accounts for 80% of the spread of HIV; thus, AIDS is not an illness of homosexuals any longer (Lamptey, 2002:208). Public awareness of the nexus

between sinful behaviour and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS has given rise to an overbroad branding of anyone who has the disease with sinful behaviour. That has had the terribly unfortunate effect of creating fear, shame, and stigmatisation of anyone living with the disease, and has caused people to deny or keep silent about their status, only further contributing to the spread of the epidemic (GNA, 2004). It is erroneous for anyone to assume that those who have contracted the disease are guilty of any of the aforementioned sins, because indeed many wives, husbands, and children have contracted HIV without any moral impropriety. Anyone who has contracted the disease by whatever means is a living opportunity for God's love and power to be manifested in his or her community, and must be shown compassion, care, love, and dignity as Jesus would also do (World Vision, 2008). Christians must not piously "pass by on the other side" (2001:Luke 10:31).

Despite having the most advanced and prosperous economy in Africa, South Africa is facing a serious increase in mortality and decrease in life expectancy among its working adults, a serious threat to its economic viability in years to come, and a consequent threat to its governance (UNCHG, 2008:7). The nation may experience economic collapse within three generations if nothing is done (Bell, 2003:3). The AIDS epidemic is having a deleterious effect on the individual, the family, the community, the marketplace, and society as a whole. Over the past 15 years, the nation's life expectancy has now dropped from 64 years to 49.3 years (UN, 2006:83). The Bureau for Economic Research conducted a survey of businesses in 2005 revealing that AIDS is having a disproportionate impact on the working age population (90% of HIV prevalence is among working-age people). The mining sector, followed by the manufacturing and transport sectors, are the worst affected in terms of lower labour productivity, increased absenteeism, and a loss of experience and skills (BER, 2005:59). In addition to its other woes, the medical profession has been impacted by the epidemic. In 2007, a serosurvey in two public hospitals in Johannesburg found that 11.5% of health-care workers were HIV-positive, including nearly 14% of nurses. Almost one in five infected health-care workers had a CD4 count below 200 (AIDS level), with almost half having CD4 counts under 350 (Connelly, 2007:118). The Medical Research Council conducted a national survey of more than 17,000 educators for the Education Labour Relations Board in 2004 and found that the HIV prevalence

among South African teachers was 12.7%, and in the 25-34 age group was 21.4%, both figures very close to the national average. African teachers in the rural areas, from a lower economic status, and female teachers, were more likely to be HIV positive (ELRC, 2005:14).

Evidence of a marked turn-about from the policies of the Mbeki administration, the South African government now has appropriate legislation, policies, and programmes in place to combat the epidemic, and is working together with business, private, and community organisations to change the direction of the last decade's statistics. A Harvard study released in 2008 had conservatively estimated that more than 330,000 people had lost their lives, and 35,000 babies had been born with HIV, as a result of the Mbeki administration's restriction on the distribution of ART (antiretroviral therapy) (Chigwedere, 2008:414). South Africa now has the largest national antiretroviral program in the world, providing an estimated 700,000 South Africans with treatment as of November, 2008 (ASSA, 2009:1). In April of 2010, the government also began an HIV Counselling and Testing (HCT) campaign with the theme, "I am responsible, we are responsible, South Africa is taking responsibility." The goal was to educate the public and perform HIV and TB testing on 15 million people by June of 2011, thus reducing new HIV infections by half. Challenges still remain to find funding and personnel and to overcome logistical problems.

There is some evidence of a moderation of the epidemic in that levels of HIV "incidence," defined as the sum of new HIV infections in the general population or a specified demographic group, have begun to drop, particularly among the youth where the decrease in incidence in some age brackets is more than 25% (UNAIDS, 2010:6). At the same time, researchers are using caution when review data regarding HIV "prevalence," defined as the sum of HIV infections in the general population or a specified demographic group, because with the use of ART, people with HI/AIDS are living longer, thus making it appear that more people are newly infected (Rehle, 2010: 5).

1.2.3 The impact of HIV/AIDS on South Africa's children

AIDS orphans have captured the attention of the world over the past decade. An orphan is defined as a child under the age of 18 whose mother, father, or both

biological parents have died. Thus, orphans are subdivided into three categories. A maternal orphan is a child whose mother has died but whose father is alive, a paternal orphan is a child whose father has died but whose mother is alive, and a double orphan is a child whose mother and father have both died (Meintjies, 2009:102).

By 2008, an estimated 14.1 million children had lost one or both parents to AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2009:21). South Africa has a large number of orphan children, estimated by the General Household Survey of 2008 to total 3.95 million of South Africa's 18.7 million children, more than one out of five (Meintjies, 2009:102). While it is difficult to ascertain how many children have been orphaned specifically due to HIV/AIDS, estimates by Statistics South Africa in 2009 put the figure at 1.91 million (STATSSA, 2009:8). If the projections of the various statistical organisations are correct, almost 1,100 people are dying of AIDS-related illness each day, and from 2,000 to 3,000 children are newly orphaned each week in South Africa (DSD, 2009:3). Fifteen children lose a parent to an AIDS-related illness in South Africa each hour. Dorrington (2006:24) estimated that by 2015 the number of orphans in South Africa just due to the AIDS pandemic will reach 2.2 million. Some have estimated that the total number of orphans in South Africa by 2015 from AIDS and other causes will be as high as five million among a population of 52 million people (BBC News, 2007:10).

An estimated 1,577,200 children in South Africa are directly affected by HIV/AIDS through circumstances such as mother to child transmission of HIV, infection due to sexual abuse, living with an adult caregiver who is suffering from HIV/AIDS, being abandoned, or living in a house that cares for many children (SADOSS, 2009:11). Health Minister Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi told the National Conference on Religion and Public Health in October, 2010, that 75,000 children under the age of five die each year in South Africa, climbing from 59 children per 1,000 live births in 1998 to 104 in 2007, despite speeches, policies, and programmes seeking to reverse this trend. He added that in 2007, an estimated 57% of these deaths were attributable to HIV/AIDS (Johns Hopkins, 2010).

South African children are therefore facing a situation unprecedented in modern times, where so many children are living without parents, are caring for parents

who are ill, and are living with HIV themselves. “AIDS is reducing the pool of traditional caregivers and the numbers of breadwinners resulting in increased poverty and reduced care-giving for children” (SADOSS, 2005:7). Chapter 2 of this thesis will elaborate further on the situations and struggles that orphans and vulnerable children are experiencing in South Africa, but in summary let it be noted here that the HIV/AIDS epidemic has exacerbated the difficult circumstances already being faced by most of South Africa’s children brought on by the country’s poverty, fragmented families, insufficient infrastructure, lack of access to medical and social services, moral decay, and abuse against women and children (Bird, 2005:5).

Beyond these more common struggles, orphans in South Africa face the increased non-material problems of the loss of parental love, care, and guidance, loss of identity and belonging, grief, loneliness, insecurity and despair, the stigma and discrimination of being labelled as an orphan, injury to their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being, and loss of a moral-ethical compass. They also face increased material problems such as hunger, lack of basic clothing and shelter, loss of personal and real property and inheritance, struggles with HIV infection or AIDS themselves, lack of security and protection from sexual, physical, and labour abuse, the disruption of their education, the care of ill relatives in the household and its associated health risks, and in many cases serving as the provider in a child-headed household.

1.3 Problem Statement

In the midst of the orphan crisis in South Africa, and as part of the larger public response, churches and faith-based organizations (FBOs) have stepped in to make a difference. Other than the support provided by extended families, and the financial grants of the government, the Christian church has played the most significant role in providing healthcare, education, and social services to the people of Southern Africa (Steinitz, 2006:92), not to mention providing children with the only solution for their spiritual woes. The answer to caring for orphans and vulnerable children in the current AIDS crisis begins naturally and biblically with the family, and where the parents have passed away, with extended family. Local faith-based initiatives have done much to strengthen and support the

capacity of extended families and foster families caring for OVC, and to step in where there are no adults available to provide food, water, shelter, care, support and protection. But certainly, far more could be done and needs to be done. Large mainline churches and their social engagement organizations are responding in an admirable way by providing medical care, assistance for OVC and their care-takers, foster-care residences and communities, and education about chastity and monogamy (Ruden, 200:567). The churches in the African communities have responded practically because they must; members of their congregations, and relatives of those in the congregations, have died of AIDS. Orphans and vulnerable children are increasingly filling the ranks of their congregations and youth ministries.

A number of Christians have, without church sanction or connection, formed not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) in South Africa to provide food, care, support, and protection for orphans and vulnerable children. Their approaches and models of ministry have been varied due to differing needs in their communities, their organisation's philosophy of engagement with the culture and with OVC, the availability of qualified volunteers, and their philosophy of and success in fund-raising. Some Christians focus their attention on providing food, shelter, assistance, protection, and capacity-building for child-headed households. Others have created first-line rescue homes for children. Some have begun community care centres that provide food, counsel, and after-school programmes, and in a few cases, these care centres double as, or are run by, churches. Still others have created a network of subsidised foster care homes where no community care centre is necessary. Some organisations started by Christians receive funding from donors in European countries or in the United States of America, while others restrict their fund-raising to South African businesses and philanthropists. Some Christians start and operate within secular NPOs. Many Christians create NPOs with a general Christian ethos that labour faithfully in providing food, clothing, shelter, medication, and care, but have no distinctly Christian mission where the transforming truth of God's Word is communicated. Other Christians create distinctively Christian FBOs that are trying to reach the orphans with the gospel of Jesus Christ and the precepts of God's Word in addition to providing other practical, material, and emotional help to OVC.

Many Christians and churches are responding to the OVC crisis, but on the other hand, many of the economically empowered Christians and churches of South Africa remain apathetic to the situation despite being astonished by the statistics aired on the news from time to time. Overseas Christians and churches seem to display more energy, create more websites, donate more funds, get involved incarnationally, and have a greater determination to make a difference in the lives of South Africa's OVC than their local counterparts. There are perhaps many reasons why Christians and churches don't get involved: preoccupation with everyday life, cynicism about the direction of the New South Africa, a resignation to the way they feel things have always been and always will be, a desire not to see or be emotionally touched by the overwhelming needs, a lack of specific opportunities or invitations to get involved, or an undeveloped understanding of the character and commands of God in the Scriptures regarding compassion ministry to orphans. There seem to be no journal articles, media reports, or books about the stunning and overwhelming response of South African churches to the orphan crisis.

Believers and local churches need to step forward in increasing numbers. The world often judges the credibility of our faith based on how we treat the weakest of our fellow man. Perhaps the greatest stewardship of the global Body of Christ in the next decade will be what we did to reach the 20 million orphans and vulnerable children of southern Africa with compassionate ministry and the truth of God's Word. In evaluating how we must proceed, we must leave the vestiges of European and American colonialism behind, instead applying the ethical framework of the Scriptures to the African cultural milieu. This research will, therefore, seek to provide answers for the following questions:

- What conditions and struggles are currently being faced by orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa in light of the current HIV/AIDS crisis?
- What are the Biblical ethical principles, directives, and examples that are applicable to compassion ministry in general, and to compassion ministry to orphans in particular?
- What are the Biblical principles regarding ministry to children generally?

- What are the proper motivations a Christian or church should have in ministering to orphans and vulnerable children?
- What are the guiding ethical principles regarding cultural sensitivity, and specifically, to applying Biblical principles in the African context?
- Do faith-based organisations and their employees understand what the Bible says about compassion for orphans and the poor? Do they have a biblical philosophy of compassion ministry?
- What models and approaches have been, and are being used by Christians, churches, and other faith-based organisations, and what have been found to be God-honouring, culturally-sensitive, and successful over a period of years?
- What are some of the dangers inherent in foreign and non-local churches and Christians getting involved in ministry to OVC?

1.4 Central theoretical argument

The Bible contains an ethical framework for compassion ministry to orphans, and several South African faith-based organisations are engaged in successful, Biblically-based, culturally sensitive, and contextually sensible orphan-care models sufficient to challenge and inspire Christians and churches to become meaningfully involved in orphan-care ministries, and to enable other Christians, churches, and faith-based organisations involved in orphan-care ministry to evaluate and improve their own models, approaches, motivations, and attitudes toward orphan-care.

1.5 Aims and objectives of this study

The motivation for this study arose from the comparatively mild personal exposure and involvement of the writer with the current orphan crisis, seeing the overwhelming needs and burdens of the children out in the villages, interacting with children and teens about their struggles, being impressed with the commitment, work, fatigue, frustrations, and successes of organisers, caregivers, and care workers, noting the drawbacks, shifts, and failures of certain models of ministry over a period of five years, starting a not-for-profit faith-based organisation, raising funds, and trying to get others involved. It is clear that the nation is not doing enough, and that the Church should be setting the example

and leading the way when it comes to compassion ministry. Thousands of committed workers feel compassion and defend the rights of the child, but they don't know of the wellspring from which these feelings arise, that compassion begins with the character of God or that a child's rights arise from his being made in the image of God. They don't know or feel the force of the commands of God for His people to show compassion, nor can they clearly articulate the genius found in the ministry of Jesus and the early church that balanced compassion with the communication of the gospel, and ethical-moral teachings.

It is hoped that the biblically-based and culturally informed ethical approach to compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children developed in this study will provide South Africans generally with a superior ethical framework with which to approach the current crisis. It is also hoped that the study will motivate other Christians to become part of the solution instead of being a spectator. The FBOs working out in the field are constantly looking to carry out their ministries better, and so it is hoped that this study will provide them with an inspiring and helpful tool to fulfil their mission with greater wisdom and zeal.

The principle objectives of this study are, therefore, as follows:

- To investigate the current conditions and struggles being faced by orphans and vulnerable children in the current HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa.
- To investigate the Biblical description, principles, directives, and examples of compassion ministry in general, and compassion ministry to orphans in particular.
- To investigate other Christian ethical principles regarding cultural sensitivity and application of Biblical principles.
- To investigate, analyse, compare and contrast what Christians, churches, and faith-based organisations are doing in the field to minister to orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa in an effort to understand what orphan-care models and approaches have been and are being used, and to discern what has been found to be God-honouring, culturally-sensitive, and successful.
- To propose an ethical framework and recommendations that will enable individuals and organisations involved in compassion ministry to orphans to

evaluate and improve their own models, approaches, motivations, and attitudes toward orphan-care.

1.6 Research Methodology

The research methodology proposed for this study will be two-fold, employing both a comparative literary study as well as conducting field research to inform the proposed ethical framework.

1.6.1 Comparative Literary Study

The aim of this research is to collect, analyse, compare, and contrast statistics and information on orphans and vulnerable children in the current HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa, as well as ethical ideas regarding compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in general, and this kind of ministry in the African context. An attempt will be made to focus on materials by writers who have been in the field in southern Africa and particularly in South Africa. The study will attempt to develop a Christian ethical perspective on African orphan-focused ministry. All relevant databases will be used. Books, journals, articles, pamphlets, policy documents, government materials, websites, and audio-visual materials, will be examined by means of a literature review.

1.6.2 Empirical Investigation

The aim of this qualitative research is to collect information from ten Christian faith-based organisations working with orphans and vulnerable children in the field in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Northwest Provinces regarding their history, experiences, observations, ethical motivations, funding, personnel, models and changes in models of ministry used, child-protection, adoption emphasis, distinguishing characteristics, use of evangelism, discipleship and biblical education, access to local churches, achievements, failures, and wisdom gained.

The approach is, therefore, to undertake several smaller case studies. The survey will be done by means of reviewing organisational materials, conducting personal recorded interviews with key people on location in the various ministries, with possible follow up by correspondence or interview for further clarifications. Interview questions will be informal and open-ended to allow for reflection and candour.

Information will also be gained through investigation and observation of several orphan-care facilities and orphan residences, and through personal involvement by starting an NGO that is assisting African churches to care for orphans and vulnerable children.

1.7 Provisional chapter divisions

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement, central theoretical argument, aims and objectives of the study, and research methodology

Chapter 2: HIV-AIDS and the orphan crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa

Chapter 3: The Biblical/theological basis for ethical compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children

Chapter 4: Other ethical considerations for compassion ministry in the African context

Chapter 5: Orphan-care models and approaches being used by Christians, churches, and organisations with a Christian ethos in the field in South Africa

Chapter 6: Application of ethical principles to current models

Chapter 7: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

1.8 Table of problem statement, aims and objectives and chapter divisions

Problem Statement	Aims and Objectives	Chapter Division
What are the crisis conditions and struggles being faced by South Africa's orphans and vulnerable children?	To collect, analyse, compare, and contrast statistics and information on orphans and vulnerable children in the current HIV/AIDS crisis in South Africa.	Chapter 2: HIV-AIDS and the orphan crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa

What are the Biblical principles, directives, and examples of compassion ministry in general, and compassion ministry to orphans in particular?	To collect, analyse, compare, and contrast Biblically-based ethical ideas regarding compassion ministry to OVC in general.	Chapter 3: The Biblical basis for ethical compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children
What are other Christian ethical principles regarding cultural sensitivity and application of Biblical principles in the African context?	To collect, analyse, compare, and contrast other ethical ideas regarding compassion ministry to orphans in the African context.	Chapter 4: Other ethical considerations for compassion ministry in the African context
What models and approaches have been, and are being used by Christians, churches, and other faith-based organisations, and what have been found to be God-honouring, culturally-sensitive, and successful over a period of years?	To investigate, analyse, compare and contrast what Christians, churches, and faith-based organisations are doing in the field to minister to orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa in an effort to understand what orphan-care models and approaches have been and are being used, and to discern what has been found to be God-honouring, culturally-sensitive, and successful.	Chapter 5: Orphan-care models and approaches being used by Christians, churches, and organisations with a Christian ethos in the field in South Africa

How do the Biblical ethical principles regarding compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children find appropriate and powerful expression in the models being used by faith-based organisations in South Africa?	To blend together Biblical ethical principles and the orphan-care models being used by faith-based organisations in South Africa.	Chapter 6: Application of ethical principles to current models
What are the results of the research and findings?	To summarise and conclude the findings of the study and make recommendations for further study.	Chapter 7: Summary, conclusions, and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

HIV-AIDS and the orphan crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa

2.1 A common scenario

It was a clear and warm day at winter's end in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga Province, 27 September, 2006. The staff of the Mukhanyo Community Development Centre (MCDC) had received a call from a woman in the village of Mountainview saying that some children had been begging for food from her for several days. She knew that MCDC didn't have a care centre in that area, but she wondered if they could visit the children, find out what their situation was, and render some assistance. An MCDC team in their bakkies climbed the rifted dirt roads of Mountainview, leaving in the dust the more proper dwellings below. Where the village met a sparsely vegetated field stood a corrugated tin shack, a patchwork of rust and paint, perhaps four metres wide and two metres deep. Four children slowly emerged from the dwelling, bewildered by the number of visitors.

The oldest, Thulisa, was only nine years old and was caring for Thembi, aged five, and Tutuzi, aged two. They had never known their father. Their mother left for Pretoria several weeks earlier looking for work. The baby Thulisa carried in her arms was her sister's child, but her sister had left three days earlier and couldn't be found. The children had no food, no nappies, and no furniture, just a bed of clothes on the ground on which they tried to keep warm during the cool nights of September. Thulisa also reported that men were coming in the night and hurting her. This is a classic and oft-repeated scenario for workers in the villages of South Africa. Saddened, but not surprised, the MCDC team took the children down to a nearby care centre, provided them with a warm meal and a pack of nappies. The downside was that unless there was another crisis, there would be little follow-up of the children after they were returned to Mountainview because no care centre existed on that hillside.³

³ The writer was present when this incident took place. Names have been changed to protect the children's identity and rights. MCDC's website is at www.mcdc.org.za.

2.2 The number of orphans and vulnerable children

With the attention of the United Nations, the media, celebrities, and a host of organisations and people contributing funds, working in the field, and uploading information and pictures to the internet, the world has become focused on the plight of AIDS orphans over the past decade. An orphan is defined as a child under the age of 18 whose mother, father, or both biological parents have died. Thus, orphans are subdivided into three categories. A maternal orphan is a child whose mother has died but whose father is alive, a paternal orphan is a child whose father has died but whose mother is alive, and a double orphan is a child whose mother and father have both died (Meintjies, 2009:102).

The sheer number of orphans staggers the imagination. Statistics gathered in the General Household Survey of 2008 supported an estimate that 3.95 million of South Africa's 18.7 million children, more than one in five, were orphans (Meintjies, 2009:102). South Africa's Department of Social Development (DSD) has affirmed (2009:3) that the number of orphans increased five percent in the five years from 2002 to 2006, from 17% to 21% of all children. If the DSD figures are correct and the increase in the number of orphans yearly is 1% of a static figure of 18.7 million children, or 187,000 children each year, then more than 3,500 children are newly orphaned each week in South Africa, more than twenty every hour (Ash, 2006:162). At the date of this writing, therefore, South Africa has passed the four million mark. The number of double orphans more than doubled from 350,000 in 2002 to 850,000 in 2008, and if the trend has continued, has now passed the one million mark (Meintjies, 2009:102). Some have estimated that the total number of orphans in South Africa by 2015 will be as high as five million among a population of 52 million people (BBC News, 2007:10).

The shame in all of this is what statistics do to our minds in impersonalising the matter. The old German proverb often attributed to Josef Stalin says, "The death of one man is a catastrophe; a hundred thousand dead is a statistic." The statistics run together like a blur. The numbers are just too high and impersonal. The little faces on television, posters, and websites are so common and two-dimensional that they still make little impact. Compassion begins with seeing. It often takes a visit to the settlements, a chat with volunteer workers in a dusty

village, holding a little orphan's face in your hands, where you struggle to pronounce their beautiful African name, to grab your heart, to wake you up to the devastating situation for this child times four million, and the need they have for Christians with compassion and the Gospel. People from the West often suffer emotional meltdown as the reality sinks in.

How many orphans are AIDS orphans? Because AIDS is not a notifiable disease, because there is no recent detailed national census, and because many children in the surveys simply do not know where their parents are or if they are alive, there is no way to accurately differentiate how many children are AIDS orphans as opposed to being orphaned from some other cause such as auto accidents or malaria (Anderson, 2006:3). Medical records and death certificates rarely note the presence of the disease. Based upon the increase in mortality of children and adults over the past decade when the AIDS epidemic reached its peak, Statistics South Africa estimated in 2008 (2009:8) that 1.91 million of the nation's 3.7 million orphans were AIDS orphans. UNAIDS (2004:3) reported in 2004 that the number of children orphaned by AIDS will continue to rise for at least the next decade. This is largely due to the lag in time between HIV detection and death from AIDS-related causes. Dorrington (2006:24) conservatively estimated that by 2015 the number of orphans in South Africa just due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic will reach 2.2 million. The reason that the AIDS statistics in South Africa are significant, rather than simply defying one's mental grasp, is that the staggering loss in the adult population, particularly of those ages 25-49, is wiping out not only the primary workforce of the country but the primary caregivers of children. The deaths are not only causing the orphan crisis, but will weaken the country's ability to respond to it.

2.3 The blur of distinctions

Those working in the field do not typically use the term "AIDS orphan", or even "orphan", because there are so many other children who have been injured and put at risk by the scourge of HIV/AIDS. A child with a father who has been absent for years and a mother who is terminally ill with tuberculosis secondary to AIDS is not an orphan, but is nonetheless in grave danger. Therefore, the term "OVC," meaning "orphans and vulnerable children," has become a term of art (Skinner,

2006:620). OVC includes single orphans where one parent has died, designated as either a maternal or paternal orphan, and double orphans where both parents have died. But the vulnerability also involves a broad range of other overlapping conditions. Some have been abandoned; some have a parent or caregiver who is chronically ill, disabled, or substance-abusing. Others have lack of access to medical services or education or have inadequate clothing or shelter. Some face a vulnerability that is due to HIV/AIDS-related factors, such as being in a household where the income-provider is battling with AIDS, being in poor and overcrowded households that have taken in orphans, being discriminated against because of his or her or a family member's HIV status, or the poverty and illnesses that develop in these settings (QAP, UNICEF, 2008:18). UNAID (2004:3) advises that "programs should not single out children orphaned by AIDS but should direct their efforts toward communities where HIV/AIDS is making children and adolescents more vulnerable". For the purposes of this study, an orphan or vulnerable child (OVC) is regarded as a person under 18 years of age who has lost one or both parents to death, desertion, or disability, and/or a child who has little or no access to basic needs or rights.

Although orphans and vulnerable children experience great suffering, it must be noted that in regular children in South Africa's poor communities suffer in many of the same ways that OVC do (Bird, 2005:5). The HIV/AIDS epidemic has exacerbated the difficult circumstances already being faced by most of South Africa's children due to factors such as the country's poverty, fragmented families, crime and violence, abuse and exploitation of women and children, insufficient infrastructure, lack of access to medical and social services, and moral decay. Things such as low school attendance, perilous living conditions, deep poverty, hunger, abuse, violence, lack of access to medical services, and living with people other than biological parents are common to orphans, vulnerable children, and regular poor children alike. Yet somehow, these conditions are easier to face when you can see the face of a mother or father.

For those in the field, children are simply referred to as "children." In the townships and villages, there is little meaningful distinction between how you would treat an orphan, a vulnerable child, or a regular child living in poverty, so

the terms are not helpful in that setting. Organisations providing orphan care often visit homes to make an assessment on a case by case basis as to whether a child qualifies to receive assistance, with periodic review to evaluate whether circumstances have changed. “While not all orphaning is due to HIV/AIDS, orphaning remains the most visible, extensive, and measurable impact of AIDS on children. To date, no methodology is available for estimating the number of other children made vulnerable by AIDS. Orphans are not only of great concern; their presence reflects a much larger set of problems faced by children generally” (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004:5).

Therefore, when one ponders the impact that five million orphans will have on South Africa over the next two decades if not properly reared and cared for, one should at least double that number when properly considering the vulnerable children who are likewise suffering. If not properly addressed, AIDS not only kills the individual, it disintegrates families, decimates communities, and damages the society as a whole, not only due to the absence of its adult and working population, but because of the orphans and vulnerable children left in its wake. If an epidemic is mild, extended family systems can provide such children with love and support, food, shelter, education, and medical care. But in the case of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, the epidemic is so severe that in many cases there are not enough adults to care for the children left behind. “AIDS is reducing the pool of traditional caregivers and the numbers of breadwinners resulting in increased poverty and reduced care giving for children” (SADOSS, 2005:7). Families struggle just to meet the funeral bills, which can cost as much as four months of a family’s income, and bereaved households are often required to reduce spending on other items, such as food and education (UNCHGA, 2004:18).

2.4 Children living with AIDS

South African children are facing a situation unprecedented in modern times where so many parents have died, and so many other parents need their children to care for them and the household while they are sick and dying. The transience of life and certainty of death is underscored every day with the news that someone else nearby has died. Saturday is funeral day. “HIV starts to affect a child early in a parent’s illness, and its impact continues through the course of the

illness and throughout the child's development after the parent's death" (UNAIDS, 2004:4). An estimated 1,577,200 non-orphaned children in South Africa are directly affected by HIV/AIDS through circumstances such as HIV infection, living with an adult caregiver who is suffering from HIV/AIDS, being abandoned, or living in a house that cares for many children due to the AIDS epidemic (SADOSS, 2009:11).

Children living with HIV/AIDS are affected in numerous ways. Some are born to mothers who are HIV positive. About a third of such children have contracted HIV from their mothers, something known as vertical transmission, through the childbirth process or breastfeeding, but that possibility can be greatly diminished when the mother is receiving ART (antiretroviral treatment) (Bird, 2005:8). Testing newborns for HIV normally proves inconclusive, but it is safest to put the baby of an HIV-positive mother on ART just in case (Van der Horst, 2008:38). More than half of HIV-infected infants have died at less than 2 years of age, but that mortality level is being reduced by almost 70% when infants receive ART (Brahmbhatt, 2005:507). Although ART is mildly toxic, children seem to respond well to it and are living into their teens so far, as will be discussed further infra.

Many South African children are struggling with HIV infection and AIDS. In 2007, 57% of deaths of children under five were attributable to HIV/AIDS (Johns Hopkins, 2010). That same year, there were an estimated 280,000 South African children under age 15 living with HIV infection, a figure that had almost doubled since 2001 (UNAIDS, 2008:216). With AIDS compromising their immune systems, children become susceptible to opportunistic infections. Up to half of the children living with HIV in South Africa are co-infected with tuberculosis (Prendergast, 2007:72). In 2009, UNICEF reported that 86,270 children in South Africa were receiving ART, approximately 54% of the children under age 15 whose CD4 count had dropped sufficiently low to require it (UNICEF, 2010).

Many children live with sick parents or sick caregivers. Not only do they tend these sick adults, which can be a difficult and dangerous job even for healthcare professionals, but they pick up additional tasks around home such as cooking, cleaning, running errands, and caring for younger siblings. This often compromises school attendance and certainly their ability to focus on their studies

(Bird, 2005:2). It is critical for children to stay in school. A recent study in rural South Africa found that each additional year of educational attainment reduces the risk of HIV infection by 7% (Bärnighausen, 2007:36). In particular, schooling offers an excellent means of reducing girls' HIV risk and vulnerability (UNAIDS 2008:69). The difficulties at home are compounded when financial remittances the family was counting on, perhaps from a father or relative working in the city, stop coming and they learn thereafter that he or she has died. In some cases, relatives from the city return to their rural homes to die when they learn they have AIDS (Clark, 2007:41). Lower income normally means less food. According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (UNFAO, 2001:1), food consumption drops approximately 40% in homes affected by HIV and AIDS.

In addition to these struggles in the home, many children are living with AIDS in a more general way, surrounded by illness and death in their neighbourhoods, extended families, and educational institutions. Many have lost teachers and other role models to the epidemic. Arguing that teachers are the first line of defence, after medical professionals, in the fight against AIDS, Coombe (2002:4) lamented that "school performance would inevitably decline where 20-30% of all teachers, officials, and learners are ill, and others lack morale and are unable to concentrate on learning and professional matters because their lives too are touched by HIV and AIDS." What makes matters worse is the shame and secrecy surrounding the topic of sex, disease transmission, and prevention. A study released in 2009 (Ahmed, 2009:51) found that, for personal, moral, or religious reasons, teachers are neither comfortable nor confident with engaging their learners on sexual health and HIV/AIDS prevention, and believe that such education should be, but is mostly not, provided at home.

Many children living in HIV-infected communities are also at risk of infection by rape and sexual molestation. South Africa has one of the highest rates of reported rape in the world, and one of the highest HIV infection rates in the world; research is attempting to find a link between the two. A study released in 2009 (Jewkes, 2009:18), interviewing 1700 men from around the country, sadly documented that 27.6% of South African males admitted that they had raped a woman or a girl once, 23.2% had raped two or three women, and 4.6% of them

had committed rape in the past year. Although the HIV prevalence among this study's men who had committed rape was not significantly different than the HIV prevalence in the general male population, other studies have shown that most HIV infections in young women are a result of unprotected sex that often takes place as a result of a cultural power imbalance between men and women that limits "women's ability to negotiate or control sexual interactions, especially with older men" (Lampthey, 2006:5).

2.5 The difficulties faced by orphans

Beyond the burdens, risks, and reprioritising busyness of being a child living with HIV/AIDS in the home, AIDS brings yet another devastating blow to Africa's children by taking away their mothers and fathers. Somehow all of the burdens are more bearable when one can see a mother's face, touch her hand, and feel that she knows and cares. AIDS brings children even lower than the low and is redefining the very meaning of childhood for millions in Africa, depriving them of many of their human rights and of the care, love, and affection of their parents and other caregivers (Bundy, 2006:8). Orphans in the HIV/AIDS context experience several unique hardships and threats to their wellbeing and socialisation above those of poor and vulnerable children generally.

2.5.1 Psycho-social problems

When the prolonged suffering of a parent with AIDS comes to an end, the suffering of their child is just beginning to crest. In many cases, they have been working hard, fighting for their parent's comfort, health and survival, and hoping they won't slip away. But their sterling efforts are followed only by the realisation of their worst fears. When parents die, the children left behind suffer great injury to their emotional well-being, and the grief can be overwhelming (Cluver, 2007:758). They have lost parental love, care, and guidance, particularly from their mothers. Because of the traditionally greater responsibility for childcare carried by the mother, and due to the common absence of the father from the family for long periods of time due to work obligations, community based organisations take special interest in whether a child's mother has died. Although the death of either parent is a tragedy, the immediate impact of the death of the mother on the care of the child is likely to be more serious than is the death of the

father (Anderson, 2006:1). As of the 2008 General Household Survey, 21% of South Africa's 18 million children were orphaned in some way; 3.3% were maternal orphans only, 13.2% were paternal orphans only, and 4.6% were double orphans. Thus, over 1.4 million of the country's children had lost their mothers (CCCI, 2010).

So many orphans feel utterly alone and abandoned, and that no adult or person of power in the world cares about them, is watching out for them, or will provide for them. Unless there is some neighbour or care centre around them that has communicated a commitment to help, facing the next day without parents brings insecurity and fear. There is hardly an emotion in the world to compare with being alone as a child in a hostile world, a world full of larger, more forceful and powerful adults. In addition to their great sorrow, anger, and even guilt over the loss of a parent is the fear of the future: finding the next meal, finding some way to make money, caring for siblings, guarding their property from being stolen, taking care of a sick baby brother or sister, deciding whether to stay in school, protecting themselves from abuse, violence, and exploitation. In some regions of South Africa, the mothers have died, the fathers are gone, many children are sick, and there are few caregivers. For instance, in the Motheo District of the Free State, near Bloemfontein, according to some unpublished studies documented by UNAIDS in 2008 (2008:154), there were an estimated 44,000 maternal orphans living in the district, 7736 of whom were living with HIV. More than 25,000 of these children were under the age of ten and were considered malnourished. The one palliative care programme in the district was stretched trying to serve 1300 children, a fraction of those who needed help.

There is also a stigma attached to being an orphan, or associated with AIDS, even though in many villages orphans are the majority. Some suffer injury to their psycho-social wellbeing due to the stigma and discrimination at school or in the community attached to HIV/AIDS and the status of being an orphan (Bray, 2003:46). If an orphan has lost both parents and close relatives, and is passed off to either extended family, to neighbours, or to a government agency or an NPO facility, they can also experience a loss of identity and belonging. They become another of too many children in one house, a case number, or another child within

a system choked by a superabundance of children. They feel that they have become a burden to others, and at times, they become servants to others. Sadly, many orphans experience loss and abandonment on a repeated basis and become emotionally distant to avoid further hurt. Some are taken into a home on a trial basis only to be passed off to other neighbours when conflicts or difficulties occur. Some are permitted to take up residence with another person who is aged or infirm only to see that person pass away in time, which serves to resurface their earlier loss of parents. Stability and inclusion of an orphan in a larger social, cultural, and societal framework is very important to their being able to cope with the death of a parent. Exclusion and marginalisation of OVC before or after the death of a parent from AIDS is highly detrimental to their psycho-social wellbeing (Snider, 2006:27).

Another recent trend, purporting to help the orphans, might actually be hurting them. AIDS orphan tourism, nicknamed “voluntourism,” is the activity in which affluent Western adults and young adults travel to places like South Africa to spend days or weeks with the “AIDS orphans” as voluntary caregivers. Different than people who bring serious and useful skills to an orphan setting, these “voluntourists” desire an emotional connection with needy young children, to experience first-hand one of the world’s great crises, and even to identify with Hollywood personalities who fly in to swoop up a couple of toddlers to adopt (Richter, 2010:4). These well-intentioned caregivers can have a detrimental impact on the emotional well-being of orphans when they leave. The dissolution of attachment bonds with successive volunteers is yet another experience of abandonment and creates insecurities and odd behaviours like indiscriminate friendliness, clinging fondly to strangers they have just met. The problem of viewing orphans as a tourist commodity is just starting to get the attention it needs.

2.5.2 Material problems

Obviously, with the loss of either the family bread-winner, who lived locally or far away, or the loss of the local parent who handles the finances, food prep, and maintenance in the home, most orphans are going to face economic hardship and poverty. With very few exceptions, orphans are poor. They further run the risk of

losing personal property (furniture, electronics, livestock, etc.) and real property that they are entitled to by right of inheritance (QAP, 2008:30). Often the property left behind by their parents is taken away by relatives or neighbours (Lloyd, 2008:15). Without an advocate, a child is physically unable to recapture possessions and lacks any understanding of rights or legalities. Often, even where no property-grabbing takes place, there are no possessions left behind with any market or even sentimental value (Izumi, 2006:45). One child showed the author a tattered photo of his mother and father and insisted they would be back, while the care worker quietly shook her head.

The death of a parent reduces a child's protection against financial and labour exploitation by relatives and neighbours (Case, 2004:485). Although informal fostering by extended family or by grandmother figures in the community is common, some children are kept by a person for what little funds the caregiver can get from the Child Support Grant, currently R240/month for any impoverished child up to age 18. In an increasing number of cases, these funds are pocketed rather than being properly spent on behalf of the child (Maqoko, 2007:725). Keeping multiple orphans simply as a business venture is the lowest sort of mercenary activity, and measures need to be taken by government agencies to ensure that these funds are being properly spent. Other orphans are forced to work at their new home and in the fields rather than going to school (Ardington, 2008:4).

The death of a parent can also greatly impact an orphan's education. Absenteeism, falling behind, and dropping out are more common for orphans than regular children, and these patterns compromise the development of their cognitive and study skills, and weaken their future prospects. HIV/AIDS orphans are often mocked by other children, discriminated against, and isolated such that they simply find it easier to stay away from school. "Others feel badly when they have no money for a school uniform, to pay their school fees, or pocket money to take to school. The stress of their situation takes its toll on orphaned children's education" (Maqoko, 2007:727). After losing a parent to AIDS, losing a favoured teacher as a role model can also be emotionally painful. Teachers get sick with HIV and lose, on average, six months of professional time before developing full-

blown AIDS, thereafter dying within a year, like the orphan's parents did (Allemano, 2003:28). More than a decade ago, UNICEF reported that South African school children had already lost an estimated 100,000 teachers to AIDS (Coombe, 2002:3). The Human Sciences Research Council, the Medical Research Council, and the Mobile Task Team on the Impact of HIV/AIDS on Education (HSRC/MRC/MTT) were commissioned to produce a study on "the demand and supply of educators in South Africa," and reported in 2004 that HIV prevalence among South Africa's teachers was 12.5%, and as high as 24% among teachers under age 35 (Bennell, 2005:2). Some researchers (Rehle, 2005:8) estimated this to be the apex, and projected that prevalence would decline to 11.5% by 2015.

Some orphans face an increased risk of hunger, malnutrition, and consequent illness. According to a Shona proverb, *Nherera inoguta musi wafa mai* (an orphan has their last full meal on the day the mother dies). Obtaining money from relatives, nearby NGOs, or government grants can seem impossible to children. Most resort to begging, which raises new dangers discussed below. Even if a child can receive funds, he or she struggles to understand its value, the value of products at booths or in the shops, or the discipline of budgeting. They also risk the possibility of theft by others or being accused of theft. Left alone, children often struggle to obtain water at adult-dominated wells or water tanks, to transport the water, to tend and guard their gardens, or to make enough money to purchase food at the market. The implications are serious: malnutrition, limited physical and mental development, illness, and even starvation (Maqoko, 2007:3). Walking or finding transport to a nearby medical facility, or even knowing what to do, where to go, with whom to speak, or how to express one's pains, symptoms and needs, can prove overwhelming for children. Further, caring for one's parents until they die does not exempt an orphan from again becoming a care-provider for ill relatives or siblings, and they can therefore be exposed to the ongoing risk of contracting HIV themselves in addition to not having access to medical help.

The struggle to obtain food and goods within a culture of sexual exploitation, often puts orphans at risk (QAP, 2008:30). Economic hardships often lead to begging, and begging often leads to opportunities to progressively use one's body to get

food or money. Emma Guest (2003:1) told of one girl who gave away her virginity for an apple. "Research in South Africa consistently demonstrates a pattern of extensive sexual violence in which children and young people are raped or forced to have sex, young women live in anticipation of harassment, rape or coerced sex, and a miasma of fear permeates sexual relationships between young people" (Coombe, 2002:6). Abusing the cultural respect for age, older men have in many cases abused their positions of physical power and social authority to force girls into sexual relationships (Chitando, 2007:18). Desperate for help and relief from their difficulties, many girls succumb to the proffers of a "sugar daddy" and exchange sex for money, food, and other favours and services (UNCHGA, 2008:81). The lower the age of first sex, the higher the lifetime risk of HIV infection because an early sexual debut is often associated with older lifetime partners, higher rates of coerced sex, and lower rates of condom usage (Pettifor, 2009). In their ten observations from years of work in HIV/AIDS infected communities in southern Africa, authors Rhoi Wangila and Chinua Akukwe (2006:1) lamented that there are entire generations of orphans left without social, economic or political support who have been abandoned to abysmal poverty. They also gave warning about what they called the dark side of the AIDS orphan saga in Africa: sexual predation of AIDS orphans. "Female AIDS orphans are now easy fodder for sexual predators. In this ongoing study, some female AIDS orphans in Africa are visibly pregnant or caring for young infants. Many of the AIDS orphans are not in school or have no hope of ever receiving structured education. Most of these AIDS orphan mothers are fending for themselves with little or no social support. The inability of African governments and the international community to protect AIDS orphans and provide social and economic support is troubling" (Ibid.).

2.5.3 Child-headed households

Some OVC become members of, or providers for, child-headed households, a household in which no one is age 18 or older. In her book, *AIDS Orphans Rising*, Sister Mary Lloyd stated that worldwide "a new child-headed household is formed every 14 seconds" (Lloyd, 2008:11). There are no firm statistics on how many child-headed households or orphan-headed households exist in South Africa, but

the General Household Survey of 2008 found approximately 122,000 children, less than 1% of South Africa's child population, living in such conditions, with 61% of them reporting that they had living parents (STATSSA, 2008:95). Here again one must use caution; most people assume that child-headed households must necessarily be comprised only of orphans. But many children, while their parents are working in a distant location, live at home alone and maintain a presence at the family residence to avoid others squatting on their family's land and asserting rights under the Housing Act. These guardian children are not orphans and may be vulnerable only in a very limited sense. The Children's Institute in Cape Town reports that currently, of South Africa's 18.7 million children, 23% do not reside with either of their biological parents, yet only 5% are double orphans (CCCI, 2010). This is part of the cultural milieu in South Africa and those unfamiliar with it can make unfortunate and exaggerated assumptions.

Nonetheless, many working in the villages estimate the true number of orphan-headed households to exceed the numbers documented in a few surveys in which approximately 20% of the children living alone reported that their mother was deceased (Meintjes, 2010:12). In areas where the AIDS epidemic has hit hard, there is a dearth of adults who are available to care for children. The writer has observed homes in the Jeppe's Reef and Shongwe Mission area of Mpumalanga Province that are headed by children ages 10-12 who are caring for three to six other children. Lloyd (2008:29) has noted the same, adding that some children have relatives who simply did not want to take them for economic reasons, and thus they formed their own household. Thembaletu, an outstanding NGO operating in Shongwe Mission, noted on its website:

"In the region of Nkomazi, in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa, bordering with Swaziland and Mozambique, the HIV/AIDS situation is bleak. Medical practitioners report that the incidence of HIV infection is as high as 50% placing Nkomazi among the highest infected communities in South Africa. In addition, local government hospitals estimate that 90% of their beds are used for AIDS-related illnesses. After two years only 1000 patients are on antiretroviral treatment (ART) from government hospitals in Nkomazi, with an unknown number under

treatment from private doctors. Poverty levels are high with 65% of the community unemployed. By June, 2007, Thembaletu identified more than 4,500 orphans and vulnerable children in the villages in which we operate with over 350 households that are headed by children ages 16-18” (Thembaletu, 2010).

These are households in which primarily teenagers are raising younger siblings and other unrelated children, and at times are double orphans. As the elderly caregivers pass away, and the next generation has been greatly diminished by the AIDS epidemic, efforts will need to increasingly focus on helping children to cope alone (Maqoko, 2006:722). These children are mature beyond their years since they have watched loved ones die long, agonising deaths, bathed their sores, fetched their medicines, and not rejected them as cursed by the ancestors or witchcraft, as many adults have done (Masaka, 2009:190). One survey reported that these children live in less sanitary conditions than in mixed generation households, and that a surprising 95% of the children attend school and don’t carry jobs, but instead rely on grant monies supplied by the government and remittances sent by relatives working elsewhere (Meintjes, 2009:3). In these areas, OVC care centres are of critical importance.

2.6 Responses to the needs of OVC

2.6.1 Framework for public action

At the launch of the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund in Mahlamba'ndlopfu, Pretoria, on 8 May, 1995, Nelson Mandela said, “There can be no keener revelation of a society’s soul than the way it treats its children.” As South Africa was becoming aware of the emerging AIDS crisis through the 1990’s, its response had to be three-fold: HIV/AIDS prevention, HIV/AIDS treatment, and care for a growing number of orphans and vulnerable children (Guthrie, 2010:9). But at the same time, the country was just recovering from a period of social upheaval, forging a new Constitution, and undergoing a massive change in government personnel. The public was intoxicated with new freedoms, new models of doing things, new behaviours, new morals, and a flight to the cities to profit from changing economic prospects. This positive outlook blinded minds to the spreading virus.

As will be discussed *infra*, protecting and caring for orphans, from a Christian perspective, has its genesis in the person and character of God. Firstly, children are humans created in the image of God and, although fallen, carry an esteem given to them by God, and a consequent value and dignity, and they are therefore entitled to certain rights (Vorster, 2004:94). Secondly, because orphans are in the ranks of those who are weak and relatively powerless in society, God has compassion for them. Because normally functioning humans, though fallen, are made in God's image, they also share such compassion for the weak and powerless. The South African government could not, however, allocate millions of rands to orphan care merely out of compassion or some philanthropic spirit, noble as that might be. It needed to create a legal framework and did so based upon the rights of the child, even though the articulation of those rights in government documents would be devoid of any reference to God. Progressively over the past fifteen years, the legal framework for protecting the rights of children and orphans has been built. Unfortunately, the second administration of the new South Africa under President Thabo Mbeki took a minority stance on the cause, nature, and cure for AIDS, which only served to slow the energy for a national response to the crisis (Guest, 2003:15) even though the legislative basis was in place. But with a turn in administrations, and under the current leadership of Health Minister, Dr. Aaron Motsoaledi, the zeal for social action on behalf of orphans and vulnerable children, based largely on their rights as children, has caught fire in South Africa.

The rights of children are codified in Section 28 of South Africa's Constitution's Bill of Rights (Constitution, 1996). Those rights include, *inter alia*, "the right:

- to a name and a nationality from birth;
- to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment;
- to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services;
- to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation;
- to be protected from exploitative labour practices; not to be required or permitted to perform work or provide services that
 - are inappropriate for a person of that child's age; or

- place at risk the child's well-being, education, physical or mental health or spiritual, moral or social development”

Every one of these rights is affected when a child is orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Anderson, 2006:1).

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, adopted in 1990 and ratified by South Africa in 1995, states in Article 25(2)(a) that member nations “shall ensure that a child who is parentless, or who is temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or who in his or her best interest cannot be brought up or allowed to remain in that environment, shall be provided with alternative family care, which could include, among others, foster placement, or placement in suitable institutions for the care of children” (OAU, 1999:11).

Further, South Africa is a signatory to the Declaration of Commitment of The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Children, held in 2002. Article 46(c) of the Declaration states:

“By 2003 develop, and by 2005 implement, national policies and strategies to: build and strengthen governmental, family, and community capacities to provide supportive environments for orphans and girls and boys infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, including by providing appropriate counselling and psycho-social support; ensuring their enrolment in school and access to shelter, good nutrition, health and social services on an equal basis with other children; to protect orphans and vulnerable children from all forms of abuse, violence, exploitation, discrimination, trafficking and loss of inheritance” (UNGASS, 2002:19).

On time in 2005, the South African Department of Social Services (SADOSS) issued its Policy Framework For Orphans And Other Children Made Vulnerable By HIV And AIDS. Expanding on the five key strategies of the framework developed by UNICEF and UNAIDS to respond in a comprehensive way to the plight of OVC (UNAIDS/UNICEF/USAID, 2004:5), the South African Department of Social Services (SADOSS, 2005:8) enumerated six key strategies, from inside to outside, that would assist the country in developing “comprehensive, integrated

and quality responses for orphans and other vulnerable children at a programmatic level.” These are:

- Strengthen and support the capacity of families to protect and care.
- Mobilise and strengthen community-based responses for the care, support and protection of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.
- Ensure that legislation, policy; strategies and programmes are in place to protect the most vulnerable children.
- Assure access for orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS to essential services.
- Raise awareness and advocate for the creation of a supportive environment for OVC.
- Engage the civil society sector and business community in playing an active role to support the plight of orphans and children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

This Policy Framework document was intended to reflect “the collective commitment of government, faith-based organisations, community-based organisations, civil society and the business sector and serves as a guiding tool to all people involved in HIV and AIDS and the children’s sector” (SADOSS, 2005:4).

Earlier, following a conference in 2002, the South African Department of Social Development (DSD) established the National Action Committee for Children Affected by AIDS (NACCA) to coordinate government departments, businesses, and non-governmental organisations on national, provincial, district, and community levels in an effort to collectively alleviate the suffering of these children. “The realisation of the rights of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS and the vigorous advancement of the social development agenda to restore their dignity and wellbeing requires collective effort from government, business sector, civil society and the strengthening of community responses” (SADOSS, 2005:12). Based on information gathered by NACCA, the Department of Social Development designed and implemented two National Action Plans for Orphans and other Children Made Vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, the first from 2006-2008, and after review by key stakeholders, the

second from 2009-2012, dealing more in depth with the six key strategies noted above. Thus, the legal framework for an all-encompassing public response to the OVC crisis is in place. But such documents are only declarations of rights and intentions. Meaningful progress will obviously depend on funding, performance, coordination and communication, honest and effective monitoring and evaluation, and properly functioning feedback mechanisms.

The feet and hands of the South African government in reaching OVC where they live is Child Welfare South Africa. Formerly the South African National Council for Child and Family Welfare, CWSA is a non-profit, non-governmental coordinating body for 263 member organisations and outreach projects aimed at creating safe and caring environments for children, mobilising public awareness and protection of children, and providing services for children in predominantly unserved and underserved communities around the country. About 90% of its work is statutory and involves finding homes and safe houses for children who are formally in the system (Guest, 2003:41). Its Asibavikele (“Let’s Protect Them”) programme began in 2002 and has responded to the OVC crisis by identifying thousands of OVC, establishing foster care homes and safe homes, training volunteers, publishing manuals to keep caregivers informed of their rights and responsibilities and of public benefits, grant monies, and social workers available to them (CWSA, 2009).

2.6.2 Funding for OVC care

Substantial funds, from inside and outside of South Africa, are being spent to combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic and care for OVC. There has been some concern, due to the economic recession over the past few years, that there would be a marked downturn in foreign donations. Sidibe of UNAIDS (Tay, 2010) said that in 2010 94% of the patients on ART on the continent of Africa, including 920,000 South African patients, many of them children, relied on external donor funds to provide their medications. He was concerned that these gains would be lost, but after its meeting in New York in October of 2010, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria announced a new donor commitment of \$11.7 billion for ART for the years 2011-2013.

In its 2010 report to the United Nations' Special Session on Children, the South African Department of the Treasury (South Africa, 2010:27) indicated that 17.57 billion rand was spent in 2009 on the AIDS epidemic from domestic and international sources, an increase of 21% from the year before. The most notable foreign investment benefiting orphans and vulnerable children has been the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which contributes substantial sums to larger agencies involved in HIV/AIDS education and prevention campaigns, HIV/AIDS treatment, and OVC care. In 2009, designated South African agencies, organisations, universities, and initiatives, referred to as "prime partners," received more than \$551 million from PEPFAR, and have received more than \$1.9 billion since 2004, more than any other country in the world (PEPFAR, 2010). But PEPFAR funding will expire in December of 2011.

In 2009, the Department of Social Development increased social assistance grants, including an extension of eligibility for the child support grant to age 18, in response to the global economic downturn compounding the suffering of poor families and diminishing charitable donations. The means test for social grants was also raised to permit wider access to social support (South Africa, 2010:47). These cash grants provide targeted income to support families whose livelihood is at risk.

The two main grants designed to protect the rights and enhance the living conditions of OVC are the "child-support grant" and the "foster-care grant." As of October 2008, 8.3 million children were receiving the child-support grant, which is provided to children in need up to the age of 15 years, and 494,992 children were receiving the foster-care grant to provide money for foster families caring for children up to the age of 18 years. To receive the child-support grant of R240 per month, one must establish need and that he or she is a child's primary caregiver. To receive the foster-care grant of R590 per month, a child must have been legally placed in one's care by a court under the Child Care Act, and the foster parents must pass the means test (Cape Gateway, 2009). The funds are paid to the foster parents, or in the case of orphans in a child-headed household, to a community based caregiver (Maqoko, 2007:726). Of lesser use, but deeply helpful if needed, is the "care dependency grant" of R1010 per month to help

provide for disabled children if the primary caregiver passes the means test, thereby establishing need.

The South African government reported to the UN in 2008 (UNAIDS, 2008:166) that it had reached more than one million orphans and vulnerable children (50% of households that include one or more OVC) with financial support, mostly in the form of child-support and foster-care grants. In 2010, the Department of Social Services (South Africa, 2010:46) claimed that an estimated 75% of South Africa's OVC are receiving some kind of free basic external support. Thus, there are still caregivers overseeing millions of impoverished children in South Africa who do not know about the grant monies, do not have the necessary identification documents, or do not know how to qualify for or access the funds.

“The realisation of the rights of orphans and other children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS, and the vigorous advancement of the social development agenda to restore their dignity and well-being, requires a collective effort from government, the business sector, civil society and the strengthening of community responses” (DOSD-SA, 2005:4). Therefore, in addition to these government grants and services, non-profit organisations, utilising funds received from the government, from PEPFAR, or from their own fund-raising efforts, also contribute to the welfare of OVC by funding care centres, building and funding foster homes and cluster foster care villages, and even contributing directly to caregivers for food and supplies as necessary.

2.6.3 Care of OVC

Informal fostering within the extended family is the most common safety net for orphans and children made vulnerable by the current HIV/AIDS epidemic (Subbarao, 2004:28). It is also the most desirable since maintaining connections with family, relatives, tribe, community, culture, and tradition is considered in the best interests of the child (Böning, 2005:1). The collective focus of the government and the network of non-profit organisations is primarily on assisting these thousands of informal fostering arrangements throughout the country. Contrary to more affluent Western societies where fostering is viewed as a short-term solution, and adoption a more desirable and permanent one, the flood of OVC created by the HIV/AIDS epidemic dwarfs what little help formal fostering

and adoption in South Africa can provide. There is a fully developed but comparatively expensive legal process to undergo in the children's court to adopt children, and comparatively few orphans have been adopted within South Africa. A total of only 1,913 adoptions took place in 2007-2008 (Di Siena, 2009). An increasing number of adoptions are by foreign parents living primarily in European and Scandinavian countries having an adoption agreement with the South African government, and they are almost all interracial adoptions.

As parents in the 20-40 year old age bracket die away of AIDS, it is typically the older generation of grandparents, longing for the years where they can be cared for by their children, who are instead faced with rearing their children's children. Grandmothers who have often lost their own children to AIDS, have, without any organisation or prodding, taken these little ones into their own homes, or watched after them (Guest, 2003:17). In one extreme case, a grandmother's seven sons and their wives had died, and she was caring for 15 grandchildren (Izumi, 2006:44). Surveys in rural South Africa have detected an increase in the number of households headed by individuals over 50 (UNAIDS, 2008:164). But an elderly person's pension money can only stretch so far, and therefore, the child support grant and foster care grant were designed to assist such households in meeting basic food and clothing costs. Many working in the field are still concerned that many caregivers do not know of these benefits.

In the absence of extended family, many OVC are absorbed informally into the community, and are cared for by an unrelated grandmother figure who serves as a foster parent, typically for two to four children. Socially, these go-go's have been the saviours of the orphans. "Child-rearing in South Africa has long been characterized by the presence of multiple caregivers and the involvement of broad kinship networks in the lives of children, both with and without living parents" (Meintjies, 2009:102). Bray (2003:42) indicates that it is simply a continuation of trends in child care that began several generations ago with the migrant labour patterns of the apartheid era where one or both parents went to the city to work leaving their children behind with relatives or trusted friends in the rural areas. Even prior to the AIDS epidemic, studies indicated that the pensions of grandparents were often spent on fees, uniforms, and books for school. Africans

have a strong culture of community, holding to the adage that “it takes a community to raise a child”. Even oft used words in orphan-care work such as “ubuntu” (I am well when we are well) or “masibambisane” (let us lift the burden together),” stress the African cultural desire to work together.

It is where these informal fostering networks of caregivers struggle or fail that the network of community-based and faith-based organisations provide critical, personal, and supplemental care for OVC. Despite receiving their monthly grant monies, many older caregivers need additional assistance. HelpAge International (2006:98) estimates that half of the elderly population in severely affected areas now care for children living with HIV/AIDS and/or orphaned children. Out of their meagre pensions, they fund the medical costs, including the costs of antiretroviral therapy, and home-based care costs such as additional food and water, and the costs of clothing, school fees, and school uniforms for orphans and vulnerable children.

In the case of abandoned babies, Child Protection Services or government-recognised safe houses or rescue homes must step in to help. South Africa’s government-run children’s homes (“places of safety”) are most often in urban areas and, although doing a great job, are overwhelmed by the needs in the area. Privately funded non-profit rescue homes often have space available to care for additional children even though their resources are strained as well. The government is discouraging the creation of any more orphanages, preferring networks of small family-like homes with resident caregivers known as CYCCs (Children and Youth Care Centres) (UNICEF, 2002:4, 7). Given the scale of the growing OVC population, building orphanages is neither fitting nor sustainable as the cost of maintaining a child in such an institution is much greater than other forms of care (UNICEF, 2002:20). Any compassionate response on a macro-scale will need to devise a workable plan to care for so many children at the same time with limited resources. “It is simply wrong to begin any strategy that is so expensive (in terms of money or manpower) that it cannot be rolled out on a large scale. The pool of resources is small and any expensive plan for children in one place simply robs resources from children elsewhere.” (Ash, 2006:162). Starfish Greathearts Foundation (Gallagher, 2006:1) claimed that the main charities that

focused on supporting AIDS orphans in 2006 were reaching only one sixth of the then estimated 1.2 million children in need. "Between all of us, we are probably reaching 200,000 children in South Africa ... and just reaching that 200,000 is quite challenging" (Gallagher, 2006:1). No better or more recent estimate of the quantitative impact of all such organisations has been made.

Individual Christians were some of the first to recognise the enormous needs of South Africa's orphans and vulnerable children, and acting on the ethical imperatives within the Scriptures and conscience, have organised and mobilised others to engage in compassion ministry to these children. Most faith-based organisations working with OVC are funded by donations from a host of Christians, churches, and other non-profit organisations in South Africa, Europe and America as well as from domestic banks and businesses. Much of the on-the-ground volunteer work in Christian and secular NGOs is also provided by Christians, local and foreign, who serve as staff or social workers either on a volunteer basis or for nominal compensation. Some provide medical care, tutoring, counseling, and discipleship. Some plan and coordinate after-school activities in sports, the arts, computer skills, crafts, and Bible-clubs . Some are involved in fund-raising or in the development aspects of orphan-care such as gardening, sewing, craft-making or other income-generating projects. Some go house to house or to local OVC care centres visiting the children and their caregivers, distributing food and medical supplies, providing medical transportation, and giving legal advice and practical help.

Some non-profits are actually reaching out to churches to get them involved, and some missionaries are now beginning to plant churches that have compassion ministries built into the DNA of the church. Churches in many affluent communities seem oblivious to the problem or suffer emotional disconnection because the need is not pressing in their community. Churches in the poorer communities are grieved by the pandemic that has, in many cases, touched the lives of families in their congregations, but few have the resources to undertake a meaningful remedy. Further, there are few significant partnerships between affluent and poorer churches to address the need.

A problem faced by many community-based and faith-based organisations working with OVC is that few know where other similar initiatives are located nearby or what activities they are involved with. A fully coordinated approach to finding and caring for OVC, or providing them with information on OVC service-providers and relevant government agencies in their community, has not yet taken place in South Africa. But in 2009, to properly coordinate the distribution of funds under PEPFAR, the Population Council, in collaboration with the South African Department of Social Development and other partners, began a project to collect, collate, and map information on all OVC service providers around the country and publish it in a Children Services Directory. This directory will be distributed in as many forms as possible through the countryside and will be a guide, with local maps and contact information, to help OVC and their caregivers find provincial non-profit organisations and government resources in their area that are designed to help OVC (USAID, 2010).

Most of these faith-based organisations have been learning and developing models simply by trial and error as they grow, and a few have borrowed ideas and models from other similar organisations. The approaches used by these ministries seem to be rather pragmatic, and although motivated by compassion and operated in love, often lack a biblical and philosophical basis for compassion ministry to orphans, or for the care model they are using. The research that exists directly on point regarding a biblical-based and culturally sensitive ethical approach to compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children is almost non-existent, and therefore, considerably more research is needed.

In summary, of South Africa's 18 million children, four million have lost at least one parent due to illness or injury. Of this number, two million are believed to be AIDS orphans, and one million are double orphans. Roughly 3,500 children are newly orphaned each week now in South Africa; more than twenty each hour. The number of total orphans is expected to climb to five million by 2015. But beyond those figures are many more children who have also been made vulnerable by the AIDS pandemic and have little or no access to basic needs or rights. These OVC live with AIDS in their homes and communities, are themselves at risk of infection, and suffer familial loss, psycho-social loss, and

material loss due to the disease. Some have no adults left to depend on, and therefore form their own child-headed households.

Efforts have been made to respond to these children in crisis. Their rights are enshrined in our Constitution, and in international charters and commitments to which our country is a party. Policies have been forged, studies have been conducted, local and international funding has been secured, and multiple government departments are sharing and coordinating their efforts to find, and begin meeting the basic needs of these children. But the most natural and common safety net for South Africa's orphans and vulnerable children has been the informal foster care provided by extended families and older people in their communities, assisted by childcare grants and a host of local community-based and faith-based organisations.

Individual Christians, churches, and faith-based organisations have often led the way in providing supplemental and even primary care for OVC, but far more need to be involved, and their efforts need to be properly motivated, coordinated, and carried out. Many Christians and churches have failed to understand the compassion that God has for these little ones, and have ignored compassion ministry as part of the distinctive mission of God's people. Others who have been moved to help have unwittingly harmed those they were trying to help because they failed to understand the African cultural context into which they were pouring their time, talents, and treasures. These issues will be discussed further in chapters 3 and 4 that follow.

CHAPTER 3

The Biblical/Theological basis for compassion ministry

In this chapter, a biblical definition for compassion will be advanced, and thereafter an ethical basis for compassion ministry will be developed using a number of Biblical themes such as the compassionate character of God, compassion as a part of *imago Dei*, the commands for compassion in the Mosaic Law and in the prophets, compassion in the life and teachings of Jesus, and compassion in the ministry and teachings of the early church. Then, what the Bible says about compassion ministry to orphans in particular will be reviewed, and several conclusions drawn about principles for compassion ministry.

The purpose of the lengthy biblical analysis in this chapter is to make practical and pastoral observations about the biblical theme of compassion based on the plain reading of New and Old Testament passages, rather to take a critical or thoroughly exegetical approach as might be true of New or Old Testament scholars. The interpretation will, therefore, be based on a natural and grammatical hermeneutic, with historical background interposed, comparing Scripture with Scripture, and using a literal method of interpretation except where the passage clearly warrants otherwise.

3.1 Compassion defined and described

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew verb *racham* means to have compassion, to be merciful, or to have pity (Vines, 1996:43). Compassion, mercy, and pity are regarded as synonyms in many Bible dictionaries. Even in modern usage, authors and people in the field refer to “compassion ministry” and “mercy ministries” interchangeably. *Racham* is most often translated “mercy” in the older English Bible versions whereas modern English versions, such as the New American Standard Bible (1995) and the New International Version (1984), translate *racham* more frequently as “compassion” than as “mercy” to capture the modern English understanding of compassion as “goodness toward those in misery or distress” (Grudem, 1994:200). In modern English usage, “mercy” often connotes an authority’s withholding of judgement from someone hopelessly under condemnation, and at times *racham* is used in such a way in Scripture (see Isaiah

54:7-8), but most often the word refers to feelings of love, pity, kindness, and tenderness toward those who are in distress and cannot remedy their own situation, feelings that result in remedial action (see Psalm 40:11). Purves (1989:56) notes that:

“... compassion is commonly lumped together with perceived synonyms like mercy, empathy, sympathy and pity. Many theological dictionaries and commentaries also make the mistake, adding to the conceptual confusion and to the blunting of the particularity of compassion. This carelessness contributes to the already considerable neglect of compassion, causing it to remain hidden behind other concepts.”

It is highly significant that compassion in the Scripture is a sentiment that compels action. It is not mere sympathy, which may be described as feeling for someone. It goes even beyond empathy, which may be described as entering into someone's frame of emotional reference and identifying with their pain or sorrow (Elwell. 2001:306). Unlike sympathy, empathy is not a biblical word, and even the Greek word for sympathy (*sympatheo*) is never directly ascribed to Jesus. Compassion is a deep-seated compulsive response from within that pulls one into identification with a sufferer such that one is constrained to take action on their behalf as if one was struggling to free himself. Indeed, even the English word “compassion” is derived from two Latin words “*cum*” meaning with, and “*pati*” meaning suffer; hence, literally “to suffer together with” (Nouwen, 1983:4).

The English language cannot convey the full impact of this theologically significant verb that combines both feeling and action because English has no verb for compassion. One cannot “compassion someone,” and so we miss the thrust of the Hebrew verb. In English, one may be moved with compassion, using the noun form, or be described as compassionate, the adverbial form, but in each case, it seems as if the sentiment is just a burning within. If we could “compassionise someone” in English usage, it would carry the idea of acting out the sentiment and connecting it with the needy person. Nowhere does the Bible mention an example of someone having compassion and then walking away and doing nothing about it (Purves, 1989:15).

The noun form of the Hebrew verb *racham* is *rehem*, and it literally means the womb, the gut, or the bowels, indicating the quantitative depth of feeling involved in compassion (Elwell, 2001:306). Isaiah called out to the Lord on behalf of Israel, underscoring the physical nature of compassion, “Where are your zeal and your might? The stirring of your inner parts [literally “intestines”] and your compassion are held back from me” (2001: Isaiah 63:15). Idiomatically, *rehem* means compassion or mercy, but there is a deep pathos behind the words such that they should never be trivialised. *Rehem* is often used of deep feelings between family members, such as a father or mother for their child. When Solomon was faced with two women claiming the same baby, he ordered the baby cut in half, and the natural mother responded with deep compassion. The KJV renders 1 Kings 3:26 as, “her bowels yearned upon her son,” whereas a more modern translation like the NIV reads that she “was filled with compassion for her son.” After years of separation from his brothers in Egypt, Joseph looked upon his youngest brother Benjamin and literally his heart heated up with compassion (Gen. 43:30). David wrote that “as a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him” (2001: Psalm 103:13). Isaiah portrayed Jahweh’s compassion as surpassing even a mother’s affections in writing, “Can a woman forget her nursing child that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you” (2001: Isaiah 49:15).

The New Testament most often uses the Greek word *splanchnizomai* to denote compassion. *Splanchnizomai*, like its Hebrew counterpart, means to be moved deeply in one’s lower viscera, in one’s bowels, heart, or inward parts, toward those distressed, powerless, and in need of help (Vines, 1996:116-7). “Compassion in the New Testament literally means to have one’s bowels turned over. The word refers to what we would perhaps call a ‘gut-wrenching’ experience ... a feeling of solidarity with another that is virtually physical in its effect. There is nothing genteel or comely about compassion” (Purves, 1989:18). MacArthur notes that *splanchna*, the noun form of the verb,

“... is used figuratively to represent the emotions, much in the way we use the term *heart* today. The Hebrews, like many other ancient peoples, expressed attitudes and emotions in terms of physiological symptoms, not

in abstractions. As most of us know from personal experience, many intense emotions – anxiety, fear, pity, remorse, and so on – can directly, and often immediately, affect the stomach and the digestive tract. Upset stomach, colitis, and ulcers are a few of the common ailments frequently related to emotional trauma. It is not strange, then, that ancient people associated strong emotions with that region of the body” (Macarthur, 1989:273).

The Greek verb *splanchnizomai* is only used in the Synoptic Gospels and only used to describe Jesus’ ministry and teaching. He had compassion on the multitudes such as in Matthew 9:36, 14:14 (paralleled in Mark 6:34), and 15:32 (paralleled in Mark 8:2), and on the individually sick, demonised, and sorrowing as in Matthew 20:34, Mark 1:40, 5:19, 9:22, and Luke 7:13. In each case, “the verb has messianic significance, for it is only Jesus who shows compassion” (Kittel, 1985:1068). Jesus used the verb *splanchnizomai* in three parables highlighting the greatness of the virtue of compassion. The Good Samaritan had this compassion on the injured traveller in Luke 10:33, the father had this compassion on his prodigal son in Luke 15:20, and the king had this compassion in forgiving the debt of his slave in Matthew 18:27.

Other Greek words used in the New Testament that are companions to the concept of compassion are the verbs *eleeō*, most often translated as “have mercy” (Matthew 5:7; 18:33; Luke 16:24; 17:13; 18:38; Romans 9:15; 11:30; 12:8; 2 Corinthians 4:1; Philippians 2:27; and 1 Peter 2:10), and *oikteirō*, which is found twice and translated “merciful” (Luke 6:36 and James 5:11). The noun form, *oiktirmōs*, means mercies, grief or sorrow, and a sympathy that is ready to help (Romans 12:1; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Philippians 2:1; Hebrews 10:28) (TDNT. 1979:159). At times, Paul used *oiktirmōs* together with *splanchna*, the heart, bowels, inward parts, or seat of the deep emotions. In Colossians 3, Paul exhorted believers to put to death the earthly and sinful elements within them, listing a number of sins, and then exhorted them as God’s chosen ones to put on a number of virtues. The very first was a “heart of compassion” (1995: Colossians 3:12). “It was to be an integral part of the concept of Christian community. The Greek word means literally ‘to be moved in one’s bowels.’ The term points to the

very core of one's inner feelings, much as the term 'heart' does today. One's intense inner feelings should always lead to outward compassionate acts of mercy and kindness" (Elwell, 2001:306). As used in this work, compassion will be defined as a compulsive response of the inner self that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer who is unable to remedy his condition that one is constrained to take action on their behalf as if one was struggling to free himself.

3.2 Compassion originates in God's character

The Bible's ethical teachings are theocentric, and their source is the being and character of God Himself. "The power of the good rests entirely on the One who is good. Of moral behaviour for the sake of an abstract good, there is none" (Eichrodt, 1967:316). All virtues begin with God who is the very essence of goodness (Mark 10:18), and His character and will as revealed in the Bible define and are the standard for goodness (Geisler, 1989:22). Hodge describes the goodness of God in terms of his benevolence, love, mercy, and grace. "Mercy is kindness exercised towards the miserable, and includes pity, compassion, forbearance, and gentleness, which the Scriptures so abundantly ascribe to God" (Hodge, 2004:427).

Compassion, therefore, finds its genesis in Jahweh's loving and merciful character when it is particularly directed toward those who are physically or spiritually helpless, broken, weak, and vulnerable. On the mountain with Moses, Jahweh described himself as compassionate (Exodus 34:6), and David the Psalmist extolled his God as being full of compassion. "You, O Lord, *are* a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth" (1982: Psalm 86:15). "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust" (2001: Psalm 103:13). "The LORD is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all his creation (2004: Psalm 145:8-9). It can be argued that the central theme of the Bible is God's compassion on fallen and suffering mankind and his cursed dominion by providing a Saviour, a salvation, a consequent re-creation of redeemed individuals, and a

confident eschatological expectation of the end of suffering and the restoration of the creation.

In the Old Testament, compassion was particularly one of the vital elements in God's covenantal relationship with his people, Israel. Spawned of unilateral love and faithfulness when seeing the pitiful troubles the Hebrews had repeatedly brought upon themselves through their disobedience, Jahweh's compassion was always demonstrated by acts that testified to His covenant with Israel. In spite of their rebellion, God still had compassion on his people (Elwell, 2001:306). His compassion, in accord with his wisdom and divine purposes, frequently seemed to overcome His anger and prevail over His justice. Moses prophesied to Israel that, in the future, after it had disobeyed God and been scattered among the nations, "Then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you" (2001: Deuteronomy 30:3). Even during the days of the disobedient kings of the northern kingdom of Israel, when the Syrians attacked, "the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion on them, and he turned toward them, because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not destroy them, nor has he cast them from his presence until now (2001: 2 Kings 13:23). In his deep grieving, the prophet Jeremiah took hope by calling to mind that even though God was bringing judgement, all would not be lost because, "the LORD'S lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness" (1995: Lamentations 3:22-23). Even though God brought judgement down on Israel, he identified with their pain and said, "'Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely', and he became their Saviour. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them" (2001: Isaiah 63:8-9). The oft repeated promise to Israel in the prophets was that although their land would be destroyed and their people scattered due to their disobedience and indifference, yet "the LORD will have compassion on Jacob and will again choose Israel, and will set them in their own land, and sojourners will join them and will attach themselves to the house of Jacob (2001: Isaiah 14:1).

In the New Testament, using the verbs *eleeō* and *oikteirō*, God is described as compassionate and merciful. Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit when he exclaimed that his son, John the Baptist, would be sent as a prophet to prepare the way for the Messiah “because of the tender mercy of our God” (2001: Luke 1:78). James reminded believers undergoing difficulties to endure and not complain, knowing that “the Lord is full of compassion and is merciful” (1995: James 5:11). Paul described God as the “Father of compassion and the God of all comfort” (1996: 2 Corinthians 1:3). But a review of the New Testament’s teaching on compassion will invariably draw one’s focus to Jesus Christ, who was the “radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (2001: Hebrews 1:3), and in whom “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (2001: Colossians 2:9). Compassion in Jesus’ ministry and teachings will be discussed at length infra.

3.3 Human compassion and Imago Dei

The attributes of God are often divided into two groups in the systematic study of theology: His incommunicable attributes, those that He alone possesses as infinite God such as eternity, independence, and omniscience, and His communicable attributes, those that He shares with humankind, which he made in his image. There is much discussion in literature about what is involved *imago Dei*, but many conservative scholars agree that reason, religiosity, and morals are included in this multi-faceted image (Vorster, 2004:92). The communicable moral attributes of God include wisdom, knowledge, goodness, love, holiness, peace, and justice. Compassion, as an element of goodness, is one of the communicable attributes of God; that is, compassion is a divine as well as a human virtue (Wood, 1996:218).

The innocence of creation was lost in the fall of mankind, and the purity of God’s image was tarnished and distorted, but not destroyed. The intrinsic value and dignity of the human being as God’s special image-bearing creation was unabated, and although there was no salvific goodness in man, the natural law, instilled as God’s gracious gift into the conscience of mankind, permitted humans know on a basic level what moral goodness is, even if they lacked the power to do it (Vorster, 2004:96). Centuries later, the ethical imperatives for compassion in

the Law of Moses were not presented to mankind as novel ideas, but were a codification from God that added certainty to the broader natural law already written in their hearts, as stated in Romans 2:14-15 (Calvin, 1844:48). Years before the written code of the Mosaic era, when mankind was governed by its collective conscience, the book of Job was penned. In the days of Job's suffering, Eliphaz the Temanite, one of Job's three friends, was brainstorming why Job would suffer such terrible loss at the hand of God and made the accusation: "You have given no water to the weary to drink, and you have withheld bread from the hungry ... you have sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were crushed" (2001: Job 22:7, 9). Several times, Job's friends attributed Job's suffering to his showing a general lack of compassion.

Compassion is manifested in fallen man, even among those who do not know God, but ought to be especially reflected in the hearts and hands of God's restored image-bearers, those known throughout the Old Testament as the righteous and in the New Testament as the redeemed. "The righteous [person] is concerned for the rights of the poor; the wicked [person] does not understand such concern" (1995: Proverbs 29:7). The fundamental ethical demand of God's people in the Scripture is to imitate God (Ferguson, 1988:232). The overarching principle of the Mosaic Law, repeated by the Apostle Peter in the New Testament was "be holy, for I am holy" (2001: Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:16). Jesus instructed his disciples to imitate their Father's moral perfection (Matthew 5:48), and Paul exhorted believers, as children of God, to imitate their Father (Ephesians 5:1). In the Old Testament, God underscored the fact that, although He set the standards for holiness and justice, He also set the example of compassion for the less fortunate. "For Jahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger [foreigner], giving him food and clothing" (1982: Deuteronomy 10:17-18). Rabbi Dresner observes that "the compassion of God points the 'way' for man, for when a man acts compassionately, he is walking in the 'way' of the Lord. That is the meaning of *imitatio Dei*" (Dresner, 1957:193). Godliness at its heart is "God-likeness," having God's character reproduced in the heart and life of a redeemed

individual. One can only have true God-like, Christlike, compassion through a restored relationship with God through Christ (Purves, 1989:12).

3.4 Human compassion and the commands of God

Because Jahweh gave laws to govern human affairs based on the moral principles emanating from His own divine character, He naturally built compassion commands into the Law of Moses. Compassion was a repeated and integral component of the first and second Mosaic codifications in Exodus and Deuteronomy. God's people had an ethical duty to purposefully and regularly act compassionately toward the less fortunate in their community. Compassion was not just to be an isolated action, but rather a way of life.

General commands are generally disregarded, and thus, God went three steps further in the Mosaic Law to motivate people to compassion. Firstly, He specified that certain representative groups such as widows, orphans, foreigners, the poor, and the afflicted be the focus of regular and purposeful acts of compassion (Exodus 22:21-24). Secondly, in the second giving of the law, Jahweh specified certain representative activities at the heart of their culture that were to include compassion such as finance, harvesting crops, feasts, and justice. Rather than leaving it up to the imagination, God gave specific ways people could undertake to help the disadvantaged. For instance, God commanded that every third year, the people were to bring a tenth part of their harvest into the towns for distribution to orphans, widows, and foreigners (Deut. 14:28-29), and they had to make a vow that they had done so (Deut. 26:12-13). The families of Israel were to invite orphans, widows, and foreigners to join them for feast times (Deut. 16:11, 14). People weren't to harvest every part of the field or the trees or the vines during harvest, but to leave amounts behind for the orphans, widows, and foreigners (Greer, 2009:64; Deut. 24:19-22).

Judges were not allowed to show partiality in favour of those seeking money from orphans and widows (Deut. 24:17-18). Curses were pronounced upon those who did (Deut. 27:19). The concept of "justice" in the Old Testament, from the Hebrew word *mišpāṭ*, very often refers to what is known in the modern era as "social justice," which has been defined as "the idea of creating a society ... that is based

on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being” (Zajda, 2006:1).

“While the Hebrew word *mišpāṭ* certainly includes the concept of ‘justice,’ Eichrodt (1967:241) rightly asserts that it ‘is no abstract thing, but denotes the rights and duties of each party arising out of the particular relation of fellowship in which they find themselves. In this way everyone has his own special *mišpāṭ*: the king, the Deity, the priest, the firstborn son, the Israelites as a group, and so on. The task of righteousness is to render this justice, and the claims which it implies, effective in the proper way, so that the good of all those united in the one community of law may be safeguarded.’ There is a sense in which, at the broadest level, *mišpāṭ* ultimately has in view “the proper ordering of all society” (Barker, 1986:646).

Thirdly, Jahweh added an incentive to obey His compassion commands by connecting Himself personally with these disadvantaged groups such that if they were injured or ignored, He considered it an offence against Himself, a provocation, and He would retaliate.

“Do not take advantage of a widow or an orphan. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. My anger will be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword; your wives will become widows and your children fatherless. If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not be like a moneylender; charge him no interest. If you take your neighbour’s cloak as a pledge, return it to him by sunset, because his cloak is the only covering he has for his body. What else will he sleep in? When he cries out to me, I will hear, for I am compassionate” (1996: Exodus 22:21-27).

Jahweh so empathized with the weak, unfortunate, and oppressed, that He put Himself in their place, for better and for worse. The triennial tithe, in actuality an offering to the Lord, was to be given to the poor and needy (Deuteronomy 14:28-29). How God’s people treated them is how they treated God Himself. Solomon, exhorting Israel in his proverbs, wrote: “He who oppresses the poor taunts his Maker, but he who is gracious to the needy honours Him” (1995: Proverbs 14:31).

Solomon even went to far as to assert that doing a poor man a favour created an obligation in God's mind to repay the favour. "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed" (2001: Proverbs 19:17).

This God-ordained compassionate society was to be a testimony to the whole earth of how the people of Jahweh should behave. His kingdom would mirror his values, and the values of his eventual Anointed One, the Messiah. "In the Old Testament, God's chosen people, the nation of Israel, were to point forward to the coming King by foreshadowing what He would be like ... [and] since King Jesus would bring good news for the poor, it is not surprising that God wanted Israel to care for the poor as well" (Corbett, 2009:38). But Israel miserably failed to show the world what compassion was about, following instead the paths of immorality, idolatry, a love of wealth and pleasures, and a consequent disdain for the weak. They, in fact, felt that the weak were the perfect opportunity to gain more lands and wealth through fraud and corruption (Grogan, 1986:30). Yet, all the while, they were maintaining the outward expressions of formal religion such as worship, prayers, sacrifices, feasts, and fasting.

"Translate this into the modern era, and we might say these folks were faithfully going to church each Sunday, attending midweek prayer meeting, going on the annual church retreat, and singing contemporary praise music. But God was disgusted with them, going so far as to call them "Sodom and Gomorrah"! Why was God so displeased? ...God was furious over Israel's failure to care for the poor and the oppressed" (Corbett, 2009:40).

God sent numerous prophets to declining Israel and Judah, prophets that pointed out this lack of compassion for the helpless, weak and vulnerable. In virtually every passage, orphans are mentioned as being oppressed or overlooked. In the eighth century BCE, when Judah had fallen away from the Lord, Isaiah announced that the continuation of their formal sacrifices and religious tradition was of no use (Isaiah 1:10-15). He called for a repentance that included social justice and compassion for the weak and defenceless:

"Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice,

correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD: "though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool" (2001: Isaiah 1:16-18).

In the seventh century BCE, when judgement through the invading nation of Babylon began to fall on Judah, the prophets reminded the nation that they were being judged in part because of the way they treated the least fortunate among them. "Father and mother are treated with contempt in you; the sojourner suffers extortion in your midst; the fatherless and the widow are wronged in you" (2001: Ezekiel 22:7). Time and time again, the prophets wrote that the true fruits of repentance would involve Judah having compassion on the weak and less fortunate.

"For if you truly amend your ways and your deeds, if you truly execute justice one with another, if you do not oppress the sojourner, the fatherless, or the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own harm, then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers forever." (2001: Jeremiah 7:5-7).

Jeremiah told King Zedekiah that the Lord would relent and continue the royal house of David if he would do right by the poor and disadvantaged: "Thus says the Lord: 'Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place'" (2001: Jeremiah 22:3). But the kings and the leaders of Judah continued on in their ways, and the sad poetic result was that Judah became like those whom they refused to protect. "Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers, our homes to foreigners. We have become orphans, fatherless; our mothers are like widows" (2001: Lamentations 5:2-3).

After the return from exile, God warned Judah not to repeat the sins of their fathers that brought judgement. What God encouraged through Zechariah was not religious formalism but to embrace the four aspects of righteous living that pre-exilic Israel had refused to do (Barker, 1986:646):

“This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. In your hearts do not think evil of each other. But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and stopped up their ears. They made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen to the law or to the words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD Almighty was very angry. ‘When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen,’ says the LORD Almighty” (1996: Zechariah 7:9-12).

The testimony of the Old Testament record closes with the eschatological promise that when God sets up his kingdom on the earth, he will be a swift witness, “against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts” (2001: Malachi 3:5). When the Lord’s rule is established on the earth, his society will be one that is known for its continual and purposeful compassion (Alden, 1986:720). Compassion was commanded in the Mosaic Law. A lack of compassion and allowing social injustice was indicative of Israel when they had strayed from God, even though they amazingly maintained their religious formalism (Amos 5:22-24). Their lack of compassion became a basis for their judgement.

In summary of the above discussion, the ethical basis for compassion begins with the moral goodness of God, which goodness can be understood because it is one of the communicable attributes that humans share with God, and which goodness humans feel inclined to do because God’s moral law is written on the conscience. The ethical basis for compassion extends further for the righteous and redeemed who are called upon to imitate God the Father’s moral perfections, which include compassion. Compassion is also commanded with specificity in the Law of God, given to His people Israel who were to behave as an exemplary society on the earth. Because they, *inter alia*, failed to follow God’s compassion commands and allowed oppression and injustice, they were judged.

3.5 Compassion and Jesus' ministry

In the New Testament, the ethical basis for compassion ministry is taken two steps further in following the example and teachings of Christ, who is the supreme example of compassion, and in following the example and teachings of the early church, which continued Jesus' compassion ministry model. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and read from a classic Messianic passage, Isaiah 61:1-2a.

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour” (2001: Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and then sat down. With all eyes fixed on him, Jesus made a very important statement, drawing the prophecy to himself as if to give a purpose or mission statement to his next three years of ministry: “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (2001: Luke 4:21). The first and primary element of Jesus' Messianic mission was to preach the good news of salvation, the gospel. But the heart of his mission was only a part of his mission; Jesus' ministry would involve more than the gospel. He made it very clear from the outset that he would also be involved with the poor, the captives, the blind, and the oppressed. His ministry would be both spiritual and physical, his gospel ministry would involve more than the gospel message (Stearns, 2009:21-22). Midway through his mission, he would pass along a status report to John the Baptist: “And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them” (2001: Luke 7:22).

3.5.1 The relationship between compassion and the gospel

From the New Testament era through our modern day, the interplay between the gospel and compassion ministry has varied widely due to divergent understandings of the Scriptures and the demands of the eras and locations in which professing Christians have lived. When trying to discern the proper place

and role of compassion ministry, one must become familiar with these varying viewpoints and the shifts that have taken place in the last two centuries.

3.5.1.1 Jesus and compassion as a component of gospel ministry

In the New Testament, compassion was a component of a larger ministry model that will herein be referred to as “gospel ministry.” As one surveys the four gospel accounts, one can observe that Jesus’ ministry to people had three major components (Carson, 1984:121):

- Preaching the gospel of his coming, his person, the Kingdom of God, and the salvation connected with faith in him
- Teaching with authority his commands, which affirmed the Law and the prophets but extended ethical obligations far beyond them for those who followed God, and
- Acts of compassion that involved physical healing, feeding, delivering, and resurrecting. (Figure 3.1).

Matthew mentions this pattern clearly in Matthew 4:23 and repeats it in 9:35: “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people” (1982: Matthew 9:35).

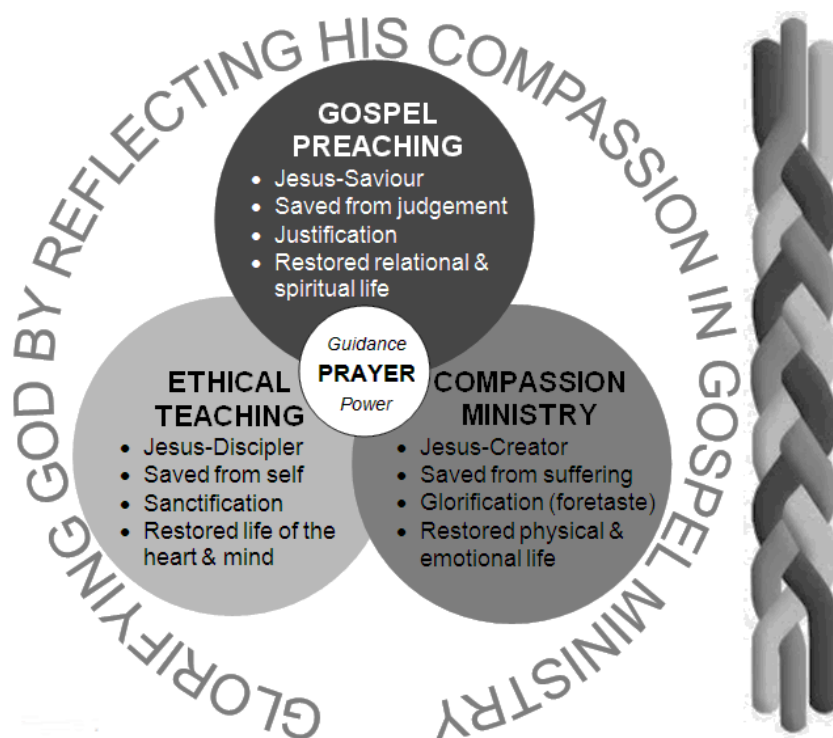


Figure 3.1: The three-fold cord of gospel ministry

But proclaiming the gospel, teaching moral-ethical precepts, and engaging in compassion ministry are each the product of an over-arching level of God's compassion for fallen, broken, and suffering human beings. God is committed to saving the whole man, all elements of the creature that he made in his image. Borrowing the metaphor in Ecclesiastes 4:12, these three components make up a three-fold cord of gospel ministry. Together all three components glorify God by reflecting his compassion to a fallen, broken, and suffering humanity. Jesus began his ministry in any given village using any one of the three components, and then moved back and forth between them. His ministry wasn't one component or the other, and the interplay between the three components was almost seamless, just as it is difficult to follow one strand of a three-fold cord through its length. Jesus' method was unpredictable to the observer, but he was acting based on guidance from the Father (John 5:17-20). In between these three components, and guiding Jesus' movement between them, was a life of constant prayer, seeking the Father's guidance and the Spirit's enabling power (Matthew 14:23, John 5:17-19). The synoptic gospels (Matthew 13:54, Mark 1:27, 2:12-13, Luke 9:11) reference this interplay between preaching, teaching, and compassion ministry, where miracles drew the crowd that Jesus then taught. Leading into the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew notes:

“And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them saying ...” (2001: Matthew 4:23 – 5:2).

Jesus' three components of ministry reflect the three stages of salvation. A basic review of the doctrine of soteriology will remind one that salvation is extended to a person in the three stages of justification, sanctification, and glorification. Compassion moved Jesus as the Saviour to proclaim the gospel that alone is the

power of God for salvation and brings justification by grace through faith, saving them from the coming judgement (Romans 1:16). Compassion also moved Jesus as the master discipler to teach moral-ethical commands that, through the enabling Holy Spirit, bring the sanctification of the soul, saving God's people from the defeat of a self-oriented life by embracing the greatest commandments of loving God and loving others. And lastly, compassion moved Jesus as the Creator to touch and restore the physical and emotional lives of his fallen and suffering image-bearers in a way that was a foretaste of glorification, the restoration of the physical world in the regeneration of the creation (Romans 8:18-23). Sourced in the compassion of God the Father for his fallen, broken, and suffering human beings, these three components blended and swirled together in Jesus' ministry such that "we can see that compassion is not a ministry exclusively to spiritual needs, or to physical needs Compassion is clearly a ministry to the whole person." (Purves, 1989:27).

Jesus' acts of compassion were both an independent good as well as the means to another end. His healing and deliverance of the oppressed in the towns and out in the countryside brought strangers near to hear God's truth because "when the Word of Truth is accompanied by an act of mercy, the powerful, living demonstration of Christ's love has the effect of turning up the volume on the gospel" (Ryken, 2003:158). At times, his compassion led to an opportunity to teach, and vice versa, and at other times compassion led to opportunities to preach the gospel, and vice versa. But Jesus' compassion was not merely relationship-building for the sake of the gospel. It was an independent good, a reflection of the heart of the Creator, Sustainer, and Reconciler for his fallen and suffering creation (Corbett, 2009:33). There are many accounts of Jesus healing and performing miracles where there is no mention of him communicating the gospel or of someone responding with saving faith. At times, people followed Jesus just for the signs or for food, but not in faith (Luke 11:29, John 6:26) (Hexham, 2004:30). Engaging in compassion ministry doesn't always guarantee a good spiritual result.

3.5.1.2 Changing gospel ministry to the social gospel

Jesus' compassion ministry to the physical needs of people was temporal good news, but it was certainly not the gospel, and acts of compassion today, while perhaps fulfilling the Golden Rule, are also not the gospel. They adorn God's truth (Titus 2:10), and may lead to an opportunity to share the truth, but neither loving your neighbour nor efforts at broader social transformation should be equated with the gospel. "Christ was and is principally concerned with eternity and the reconciliation of the lost. Fundamentally, Christ came to earth to seek and to save, not to heal and to feed. Just as Christ came to provide the only means for spiritual reconciliation with the Father, He calls the redeemed to the specific task of continuing His ministry of reconciliation" (Buckley, 2010:26).

There is much discussion in the field and in compassion literature about what exactly the gospel involves, and the debate and dialogue has been ongoing for 150 years. Myers introduces the issue in chapters 1 and 2 of his brilliant book *Walking With the Poor*:

"Modernity's separation of the physical and spiritual realms is part of the explanation for how we have come to understand Christian witness, and specifically evangelism, as being unrelated to community development. Loving God is spiritual work, and loving neighbours takes place in the material world. So evangelism (restoring people's relationship with God) is spiritual work, while social action (restoring economic, social, and political relationships among people) is not. In the final analysis this false dichotomy leads Christians to believe that God's redemptive work takes place only in the spiritual realm, while the world is left, seemingly, to the devil" (Myers, 2006:6).

Myers notes that the fall didn't only damage mankind's relationship with God (spiritual poverty), it damaged his relationship with self (poverty of being), his relationship with society (poverty of community), and his relationship with the earth (poverty of stewardship). The fall had both spiritual and material consequences, and therefore redemption must be both spiritual and material. "Both our bodies and our souls are redeemed. The new heaven comes down to earth.... God is working to redeem and restore the whole of creation, human

beings, all living things, and the creation itself.... It is in this sense that transformational development is part of God's redemptive work in the world" (Myers, 2006:47).

But then Myers seems to affirm some of the advocates of the social gospel movement so prevalent in the 19th and early 20th centuries who argued that the Kingdom of God "is not a matter of getting individuals to heaven, but of transforming life on earth into the harmony of heaven" (Rauschenbusch, 1907:57). Distorting the teachings of Charles Sheldon's book, *In His Steps*, (Sheldon, 2010), this religious wing of the Progressive Movement, largely comprised of theologically liberal post-millennialists, held that the purpose of the Christian faith was to spread the Kingdom of God, not through evangelistic preaching, but by leading a Christlike life of compassion that collectively would transform society. Sheldon believed that any societal transformation began with the individual experiencing the new birth through faith in Christ – the message of the gospel. Social gospel proponents believed that the return of Jesus Christ could not happen until humankind rid itself of social evils by human effort. The movement applied Christian ethics to social problems, especially poverty, inequality, liquor, crime, racial tensions, slums, bad hygiene, child labour, poor working conditions, excessive work hours, and poor schools. Ignoring a gospel that called for individual repentance and faith in Christ, they called for collective repentance, social righteousness, a Christianized society, and reaching the heathen in other lands with words and actions that would "save" them from a life of poverty, disease, and death (Greer, 2009:42; Rauschenbusch, 1918:47). "The social gospel concentrated not so much on individual salvation of one's own soul, but rather on the 'evangelization' and 'conversion' of social structures and institutions to a 'Christian' form, culminating in the promised kingdom of God" (Battle, 1999:8). To them, Jesus didn't provide a substitutionary atonement for the sins of individuals; rather, He died for collective mankind to save us all from selfishness (Rogers, 1998:184).

Myers submits (2006:49): "If we reduce the gospel solely to naming the name of Christ, persons are saved but the social order is ignored." Stanley Jones argued, that this creates "a crippled Christianity with a crippled result" (Jones,

1972:34). Myers quotes Wink (1992:83) to make the argument: “The gospel is not a message of personal salvation *from* the world, but a message of a *world transfigured, right down to its basic structures.*” Myers then concludes: “To work for human transformation as a Christian means working for the redemption of people, their social systems, and the environment that sustains their life – a whole gospel for all of life. This is the kingdom of God” (Myers, 2006:49). This strongly reflects the position of Walter Rauschenbusch who studied for years specifically to find a biblical basis for social transformation. “He found that basis in the doctrine of the kingdom of God, which brought together his evangelical concern for individuals and his social vision of a redeemed society” (Handy, 1966:255).

The grave error of the 19th century social gospel was that it deleted the core truth of the biblical gospel from the three-fold cord of gospel ministry, leaving only the duet of ethical teachings and compassion ministry as a new, redefined gospel, and even then, this gospel was directed more at the collective than the individual (Figure 3.2).

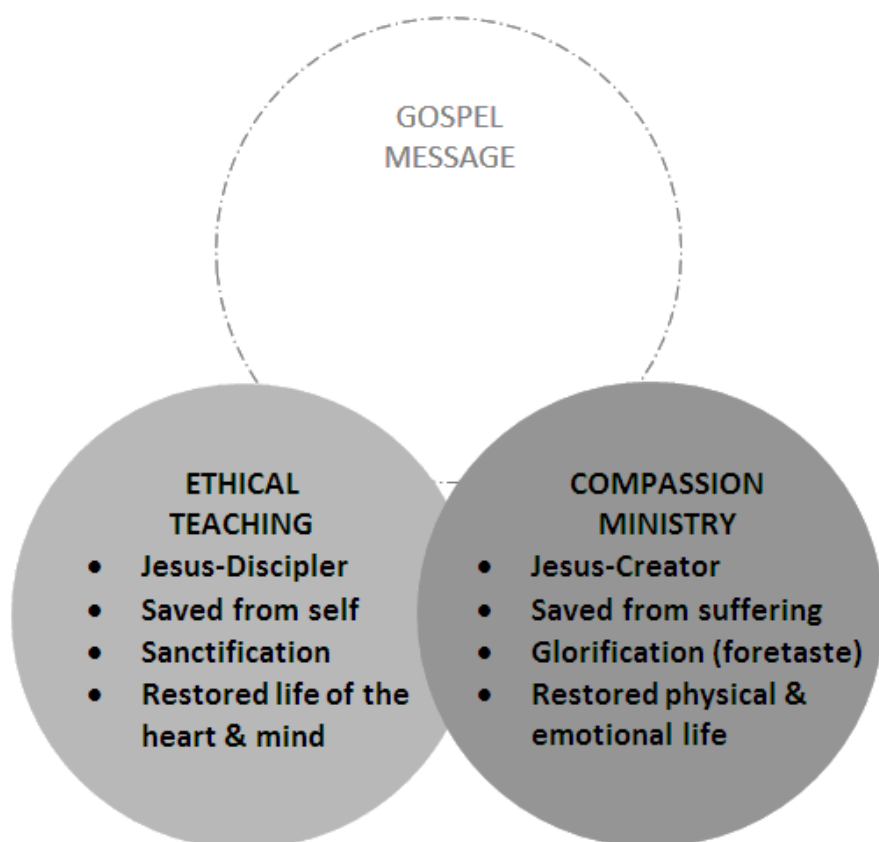


Figure 3.2: Social gospel ministry

The Apostle Paul connected the true gospel with belief in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:8; Mare, 1976:282). Those who respond to the gospel in faith are declared righteous and then begin to grow in grace, and by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit seek to obey the commandments of God. This obedience will have personal and social implications. When people in communities are truly spiritually regenerated, there will be less crime, more humanity and compassion, more public honesty, better human relations, and more reliable public trust (Colossians 3:5-17; Carson, 1994:938). Unjust and oppressive social customs and traditions will diminish and even disappear. These social benefits are a natural result of the new birth and of living out gospel truth, but they are not the gospel itself. “Attempts to improve society apart from the gospel often fall apart or are led astray by a false view of humanity or of what is right and wrong in social relations” (Battle, 1999:6).

By contrast, the social gospel was and is a theological belief-system that rejects the Bible as God's only inerrant, infallible revelation, rejects personal sin, responsibility, and condemnation, rejects the vicarious atonement of Christ, and rejects the need for personal repentance and faith in Christ. It is “another gospel” that strives to make people better in time while not preparing people for eternity (Galatians 1:6-10; Battle, 1999:11). The social gospel is largely the humanitarian work of moralists under the banner of “Christendom.” Social gospel methodology purposefully refuses to present the gospel to individuals, but instead practices and offers Christian ethics to a society filled with unbelievers as a superior way of life.

3.5.1.3 Changing gospel ministry to the liberation gospel

Liberation Theology took the social gospel a step further into more activist, militant, and even socialist extremes. These ideas began, and enjoyed widespread influence in, the Roman Catholic Church and among Jesuits in Latin America after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). These priests had seen extreme disparities of wealth and the suffering of Latin and Indian people at the hands of foreign companies extracting timber, oil, and other products from the continent (Smith, 1991:13). Liberation Theology, as articulated by Gustavo Gutiérrez, considered the sin of exploitative capitalism to be the root source of poverty and suffering; he redefined “sin” as the continual class war by the rich

against the poor, the socialist view of history known as dialectical materialism. Gutiérrez emphasised correct practice over correct doctrine, stating that the two were symbiotically related; to know God (orthodoxy) is to do justice (orthopraxis) (Gutiérrez, 1971:78). It portrayed Jesus as a poor, young radical leading a revolt against the rich power-centres of his day. After all, he said that he came to bring a sword (Luke 22:35-38). Liberation theologians created a theology from the perspective of the poor who are considered to be the preferred recipients of God's special grace (Smith, 1991:29). They emphasized the Christian mission to bring justice to the poor and oppressed through political activism leading to democratic socialism (governmental redistribution of wealth). If progressive change failed, some theologians advocated a Marxist-style uprising, a call to arms rather than a call to action. Reverend Allan Boesak was a proponent of the movement in South Africa (Boesak, 1977).

In the 1970s the influence of the movement diminished within Catholicism after theologians in Gutiérrez' circle were excluded from the Puebla Conference in 1979 and admonished by Pope John Paul II (Wojda, 1995:792). Still, John Paul II noted "the ever increasing wealth of the rich at the expense of the ever increasing poverty of the poor" and initiated the Church's "preferential option for the poor" as an ethic based both in reason as well as on the teaching of both Old and New Testaments (Twomey, 2007:322). In mid-1980s, then Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) argued that liberation theology was, in fact, not a grass-roots movement among the poor, but was based on the writings of Western intellectuals who were trying to test their ideologies that had failed in Europe in new places using new theological moorings (Ratzinger, 1984:1). Liberation theology misuses and abuses the Word of God to convince poor people that God is on their side when they revolt. It redefines "sin" as exploiting humans and natural resources, causing collective suffering, and refusing to alleviate such misery. It also redefines "salvation" as throwing off such oppression and injustice by influence or force, and then forcibly redistributing wealth. Ratzinger, who was head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican's office for doctrinal orthodoxy, steadily condemned liberation theology, isolated its proponents, and forbade its teachings in the name of the Roman Catholic Church,

but the movement still has proponents and followers in Latin America, and in black churches in Africa and America.

3.5.1.4 Changing gospel ministry to the gospel message

When the liberal Modernism in the early 20th century redefined sin as human suffering and the gospel as social relief, it caused a backlash within evangelical circles. As the burgeoning fundamentalist Christian movement furiously combatted liberal teaching, it distanced itself from anything that looked like liberalism, including compassion ministry because it looked like the Social Gospel.

“By the time of World War I, ‘social Christianity’ was becoming thoroughly identified with liberalism and was viewed with great suspicion by many conservative evangelicals.... By this time, the balance was precarious, and the issue of evangelism as opposed to social service was widely debated. World War I exacerbated the growing conflict. When fundamentalists began using their heavy artillery against liberal theology, the Social Gospel was among the prime targets. In the barrage against the Social Gospel, it was perhaps inevitable that the vestiges of their own progressive social attitudes would also become casualties” (Marsden, 1980:91).

Historians now refer to this switchback as “The Great Reversal” in which an entire section of Christianity, supported by an array of new Bible institutes and seminaries in the United States and England, virtually eliminated compassion ministry from the three-fold cord of ministry (Figure 3.3), leaving only the core gospel message and ethical teachings for those who believed (Smith, 2004:112; Moberg, 2006:29; Marsden, 1980:91; Greer, 2010:43). The former God-honouring compassion ministries of the 17th-19th century churches were largely forgotten. Marsden notes (1980:91) that the

“earlier evangelical support of public or private social programs... [were] understood as complimentary outgrowths of the regenerating work of Christ which saved souls for all eternity. The evangelicals’ theological stance theoretically in no way should have been threatened by a commitment to social action per se. The necessary first step in the Christian’s life was repentance for sin and total dependence on God’s grace. Good works

should follow. The only question was what form these should take – individual or public, private or political.”

The emerging Social Gospel emphasis strongly favoured the latter and did so from the springboard of a redefined gospel. Rauschenbusch pragmatically subordinated and modified almost every other doctrine to the overarching, all-consuming goal of social change, saying that “religious morality is the only thing God cares about” (Rauschenbusch, 1907:6). The validity of any theological truth was based upon whether it worked in motivating Christians to change society. Historic fundamentalists took great offence to such a liberal position, “which seemed to undercut the relevance of the message of eternal salvation through trust in Christ’s atoning work... Traditional Christian belief seemed to be at stake” (Marsden, 1980:92).

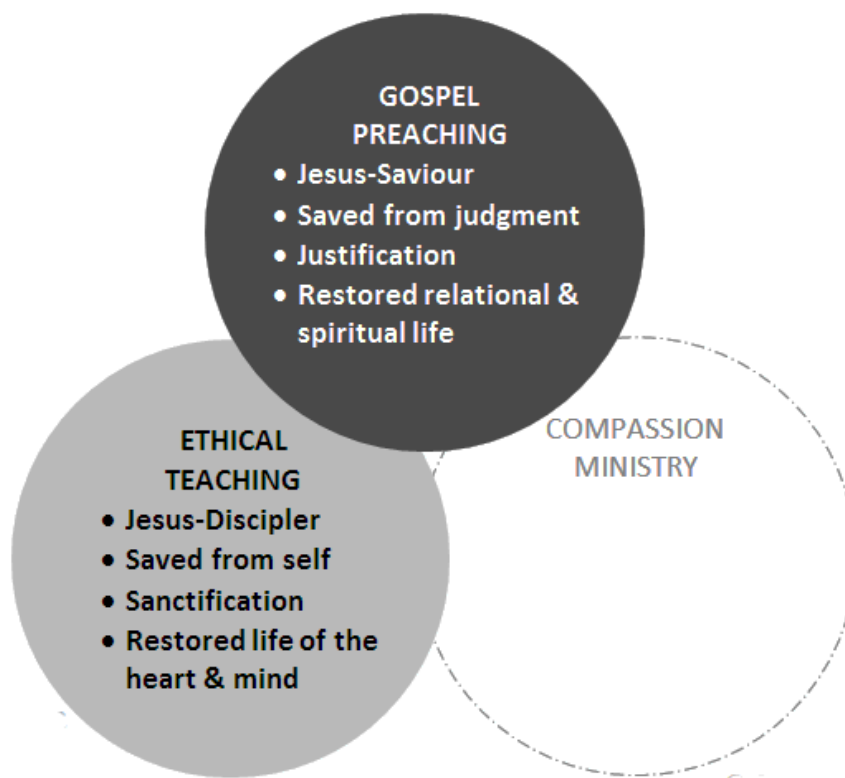


Figure 3.3: Great Reversal ministry

Thus, in the early part of the 20th century, historic fundamentalism shifted away from a balanced evangelical social concern and focused heavily on individualism and futurism – one’s personal salvation, one’s personal spiritual walk, one’s life within his/her own church, and one’s hope in the return of Christ. Compassionate

or relational contact with the world was discouraged. Church ministries and seminary curriculums seemed to focus only on teaching and preaching, with little emphasis on social work or compassion ministry (Greer, 2010:43). Any engagement with the culture was polemic in nature as the Church became a voice against the secularist influences of evolution, humanism, and communism. Misunderstood dispensational premillennialist ideas encouraged believers to abandon any hope of improving a society deserving of God's soon-coming judgement, and many in the holiness movement likewise withdrew from their downward-spiralling culture to create a more pleasant and isolated sub-culture (Marsden, 1980:90).

Even today, the term "Social Gospel" is often used within fundamental and conservative evangelical circles in an ill-informed way and, at times, as a malicious label to discourage pastors and churches from any social engagement at all. Many Christian young people emerging from these sub-cultures sense that they should be doing more, but battle with knowing how to get involved with social projects, especially since Catholic and liberal groups dominate the field. Many conservative pastors, in this writer's experience, feel that giving food to a beggar on the street corner, but not sharing the gospel, is actually wrong and engaging in the Social Gospel, rather than seeing compassion as an independently good deed.

Doing good deeds without introducing people to the Saviour is not optimal, but then neither is telling someone of the love of God without also showing them the love of God, particularly if they are suffering. Similarly, evangelical Christians getting upset with platinum mining corporations that exploit impoverished workers who live in tin shacks, or petitioning an apathetic government to do more to stop the HIV/AIDS epidemic sweeping their country is not liberation theology. Such were the sentiments of William Wilberforce (1759-1833) whose compassion for children, slaves, animals, and the uneducated arose from his faith in Christ and from the ethical principles that accompany a new life in Christ (Greer, 2009:41).

3.5.1.5 Maintaining a proper balance in gospel ministry

Biblically balanced Gospel Ministry has taken a beating in the last 130 years; the first attack being from the "Social Gospel" and the second from the "Great

Reversal.” What is needed in our world is not a redefining or broadening of the gospel message, but a broadening of our notions of gospel ministry. The gospel message is theological, propositional, and transactional. The gospel ministry is practical, incarnational, and transformational. The Church mustn’t engage in only spiritual ministry or in only physical ministry. Jesus preached the good news, but his ministry involved much more. The apostles preached the good news, but their ministry involved much more. The evangelical church upholds the primacy of preaching, but their ministry should involve much more. Church history is full of leaders who preached a genuine gospel, and believed that society could only be truly and lastingly changed as the gospel did its transforming work one individual at a time, and yet they were heavily involved in compassion ministries. England’s Charles Haddon Spurgeon, known as “the Prince of Preachers,” led a church that began sixty-seven social organizations and programmes, and yet he despised the social gospel. Drummond writes:

“One recurring tragedy of the Christian Church, however, has been the separation of social ministries and spiritual, evangelistic ministries. Often a rigid dichotomy has been struck between these two allied services for Christ. This dilemma can vividly be seen in the twentieth century, particularly in North America, in the polarization of the so-called “social gospel” and the “saving gospel.” Such a situation inevitably brings the Church to a low estate. This kind of dichotomy never has our Lord’s stamp on it. The New Testament Church, the Church down through the centuries of history always combined in a harmonious unity these two merging ministries. Such a separation of services was unknown to ... John Wesley ... George Whitefield ... Hermann August Francke ... Lord Shaftsbury and William Wilberforce. Almost unparalleled in church history, the ministry of Charles Haddon Spurgeon epitomized the perfect blending of evangelistic fervency and deep social concern.... Right beside that concern for people’s souls stood a commitment to fulfil people’s needs” (Drummond, 1992:397).

Jesus overcame the natural human bent toward dualism, the worldview that keeps the physical/spiritual and secular/sacred worlds separate and distinct, which is a

remnant of erroneous Enlightenment thinking. God's Word is spiritual and it became a person. The first and second great commandments of loving God and loving our neighbour are both spiritual, and are both meaningless without tangible actions (Myers, 2006:6). A holistic view of ministry then gets beyond ideas and words and hits the streets with deeds of compassion. Evangelical churches in the third-world villages of Africa, Asia, and South America, where poverty and suffering define the culture, tend to be very compassionate. Similarly, missionaries working in those cultures who are committed to the gospel message have been heavily involved in compassion ministry. William Carey, the "father of modern missions" who worked near Calcutta, India, opposed slavery, fought against the practice of sati, the Hindu ritual of burning widows alive on the pyre of their dead husbands and infanticide, the offering babies to the gods in the Ganges River, and made improvements to education and agriculture during his forty years of ministry. E. Stanley Jones, also a Methodist missionary in India, explained gospel ministry using this rationale: "A soul without a body is a ghost; a body without a soul is a corpse. The Gospel is addressed to living persons, soul and body, in all of their broken humanity and need for wholeness" (George, 2005:166). Even London in the 1850s was so full of the poor, destitute, homeless and hungry that William Booth felt compelled to leave his pulpit and begin the Salvation Army. Spurgeon, a preacher in London during that era, commented:

"Men have enough practical sense always to judge that if professed Christians do not care for their bodily wants, there cannot be much sincerity in their zeal for men's souls. If a man will give me spiritual bread in the form of a tract, but would not give me a piece of bread for my body, how can I think much of him? Let practical help to the poor go with the spiritual help you render to them. If you would help to keep a brother's soul alive in the higher sense, be not backward to do it in a more ordinary sense" (Spurgeon, 1876:1).

The development of a truly Bible-based theology of compassion and compassion ministry has been poor, in part, because Christianity in scholarly, literature-producing regions like America and Europe has largely been a religion of suburbia where people do not see vast social needs and, therefore, aren't driven to grapple

with creating biblically based ministry methods to meet those needs. The poorer urbanised churches in these otherwise affluent regions are forced to respond to the needs around them. When the author has asked leaders in South Africa's compassion ministries to write about the things they have learned and seen, the invariable response is that they do not have the time. Hence, our theologies are driven by ivory-tower theological musings that are far from where Christians are making the difference.

“When evangelicals entered the slums as soul-winners, they learned firsthand the conditions under which people lived and quickly added social welfare programs. Such great evangelical leaders as F. B. Meyer, John H. Jowett, Charles H. Spurgeon, and T. DeWitt Talmage thus played a significant part in the establishment of gospel missions, employment bureaus, orphanages, and other agencies to meet the needs of the poor, seeing it as “the whole gospel for the whole person”.... Because they were true friends of the poor and actively helped to meet their material and physical needs, their evangelistic efforts among them were effective. They brought the gospel of salvation, but they also played a part in bringing about major social reforms of the 19th and 20th centuries (Moberg, 2006:29).

In his new book, Stearns (2009:17) comments that he grew up being taught that the Great Commission “was about saving as many people from hell as possible – for the *next* life. It minimized any concern for those same people in *this* life. In our evangelistic efforts to make the good news accessible and simple to understand, we seem to have boiled it down to a kind of ‘fire insurance’ that one can buy As long as the policy is in the drawer, the other things don’t matter as much. We’ve got our ‘ticket’ for the next life.” This is what Stearns called “the hole in the gospel,” saying that it was not the “whole gospel.” Like so many believers who have travelled to distant lands, Stearns had his heart torn with compassion when he saw the dire needs abroad, and began to loathe his own comfortable Christianity, the Christianity he had watched and been taught growing up, the Christianity of his culture. He sensed that something was drastically wrong and missing in the American version of Christianity, and was angry about it.

Like Myers, Stearns affirms the gospel message of faith in Christ for a person's forgiveness of sins, so neither is an advocate of the social gospel. But Stearns then blurs the distinction between the "gospel message," which is foundational, propositional, and transactional, and "gospel ministry," which should involve heavy doses of compassion ministry and ethical teaching, something that traditional Euro-American Christianity has largely missed. He even goes so far as to say: "This gospel – the *whole* gospel – means much more than the personal salvation of individuals. It means a *social revolution*" (Stearns, 2009:20). Stearns' effort to change the behaviour of the Church is justified, but the answer is not to redefine and broaden the gospel to include charitable deeds and the teaching of higher ethics; the answer is to proclaim to the Church that there is a hole in its gospel ministry, and that hole is a deficit of compassion. If one understands the "gospel" to be "gospel ministry" throughout Stearns book, his is a far more biblical argument and is an exceptional encouragement to Christian social action.

As a compassionate Saviour, Jesus Christ of Nazareth preached the good news of the Kingdom of God calling on people not only to believe in what he said, but to believe in him to receive forgiveness of sins, everlasting life, and a restored relationship with God (John 3:16, Acts 10:42-43). Jesus kept the gospel message as the focal point of his ministry, because it was the primary reason that he came to earth (Buckley, 2010:23). When he left earth, the commission Jesus left to his disciples was focused on disciple-making and truth-teaching (Matthew 28:18-20). The mission is to make more and better disciples through the transforming truth of the gospel message, and the primacy of this message must not be subsumed by efforts to transform individuals or society on the outside.

The gospel message is the primary thing, but in Jesus' ministry it was not always the first thing or the last thing he did when he encountered fallen and suffering human beings. Speaking at the International Conference on World Evangelism in 1974, Billy Graham cited the five hallmarks of a biblical approach to evangelism:

- The authority of the Scriptures
- The lostness of human beings apart from Jesus Christ
- Salvation in Jesus Christ alone
- A witness to the gospel in word and deed

- The necessity of evangelism.

“Declaring the Good News ‘in word and deed’ points to the dual necessity of *both* declaring *and* living (i.e., including a propositional and incarnational dimension to) the mission of the church” (George, 2005:166). Grant (1985:208) wrote concerning Charles Spurgeon's mercy ministries:

"Spurgeon looked upon their work of sheltering the homeless as part and parcel of the rest of their ministry. It was inseparable from their other labours, preaching, writing, praying and evangelizing. It was inseparable, in fact, from their faith in Christ. Once a doubter accosted Spurgeon on a London thoroughfare and challenged the authenticity of his faith. Spurgeon answered the man by pointing out the failure of the secularists in mounting a practical and consistent program to help the needy thousands in the city. In contrast, he pointed out the multitudinous works of compassion that had sprung from faith in Christ: Whitefield's mission, Mueller's orphanage, Bernardo's shelter. He then closed the conversation by paraphrasing the victorious cry of Elijah, boisterously asserting, ‘The God who answers by orphanages, let him be God!’”

3.5.2 Compassion for the leper (Mark 1:40-45)

Compassion was magnificently exemplified by Jesus in his deeds, in his teachings, and in his substitutionary death. The Greek word for compassion, *splanchnizomai*, is used nine times in reference to Jesus' activities, and three times in Jesus' teaching highlighting the greatness of the virtue of compassion. All twelve instances will be examined, and observations made, below. The word *splanchnizomai* is used only in the Synoptic Gospels and only in reference to Jesus, and thus, it has Messianic significance. But beyond the use of the exact Greek words, there are dozens of examples of compassion in Jesus' ministry, making it clear to those who were his followers that compassion was a hallmark of true discipleship. Acting with compassion is to be like Jesus, “not only in being without respect of persons, but also in that it is expressed in deeds which involve personal sacrifice” (Wood, 1996:218).

In Jesus' healing of the leper (Matthew 8:1-4, Mark 1:40-45, Luke 5:12-16), Mark records, "Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed" (1982: Mark 1:41-42). A number of observations about compassion may be made from Jesus' ministry here in this text:

Firstly, compassion is incarnational; it requires an encounter with the suffering. It normally involves seeing or, at the very least, hearing about people who are sick, weak, poor, abused, and unable to help themselves.

"God gave the responsibility to care for the defenceless to those claiming to be followers of Christ. It is through our hands the Father's love comes, it is through our voices His voice is heard, it is through our efforts and those of the church that his care is revealed to the ones the rest of the world has forgotten We put flesh to His words and make Him alive to those who are desperate to know He is real" (Davis, 2003:33).

To see those who suffer, one must normally go to where they live, which was a big step for many in Jesus' day, and it still is today. The affluent often prefer to live quite separate and apart from the needy so that their hearts can be at ease; out of sight is out of mind. If one sees, he or she might feel compassion, and compassion always demands a response. Joseph ran out of the room when he saw Benjamin (Genesis 43:30). Many people run from compassion. Its pull is strong and at times relentless; avoiding it by never seeing the needs in the first place is the path many choose. In some cases, compassion draws a person's heart so strongly into identification with the sufferers that the compassionate person actually makes the place of suffering his or her home. In this case, Jesus was ministering in Galilee, which was his home. It was a needy place where he could encounter people with needs.

"Here we see what compassion means. It is not a bending toward the underprivileged from a privileged position; it is not reaching out from on high to those who are less fortunate below; it is not a gesture of sympathy or pity for those who fail to make it in the upward pull. On the contrary,

compassion means going directly to those people and places where suffering is most acute and building a home there” (Nouwen, 2008:27).

Myers calls Jesus “the Christ of the periphery” because much of his ministry took place in Galilee, on “the edge of Israel,” in “the backwater of the Roman Empire” among the common people whom society labelled publicans and sinners or unclean (Myers, 2006:33). Hearts resisting compassion will reject such places and people, just as the religiously spotless Pharisees of Jesus’ day could not fathom why Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus responded: “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (1995: Matthew 9:12-13). In Jesus’ mind, “sacrifice” symbolised the self-securing trappings of formal religion, apart and aloof from needy humanity, as opposed to compassion, which was the selfless manifestation of functional godliness in seeing and entering into the pain of the sufferer. To show compassion to the suffering and rejected, one must first see them, must encounter them. Compassion is incarnational. Often one must disappear from the mainstream and enter the margins of society to encounter the hurting, as Jesus did.

Secondly, compassion is an action word. Jesus never felt compassion and then walked away. “Compassion means getting involved in someone’s life for healing and wholeness. The logic of compassion moves from a deep feeling for another who is suffering to a ministering work of some kind. In every instance where Jesus is reported to have compassion, it is also reported that he engaged in a subsequent act of ministry” (Purves, 1989:17). The moving of his heart necessitated the moving of his body to remedy the suffering, the hands if there was someone suffering physically, and the mouth if there was someone suffering spiritually. “God’s love was intended to be demonstrated, not dictated Our charge is both to proclaim and embody the gospel so that others can see, hear, and feel God’s love in tangible ways.” (Stearns, 2009:18).

People on foreign shores who hear news reports about the world’s 153 million orphans, or see advertisements by non-profit organisations on TV soliciting contributions for AIDS orphans, and feel stirred but do nothing about it, have not

experienced true compassion. Compassion responds as if the pain is one's own, and in some cases launches a person into extreme and at times ill-advised conduct. Compassion creates a reaction.

Thirdly, Jesus used touch as an element of compassion. It is very clear by the nature and power of who Jesus was that he could have simply spoken and the healing would have taken place, and in fact, the healing took place "as soon as he had spoken." Nonetheless, Jesus touched the leper. Compassion and touch were frequent companions in Jesus' ministry.

"He reached out His hand and touched the eyes of the blind, the skin of the person with leprosy, and the legs of the cripple.... I have sometimes wondered why Jesus so frequently touched the people He healed, many of whom must have been unattractive, obviously diseased, unsanitary, smelly. With His power, He easily could have waved a magic wand. ... But He chose not to. Jesus' mission was not chiefly a crusade against disease ... but rather a ministry to individual people, some of whom happened to have a disease. He wanted those people, one by one, to feel His love and warmth and His full identification with them. Jesus knew He could not readily demonstrate love to a crowd, for love usually involves touching" (Yancey, 1980:140).

As with the leper, Jesus later had compassion on the two blind men, and touched them to heal them (Matthew 20:34). When Jesus taught about compassion, he noted that the Good Samaritan had compassion and then touched (Luke 10:33-34) and the father of the Prodigal Son had compassion and then touched (Luke 15:20). Even when compassion is not explicitly mentioned in the biblical text as a motivation, Jesus healed the sick and cared for children and adults using touch (Matthew 8:15, 9:29, 17:7, Mark 7:33, 8:22-23, 10:13, Luke 18:15, 22:51). The significance of touch has a long biblical tradition. The laying on of hands was done to transfer blessing in the Old Testament (Numbers 27:18) (Smalley, 2004:42). In the New Testament, believers were to greet each other with touch (1 Peter 5:14), God's servants were commissioned with touch (2 Timothy 1:6), and if suffering, they were to call for the elders who would touch them with oil (James 5:16).

Fourthly, Jesus demonstrated that compassion involves social and physical risk. It breaks through barriers of religious and social convention and creates relationships with those who may be viewed as “outcasts” (Purves, 1989:20). This man was a leper. Not only was he afflicted with a loathsome and disfiguring skin disease that was contagious, he was cut off from the Jewish community of his day under the provisions of the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 13:42-46). He faced the stigma of being unclean, and was therefore rejected and avoided socially and physically, just as many adults and children in modern times who are struggling with diseases such as HIV and AIDS. Jesus reached out in compassion for the spiritual condition of the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 and crossed forbidden cultural divides, taking a huge social risk “for Jews have no dealings with Samaritans” (2001: John 4:9). In telling a parable to illustrate love and compassion, Jesus chose to tell about a Good Samaritan, again rejecting the ethnic and religious divides and conventions of his day (Luke 10:33-37).

3.5.3 Compassion for the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17)

Jesus had compassion for those suffering emotionally with grief. Only Luke records the story of Jesus resurrecting the only son of a widow. “Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, ‘Do not weep.’ Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, ‘Young man, I say to you, arise.’ And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother” (2001: Luke 7:11-15). Several observations can be made about compassion here.

In this instance, Jesus felt compassion for someone else’s grief rather than for her spiritual or physical need, per se. He was wounded by her wounded spirit. While the reason “Jesus wept” at the graveside of Lazarus is the subject of much speculation (John 11:35), it is certainly probable that he was feeling compassion for the mourners there as well. Upon meeting Martha outside of town, he had been quite calm and assured her that he was the resurrection and the life. But

when he saw Mary weeping and crushed with sorrow, and the others weeping, he was “deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled” and gave way to sympathetic emotion. Jesus showed us that compassion involves vicarious emotions, weeping with those who weep (Romans 15:13). At times, He cried in sympathy for people. Compassion is bearing someone else’s pain before one can bear it away (Galatians 6:2).

Jesus gave the young man to his mother, again an indication of touch and of personal connection rather than just walking away. Jesus communicated the character of God by teaching people about the Father, but He also modelled the character of God by demonstrating His love for them in a close and practical way. In many cases, people need a practical demonstration of an abstract concept like “selfless love” before they can comprehend how the spiritual aspect works. Love often touches the body before it touches the heart. Purves notes (1989:38):

“Compassion is a ministry of presence. To be present for another is to be available for him or her. It is to relate to one another with all of one’s attention and energy. And it is to invite that other into relationship with oneself. Presence allows another to stake a claim on one’s personal and private space.... Compassion as presence is not fulfilled simply by feeling the right feelings or by going through the motions of care. Compassion includes competence but it not reducible to it.... Compassion requires a quality of relationship ... it is being wounded by the suffering of another.”

3.5.4 Compassion for the demonised boy (Mark 9:14-29)

By way of a preface to the story here, Matthew noted in his record of the gospel that, “Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest’” (2001: Matthew 9:35-37).

It is interesting to note that Jesus, God incarnate, needed help. If God had granted Jesus the permission, he could have simply raised his hand and commanded all people in Galilee and Judea to be healed, but beyond simply coming to mankind, Jesus loved and came to touch and heal and teach and save people one by one. Compassion is personal. There was no collective healing; there is no collective salvation. There were so many on whom Jesus had compassion, but he could not do things by himself; he had to delegate and empower a band of disciples. MacArthur (1989:271) notes: "This text marks a significant transition in Jesus' ministry. Until this point His disciples have simply been listeners and onlookers, observing and learning. All of the actual ministry – teaching, preaching, and healing – has been performed by Jesus Himself. Now Jesus shows the reason and need to begin involving the disciples." Of course, delegating ministry is not always a tidy arrangement with optimal outcomes. All disciples have a learning curve as is illustrated by the situation with the demonised youth.

In Jesus' healing of the demonised youth (Matthew 17:14-19, Mark 9:14-29, Luke 9:37-42), Mark gives the most detailed account of the event.

"And they brought the boy to him. And when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, 'How long has this been happening to him?' And he said, 'From childhood. And it has often cast him into fire and into water, to destroy him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.' And Jesus said to him, 'If you can! All things are possible for one who believes.' Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, 'I believe; help my unbelief!'" (2001: Mark 9:20-24).

Several observations about compassion may be made from Jesus' ministry here in this text:

Firstly, when someone is suffering, it is an emotionally difficult thing to behold, and because of this heightened emotion and urgency there are often arguments in the community as to why the person is suffering and what remedial actions should be taken to affect a cure. Here Jesus came upon an argument between the scribes, the disciples, and the people in the community about helping a boy whose

demonization caused him to be mute and to have epileptic-type seizures (Mark 9:14-19). The father felt helpless, the scribes were likely accusing the boy or his parents of some causal sins, and the increasingly famous disciples of Jesus were unable to cast out the demon. There had been no prayer or fasting to seek God's guidance or power (Mark 9:29).

Secondly, Jesus didn't heal the boy immediately but he first chose to deal with the spiritual issues of those floundering in compassion ministry so that he could involve them in the compassion solution. Jesus' ministry was bathed in intermittent prayer such that he was informed and empowered for the correct solution. Jesus' dialogue with the boy's father and the disciples highlighted the fact that prayer and faith had been missing in the efforts to help the boy. Ignoring the underlying spiritual issues of caregivers can often block the resolution of suffering, and while dealing with such spiritual issues doesn't immediately alleviate suffering, it is often the beginning of the road to a lasting solution. It is not enough that just the particular sufferer's needs be addressed; often his or her sufferings are perpetuated by the spiritual issues of those around. The answer to a person's physical suffering often begins with the spiritual transformation of that person's caregivers and their community. In his brief and brilliant article entitled, "As an atheist, I truly believe Africa needs God," Matthew Parris (2009:1) of the Sunday Times (UK), who grew up in Malawi, commented:

"Now a confirmed atheist, I've become convinced of the enormous contribution that Christian evangelism makes in Africa: sharply distinct from the work of secular NGOs, government projects and international aid efforts. These alone will not do. Education and training alone will not do. In Africa Christianity changes people's hearts. It brings a spiritual transformation. The rebirth is real. The change is good In the city we had working for us Africans who had converted and were strong believers. The Christians were always different. Far from having cowed or confined its converts, their faith appeared to have liberated and relaxed them. There was a liveliness, a curiosity, an engagement with the world – a directness in their dealings with others – that seemed to be missing in traditional African life. They stood tall.... Christianity, post-Reformation and post-

Luther, with its teaching of a direct, personal, two-way link between the individual and God, unmediated by the collective, and unsubordinated to any other human being, smashes straight through the philosophical/spiritual framework I've just described. It offers something to hold on to those anxious to cast off a crushing tribal groupthink. That is why and how it liberates.”

Thirdly, Jesus challenged the spiritual condition and invoked the personal responsibility of the boy's caregiver to be involved in the transformation process. The father had become passive and had given up hope of his son's recovery. He seems half-hearted when he asks Jesus, “If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” Jesus throws the challenge right back to him with a heightened degree of intensity, “If you can! All things are possible for the one who believes,” perhaps also referencing his disciples' lack of faith. Stung by Jesus' pointing out his lack of zeal, the father cries out truthfully, “I believe; help my unbelief!” Purves (1989:24) notes:

“Compassion does not allow the recipient to remain passive. It does not induce quietism. In compassion, Jesus does not act as a magician or wonder-worker. In this story he required the father to do from his side what was necessary for the healing to be successful.... Compassion ministry, if it is not to be cheap grace, must, when necessary and appropriate, call forth responsibility from the sufferer. In this sense it is an evangelical ministry. It is not paternalism, a superior kind of do-good-ism, which does things *for* people instead of doing things *with* them. It treats people as responsible adults who more than likely have a role to play in their healing and wholeness.”

Jesus was interested in the spiritual transformation of the caregiver and involved him in the compassion solution. At the end of the story, Jesus mentions privately to his still frustrated disciples that faith was important, but that the solution also involved the power of prevailing prayer, and some manuscripts for Mark 9:29 add “and fasting.” Jesus' compassion in the gospels was directed at those who were suffering physically, and suffering spiritually. But compassion directed at physical suffering seldom offers only a physical solution. Seeking spiritual transformation

is most often an integral part of dealing with physical suffering because it offers a long-range internal change that not only begins a path to end the suffering, but can often keep it from returning.

3.5.5 Compassion for the two blind men (Matthew 20:29-34)

In Jesus' healing of the two blind men on the road from Jericho to Jerusalem (Matthew 20:29-34, Mark 10:46-52, Luke 18:36-43), Matthew records, "And Jesus stopped and called them, and said, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' They said to Him, 'Lord, we want our eyes to be opened.' Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight and followed Him" (1995: Matthew 20:32-34). Several additional observations about compassion may be made from Jesus' ministry here in this text:

Firstly, the busyness and the popularity that Jesus experienced due to his authoritative preaching, and his unequalled compassion ministry, did not induce Jesus to cruise or ride the crest of the wave, nor did it prevent him from continuing to show compassion. At his heart, Jesus came to serve, which is strongly emphasized in the verses immediately preceding the encounter with the blind men (Matthew 20:20-28). Piercing through the temptation to serve self that popularity brings, Jesus kept his outward focus, and demonstrated with great clarity for his disciples that greatness in the kingdom is not gained through political positioning but through heart-initiated service.

Secondly, the distracting crowd forced the men who were suffering to muster themselves and fight to be heard. They did not have the privilege to simply lie back, do nothing, and expect Jesus to come help them. Mark notes in his parallel account that one of the men was Bartimaeus who called out "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' And Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' And they called the blind man, saying to him, 'Take heart. Get up; he is calling you.' And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus." (2001: Mark 10:47-50). Jesus perhaps felt that Bartimaeus had been basking in his suffering, and rather than pander by walking over to him, Jesus demanded that he get himself up and grope his way over and through the crowd to Jesus.

Thirdly, Jesus gave the opportunity for the suffering to have input into their remedy. The men had yelled for mercy (Greek “*eleeo*”), a synonym for compassion, but the request was somewhat vague. In Mark 10:51, Jesus asked, “What do you want me to do for you?” Bartimaeus could have had small vision and simply ask for money, perhaps even enough money to set himself up well for life, but knowing that Jesus was Messiah, as indicated by his use of the term “Son of David,” he asked for a final and comprehensive delivery from the thing that held him back, his blindness. Seeing their pitiful condition as beggars, and perhaps the condition of their eyes, Jesus had compassion on them. His heart was wounded by their suffering, and he touched their eyes such that they received sight. Here again, compassion and touch are linked.

3.5.6 Compassion for the multitude (Matthew 14:13-21 and Mark 6:32-44; Matthew 15:32-38 and Mark 8:1-4)

As a preface to this passage, it should be noted that in the moments prior to Jesus’ famous incident of feeding the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:32-44, Luke 9:11-17, John 6:1-14), Mark records, “Now many saw them going [away in the boat] and recognized them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things” (2001: Mark 6:33-35). Matthew observed that Jesus healed their sick; and Luke notes that Jesus both taught and healed the sick. Several observations about compassion may be made from Jesus’ ministry in feeding the 5,000 and feeding the 4,000:

Firstly, it should be noted from the context that those involved in compassion ministry need to rest or they will face compassion fatigue or burnout (Ferguson, 2007:16; Lehr, 2006:4). Earlier in the chapter, Jesus sent out the twelve disciples in pairs to minister throughout Galilee. The length of this field training is unknown, but Mark notes, “So they went out and proclaimed that people should repent. And they cast out many demons and anointed with oil many who were sick and healed them” (2001: Mark 6:12-13). When they returned and reported to Jesus, he said to them, “‘Come away by yourselves to a desolate place and rest a while.’ For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they

went away in the boat to a desolate place by themselves” (2001: Mark 6:31-32). As explained earlier, the Greek word for compassion literally means to have one’s bowels turned over, and the English word compassion literally means to suffer with. Seeing, confronting and remedying suffering takes an emotional and physical toll on those ministering. The disciples came back probably joyful, but noticeably weary, since Jesus responded by calling for a retreat from people altogether, getting away to a desolate, secluded place. The compassionate need compassion since after a while they begin to feel a “secondary traumatic stress disorder,” the transfer of suffering from outside to within known more popularly as “compassion fatigue” (Finley, 1995:3).

“It is probably a matter of time before the intensity of suffering in others leads us to harden our hearts against it. After all, there is only so much suffering any of us can take before we are simply overwhelmed by it. We can only sit on the mourning bench for a while. We who would suffer with others can become casualties of the very acts of our love. Our compassion recoils, as it were, making us its victims. We begin to realize, perhaps, that exposure to too much suffering will destroy us as well. It will drive us mad. And so we shut off, or at least carefully control, our sensitivity to the suffering of others, often being unaware that we are doing so” (Purves, 1989:12).

Jesus’ command reflected his awareness that compassion can wear you down. Withdrawing for seasons of refreshment and prayer is essential. In this instance, Jesus and the disciples enjoyed no such respite since the crowd ran around the lake and met them on the far shores.

Secondly, Jesus demonstrated that compassion is about doing the Father’s will, not responding to needs. Compassion comes from a deeply spiritual walk that is in submission to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It begins in the heart of God and flows through a heart and life that walks intimately with Him. Nothing else will sustain compassion workers in a world of overwhelming needs. On a number of occasions, Jesus moved away from the compassion-demanding crowd, not just due to fatigue, but due to other priorities such as prayer, preaching the gospel, and otherwise staying in his Father’s will. Jesus saw his ministry as

directed and integrated with the ministry of the Father. “For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing; and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes” (1995: John 5:20-21). Ultimately, Jesus didn’t come for us or for himself; he came to do the will of his Father. “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me” (1995: John 6:38). His mission was theocentric, not anthropocentric, but Jesus demonstrated remarkable strength in keeping this priority because in the field, compassion workers seem to run here and there at furious speeds and in great stress because they are driven by needs. The needs of mankind, and even of one small community, will always tower above one’s ability to meet them. Jesus didn’t allow compassion ministry to be the driving factor of His work; He kept it in check. There were dozens of villages that Jesus passed by without healing anyone. Jesus came simply to do His Father’s will, but it must be remembered that His Father’s will involved an enormous amount of compassion that was administered in person.

Thirdly, Jesus had compassion on them because of their need for a shepherd, their need for spiritual direction and nurture. Each in the crowd seemed taken with having their physical needs, or the needs of someone they had brought, met by Jesus. Suffering at times makes people feel distant from God because he has forsaken them, or is angry with them, or has chosen this path for them, and consequently their focus is on their problem rather than on seeking God for sustaining grace or a solution. Their focus is only on their pain, spending their funds (Luke 8:43) and doing everything possible to be rid of their condition, or wallowing in hopelessness if nothing can be done. They don’t perceive their greater underlying need of a shepherd, a relationship with God that can give them peace even through the valley of the shadow of death (Psalm 23). These crowds had physical problems, but Jesus also saw them as sheep without a shepherd. True compassion sees the big picture and understands that gospel ministry involves more than meeting physical needs.

Fourthly, Jesus challenged others to expand their endurance for the sake of compassion and serve in God’s strength even above their human abilities. At the

beginning of the passage, Jesus and the disciples were trying to get alone to rest, but Jesus' compassion for the pressing crowd caused them to put their plans aside for a time. Jesus taught and healed for perhaps an hour or two. Then Mark continues, "And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, 'This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.' But he answered them, 'You give them something to eat'" (Mark 6:35-37). Earlier, Jesus had shown compassion because the people were leaderless and comfortless and needed care, healing, and truth. Now the need was more mundane; they just needed food. It was getting late, and the people were hungry; it was easiest just to walk away from another oncoming problem. Like Mary at the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:3), the disciples didn't wait to see what the wise and perceptive Jesus would do, but offered their recommendation. Jesus' reply taught them that the needs of the people around a believer are the believer's problem. "You give them something to eat" essentially meant "you show them compassion." In contrast to Jesus' compassion, the disciples indicated that they didn't want these people to become their problem. Compassion says "your problem is my problem," and they were resisting that notion. Their surprise to Jesus' instruction was understandable. Compassion is best learned from one who has done it, and Jesus was stretching their understanding of the limits of compassion. The disciples were tired from ministry, had seen their secluded time robbed away, had been involved in more ministry, and now it was late afternoon. Even then, Jesus said they should not assert their rights to peace and quiet but should keep serving.

Fifthly, Jesus had compassion on people even for their mundane needs such as food. In a separate incident where Jesus fed 4,000 under similar circumstances (Matthew 15:32-38, Mark 8:1-10), the crowd had followed Jesus for three days and everyone had run out of food. They had a shepherd but no food. They had been healed, cared for, nurtured and taught, but now they were hungry. Jesus had compassion on them because some would faint just trying to get home. The disciples had learned their earlier lesson. They made no cynical suggestion of sending everyone home. Rather, they sought the Lord to see what he would do. In this instance, the people were not suffering badly, such as the leper or the blind

men or the demonised boy. Jesus showed his disciples that compassion need not be withheld unless someone is grindingly low and without any ability to help themselves. Compassion can meet needs even when, with a little time and effort, a sufferer could remedy his own condition.

Sixthly, Jesus showed the disciples that compassion is often faith-based and cannot be demonstrated only when one can meet the need with what is in hand. When one has an abundance of resources, he or she is likely to rely on the strength of self or the strength of one's network of charitable contributors. Jesus was supported by some faithful women (Luke 8:3), but feeding so many people far exceeded what little resources the disciples had. This principle is not meant to suggest fiscal irresponsibility, but to stress that Jesus made a decision to help beyond the apparent means at hand such that the work could only be accomplished by the compassionate provision of God himself. Compassion is often faith-based and sees beyond human capabilities to a preferable future that God will create through obedient faith.

3.6 Compassion and Jesus' teachings

Jesus modelled compassion, but he also exhorted his disciples to be merciful, to give to the needy privately, and to do good works so that onlookers would see them and glorify their Father in heaven (Matthew 5:7, 16, 6:1-4). Compassion is a manifestation of following Christ; compassion is part of discipleship.

3.6.1 The compassionate Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37)

In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), Jesus had been conversing with a lawyer who knew that the first and second great commandments were to love God supremely and to love your neighbour as yourself. Wanting Jesus as a rabbi to help him narrow the number of people involved in the term "neighbour," he asked who qualified as his neighbour. Jesus told of a man travelling the notoriously dangerous road from Jerusalem to Jericho who was robbed, beaten, stripped, and left for dead. Since he was unconscious, there was no way to tell what the man's ethnic or religious or moral identity was or where he was from; his only identity and value was that he was a human being. For whatever religious, cultural, or personal reasons, a priest saw him but passed

by on the other side refusing to give aid. A Levite later did the same thing. Both religious men acted in self-interest, guarded their safety, shielded their hearts, showed no compassion, and refused to give even their presence to the desperately needy man. They passed by on the other side, refusing to get close, refusing to get involved. Oddly, the hero of the story, the compassionate person, was not even a poor Jew but a Samaritan. Compassion is borne in the soul of all humanity; it should be most typical of God's people, but unfortunately is not.

Even with a casual glance, one can note eight steps of compassion in the text: "And when he saw him, he had compassion. He went to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he set him on his own animal and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever more you spend, I will repay you when I come back (2001: Luke 10:33-35). The good Samaritan took the following measures:

- He saw or encountered him
- His heart and gut were afflicted by the traveller's condition (compassion)
- He went to him, an action involving risk
- He bound up his wounds by coming close in his presence and touching him
- He set him on his animal, an act of service
- He took care of him over a longer time
- He incurred personal cost by asking the innkeeper to care for him, and
- He involved others in compassion

Again, there is nothing mild, clean, distant, or safe about compassion. There can be no manual about how to show compassion since every situation is different, and if there is an unspoken manual about socially acceptable practices, compassion often breaks those rules and leads one straight into the shadows of social, physical, and emotional risk.

"Compassionate service may well lead us beyond what may be regarded as an acceptable or prudent level of involvement with another in need to a level of involvement that could demand great personal cost. Time and again Jesus broke the canons of respectable self-limiting behaviour.... No

self-respecting Jew would have acted as frequently as he acted, keeping company with the money men, the prostitutes, the poor, the deranged, and the other marginalised persons in his community. His compassion often led him beyond the acceptable limits of pastoral orthodoxy” (Purves, 1989:49).

In this parable, compassion required a personal investment, a material sacrifice to meet the needs of the sufferer. At times, compassion demands an investment of one’s resources to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, welcome and provide housing for the stranger, clothe the naked, care for the sick, and visit the prisoner. These six traits are typical of poor people, so the bill falls to the giver of compassion. In this parable, the needs of the suffering traveller were apparent, but in many cases, finding out why poverty exists takes time. “Usually this is the difference between good charity and bad charity. Bad charity throws money at a problem without getting personally involved, with the result that the underlying causes of problems like poverty and homelessness are never dealt with. Good charity makes a total commitment to meetings someone’s total needs” (Ryken, 2003:156).

3.6.2 The compassionate father (Luke 15:11-32)

The parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15:11-32 could be better titled “the parable of the Compassionate Father,” since the emotional focus of the story is the reunion of the father with his son, a beautiful picture of the gospel themes of sin, estrangement, repentance, compassion, forgiveness, restoration, and celebration. Earlier, the father had granted his son’s wish, given him his money, and absorbed the pain of his departure. When the wayward younger son came to himself, he knew he must return home and in abject humiliation offer himself as a slave. “And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him” (2001: Luke 15:21). Several observations can be made here.

Firstly, this act of compassion was one of the most amazing in Scripture because in no other instance had the compassion-giver been relationally harmed by the one receiving compassion. There are many reasons for blocking off one’s heart from compassion; being hurt by the ones needing compassion is one such

reason. People who are suffering can become self-absorbed and obsessed with relieving their suffering. Those showing them compassion can be robbed, lied to, deceived, wrongly accused, their motives questioned, physically threatened or injured, or otherwise drained dry by needy people who are responding in sinful ways. This can cause one to pull away in self-protection. The father didn't hold to his rights or hold back his affection, and even before clearly knowing his son's disposition or hearing a formal apology, he felt compassion. The father entered into the suffering of his son, knowing the shame he was feeling as he walked through the village and onto the farm, and he decided to bear that shame for him by making his steps to reunion fewer (Bailey, 1983:181). The father took the risk as family and staff looked on, he moved into his son's presence, he touched his son, and welcomed him home.

Secondly, while compassion draws one into selfless acts of service that involve presence, action, risk and personal loss, compassion in one heart does not mean compassion in all hearts that behold a need, and others whose hearts are not touched will have trouble understanding and accepting the compassionate person's behaviour. The older son had lived an exemplary life and correctly observed that the younger son had created his own suffering. His brother's disregard for order, structure, propriety, patience, and relationships, and his love of impulsiveness, idleness, cheap thrills, and immorality had woven the web in which he was now caught. He had made his own bed. The father's compassion in light of the past was unacceptable; surely a celebration should come with merit. The cream of society does not often understand the compassionate within society.

Thirdly, Jesus highlighted the truth that compassion doesn't focus on past sins or ancestral curses (John 9:1-7), or take pleasure that someone is getting something due him, but focuses on God being glorified through the remedy. In cases where sin has caused the suffering but the heart of the sufferer is broken and contrite, then forgiveness is to be extended (Matthew 9:1-8).

Fourthly, compassion, like the unconditional commitment *agape* love of the New Testament, comes from one's own resources within, and is not fuelled by the desirability of the one helped or by receiving anything in return. For centuries, compassion ministry was known by the old English word translated from the

Greek word *agape*, “charity.” Jesus said that there was little merit in having compassion on people like oneself: “For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so?” (2001: Matthew 5:46-47). Showing kindness to pleasant company when one can be repaid has no eternal merit. Compassion is at its best when directed at the unlovely.

“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbours, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just” (2001: Luke 14:12-13).

Compassion is also not based on the virtue or merit of the thing focused upon, as a girl might have compassion on a wet kitten, or an adult might have compassion on a cute orphan baby. In the Scripture, particularly in the case of disobedient Israel, the sufferer is often not only unlovely and without merit, but the creator of their own circumstances and deserving of every measure of their suffering. Of course, when they are still swirling in sinful behaviour and are unrepentant, it is not time to act out one’s compassion. But when sinners come to the end of themselves, and are broken and contrite, then compassion is fitting (Isaiah 57:15). Jesus had compassion and spent time with people who knew they were fallen, broken and sinful (Mark 2:17). In these settings, compassion breaks with the past, is visionary, and works hard to create a preferable future. In the parable of the compassionate father, compassion overcame the relationally broken past and created a revitalised bond, the basis for a changed and preferable future for the younger son (Hughes, 1998:142).

3.6.3 The compassionate king (Matthew 18:21-35)

The parable of the Unmerciful Servant, better known as the parable of the Compassionate King, in Matthew 18:21-35 underscores yet another rationale and motivation for why redeemed people should show compassion to others; they have greatly benefitted from God’s compassion and should therefore pay such

compassion forward to others (Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32). In the parable, a servant owed his master an extraordinary amount of money, equal to many millions of rands. Since he was unable to pay it, the king ordered that he, and his wife and children be sold in partial satisfaction of the debt. The servant prostrated himself before the king and pleaded for more time. Amazingly, the king didn't give more time, but rather, "the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt" (1995: Matthew 18:27).

Compassion can push one to financial extravagance, even toward people with which one has only a minimal relationship. This king so entered into the grief of the sufferer that he took the suffering to himself; he would pay himself back, essentially the meaning of forgiving the debt. In compassion, the king bore the servant's suffering and then bore it away. The father of the prodigal had given away money that the son had an eventual claim to as his inheritance. The issue in that parable wasn't the lost money since the son lost his own money; the issue was a lost relationship that was restored. In this parable, the issue isn't so much the relationship as the debt. At times, compassion radicalises people (Tuohy, 2010:138).

The story also underscores the connection between compassion and vicarious suffering, suffering in the place of another, something Christ did at Calvary (2 Corinthians 5:21). A helpless sufferer's problem becomes one's own problem. In the three parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Compassionate King, Jesus underscored the personal cost borne by those who show compassion. When Jesus healed people, cast out demons, fed thousands, or performed his miracles, it seems that he did so out of the inexhaustible resources of heaven. He didn't seem to suffer much personal loss. But Jesus' greatest act of compassion was his vicarious death for the sin-debt of mankind in which he suffered enormous personal loss, and the parable of the Compassionate King underscores the heavy toll that compassion sometimes brings.

3.6.4 Compassion a basis for judgement (Matthew 25:31-46)

Jesus also taught that compassion ministry will result in blessing since God and Christ identified themselves with the hungry, thirsty, foreigner, naked, sick, and those in prison; lack of compassion will meet with judgement. God judged

Sodom, in part, for failing to help the poor and needy (Ezekiel 16:48-50). “Sodom’s chief sin had been pride and self-exaltation. This stemmed from her abundant materialism (food), given to her from God, which had resulted in false security, apathy, a luxurious life of ease, and the corollary disdain and neglect of the poor and needy” (Alexander, 1986:817). Although the Greek words for compassion and mercy are not found in Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus’ teaching concerning the final judgement clearly informs the doctrine of compassion. When all ethnic groups of the earth are gathered before Jesus on his throne, he will separate the sheep on the right from the goats on the left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me’” (2001: Matthew 25:34-40).

The standard that Jesus applies for evaluating the conduct of the sheep is how they treated him when he was hungry, thirsty, a stranger, naked, sick, and in prison. The righteous are surprised because they cannot recall any interaction with Jesus personally, and he responds that whatever they did for those in need they did for him. Carson (1984:519) notes that “the great majority of scholars understand ‘the least of these brothers of mine’ (vv. 40, 45) to refer to all who are hungry, distressed, needy,” not just believers. As was true of Jahweh in the Old Testament, Jesus added an incentive to be compassionate by connecting himself personally with these disadvantaged groups such that if they were injured or ignored, he considered it an offence against himself, and if these disadvantaged groups were ministered to, he considered it a personal favour. “In effect, Jesus

said ‘I am the starving child, the homeless man, the outsider, the invalid, the inmate’” (Ryken, 2003:151).

In early church history, the acts of compassion mentioned in Matthew 25 became known as the “corporal works of mercy” because they alleviated the suffering of the body. Unfortunately, some Christian traditions hold these acts as having salvific significance (Delaney, 1911:1), but it must be noted that the sheep are divided before the judgement of deeds is brought into view. The sheep did not become sheep because of their compassion. They were sheep because they were chosen before the world began and, in time, were restored in their relationship with God. The righteous will be known for their compassion; it is an essential mark of being a Christian. Their response to the poor and needy was a sign of the genuineness of their faith toward God. A sensitive social conscience and a life poured out in compassionate deeds to the needy is the inevitable outcome of true faith (Ryken, 2003:153). A lack of compassion, and a lifelong pursuit of self-benefit, is perhaps a sign that one is a goat acting as goats do. Spurgeon, England’s prince of preachers, once said, “God’s intent in endowing any person with more substance than he needs is that he may have the pleasurable office, or rather the delightful privilege, of relieving want and woe” (Spurgeon, 1869). Commenting on Matthew 25, Scottish pastor M’Cheyne said:

“I fear there are some among you to whom Christ will not say, ‘Come thou blessed ... inherit the kingdom.’ Your haughty dwelling rises in the midst of thousands who have scarce a fire to warm themselves at, and have but little clothing to keep out the biting frost; and yet you never darkened their door. You heave a sigh, perhaps at a distance, but you do not visit them. Ah dear friend! I am concerned for the poor, but more for you. I know not what Christ will say to you in the Great Day. I fear there are many hearing me who may know not well that they are not Christians because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart; an old heart would rather part with its life-blood than its money” (Carter, 1847:283).

3.6.5 Summation of Jesus' ministry and teachings

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, exactly reflected the Father's compassion in his dealings with a fallen humanity. The discussion above pertains just to the gospel passages where compassion is specifically mentioned, which represents but a small percentage of the incidences in Jesus' ministry where he showed compassion. Jesus also showed compassion in interacting with the woman at the well (John 4:1-42), eating with those shunned by the religious leaders (Matthew 9:10-13), showing mercy to an adulterous woman (John 8:3-11), and keeping a bridegroom from being embarrassed (John 2:1-11), just to name a few. He demonstrated God's power, God's love, and God's closeness to the individual who was broken by suffering.

But the most common way that Jesus showed compassion was by addressing people's physical needs while speaking to their spiritual needs. His model of gospel ministry seamlessly threaded the three-fold chord of proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and teaching the ethical principles of the kingdom, and showing acts of compassion to the weak and suffering. In between these three components, and guiding Jesus' movement between them, was a life of constant prayer, seeking the Father's guidance and the Spirit's enabling power. Jesus felt compassion for those who needed truth, the gospel, and spiritual leadership and maintained the gospel as the focus of his ministry. But Jesus was interested not only in the spiritual and eternal well-being of people. As the Creator and Shepherd, he also felt compassion for those with diseases and infirmities, for those who had lost loved ones, for those who were demonised, and for those who were simply hungry. In every situation where He healed, He also spoke God's truth or taught a lesson, and in most of the settings where he taught, he also engaged in acts of compassion.

These acts of mercy were more than just kindness; they had theological significance and were actually signs of the Messiah. When the disciples of John the Baptist asked if Jesus was the Messiah, Jesus replied, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them" (2001: Luke 7:22-23). The miracles that Jesus did were, in

part, to authenticate that He was God's messenger with God's most important message. This is why the miracles were called "signs;" the signs read, "this is God's messenger – listen to him." It should be noted that Jesus didn't say to tell John the Baptist, "a man has the Spirit of God descend on him like a dove, walks on the water, tells the wind and the waves to be still, and appears with Satan on the pinnacle of the temple." No, because a sign of the Messiah was not merely miracles, but miracles that involved the Messiah's love and compassion for his people. Matthew records that Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah's compassionate ministry: "That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'He took our illnesses and bore our diseases'" (2001: Matthew 8:16-17, citing Isaiah 53:4). Jesus understood the Messianic significance of his mercy ministry from the outset. At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth and, as if to give a purpose statement to his ministry, read from a classic Messianic passage, Isaiah 61:1-2a. Jesus' miracles were not just awe-inspiring, but helpful. His miracles helped suffering people in practical ways – feeding them, restoring sight, enabling them to walk, forgiving, and healing. Imagine reading in the gospels of Jesus performing miracles in which He made balls of light to hover in the air, or made sticks dance in the desert, or gathered dirt into bird-like figures and made them fly away. Such miracles may have increased faith, but would have been tricks that helped no one practically. Corbett (2009:35) notes, "In essence, Jesus was saying to John, John you have not run the race in vain. I am the promised Messiah I am preaching the good news of the kingdom, *and* I am showing the good news of the kingdom, just as Isaiah said I would."

Jesus also empowered others and sent them out, not to demonstrate power, but to use power to demonstrate compassion. Following Jesus' example, Christians are to show compassion in dealing with others.

"Given this background, it is not surprising that the true test for God's servants is how they treat people whom nobody wants, nobody loves, and nobody touches because they just can't seem to get their act together. Who really cares about the homeless? Or about immigrants who can't

speak English? Or about the sick, lonely people languishing in a nursing home? Or about people dying from AIDS? Or about criminals locked up in prison? God does, and so should all His servants” (Ryken, 2003:157).

Of course, Jesus’ ministry also demonstrated that compassion doesn’t guarantee a good result in a life or in a community. Not everyone he helped was a believer, or became a disciple. While people often glorified God for what Jesus had done (Matthew 15:30-31), many took advantage of His compassion, followed him just to see miracles, followed him for food, and failed to even say a simple “thank you” (Matthew 12:38-39, Luke 17:17-18, John 6:26). In his own home town, powerful preaching, teaching with authority, and compassionate miracles did not bring about faith (Luke 4:16-29). Still, lack of results didn’t stop Jesus from serving. He even healed on His way to the Cross (Luke 22:51).

3.6.6 Compassion and the sacrifice of Christ

Compassion is a compulsive response of the inner self that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer who is unable to remedy his condition that one is constrained to take action on their behalf as if one was struggling to free himself. For compassion to occur, there must be someone struggling who is unable to remedy his pitiable condition. The struggle may be simply to get enough food to survive, or the struggle may be a profound spiritual lostness and separation from God that leads to a ravaged life and ultimately to eternal judgement. But there must also be a stronger and more capable one who comes alongside the sufferer, enters into their difficulty, becomes as they are, and then does something to free them. On a daily basis, this is what happens when a paternal orphan stays home from school to care for her mother who is also dying from complications due to AIDS. On a grand scale, this is essentially what happened at Calvary when Jesus pierced time and space to become pierce-able for the sake of perishing humanity.

Compassion, helping the helpless, is essentially what God did for humanity when it was without Christ, foreigners who were strangers to the revelation that Israel had received, having no hope, and without God in the world (Ephesians 2:12). “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person – though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die – but God shows his love for us in that while we were still

sinner, Christ died for us” (2001: Romans 5:6-8). Jesus even had compassion for people on his way to the cross and while on the cross. At the time of his arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, after Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, the high priest’s servant, Jesus continued to act with an others-orientation and healed the man (Walvoord, 1983:437). Even while hanging on the cross, Jesus called for the mercy and compassion of God in saying “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (2001: Luke 23:34), he had compassion on the thief dying next to him, recognizing his repentant heart, and assuring him that they would meet again that day in Paradise (Luke 23:43), and he had compassion on his mother that he was leaving behind, entrusting her to John’s care (John 19:26-27).

Christ’s death was the supreme demonstration of God’s supreme compassion, bearing our sins before he could bear them away (2 Corinthians 5:21). God’s love was revealed not just in a cold and distant written *logos*, but was incarnated in the living *logos*. God came near, entered into the realm of the sufferer, became a poor man from the townships (John 1:46), and transformed a philosophical concept of the love of God into a caring, weeping, and touching love that connected with people on the deepest level. Both Jesus’ ministry and His sacrifice on Calvary involved compassionate acts of physical sacrifice that also had spiritual implications. The Father didn’t merely declare us righteous alone in the courtroom of heaven. He sent the Son to live a poor, dusty life in the villages among unbelievers, and to die betrayed and alone for his broken image-bearers so that the Father could declare us righteous. The physical was combined with the spiritual both in Jesus’ ministry and in His substitutionary death.

“God’s ministry of compassion in and through Jesus Christ is a ministry that is accomplished first of all in the completed work of Jesus Christ. Here we think of the work of atonement, in which God in Christ went all the way into our lostness and separation from God in order to restore us to relationship with God. God in Christ, in Christ’s compassionate at-one-ment with us, entered into the depths of our sin and, in becoming as we are, enabled us to become as He is” (Purves, 1989:79).

3.7 Compassion commands in the New Testament

Jesus concluded his ministry on earth by sending out his disciples just as the Father had sent him (John 20:21). As disciples, they were to imitate their teacher (Matthew 10:24-25). He also commissioned them, saying that as they were going, they were to make new disciples, baptising them and teaching them everything that Christ had commanded (Matthew 28:18-20). The commands of Christ included his ethical teachings, and specifically his teachings on compassion. Jesus' disciples were challenged then to live with the values, priorities, and focus of the Master, and to tell others of the Master's life, his teachings, his death, burial and resurrection, and his ascension and return. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, empowered and enabled these otherwise feeble apostles, and through them continued the three-fold ministry of Christ, preaching the gospel, teaching his commands, and engaging in compassion ministry.

3.7.1 Compassion exemplified by early churches

A brief survey of the New Testament reveals a startling level of commitment to ministries of compassion after the ascension of Jesus Christ. In the days following Pentecost, the new church in Jerusalem "had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need" (2001: Acts 2:45). This sacrificial and communal pattern continued due to the unity and oneness of believers entering into each other's lives, which is an integral part of compassion, "and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need" (2001: Acts 4:32, 34). Intermingled with their teaching and preaching, the apostles healed the sick that they came across and had many brought to them for healing. Filled and energised by the Holy Spirit, their work mirrored the three-fold chord of gospel ministry of Jesus that combined the gospel message, the ethical commands of Christ, and compassion ministry (Acts 3:1-10, 5:12-16, 5:42-6:7, 8:4-7, 12-13). It is no surprise that compassion ministry should follow a great work of the Spirit of God such as took place at Pentecost. Looking back to the Old Testament and

forward into the centuries of church history, one can find that whenever there were times of repentance, revival, and renewal, compassion ministry followed.

In the early days of the Church, the body of believers in Jerusalem had established a regular and ongoing compassion programme, a food distribution scheme for widows. The Hellenistic believers complained that their widows were being overlooked, unlike the Hebrew widows. The apostles responded, "It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brothers, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we will appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (2001: Acts 6:2-4). Many believe these men to be the first deacons. Deacons should be engaged in compassion ministry as the core work of their office. The responsibility didn't fall to just any believer. Because compassion ministry is spiritually and emotionally draining, these servants had to have a good reputation, and be filled with the Spirit and wisdom.

Time went on, and compassion continued. Peter was used by God to raise Tabitha from the dead, a godly woman who was known for good works and charitable deeds (Acts 9:36). Barnabas was a wealthy man who made an indelible mark on the early Christian communities as a man of encouragement, first by supplying the needs of the poor out of his own assets (Acts 4:36-37), and later by taking up and transporting collections for famine-stricken Judeans (Acts 11:27-30). The transition of the gospel to the Gentiles began at the house of Cornelius, "a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God (2001: Acts 10:2).

As a devout Jew who converted to Christianity, Paul was deeply committed to helping the poor. When the church leaders in Jerusalem first met with Paul, they extended to him the right hand of fellowship to go to the Gentiles, "only they asked us to remember the poor, the very thing I was eager to do" (2001: Galatians 2:9-10). His ministry at Antioch involved helping them collect and transport an offering for the brothers in Judea who were soon to face a famine and the need and suffering that went with it (Acts 11:27-30). In about 56 AD, Paul, assisted by his protégé Titus, went to great lengths to network the churches of Greece and

Macedonia for relief purposes (2 Corinthians 8:1-24, Romans 15:26). His rationale of solidarity and fairness, what has been earlier noted as social justice, is interesting to note:

“For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what he does not have. For I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness. As it is written, “Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack” (2001: 2 Corinthians 8:12-15).

Paul’s efforts in spearheading this relief effort was noteworthy because, although God never required local churches to give tithes and other gifts to orphans, widows, and foreigners as he required of Israel under the Mosaic Law, the leaders of the Church did, in fact, press churches to give sacrificially to the poor in an early form of voluntary, cooperative, worldwide communalism.

“Christian giving, he insists, does not aim at an exchange of financial burdens but rather at an equal sharing of them and an equal supply of the necessities of life. The rich are not called upon to give so lavishly that they become poor and the poor become rich. That would simply prolong inequality. But those who enjoy a greater share of material benefits are called upon to make certain that those who have a smaller share through no fault of their own are not in want The equality the Israelites miraculously experienced in the wilderness was enforced; the equality Christians are themselves to create in the church and the world is voluntary” (Harris, 1976:370).

Such gifts were not just directed to other Christians, but to the public as a whole (Greer, 2009:39, Galatians 6:10). Even though giving to the poor in the early church was no longer under the mandated triennial tithe, it was still seen as a form of worship, and Paul urged believers to give cheerfully, bountifully, willingly, purposefully and proportionately, stressing that God would supply their needs (2 Corinthians 9:6-15). Paul’s collection was not for a corporate church, such as those that exist in modern times in which so much of the offerings of God’s people

are used for properties, buildings, media, and other accoutrements of the wealthy church. In fact, three of the five expenditures of early Church congregations involved helping those who were struggling – needy believers, needy unbelievers, and needy churches (Galatians 6:10, Acts 11:29). Many modern churches have lost an outward compassionate focus in caring for the needy in their communities. As one disgruntled Christian quipped, “If the fields are white for harvest, why do we spend all of our money on painting the barn?” (Davis, 2002:34). Spurgeon (1869:1), whose church’s sixty-three compassion ministries combined mercy ministries with the clear teaching of the gospel, urged his congregation:

“These [churches] are not built that you may sit here comfortably, and hear something that shall make you pass away your Sundays with pleasure. A church in London which does not exist to do good in the slums, and dens, and kennels of the city, is a church that has no reason to justify its longer existing. A church that does not exist to reclaim heathenism, to fight with evil, to destroy error, to put down falsehood, a church that does not exist to take the side of the poor, to denounce injustice and to hold up righteousness, is a church that has no right to be. Not for thyself, O church, dost thou exist, any more than Christ existed for himself. His glory was that he laid aside his glory, and the glory of the church is when she lays aside her respectability and her dignity, and counts it to be her glory to gather together the outcast, and her highest honour to seek amid the foulest mire the priceless jewels for which Jesus shed his blood.”

3.7.2 Compassion instructed in the epistles

The list of New Testament Scriptures exhorting believers to have compassion, sympathy, tender affection, and selfless love for people who are sick, poor, and in need is very long indeed. Early on, James stressed in his epistle to a largely Jewish Christian audience that compassion was a fundamental evidence of a living faith. “If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:15-17).

“This is the same issue that touched off the Reformation. Our faith is rooted in the mighty acts of God: the incarnation and humanization, reconciliation, resurrection, and the presence of Jesus with us in the person of the Holy Spirit. All of these are at the root of our faith. If such root issues are genuine ... then they will bear fruits in good works towards the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the outcasts, people with disabilities and sinners. In short, faith will bear fruits of goodness, generosity, compassion, and social and economic justice” (Adeyemo, 2006:1229).

The other epistles tend to follow the Pauline pattern of laying the doctrinal foundation upon which exhortations for the Christian walk are based. After a discussion of the sowing and reaping principle, Paul charged the Galatian believers, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith” (2001: Galatians 6:9-10). The spirit of compassion is found throughout the practical admonitions of Romans 12 as Paul writes, “contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep If your enemy is hungry, feed him, if he is thirsty, give him a drink” (2001: Romans 12:13, 15, 20).

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human” (Nouwen, 2008:4).

When Paul instructed Timothy about how things should be done in the local church, he became very specific about caring for widows (1 Timothy 5:3-16). Compassion can draw a large crowd of claimants, and no doubt the popularity of the early church was in part due to the social benefits that came with being considered a disciple. Paul’s specificity may indicate that compassion had been abused, and so he endeavoured to narrow the ranks. A true widow, he wrote, is

one who has no family left, exceeds age sixty, and has “a reputation for good works: if she has brought up children, has shown hospitality, has washed the feet of the saints, has cared for the afflicted, and has devoted herself to every good work (2001: 1 Timothy 5:10). Toward the conclusion of his letter to Timothy, Paul warned him about the love of money and stressed the basic subsistence level of life with which the believers should be happy. “Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content” (2001: 1 Timothy 6:7-8). Timothy was also to pass a challenge onto those in the church who had some degree of wealth.

“As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life” (2001: 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Titus was Paul’s companion in taking up the relief offering of Macedonia and Achaia. When we last hear of Titus in the New Testament, he has taken over the huge task of appointing leaders and teaching ethical behaviour in the churches on the island of Crete. He was to instruct the believers not to live for themselves because Christ had redeemed them “for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works” (2001: Titus 3:14). Paul used a radical word, reflective of the rebel political party of his day, the Zealots. To be zealous was to be enthusiastic, and deeply committed to something, to have a consistent and emotionally charged orientation of action to a moral ideal (TDNT, 1964:888). When Christians are not enthusiastic about doing good works, something needs fixing. Paul told the Ephesian believers that although Christians were not re-created *by* good works, they were re-created *for* good works (Ephesians 2:8-10). Apathy is, therefore, not an option. Compassion ministry should be a core value to those who want to live out their faith in a world that is watching.

Paul also instructed Titus that believers were to be “careful to devote themselves to good works. These things are excellent and profitable for people” (2001: Titus

3:8). Paul concluded his letter, “Our people must also learn to engage in good deeds to meet pressing needs, so that they will not be unfruitful (1995: Titus 3:14). Given that selfishness is the essence of sin, good deeds to meet pressing needs doesn’t come naturally; compassion ministry involves an outward focus, and is a discipline that must be learned over time.

The writer of Hebrews, in his closing practical admonitions, urges believers to show compassion to those in the familiar categories of strangers and prisoners (Hebrews 13:1-3), adding, “Do not neglect to do good, and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God” (2001: Hebrews 13:16). Peter urged believers struggling under persecution and suffering, “Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous” (1982: 1 Peter 3:8). Echoing the admonitions of James decades earlier, the Apostle John reasoned with the churches of his day, “But if anyone has the world’s goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God’s love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth” (2001: 1 John 3:17-18).

Compassion ministry is living out the heart of Jahweh who created and loves individual people who are his fallen and broken image-bearers. Compassion ministry is also living out the life of Christ who seamlessly combined the spoken truth with acts of kindness and selfless service to those without strength or power. Compassion ministry is not merely something that is organized, or a technical skill to be mastered. It is a basic life principle that every Christian, and Christian family, should practice. Many first-world Christians have not seen extreme poverty, so they have perhaps never developed a lifestyle of compassion, or the theology that undergirds it. A visit to the third world often changes that. One family returning from a short-term mission to Haiti hung up a sign in their home: “Living more simply so that others may simply live.”

3.8 The Biblical/theological basis for compassion ministry to orphans

3.8.1 Compassion ministry to orphans in the Old Testament

The Biblically-based call to show compassion to orphans is a combination of exhortations to guard the welfare of orphans, to care for the poor (because they

are virtually always poor, especially in the African context), and to minister to children. “Taking care of orphans ... is a duty that lies close to the heart of God” (Constable, 2003).

As noted above, there are three groups in the Bible that God continually draws attention to when it comes to showing compassion to those who are suffering: the widow, the orphan, and the foreigner (also translated as stranger, sojourner, or alien in differing versions). “What these people have in common is their desperate need of provision and protection. They are the weak, the under-privileged, and the needy among us. Scripture mentions the importance of caring for these individuals more than sixty times!” (Davis, 2003:27).

The first mention of the fatherless in the Bible is in Exodus 22, and it is highly significant. God had just given Moses the Ten Commandments, written with His own finger. Sinai was quaking with thunder, lightning, and smoke. Then God continued to dictate the rest of His law, and He began with the rights of persons as recorded in Exodus 21. God gave commands regarding criminal matters, saying that if a person broke a certain law, then the rulers must respond with a certain penalty. God gave commands regarding civil matters, saying that if a man negligently caused injury to person or property, then restitution must be made. But then God came to a topic that touched His heart and character so deeply that He said if someone committed this sin, He would personally get involved.

“You shall not afflict any widow or orphan. If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless” (1995: Exodus 22:22-24).

So compassionate and so sensitive was Jahweh to the rights and conditions of orphans that he said human justice would be insufficient, and he would mete out justice Himself, and in time repay men for their wrongdoing. Forty years passed by, and before he died, Moses gave a restatement of the law. He encouraged Israel to fear the Lord, to walk in His ways, to love and serve Him because He is an awesome God. Then, Moses summed up Jahweh’s character by highlighting His power over the powerful, and His love for the weak.

“For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing” (2001: Deuteronomy 10:17-18).

In using the term “justice” it does not seem likely that God meant criminal justice or even civil justice, since He would not literally appear in such situations, but rather social justice. God created a society under the Mosaic Law that recognized the dignity of each human being, promoted the consequent human rights, and set forth humanitarian laws of economic redistribution underscoring the solidarity and unity of the community. In God’s view, responding with compassion to the suffering of needy people is not optional or merely a nice gesture. He has actually accorded the human rights of life and basic care to orphans. “So to deprive the fatherless of justice doesn’t simply mean that you deny them a proper hearing in court. It means *not* welcoming them into your home, *not* helping them when they are cold and hungry, *not* listening when they cry out. In other words, the sure way to deprive the poor of the justice due them is to do nothing” (Davis, 2003:54).

God commanded Israel to set aside a tithe, a tenth part of their harvest, every third year as an offering to God. As has been noted above, Jahweh and Jesus so identified themselves with the poor and disadvantaged, that to bless the orphan was to bless them; likewise, to defraud or injure the orphan was to defraud and injure them. Israel’s triennial tithe to Jahweh was to be brought into the towns and given to the orphans, widows, and foreigners in the land. Giving to orphans was considered an act of both obedience and worship to God, and he connected Israel’s obedience with his blessing.

“At the end of every three years you shall bring out all the tithe of your produce in the same year and lay it up within your towns. And the Levite, because he has no portion or inheritance with you, and the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, who are within your towns, shall come and eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do” (2001: Deuteronomy 14:28-29).

Israel was an agrarian society, and therefore, God was instructing Israel to set aside a tenth of their entire year’s income every three years for the sake of the

needy. This did not go merely to a religious institution; the tithe to Jahweh was to be given to the underprivileged, including orphans, and was taken to the towns rather than to the sanctuary. Further, this was not a suggestion, and it was not based on the benevolence, kindness or charity of the people. It was a command. God's charity and compassion to the orphan was to be conveyed to these little ones through the hands of his obedient people (Davis, 2003:30). So serious was this triennial tithing obligation, that God required that his people make a vow that it had been done.

“When you have finished paying all the tithe of your produce in the third year, which is the year of tithing, giving it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, so that they may eat within your towns and be filled, then you shall say before the LORD your God, ‘I have removed the sacred portion out of my house, and moreover, I have given it to the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, according to all your commandment that you have commanded me. I have not transgressed any of your commandments, nor have I forgotten them” (2001: Deuteronomy 26:12-13).

In addition to the triennial tithe, there were regular and annual events at which orphans and other needy people were to be looked after. The families of Israel were to invite orphans, widows, and foreigners to join their families for the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Booths at harvest times.

“Then you shall keep the Feast of Weeks to the LORD your God And you shall rejoice before the LORD your God, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite who is within your towns, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are among you You shall keep the Feast of Booths seven days, when you have gathered in the produce from your threshing floor and your winepress. You shall rejoice in your feast, you and your son and your daughter, your male servant and your female servant, the Levite, the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow who are within your towns” (2001: Deuteronomy 16:10-14).

Each year during harvest the Hebrews were instructed not to gather everything that grew, but to leave amounts behind for the orphans, widows, and foreigners.

“You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, or take a widow’s garment in pledge, but you shall remember that you were a slave in Egypt and the Lord your God redeemed you from there; therefore I command you to do this. When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow” (2001: Deuteronomy 24:19-21).

Several observations may be made from this command. Unlike the triennial tithe, this act of compassion required those who were suffering to also work for themselves; the orphans could not sit idly by, but were rather to be out in the fields gathering food for themselves (Greer, 2009:64). God based this command to Israel on the pay-it-forward principle (Ephesians 4:32); that is, Israel was to remember that since God had helped them when they were suffering in Egypt, they were to remember the suffering and disadvantaged now that they were in possession of and dominion over their own land. The Lord also again connected obedience with his “*baruch*” or blessing, which carries with it the idea of being hunted down and pursued by the favour of the Lord (Davis, 2003:37). God also established this secondary reaping as a right of the orphans, not merely a privilege, and said that anyone preventing this right was perverting justice. Solomon challenged Israel to guard these fields where the orphans gathered food, or fields that they perhaps owned, because God was their defender: “Do not move an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless, for their Redeemer is strong; he will plead their cause against you” (2001: Proverbs 23:10-11). The phrase “plead their cause” in this verse and the use of “justice” in the Deuteronomy passages again indicates that God entrenched the human rights of orphans in Israel’s legal and economic systems. “Cursed be anyone who perverts

the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow” (2001: Deuteronomy 27:19). God did not merely advocate a general egalitarianism among the people, nor did he institute a secular tax for the welfare of the poor. Lastly, God viewed helping the poor as a form of worship. God so identified himself with the poor that bringing grain and wine to them was bringing grain and wine to him. “Both the giving of it by the donor and the reception of it by the Levite or underprivileged were spiritual acts, and the tithe itself was to be recognized as holy. The eating of it was expected to satisfy the receptor because of its abundance. None should be hungry” (Kalland, 1992:156).

Upon leaving the Book of Deuteronomy, the next mention of orphans is in the poetical Book of Job. In the third speech made by Eliphaz, one of Job’s three friends, he had to agree with his two friends that Job must have been a wicked man. Why God would strike Job so devastatingly in taking away his children, his possessions, and his health except for the reason that Job had done something utterly deplorable? He guessed at one of the worst sins he could think of. Job must have sent widows away and crushed the strength of orphans (Job 22:9). Job responded that the wicked do move property boundaries and drive away the donkey of the orphan, taking away their only income (Job 24:1-5), but in his defence, Job said that he had delivered the poor who cried out, and the orphans who had no helper (Job 29:12-13). In fact, he had shared his food with the orphans and taken in an orphan from his youth and cared for him as a son (Job 31:16-21).

In the Psalms, David praised the Lord who watches when there is trouble and grief, and is the helper of the fatherless and brings justice when they are oppressed (Psalm 10:14, 17-18, 146:9). At times, David was on the run from King Saul as the nation’s most wanted, and it seems that he received word that his parents were ashamed of him. His lament, repeated a thousand times by orphans who come to know God personally, was, “When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me” (1982: Psalm 27:10). Highlighting the oft-mentioned contrast of a great God dwelling with the lowly, David said, “A father of the fatherless and a defender of widows, is God in His holy habitation” (2001: Psalm 68:5). In Psalm 82:3, Asaph rebuked Israel’s unjust judges and said that

God sees, stands, and judges saying, “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to wicked men? Defend the poor and the orphans. Do justice for the afflicted and needy, and deliver them from the hand of wicked men.” Psalm 94:6 tells us that the wicked slay the widow and the foreigner, and murder the orphans, and say that the Lord does not see. One of Solomon’s thousands of proverbs urged his people not to move the property borders or to enter the fields of an orphan to take it by adverse possession (Proverbs 23:10). Government leaders were specifically charged with defending the rights of the poor. “Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (2001: Proverbs 31:8-9).

One of the greatest indications of how godly or ungodly a society has become is to look at how it treats its weakest members – the poor, widows, orphans, and foreigners. Compassion is a barometer to measure righteousness versus wickedness. As one searches to see what the Old Testament prophets say about the fatherless, one sees that as Israel became increasingly wicked in the years of the divided kingdom, its people took advantage of orphans and used corrupt judges to rob these children of their lands and possessions (Isaiah 1:23, 10:2, Jeremiah 5:28, 7:5-7, 22:3, Ezekiel 22:7). Isaiah’s firebrand sermon in chapter one described Israel’s deplorable spiritual condition as a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, and a brood of evildoers (Isaiah 1:4-6). Isaiah told them what they must do, and noted that true repentance would not involve religious ritual but acts of selfless service and compassion. They were to “learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow” (1982: Isaiah 1:17). Often, when one sees revival and renewed righteousness in the Scriptures and in church history, there is often a consequent outpouring of compassion for the weak and vulnerable (Newheiser, 2008:168). The God of love dwells comfortably with people of love (Isaiah 58:1-10, Acts 2:44-45). Unfortunately, even after Judah’s cauterising experience in the Babylonian captivity, they again began to slip in their commitment to social justice for orphans and widows and the post-exilic prophets brought this to their attention (Alden, 1986:704; Malachi 3:5).

From these numerous Old Testament passages, one can observe that there is an ongoing compassion in the heart of Jahweh that favours orphans as a group and as part of a larger group of people whose circumstances have given them no other choice but to be helpless, lowly, and humble. These Scriptures also resoundingly conclude that injuring and failing to care for orphans is one of the worst sins in the world, keeping company with witchcraft and adultery.

3.8.2 Compassion ministry to orphans in the New Testament

The New Testament does not contain a great deal of information about compassion ministry to orphans, but there are several passages that must be noted. The first verse that likely comes to mind for Christians when they think of orphans is James 1:27. “Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” (2001: James 1:27). James wrote to scattered Jewish believers in the early years of the Church encouraging them to have an overcoming faith, a faith that, despite trials, manifested itself in good works. Toward the end of chapter one, James exhorted his readers to be obedient to the Word, the perfect law of liberty, and as if to underscore his point by giving the best ethical example he could of obeying the Word, James specified that they should visit orphans and widows in their distress.

When God gazes on a believer helping an orphan, it is “pure,” meaning religiously and morally clean, as in the Old Testament sense of the word (TDNT, 1979:414). Further, it is “undefiled” meaning spotless, free from pollution, and without a negative side (TDNT, 1979:647). Many “voluntourists” love to come to South Africa to visit orphan care centres or orphanages, but have they really “visited” in the biblical sense? The Greek word translated “visit” means much more than simply showing up, saying hello, and holding a child to have one’s picture taken with them. Vine’s (1996:662) notes that visiting means to look after, to care for, to exercise oversight, to visit with the intent of helping, even to seek out someone to care for them. It carries with it a sense of responsibility for the person visited over a longer period of time, such as when God “visited” the nation of Israel by sending the Messiah (Luke 1:68, 7:16).

Why would James pick such a topic as indicative of true religion? Firstly, as a Jewish man, James knew the extensive commands of the Mosaic Law regarding care for widows, orphans and foreigners, the weakest in society who were precious to God. He also knew of the prophets who pronounced doom on Israel and Judah because they had neglected, abused, and failed to do justice to these groups. James' admonition was an echo of the Jewish faith that God wanted preserved to the Church; he knew that ongoing compassion ministry was to be a part of the culture and tradition of any people of God.

Secondly, James gave this admonition because fallen humans are more prone to worship God through external rituals that edify themselves than through radical sacrifices without any possible gain to themselves. The Jewish religious leaders of his day were caught up in ceremonial purity and staying away from the dirty dregs of society. For this reason, Jesus said that he desired compassion rather than sacrifices (Matthew 9:13), and equated ministry to "the least of these" as ministry to him. It feels better to have a religion that suits one's own superior culture, but Jesus didn't save humanity from his culture in heaven (Elmer, 2006:17). He left his comfort zone in an extraordinary way and became a poor carpenter from the townships of Israel. When James wrote about proving faith, he challenged believers to likewise get out of their comfort zone, to live sacrificially, and to visit orphans in a meaningful way. James wrote that the way believers relate to orphans and widows as a test of the reality of their faith. Serving an orphan is serving God. Serving an orphan is serving Christ.

Interestingly, there is no record of Jesus having interaction with an orphan in the New Testament. Jesus mentioned the pitiable state of orphans only once by promising the disciples that when He left, He would send a Comforter and not leave them as orphans (John 14:18). Jesus created a beautiful picture. The perfect remedy for the sad state of an orphan is to have someone come alongside as a comforter, advocate, and helper (Tenney, 1981:147). Jesus and the apostles echoed the Old Testament ethical principle of helping those who were weak, poor, and helpless. Rarely is an orphan anything but poor, but Jesus used widows as His primary illustration of reaching out to the disadvantaged (Mark 12:40-43, Luke 18:3-5). Jesus was very clear that the most valuable ministry to others is ministry

that is done with little or no personal benefit, where no one notices, and no one can pay back for the good deed done (Luke 14:12-13).

We know Jesus' views about children. Since children were thought of as insignificant in ancient Jewish culture, the disciples found the gathering children with promoting parents to be a distraction and tried to push them away. All of the Synoptics record that Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not forbid them, for of such is the kingdom of God." (1982: Mark 10:13-16). Why did the kingdom of heaven belong to children? "It is not age *per se* that is in view but childlike qualities such as trust, openness, and the absence of holier-than-thou attitudes" (Leifeld, 1984:1002). Right or wrong, humans naturally tend to believe those who are more powerful than they are. Jesus did miracles in front of adults to convince them of His power and move them to believe. Children tend to believe what they are told because virtually everyone is more powerful than they are; they trust in the word of an adult, for better or for worse (Wessel, 1984:713). In light of the Father's and the Son's love for the weak, powerless, and disadvantaged, children are a perfect fit for their affection.

It is significant to note that, although neither compassion nor mercy is mentioned in Jesus' interactions with these children, the elements of compassion, such as need, presence, interaction, touch, and service, are there. Jesus took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them (Wessel, 1984:714).

3.9 Compassion ministry principles summarised

The biblical basis for the ethics of compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children has herein been established from a study of compassion and orphans in the Scriptures. Numerous principles for biblical compassion ministry may be culled from the study and are now summarised below.

3.9.1 Compassion defined

Compassion is a compulsive response of the inner self that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer who is unable to remedy his condition that one is constrained to take action on their behalf as if he was struggling to free himself.

3.9.2 Compassion at its source

Theology gained from the Scriptures provides the ethical basis for compassion ministry to the suffering and disadvantaged, such as orphans:

- Compassion originates in the character of God and the God-Man, Jesus Christ. Therefore, to be godly or Christlike involves being compassionate.
- God's compassion is directed at those who are suffering and cannot remedy their own condition, even if the condition was of their own doing.
- Compassion is a moral attribute also possessed by humankind, which was made in the image of God. It is an intuitive good.
- God commands his people to be compassionate to suffering and disadvantaged people, such as widows, orphans, foreigners and the poor.
- God identified himself with the suffering and disadvantaged, such that a tithe to God was payable to them. Blessing them would bless God who would in turn bless the compassionate one; injuring them would injure God who would in turn judge the uncompassionate one.

3.9.3 Compassion ministry principles from the life of Christ

Jesus' ministry and teachings provide numerous principles that are applicable to compassion ministry today and to ministry to orphans in particular. Jesus showed us that:

- Compassion is a component of gospel ministry, the larger three-fold ministry model of Jesus that involves preaching the gospel, teaching ethical commands, and engaging in acts of compassion, all guided by prayer.
- Compassion builds bridges that bring strangers near to hear God's truth.
- Compassion ministers to the body and gives the sufferer a small foretaste of the regeneration and restoration of the creation.
- Compassion is incarnational; it requires presence, encountering and interacting with the suffering; to avoid the suffering is to escape compassion.
- Compassion was an action word; Jesus never felt compassion and then walked away.
- Compassion often involves meaningful physical touch; Jesus could have

merely spoken a miracle, but he most often chose to make physical contact.

- Compassion involves social, physical, and emotional risk. It breaks through barriers of religious and social convention, and can lead one to behaviour that is unacceptable to others.
- Compassion can be directed at emotional need, rather than just physical or spiritual need.
- Compassion ministry is work done one by one; compassion is personal and relational, and therefore workers need to recruit others to help.
- One must, at times, deal with the spiritual issues of caregivers, the community, and those in compassion ministry before undertaking a correct solution to suffering.
- Caregivers of the suffering must be involved in the transformation process.
- Those in compassion ministry must remain humble servants despite the popularity of having a successful compassion ministry.
- Compassion, seeing and remedying the suffering of others, is emotionally and physically fatiguing. Withdrawing for seasons of refreshment and prayer is essential.
- Compassion is about doing the Father's will, not responding to needs. The needs will always tower above our ability to meet them.
- Compassion comes from a deeply spiritual walk that is in submission to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It begins in the heart of God and flows through a heart and life that walks intimately with Him.
- Compassion discerns that people have an overall need for shepherding and holistic gospel ministry.
- Those in compassion ministry must expand their endurance and serve in God's strength even above human abilities.
- Compassion can be felt for an extreme need like a starving child, or a even for mild need such as hungry people who would survive if left alone.
- Compassion is visionary and cannot be demonstrated only when one can meet the needs with what is at hand.
- Compassion often follows a process of:

- Seeing or encountering
 - Feeling compassion
 - Action that involves risk
 - Close presence and touch
 - Service
 - Longer-term care
 - Personal cost
 - Involvement of others
- Compassion is particularly virtuous when the compassion-giver has been harmed by the one receiving compassion.
 - Compassion doesn't focus on past sins or ancestral curses, but focuses on God being glorified through the remedy. In cases where sin has caused the suffering but the heart of the sufferer is broken and contrite, then forgiveness is to be extended.
 - Compassion in one heart does not mean compassion in all hearts that behold a need, and others whose hearts are not touched will have trouble understanding and accepting the compassionate person's behaviour
 - Compassion, like the unconditional commitment *agape* love of the New Testament, comes from one's own resources within, and is not fuelled by the desirability of the one helped, or by receiving anything in return.
 - Compassion can move one to financial extravagance, even toward people with whom one has a minimal relationship.
 - Compassion is vicarious ministry. It is bearing someone else's pain before you can bear it away.
 - Compassion ministry doesn't guarantee a good result such as salvation, life-change or even thankfulness in a life or a community
 - Compassion ministry will result in blessing at the final judgement since God and Christ identified themselves with the hungry, thirsty, foreigner, naked, sick, and those in prison; lack of compassion will meet with judgement.
 - Compassion is a hallmark those who are truly God's people. The righteous, the sheep at God's right hand, will be known and rewarded for their compassion.

- Compassion, in its ultimate form, may require the laying down of one's life for the sufferer, as evidenced in Christ's vicarious death for the sins of mankind.

3.9.4 Compassion ministry principles from the early church

The ministry and teachings of the early Church provide numerous principles that are applicable to compassion ministry today and to ministry to orphans in particular. The early Church demonstrated that:

- Compassion may go so far as causing believers to voluntarily redistribute their wealth, selling properties and possessions to distribute the proceeds to those who have needs.
- Compassion involves the three-fold cord of gospel ministry: preaching the gospel, teaching ethical commands, and engaging in acts of compassion.
- Compassion may involve believers in specific, planned and recurrent forms of compassion ministry such as food distribution for the needy.
- Deacons should be engaged in compassion ministry as the core work of their office, and due to the demands of being leaders in this field, must be men/women full of wisdom, full of the Holy Spirit, and of good reputation.
- Compassion moves churches to take up collections for the relief of suffering churches, suffering believers, and suffering unbelievers.
- Compassion ministry and social justice should be a significant component of the ministry of individual believers and local churches.
- Compassion blended with the gospel message normally allows a church to make a significant impact on their community; gospel ministry is both propositional and incarnational.
- Compassion ministry requires a periodic reminder to wealthy believers to live more simply, keep their hearts open, and be ready to share.

3.9.5 Compassion principles regarding orphans

The testimony of both the Old and New Testaments gives us principles that are applicable to compassion ministry to orphans today.

- God loves the orphan, who is almost always weak, defenceless, poor, and disadvantaged, and he considers himself both their defender and avenger.

- When God created an ideal society on earth, He specified a system of social justice for orphans:
 - Orphans should be the benefactors of regular acts of specified compassion that amounted to roughly 3.33% of the society's income each year, provided in kind.
 - Orphans should be included in community events and be invited to join in with families during times of holiday feasting and celebration.
 - Orphans are to work to provide for themselves but are to be facilitated by a society that makes their work easier.
 - Orphans are to have their possessions and rights protected from abuse or neglect by God's people and their leaders.
- God identified himself with orphans so closely, that to help or harm them was to help or harm God.
- God specified that the way people treated orphans would be a basis for judgement.
- Compassion ministry to orphans and other needy people is a good barometer for the righteousness or wickedness of a nation.
- Both Old and New Testaments state that righteousness and true religion involve meaningfully visiting and caring for orphans; in both Testaments, those who were faithful in their religious formalism often showed little compassion for the weak and disadvantaged.

Developing a theology of compassion ministry generally, and of compassion ministry to orphans in particular, is the proper place to begin when addressing the needs of South Africa's more than four million orphans and vulnerable children. But as a foundation, it is only the beginning. Much more wisdom in how to practically envision, develop, and maintain compassion ministries that do not degrade or harm the recipients, and that are culturally sensitive, must be added to, and harmonised with, these biblical principles, and these concepts will be addressed in Chapters 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 4

Other ethical considerations for compassion ministry in the African context

4.1 When cultures converge

In the past two decades, there has been an enormous resurgence in Western evangelical Christianity of “mercy ministries” or “compassion ministries” that focus on meeting the physical and practical needs of poor and suffering individuals, families, churches, and communities. The movement extends from local and cross-cultural needs in America and Europe and its former colonies to needs in foreign third-world settings (Livermore, 2006:13). Although uncoordinated, the movement seems to transcend traditional dividing lines within evangelicalism, and can be found within Charismatic, Reformed, mainstream Evangelical, and even fundamentalist circles. Thousands of evangelical churches in America have developed church-run mercy ministries that provide counselling and emergency assistance for people in the community meeting needs with groceries, finances, and homes of safety, that engage in poverty alleviation programmes such as soup kitchens, skills training, home improvement projects, and homeless shelters, and that have teams on stand-by to help with local and regional emergencies such as tornadoes, flooding, and hurricanes, and even international emergencies such as assisting with the aftermaths of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti and the 2011 tsunami in Japan. In addition to churches, thousands of Christian non-profit organizations have been created specifically to channel personnel, funds, and supplies to foreign communities for relief, rehabilitation, and development purposes. Some are huge and well-funded, such as World Vision, which collected \$1.22 billion in 2009 and operated in 97 countries (Charity-WV, 2011:1), and Compassion International, which collected \$506 million in 2009 and operated in 26 countries (Charity-CI, 2011:1), but most compassion ministries are small.

Individual Western Christians from America and Europe have been increasingly involved in short-term mission trips over the past two decades. A short-term mission is what Livermore (2006:183) describes as lasting less than two years, and typically ten days to two weeks. The writer has witnessed some sort of short-term mission team on every flight he has been on to and from South Africa for the

past five years. Some teams are sponsored by churches, some by Christian charitable organisations, and some by individual Christians who have a contact in the foreign country. Some groups number twenty to thirty people, and others less than ten. Some workers travel alone. Some 29% of American teenagers participate in cross-cultural service projects before finishing high school (Smith, 2005:69). Livermore (2006:43) comments that \$2.25 billion is spent each year to send 4-5 million North American Christians on short-term mission trips. Many are coming to South Africa. Because they cannot speak the language in many cases, these mission groups typically work to help meet the practical and physical needs of African churches and communities through relief, rehabilitation, and development projects and by advocating social justice. Unfortunately, some come primarily for the adventure, causing local workers to be increasingly skeptical of their benefit to OVC (Richter, 2010:4). The reasons for this resurgence in compassion ministry is beyond the scope of this chapter, but the phenomenon has created an enormous forward motion for Western Christians and churches to touch the lives of orphans and vulnerable children suffering due to the AIDS pandemic. What is needed are knowledgeable people on the ground in the South African context of ministry who can inform and prepare these compassionate volunteers for what they will encounter when they enter the townships, informal settlements, and villages.

True, biblical compassion is gut-wrenching, life-touching, and world changing. It has been noted that compassion is a powerful emotion and can move one to radical sacrifice and extravagance. Its ethical energy fixes one's focus straight ahead, and drives a person to find a remedy for the sufferer. Often there is no consideration of self, or how to best alleviate the suffering, or of the implications of providing a remedy to the sufferer and his or her community. But like water, compassion needs boundaries and limitations to be helpful rather than harmful. Compassion's energy is like the joyful rush of water that carries one over the rocks of difficulty in the often chaotic stream of practical ministry, but wisdom, discernment, and discretion gained from Scripture and from Christians working in the field help to create ethical riverbanks so that compassion's energy is not wasted or channelled in a way that harms individuals or the communities in which they are found.

There is an enormous amount of compassion energy in the world today generally, and specifically a desire to reach and help orphans and vulnerable children in the current AIDS crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. Such energies often go unguided and thereby cause harm to the children and their care-takers, meddle unnecessarily in their lives, or direct resources in areas where they are not needed (Livermore, 2006:61). The purpose of this chapter is to investigate other Christian ethical principles regarding cultural sensitivity, adaptive ministry, and contextually sensible models when engaging in compassion ministry to orphans in the African context.

The overwhelming majority of AIDS orphans within South Africa are to be found in the poorer third-world African communities, both urban and rural (Shisana, 2008:97). By contrast, a substantial number of volunteer workers and charitable contributions helping to provide a support network for South Africa's orphans are coming from first-world communities here in South Africa, as well as those in Europe and the United States.

When Christians, churches, and Christian organisations reach into South Africa's African communities, motivated and energised by well-intentioned compassion, they bring together two vastly different cultures and worldviews. If these volunteers and organisations fail to understand certain key ethical principles regarding servanthood, incarnational ministry, biblical contextualisation, worldviews, cultural differences, and poverty, or fail to act with discretion and wisdom based on these principles, they can cause hurt or conflicts while trying to help, or at the very least make contributions that are irrelevant (Corbett, 2009:28). In addition to one's own personal and cultural differences, "people often attribute moral force to their priorities for personal behaviour and judge those who differ from them as flawed, rebellious, or immoral" (Lingenfelter, 2003:14). This can be the case particularly with Western Christians who often feel that they are descending from a progressive, developed, orderly, clean, and therefore superior, society that has developed from Judeo-Christian principles into a pagan and backward world (Hiebert, 1985:97).

4.2 The ethics of adaptive ministry

One of the chief ethical imperatives for first-world Christians engaging in compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in the African context is to adapt one's person and one's message to the culture in which the children live. The former is often referred to as "incarnational ministry" and the latter as "contextualisation." Both require prior and progressive learning through reading, through listening in conversations, and most importantly through guided experiences in the culture (Jayakaran, 1999:33).

4.2.1 The prototype of incarnational ministry

From a missiological viewpoint, Christians have numerous examples in the New Testament of what is known as incarnational ministry, in which a truth-bearer entered into a community and changed his form to adapt to the culture and customs of the community he was trying to reach with the gospel, transformational truth, and acts of compassion (Adeyemo, 2006:1468). The term "incarnational ministry," of course, is derived from the incarnation of Christ, who being in God-form, voluntarily laid aside his prerogative of being equal in manifestation and situation with the Father, took the form of a servant, and became fully human, yet without sinning or compromising his full divinity (John 1:14, Philippians 2:6-8, Colossians 1:19, 2:9). Incarnational ministry indicates a person's identification with a cherished group by entering into their world and suffering with them before helping them (Kesler, 1988:95). God could have devised a method of saving mankind from a safe distance, but God came near; He was conceived as a human baby in a virgin's womb (Luke 1:34-35), born in a stable (Luke 2:7), reared in a poor township that was distained by respectable people (John 1:46), and lived in relative poverty during his itinerant ministry (Luke 9:58; Lingenfelter, 2003:16). Jesus was not even as aloof as John the Baptist who came out of years in the wilderness and had odd dress and an odd diet. Jesus was among the people, mixing with them, eating and drinking with them (Luke 5:30, 7:34, 15:2), and, as is noted above, his acts of compassion were almost always personal, touching individuals one by one. The writer of Hebrews said that it was fitting for Jesus to become human, to partake of flesh and blood, to be made like his brothers in every respect, and to suffer as a human so that he might become a faithful and

sympathetic high priest (Hebrews 2:1-18). Part of the incarnation involved Jesus limiting the use of his heavenly knowledge and starting over again as a babe (Luke 2:52, Matthew 24:36). Jesus was not born with a knowledge of language or culture; when he entered his host culture, he became a learner of words, walking, games, perhaps carpentry, and definitely the Scriptures (Luke 2:46, Lingenfelter, 2003:16). “Isn't it interesting that for 30 years [Jesus] doesn't speak out; doesn't reveal himself; he remains quiet, and only after 30 years of listening and learning the culture does he begin to speak” (Muriu, 2007:1).

Jesus was, therefore, the classic model of entering into, learning, and adapting to one's host culture for the sake of the gospel message and gospel ministry. Being Christlike, therefore, involves entering, mixing with, and morphing into one's host culture. Jesus left his comfort zone in the heavenlies and bore the heat, hunger, thirst, culture, traditions, language, sanitation, foods, and clothing styles of first century Judaism (Hexham, 2004:28). Similarly, “we cannot stand aloof from those to whom we speak the gospel, or ignore their situation, their context” (Stott, 1992:349).

“Given the incarnational principle ... I'm convinced that part of our ministry of comfort is simply being there in the darkest hours.... Part of God's plan is that his love is communicated by people. It's not always a vision or a still, small voice. Often it's a pastor or friend who is incarnating God's love. God is not absent. He has simply chosen to extend his love through us” (Kesler, 1988:105).

4.2.2 Purity in incarnational ministry

Jesus became like us so that he might reveal the Father to us, so that he could identify with us, and so that he could suffer with us and for us (Ferguson, 1988:334). Yet, in all of his identification, Jesus was still without sin. He was in the world, but not of it. He embraced the culture, but did not succumb to it. Cultural adaptation is never a license to compromise personal purity. John Stott (1992:244) comments:

“On the one hand, [Jesus] came to us in our world, and assumed the full reality of our humanness.... He fraternised with the common people and

they flocked around him eagerly.... He identified himself with our sorrows, our sins and our death. On the other hand, in mixing freely with people like us, he never sacrificed, or even for one moment compromised his own unique identity. His was the perfection of 'holy worldliness.' And now he sends us out into the world as he was sent into the world (John 17:18; 20:21). We have to penetrate other people's worlds, as he penetrated ours – the world of their thinking (as we struggle to understand their misunderstandings of the gospel), the world of their feeling (as we try to empathise with their pain), and the world of their living (as we sense the humiliation of their social situation)."

Jesus beheld a great deal of sin and sinners, but was aware that he was among fallen and broken products of his own creation. He practised "accepting without approving" (Warren, 1995:216), in that he gave value to a person as created in the image of God who was full of potential for future righteousness and service. Jesus was kind while being exploratory with the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-30), and he agreed to attend the feast of Zacchaeus before making sure that the man was fully repentant (Luke 19:1-10). To be insulated but not isolated from the world system requires spiritual maturity and a close relational walk with God.

4.2.3 The Apostle Paul's commitment to incarnational ministry

Because Christ laid aside his rights and took on the form of a servant in order to reach a foreign or culturally different target audience, it seems that any attempt at Christlike behaviour in fulfilling a similar mission will involve incarnational adaptation. The Apostle Paul seemed to follow this cue of Christlikeness when adapting to his target audiences. He even went so far as to circumcise Timothy as a young adult because he and Timothy, who had been an uncircumcised youth from a Greek household, would be ministering at times among Jews who would refuse Timothy's ministry on those grounds (Acts 16:3). On another occasion, Paul shaved his head and took a vow to observe the Mosaic Law in front of accusatory Jews (Acts 21:23-24). To the Corinthian church, Paul defended his rights as an apostle and church-planter, but said that he had often surrendered

those rights and became a servant to his target audience so that mere cultural differences would not offend people or stand in the way of gospel ministry.

“For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings” (Bible, 2001:1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

Paul made clear that he had studied and would endeavour to identify with elements within his host culture, but not with the sinful elements that would cause him to violate God’s moral law or the commands of Christ. He was not lowering his standards, but instead laying aside his personal privileges. It was not hypocrisy, but sympathy. Paul varied his approach to gospel ministry in each place, trying to understand those who needed Christ and entering into their experiences.

4.2.4 The process of incarnational ministry

The Apostle Paul indicated that on an ongoing and repeated basis, he enslaved himself to his host people, and became like them for the sake of the gospel. If one slows down the process of personal adaptation, as those in mission work often do to prepare themselves for changes they will face, one can note an eight-step process that is corroborated by Scripture:

- Making a loving commitment to cherish and serve a certain people group in this way (John 3:16, Romans 5:8),
- Adopting a spirit of humility to come down and choosing to serve and meekly learn from that cherished group (Philippians 2:3-5, Romans 12:16),
- Relocating and entering into the culture (Philippians 2:6-8), and learning the language

- Beginning low-level ministry, observing, listening and respectfully dialoguing within the host culture so as to note things such as behavioural and socialisation patterns, communication styles, dress, hygiene, taboos, rituals, beliefs and values (Acts 17:11, 16, 21-23),
- Growing in a basic holistic understanding of and respect for the host culture, knowing the “why” underneath the “what,” and gaining an emerging ability to respond to new problems using learned information (Acts 19:8-10),
- Discerning toxic versus benign elements within the culture (Acts 14:11-18),
- Endeavouring to personally mimic the benign elements of the culture (1 Corinthians 9:19-23), and
- Communicating the gospel or the ethical teachings of Scripture (Acts 17:17-31).

This process of personal adaptation may take a long period of time if one’s own culture and language is vastly different than the host culture, but even when there appears to be similarities between the Christian and the host culture, there are several key principles that must be kept in mind. According to Holritz (2010:37), one must:

- Recognize that one’s cultural background gives him or her subconscious values that may have absolutely nothing to do with Biblical imperatives and principles.
- Recognize that individuals in one’s target culture may also have conscious and subconscious values that have absolutely nothing to do with Biblical imperatives and principles.
- Recognize that globalization, while making cultures look more similar outwardly, seldom changes the worldview and core values of a culture that govern their daily routines.
- Recognize that Scriptural imperatives and principles apply to all cultures, but that even within Scripture, there may be culturally specific imperatives and principles that apply only to specific peoples at specific times (e.g., Exodus 34:26, I Corinthians 11:2-6).

Even when a volunteer learns the host language, Lingenfelter (2003:28) observes that this opens up only ten percent of what can be learned about the culture. Hall (1973:38-59) writes that language is only one of ten primary message systems found in every culture; the other nine are what he calls the silent language of culture, and are as follows:

- Temporality (attitude toward time, routine, and schedule)
- Territoriality (attitude toward space and property)
- Exploitation (methods of control, and attitude toward the use and sharing of resources)
- Association (attitude toward family, kin, and community)
- Subsistence (attitude toward work and division of labour)
- Bisexuality (differing modes of speech, dress and conduct)
- Learning (by observation, modelling, or instruction)
- Play (humour and games)
- Defence (health procedures, social conflicts, and beliefs)

Each message system has rules about communication, relationships, and behaviours that are learned over time, a process that can prove difficult for a child learning for the first time, not to mention a foreign adult with existing programming that must be supplanted. Lederleitner (2010:34) comments:

“In order to work together well we need to listen to one another. We need to not only deeply grasp how our partners feel and what they believe but also take the additional step to understand why such feelings and beliefs are wholly logical within a given context. If we can see the logic of a person’s worldview, if we can value it as being wholly reasonable given a unique cultural heritage and history, from that place of mutual respect and dignity we can find new and creative ways to overcome obstacles and work together.”

What is unfortunate is that few of those who engage in compassion ministry in South Africa actually move into the African cultural context. Short-term volunteers enter and then leave the compassion ministry context so quickly that they have little time to modify their thought processes. There are many first-world, short-

term volunteers from places such as Johannesburg, Berlin, and Atlanta, who come without any adaptation into African towns and villages to help the orphans for a brief while, to make their observations, take their pictures, play a few games, do a few crafts, perhaps share the gospel in a Western style, and feel that they have really experienced what it is like to be poor in Africa, and to “visit” the orphans (James 1:27). Some drive away with tears, astonished at what they have seen and experienced, overwhelmed with the enormity of the need, awestruck with how little they knew of the conditions of these little ones, and feeling contempt for their own comfortable world back home. Their experiences, no doubt, made an impact on them, but their “visit” was more like the appearance of the angel Gabriel (Luke 1:28-38) than it was imitative of the incarnation of Christ.

These short-term volunteers often begin compassion ministry in the third step of the process of personal adaptation. With no prior reading, orientation sessions, or even briefings, many start interacting with the children and the community as soon as they enter the culture. They have enough love and humility to come, but have no time for observation, conversation, or cultural assimilation. If they are working for a day, a week, or even a month, they have little opportunity to learn an African language, except for a few greetings, and have only a passing brush with the culture. Their ability, and in some cases their desire, to adapt themselves or their message is minimal. As one African pastor commented:

“When I come to America, I depend on the goodwill of Christians in this country to open their doors, because I can't afford to stay in hotels. But when Americans come to Kenya, they prefer to stay in the hotels. We are a very hospitable people. But we've found that Americans want their space. They want to be picked up from a hotel in the morning and be dropped back in the evening. And they can afford to pay for their space. They can afford to eat what they want. They can, in a sense, travel with a little bubble of America around them” (Muriu, 2007:1).

Therefore, short-term missionaries focus on meeting physical needs in their compassion ministry, and are excited if they have an opportunity to share God's truth once or twice. Such volunteers can create a world of problems for organisations involved in ongoing service to the community in that, when they are

overwhelmed by the perceived abuse, neglect, injustice, apathy, and “foreignness” of the culture, and have no information with which to process these problems, they often melt down, or even worse, blow up and go on a crusade. It is, therefore, highly important that organisations involved in ongoing compassion ministry provide instruction and counsel to their short-term volunteers in an effort to prepare them for what they might encounter.

The writer remembers an adult volunteer who conversed with a twelve-year-old girl on the street only to discover blood running down her leg. Without consulting local workers with experience, they rushed to the nearest hospital only to stand for hours in the sun in a queue of hundreds of people. Exasperated, the volunteer went to the front of the line and got into an argument with hospital staff who shrugged off the possibility of rape, replying that little girls tell stories so they can get their way. The volunteer was reduced to internal rage and tears. Much of this can be prevented with proper briefing before a volunteer’s ministry commences, and by setting up proper procedures to handle problems that may arise.

Even among long-term first-world volunteers, there are few involved in orphan care ministry who actually live in the townships and villages where they work. Still, many who live nearby work hard in the villages and townships during the long days, selflessly serving and doing their part to meet the overwhelming needs. Although they do not sleep in the village, their ministry is still strongly incarnational. For a resident of the first-world to adapt to village life is not easy, and it takes time. This was the reason for the “mission station” in the by-gone era of missions. However, the rewards of credibility, relationships, and experiential knowledge and understanding one gains by living among one’s cherished people are well worth the toil (Servants, 2009:1).

4.2.5 The benefits of incarnational ministry

There are several benefits to incarnational ministry. Firstly, morphing into a host culture enables you to identify with the struggles, boredom, stresses, frustrations, and other physical, mental, and emotional difficulties of the cherished people group. “The recipients of our witnessing must have a sense that we identify with them” (Adeyemo, 2006:1414). When one is near the heart of the culture, one

gains an enormous amount of experiential knowledge and gets to know both the perceived needs and the actual needs of the community.

Secondly, the longer the Christian volunteer stays and adapts, the more credibility and respect he or she typically gains. Villagers know that life there is tough, and although many of them want to leave the village for a more comfortable world, they respect those who could have life better but come to live with them and serve. The volunteer may never become one of them, no matter how much they try to blend in, but to care enough to stay and enter into their lives is significant to them.

Thirdly, Christian volunteers, as truth-tellers, earn the right to be heard by loving their neighbours and sharing life. The quote on caring, of uncertain origin but often attributed to John Maxwell, is that, “people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care” (Popik, 2009:1). When a volunteer moves into a poor community, he or she sends the message that if love is costly, then those who are the object of such love are worth much. This is especially true for the poor and orphans, who often bear the burden of the community’s low opinion of them. Those who affirm the high value that the Creator places on people uplift and strengthen them with a sense of nobility and also build relational bridges into their lives, coming near, and engaging them in conversations about the God who came near. When a new Christian volunteer brings ideas that are considered foreign, European, or even colonialist, people naturally get defensive in spite of the messenger’s good intentions. Without the lubrication of incarnational ministry, volunteers may be seen as arrogant or egotistical or even having some secret motive to repress or destroy their traditional culture. Resistance inevitably follows even though there might be outward politeness and agreement (Hexham, 2004:35). Words without works are empty, just as works without words are mute. Repeated acts of compassion, without seeking anything in return, can be the basis for a relationship and conversations where ideas can be exchanged with mutual respect.

Fourthly, incarnational ministry enables one to communicate on a deeper, more meaningful level with your cherished audience. In the traditional confrontational approach, a Christian volunteer might see someone engaging in sinful or harmful

behaviour, and based on their surface perceptions, confront the perceived error with truth, having no regard for the deeper levels of culture or the roles or behaviours that stem from that culture (Hexham, 2004:31-32). The volunteer who becomes involved with the culture, develops personal relationships, and has a long-term commitment to his cherished people is able to understand the ideas beneath the surface. A negative modern example might be a young woman from the cultural West decrying the male chauvinism she sees in the African community as she cuts up vegetables with the ladies for hours in preparation for a funeral reception while the men sit outside sipping cool drinks. A positive biblical example would be Paul's stay in Athens where he reasoned daily in the marketplace, listening and learning ideas that prepared him for his invitation to the Areopagus. When confronted with the idols, he didn't shame the Greeks for idolatry or paganism, but actually began his talk by referencing an idol. He used their elevated notions of God, and quoted their own authors, to segue into his presentation of the gospel (Acts 17:16-34). One may liken this to giving a remote villager in KwaZulu-Natal directions to Johannesburg. The best directions involve making the best choices between the point of origin and the point of destination. If neither he nor you know where his village is located, you can identify all major highways leading to the city, but there is still a disconnection. The key is to help the traveller get from his remote village to the main highway. However, it takes time and caring conversation for you to learn where he lives, and to help him understand that as well.

There is no training manual for this wisdom-driven kind of ministry because the information is locally obtained and slowly acquired, and processing it to meet the opportunity of the moment requires the work of God's Spirit in one's life.

"Were it not for the Spirit of God directing us as we seek him in prayer, however, we could not effectively do any of what I have proposed above, because it is the Spirit who gives us the endurance to learn the 'why' behind the 'what' of people's actions. Only as we study the Scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit can we find those deeper-level solutions and then apply them to effect behavioural change. My plea here is not that we understand the Scriptures less, but that we take the time and

effort to understand people more, as Jesus and others did. The process is all part of Jesus' command to 'make disciples of all nations' (Matthew 28:19). We cannot make disciples of people we do not know, and we cannot teach them 'to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matthew 28:20), if we do not know the Scriptures. Both traditional apologetics and incarnational ministry are necessary" (Hexham, 2004:34).

Of course, living incarnationally among the poor, living with them and as much like them as is practical, is controversial and nearly always has been. It may call for upholding biblical principle over ecclesiastical traditions which have long been viewed as biblical (Warren 1995:238). Jesus wasn't understood, and modern missionaries like Amy Carmichael who adopted simple attire to work among India's poor without a furlough for more than 50 years, or Hudson Taylor who adopted the attire and living methods of local friends in China, were rebuffed by their colleagues for making such changes.

4.2.6 Contextualisation of God's message

Incarnational ministry enables Christian volunteers to be changed, enriched, and flavoured by the cherished people group such that, as truth-tellers, they are learning lessons, illustrations, stories, sayings, parables, and concepts from the experiences of these needy people that, in time, he or she will be able to blend with biblical truth. They will also observe interpersonal dynamics and ways of communicating in the culture.

Real and accurate communication involves a great deal more than a common language; idioms, contexts, motivations, social structures, taboos, worldview, and the silent language of culture all affect speaking and understanding (Hall, 1973:39). For everyone's sake, both the truth-teller and the recipient, one must make every effort to understand how the people one is trying to reach actually think (Sire, 1992:359). Insiders do better than outsiders in communicating good news to a host culture. Otherwise, the Christian gospel presented in a Western style might be distorted to fit in with the conventions and worldview of the host culture (Van Rooy, 2006:1). This process of adapting biblical truth to properly connect with the host culture is what is commonly referred to as contextualisation, "the translation of biblical meanings into contemporary cultural contexts.

Therefore, the images, metaphors, rituals, and words that are current in the culture are used to make the message both understandable and impactful” (Van Rheenen, 2006:4). Cole, who does not see a meaningful distinction between indigenisation and contextualisation, defines the latter as “a theological formulation from exegesis of biblical texts within a socio-cultural context, and a living out of that theology within the given cultural context, utilizing the Bible as the only authority while recognizing the progress of biblical revelation” (Cole, 1998:14). Commenting on Paul’s contextualisation in his address to the Greeks on the Areopagus in Acts 17, Wiersbe (2003:445) notes:

“Was Paul behaving in an inconsistent manner? Of course not. He simply adapted his approach to different groups. When you read his sermons in the Book of Acts, you see this wise adaptation. When he preached to Jews, he started with the Old Testament patriarchs; but when he preached to Gentiles, he began with the God of Creation.”

Wan (1999:14) submits that contextualisation is “the efforts of formulating, presenting, and practicing the Christian faith in such a way that it is relevant to the cultural context of the target group in terms of conceptualization, expression, and application; yet maintaining theological coherence, biblical integrity, and theoretical consistency.” Carson (1987:219) notes that, unfortunately, not all missiologists use this biblically-oriented approach, and adds that this model “assigns control to Scripture, but cherishes the ‘contextualization’ rubric because it reminds us that the Bible must be thought about, translated into, and preached in categories relevant to the particular cultural context.” When the cultural setting is given priority over the Bible, then God’s message is sought in the culture using the Bible as a guide, and this regrettably but naturally leads to syncretism, where cultural relevancy overcomes theological orthodoxy. Syncretism is the reshaping and blending of Christian beliefs and practices with those of a host culture in order to make Christianity relevant, but which serves to weaken, undermine, or destroy its biblical distinctiveness (Van Rheenen, 2006:7-8).

In South Africa, as will be discussed further *infra*, African traditional religion has been syncretised with European and American Christian belief and praxis, such that, for instance, baptism may be seen as a magical ritual, departed saints may

be viewed as ancestors, the Holy Spirit may be seen as the greatest ancestral spirit bringing power, wealth, and blessing, and a pastor may be viewed as God's sanctified sangoma (Van Rooy, 2006:1). The insidious difficulty for Western Christians engaging in gospel ministry in Africa is that many of their own ideas about Christianity, the church, and the Christian life have also been syncretised in the past with Euro-American culture. The failure to accurately and adequately decontextualize and then recontextualise and indigenise the biblical Christian faith and worldview was one of the great errors of colonial Christianity, which in many cases was intent on "saving" the heathen by making them into European or American Christians (Coe, 1973:243; Omulokole, 1998:24-37). African theologians have been working for years to create an African theology and praxis that springs from, and is controlled by, the Scripture without Western distortions. If contextualisation is difficult for theologians and ministers living and working for a lifetime in the African milieu, it will be extraordinarily difficult for a short-term volunteer, but an awareness of the basic similarities and differences between the African and biblical worldviews gives a starting point for consideration.

4.3 Awareness of the African worldviews

It is not within the scope of this work to extensively document or analyse African traditional religions or the African worldviews, if in fact there is a homogeneity to the worldviews of the various peoples on the continent, or in South Africa. Such studies are the subject of great discourse and disagreement since, in recent decades, African intellectuals have been trying to correct the Western Christian representations of African culture and religions. However, the writer has found that there are certain general elements of the African worldview, considered at length below, that are both discussed in the literature and affirmed on the street corners in the townships and villages. There are basic beliefs that most Africans hold in this country when they are just being themselves and not worrying about Western evaluation. These views, of course, are no longer purely African; they have been influenced by Christian and Islamic religious notions, and secular modernity and materialism as well (Forster, 2006:11). South African society is so amalgamated that some Africans further north on the continent have commented to the writer that South Africa isn't really "African."

While it is true that there is currently a great struggle in South Africa between maintaining tradition beliefs, rituals, and customs on the one hand and embracing modernity, materialism, and Western values on the other hand, Mbiti (1992:xiii) provides a balanced perspective by writing:

“It would be wrong to imagine that everything traditional has been changed or forgotten so much that no traces of it are to be found. If anything, the changes are generally on the surface, affecting the material side of life, and only beginning to reach the deeper levels of thinking pattern, language content, mental images, emotions, beliefs, and response to situations of need. Traditional concepts form the essential background of many African peoples, though obviously this differs from individual to individual and from place to place. I believe, therefore, that even if the educated Africans do not subscribe to all the religious and philosophical practices and ideas described here, the majority of our people with little or no formal education still hold on to their traditional corpus of beliefs and practices.”

Compassionate first-world Christians will often see indicators of Western culture in a village, such as newer clothing, a big sound system, a nice car, or children striking the rapper pose, and assume that the community is merely a poorer version of Western culture, only to be later blind-sided by the real beliefs, values, conflicts and rituals with which they come in contact. Christian volunteers must have a basic grasp of what are the controlling influences in a community, what is generally understood as the African worldview within South Africa, if they are to approach the African culture and engage in compassion ministry with wisdom, understanding, discretion, kindness, and sensitivity (Jayakaran, 1999:31).

4.3.1 Classification of the dominant worldview in Southern Africa

The dominant African worldview in Southern Africa has, at times, been wrongly described as animistic by journalists, missionaries, and popular writers. Animism involves the religious belief that souls/spirits exist not only in humans, but also in all other animals, plants, rocks, natural phenomena such as thunder or fire, geographic features such as notable mountains or bodies of water, or other elements of the natural environment (Ferguson, 1988:24). Scholars more correctly place the religious orientation and worldview of southern African people

groups within the Niger-Congo religious tradition, an ancient belief system extending back into the millennia before Christ (Chidester, 1992:17). Although monotheistic, the tradition sees all of life in a structured hierarchy of life-forces. At the top is God, the First Cause or Creator, who is believed to be distant, aloof, and unconcerned with mankind and is, therefore, of little direct consequence to everyday religion. Below God is the realm of the spirits and the ancestors, who are believed to influence events here, for good or bad, on an ongoing basis. They are the primary focus of religious observance and rituals. Below the spirit world, but very much integrated with it, is the material world, the realm of human beings, animals, plants, and the inanimate elements of the creation (Ehret, 2002:50). Myers (2006:7) comments:

“The traditional worldview is holistic, with the spiritual and material worlds interrelated in a seamless whole. The world of high religion is occupied by the great gods that should not be bothered or disturbed. The interrelationship between the seen and unseen worlds is mediated by shamans, sacred books, spirits, and others who have access to both worlds. This is the world of curses, amulets, charms, and other attempts to bargain with or ‘handle’ the unseen world.”

The dominant theme of this worldview is its hierarchy of forces. Every spirit and every person has a vital force, and these forces are arranged in hierarchical social structure from God at the top on down through the great and more common ancestors, to the great living leaders of mankind, the nation, the region, and the village, to the heads of families, down to the wives, and on down through the youngest child. Each creature has a relatively fixed place in the grand scheme, must keep to his or her place while exercising influence on the other levels only in a proper way (Balcomb, 2004:61; Van Rooy, 1978:3). There is no sharp distinction between the spiritual and physical worlds as there is in the dualistic worldview of the West, but all things are seen as part of one community that has many levels. Thorpe (1991:5) notes:

“Trees, rivers, streams, rain are more than merely things to be utilised. They have a spiritual quality which unites them to human beings in a greater cosmic whole. The ancestors, or living-dead, continue to be a

spiritual part of this greater cosmos even after they have ceased to exist as a physical part. The creator, and even the creation itself, belong to this vertical or spiritual dimension of African traditional religions.”

Further, interactions between the different levels on the hierarchical ladder seem to be limited to the adjoining level. The saying that “water does not run past a hole” indicates that a common person does not communicate with important men without the use of an intermediary, much less with the ancestors, or especially with God (Van Rooy, 2006:3). This is the basis for the widespread use of sangomas and the appeal to ancestral spirits dealt with below. Great respect is to be used when approaching someone more powerful, often manifested by looking downward and bowing rather than making eye contact.

Turaki (1999:52-53) summarises the Niger-Congo African worldview as follows:

- The law of the spirit can explain social and spiritual phenomena.
- World/nature is held in balance by the spiritual law and therefore should not be tampered with.
- The moral and spiritual obligation of man is to live in harmony and in obedience to spiritual forces, the human and the non-human world.
- The orientation is toward the glorious, perfect, primordial state of the past and less to the unknown, uncertain future.
- The world of the ancestors is always the best, closer to the perfect origin and therefore has more potency than the present or the future. Thus, anything passed down from the ancestors, such as culture, religion, technology, education, values, social institutions, must be maintained, preserved, protected and eventually passed on to the next generations.
- The moral obligation to conform to traditions and conventions overrides any desire for change or non-conformity.
- The concept that the best in life lies in the past, the world of ancestors and the origin. This worldview is essentially spiritual, moral, philosophical and religious.

4.3.2 God in the Niger-Congo African worldview

The ancient origins of African theology are lost in the mists of the unwritten past. African theologian, John Mbiti, commented that “African religions have neither founders nor reformers” (Mbiti, 1992:4). Early European researchers had a preoccupation with discerning and documenting the African view of God. Many missionaries were pleasantly surprised to learn that most cultures in southern Africa were monotheistic and had a long-time belief in one supreme God. “When David Livingstone preached in Africa in the nineteenth century, he is said to have always referred to the Bible as the ‘message from the God whom you know’” (Adeyemo, 2006:3). However, some Westerners felt that the southern African people groups had no concept of a God, merely of the first ancestor of their people, or the first man of the earth. Callaway’s record in 1878 was made famous for his speculation that the Xhosa and Zulu concepts of God were merely echoes of early missionary teaching in the years of Shaka and Dingaan, and that they had long before lost their original belief in a deity (Hexham, 1981:276; Callaway, 2003:1). But others have documented what seems to be the long-held Zulu belief in uNkulunkulu, the Father of fathers, or the old-old one, perhaps the original ancestor, or perhaps a powerful being who was the Creator of physical things below. The Lovedu hold a similar view of their Khuzwane, and the Venda of their Raluvhimba (Van Rooy, 1978:5). Some have also found in the Zulu tradition another Sky God or Lord of Heaven, one so high and holy that, like the Jews with Jahweh, no one uttered his name (Krige, 1981:280; Smith, 1950:108). Setiloane has asserted that the African idea of God represents a conception of divinity more ancient and powerful than the God of the nineteenth century Christian missions in South Africa (Chidester, 1997:11). Despite the obscure history of the traditional African belief in God, there is agreement as to the basic belief that God is very remote and is not interested in the affairs of mankind on earth. The Zulu’s uNkulunkulu does not condescend to such matters, and the Venda’s Raluvhimba is little more than “the highest in the hierarchy of forces. He is so high above men that He is unapproachable except by special persons and in special circumstances. He therefore has very little influence if any on their everyday life. Religion is the sphere of the ancestor spirits and not of God the Creator” (Van

Rooy, 1978:5). Of the Lovedu's Khuzwane, they say "But no one knows what happened to him and no one ever thinks of him" (Krige, 1981:231).

Under the influence of Christianity, and due to translators using these names of deity figures in their translations of the Bible, many African cultures have refined their view of a Creator-God, but he is still very transcendent, and like the Deistic view of God, he is the originator of life but does not intervene in the world of mankind. "He is always far away, indifferent to human happiness, even indifferent – for all practical purposes – to whether men do good or evil" (Phillips, 1948:12). In the Sotho and Tsonga languages, God is referred to using the neuter pronoun "it," indicating that he is more of a power than a person (Van Rooy, 2006:4). A sinner cannot even offend Him because He is so far removed and unconcerned, and therefore one need not have a sense of guilt. Moral and ethical values are not determined by a theocentric moral code, but by relationships with the living and the living-dead (Mbiti, 1992:207; Van Rooy, 1978:6).

Teenage students of the Ndebele people in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga, were given a hypothetical situation by the writer in 2007 (Teens, 2006) in which their younger sister was very sick and had a high fever, and then were asked who they would pray to, God or the ancestors. They answered "both." When asked who they would go to first, they said "the ancestors." When asked why, they responded that the ancestors were closer, that they might be causing the sickness and choose to stop, and that they could help more quickly. When asked who was stronger, God or the ancestors, they answered "God." When asked why they wouldn't pray to the most powerful one of all, they said, "He is not here. He is busy."

4.3.3 The significance of ancestors in the Niger-Congo African worldview

The far more practically significant belief within African traditional religion is in the ancestors (*amadlozi* or *amatongo*), and in local spirits. Ancestor worship is not unique to Africa; in fact, according to Gehman (1999:28), it is the most widespread religious tradition in the world, being practiced in traditional religions as well as within Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. The ancestors are the living-dead, those who were human but have died physically. In some traditions, not all of the dead are ancestors, but merely the important members of the family or clan

(Kuckertz, 1981:23). They are not gods but are a part of the creative order. Ancestral spirits are around and among the living, as extended family in the spiritual realm, watching and being cheered or made angry by human actions, intervening in people's lives to cause either blessing or misfortune, and thus, holding influence over them (Bae, 2007:23, Louw, 1998:2). Therefore, religion, morality, and social structures are all driven by this relational ontology. So fundamental is this belief that early missionaries actually labelled southern African religion as “ancestor worship” to distinguish it from either the God-worship of the Europeans, or the idol-worship of the Asians (Chidester, 1997:12).

In the traditional African worldview, it is of extreme importance to maintain harmony in and between all social levels, physical and spiritual. Evil is not so much the violation of an objective standard of right and wrong, but is a violation of relationships with the living or the ancestors; upsetting harmony or stepping out of one's place is regarded as the ultimate fault (Van Rooy, 1978:4). There is no command to love and obey a personal God. Even loving one's neighbour is replaced by keeping your place in the social structure and pleasing those above you (Van Rooy, 2006:3). When a person breaches such a taboo or violates or neglects some social obligation, it is believed that the ancestors are obligated to punish the person, unless they are appeased by a sacrifice or offering. In traditional cultures, it is believed that illnesses and diseases, whether physiological or psychological, do not come from germs, viruses, or bacteria, but from spiritual or social imbalances. It is believed that there are only three possible reasons for any evil that befalls a household, such as sickness, loss of employment, accidents, failure at school, lightning strikes, bad harvests, and fires: 1) someone in the household has been bewitched by a witchdoctor (*umthakathi*), or 2) evil spirits (*imimoya emibi*) are influencing one's life, or 3) the family's ancestral spirits (*amadlozi*) are angry and require a sacrifice (BBG, 2009:1). It is believed that, at times, the ancestral spirits can take possession of persons. Those who are possessed manifest a form of hysteria or convulsions. At times, young men and women begin to suffer from terrible nightmares, persistent non-medical illnesses and mental illness, and it is believed in the culture that these are “the call of the ancestors” to become a sangoma. For fear of something worse, many of these young men and women, some well-known in South African

academic and entertainment circles, succumb to the call and practice traditional medicine alongside their careers (Mthethwa, 2008:1).

4.3.4 Intermediaries and rituals in the Niger-Congo African worldview

The ancestors must be approached through intermediaries, shaman figures typically known in South Africa as sangomas and inyangas. Some Zulu claim that sangomas are not witchdoctors, because they are neither witches nor doctors. Witchcraft is the work of the *umthakathi* who should not even be referred to as sangomas (BBG, 2009:1). If there is trouble in one's life, one goes first to the sangoma, and often brings the entire family. Sangomas then undertake their ceremony of divination ("*ngoma*" means divining), often casting small ceremonial bones on the ground to learn whether the evil has been caused by witchcraft, an offended ancestor, or an evil spirit, and thus, to smell out (*ukubula*) the reason for the evil. It is believed that the presence of the ancestors at the ceremony causes the sangoma to sneeze or convulse repeatedly.

If it is determined that a person in the community has caused the evil through witchcraft, the family may try to kill the person. If evil spirits have caused the problem, an inyanga will be consulted. Inyangas are primarily concerned with creating remedial medicines from herbs and animals and are therefore referred to as "herbalists" or "traditional healers." Prophets (*abafundisi*), whether Christian or not, may also be called to drive out the wicked spirits. If the evil has been caused by the ancestors, then the sangoma will typically make a sacrifice of a goat or animal brought by the family. In the Zulu culture, the blood may be poured into one pot, and sorghum beer into another pot, and set out in the kraal for the ancestors to quench their thirst (BBG, 2009:1; Louw, 1998:2). At times, the remedy may involve *muthi* (also referred to as "*umuthi*" and often misspelled "*muti*"), a mixture of herbs, that will be burned and applied to the sufferer directly, or in water, or mixed with Vaseline and applied to the body. In this way, the ancestors or spirits are appeased. By way of contrast with biblical Christianity, African traditional religion is not about love-inspired worship of a supreme being who loves humankind, but is all about manipulating spiritual powers and using rituals to keep temperamental spirits happy or at least appeased (Van Rooy, 2006:4). Due to the fear of the ancestors, and the use of blood sacrifices,

prayers, and other rituals designed to appease them, ancestor worship is a cult religion, not merely the folk veneration of departed forefathers, and the rituals are pagan more than merely traditional (Bae, 2007:22).

Chidester (1997:12) asserts that the belief system of hierarchical life-forces within African traditional religion creates the structures of “power relations” that operate in the spheres of the home, community leadership, and worship. The traditional African home is built upon ritual-based relationships established between the living members of the household, and also between them and the living-dead. Anchored in family life, ancestral rituals support gender roles, establish spheres of authority, and are used to seek blessing and protection on the occasions of birth, initiation, marriage, and death. Many within traditional cultures believe that a new-born baby will not grow and live on its own; it must be blessed and protected by the ancestors, and therefore, the baby is taken to the sangoma, some herbs are burnt and the mixture is placed on the baby’s head. A similar blessing is sought from the sangoma on the first day that a bride comes to her new home. If the order of the home is transgressed, the ancestors may punish the offender by bringing misfortune of some sort.

Ancestral beliefs and rituals also bolster the political power of chiefs, kings, and other traditional leaders (Chidester, 1997:13). Tribal, community, and national leaders will become great ancestors and so their wishes must be followed, especially the wishes of the greatest and oldest leader. Leaders must be granted more power and wealth and in some cultures many wives. As a leader’s power and life-force increases, so does that of his followers. This will be discussed further infra.

Because the belief in the ancestors is central to the African worldview, the sangomas, both male and female, play an important part in daily life in African culture, whether in the rural villages or in the urban townships, and are consulted by roughly 80% of the South African population (Flint, 2008:183). In 2007, the writer recalls that the new shopping centre in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga, was under construction when lightning from a summer thunderstorm struck one of the buildings and caused a fire. The next day, local traditional, political, and religious leaders and the supervisors of the construction company were called together and

told by a sangoma that the fire had happened because the spirit of the waters in the pond next to the construction site had been disturbed. He said that all further construction must cease. At the end of the long discussion, it was decided that the Christians would pray to Jesus and ask that God would calm the spirit of the waters and bless the project, and the sangoma would undertake his own ritual to appease the spirit and seek its blessing. In this way, it was decided that with a few days of prayerful delay, the project could proceed safely.

Most sangomas, whose arts are believed to bring blessing, strength, health, and protection, are considered “good” sangomas who use so-called “white muthi” or white magic. They are sought to bestow blessings and prevent prospective trouble for harvests, for travel, for procreation, for job applications, for success in exams, and for romantic love (Cook, 2009:262). Sangomas perform their rituals at the opening of Parliamentary seasons, and were present to bless the opening of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup (Lockley, 2010:1). They make a living by charging a fee for their services, depending on the importance or severity of the situation. They may be paid in cash or in kind, and if an important person has a serious illness, a sangoma may charge as much as a cow. The majority of sangomas are women, as high as 75% in some areas. In some studies, almost a quarter of them had no formal education, and fewer than 12% had graduated from high school (Cook, 2009:264). But still, they are heart and soul of the African community.

A serious problem in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS over the last decade in South Africa was due to traditional healers spreading the idea that the illness was not due to a virus but was a curse of the ancestors, and that if anyone spoke the terms “HIV” or “AIDS,” they were at risk of being struck with the illness. This made information campaigns taboo in many areas. Another belief was that all AIDS was caused by witchcraft (Easterly, 2005:248). Some sick people openly went to the sangoma, but secretly went to the medical doctor for ART (Cook, 2009:261). Fortunately, discussions between members of the medical profession and traditional healers have gotten sangomas to recognise that HIV/AIDS is a medical rather than spirit-induced disease, and that the disease can be significantly controlled with ART. Due in part to the fact that South Africa has only

77 medical doctors per 100,000 people, in comparison to the US ratio of 549 doctors per 100,000 people, the medical profession, and even some churches, are now providing medical training to sangomas to help them assist people suffering from HIV, and medical doctors are receiving training in traditional medicine (Cook, 2009:263).

Even though the subject of witchcraft is still taboo in many areas of South Africa, people in the communities are aware of “bad” sangomas, referred to as *umthakathi*, who practice witchcraft, black magic, or black muthi to cast curses and spells, empower and protect evil-doers, or steal life-force from others thereby causing illness, injury, or death to enemies and bringing success and wealth to the user (Ashforth, 2005: 235). John Lockley, who is a white Xhosa sangoma with a website designed to mainstream his profession (Lockley, 2011:1), insists that intrinsically the role of sangomas is good, and that any attempt to use traditional medicine for evil purposes is wrong, but no different from Western medical doctors doing the same. Still, the horror of muthi crimes persist in the country, crimes based on the religious beliefs within African traditional religion that life-force can be stolen from a person through dark magic. Phephisile Maseko, national co-ordinator of the Traditional Healers Organisation, said in February of 2010: “There is a notion that says ‘If I kill so and so, I will be able to live the life that they live.’ Witchcraft is all about greed and jealousy; it is a huge problem in South Africa and legitimate traditional healers are being victimized” (Buanews, 2010:1). *Umthakathi* are periodically arrested for killing humans, often women and children, to harvest body parts for their occult rituals. At times, body parts are harvested while the victims are alive in order to gain the maximum life-force (Magwaza, 2011:1). In retaliation, mobs resort to violence and murder, at times stoning the alleged *umthakathi* to death and setting their home or shack alight (News24, 2011:1). Increasing efforts are being made by the South African Police Service, university research units, and various government departments to categorise these crimes and raise public awareness of those who engage in these crime scenarios (Ibid.).

4.3.5 Life-force and limited good in the Niger-Congo African worldview

Integral to the dominant theme of the hierarchy of forces in the African worldview are the related concepts of life-force and limited good. Bae (2007:48) observes that many scholars have surmised that “the most apt descriptor of the African cosmology is likely in terms of power or force.... This is because the metaphysical or magical forces are considered to be behind everything.” It has already been noted that each ancestor, person, and animal has a vital force or life-force. This vital force in a person is what brings prestige, power, influence, wealth, children, harvests, positions, possessions, and good luck generally. The spirit, living principle, or life-force within man, referred to by the Zulu as *isithunzi* or “shadow” of a man, carries with it a connotative meaning of moral weight, influence, or prestige. When a person does something brave or clever, people may comment, “the *isithunzi* of this man is strong,” or “his *isithunzi* is strong but we did not see it until now.” When a man dies, his shadow becomes known as a “shade” (*idlozi*), the persona and life-force of an ancestor (Berglund, 1989:85-6).

Traditional cultures typically hold to the idea that there is only a limited amount of life-force in the cosmos, that each person is allotted a narrow range of this limited good for his life, and that there is no surplus life-force (Setiloane 2000:14). Powerful people, or those destined to be powerful, have greater life-force than common people do. In the African worldview, one who gets sick is losing life-force, and when he dies, he has lost more of his life-force, but he continues on. The Zulu never speak of a person’s death in the manner in which it is seen in the cultural West, as a final end to a person’s life. They will say “*udlulile emhlabeni*,” meaning that a person has passed on to another stage of life. This implies that one’s personhood is not lost even at death (Forster, 2006:267). Dying is the ultimate homecoming, prompting those at funerals to speak to the dead asking them to give greetings to other family and friends who have passed away (Louw, 1998:2). “In Africa, the process of the decrease of one's vital force results in death, and after death the process is not halted.... Paradoxically, important ancestors, chiefs, and heroes seem to increase, if not in vital force, at least in the power they exert on the living” (Van Rooy, 2006:2).

Increasing one's life-force is often a person's greatest goal in life. Most believe that by doing good, one shares in humanity (*ubuntu* discussed below), and thereby increases his *isithunzi*; by doing evil to others, one reduces his *isithunzi* (Boon, 2007:31). Any act that promotes life and humanity is seen to be good, just, ethical and desirable, whereas that which diminishes life is wrong, bad, and unjust (Ndwandwe, 2000:213). Some are willing to increase their force marginally over time by hard work and goodness, but some are drawn to the short-cut of magic in order to gain power. It is a part of human nature to be impressed by power, but African traditional cultures seem to be very attracted to power (*amandla* in Zulu) (Adeyemo, 2006:546). They love powerful sound systems that play powerfully loud music, leaders who speak powerfully, and possessions and clothing that demonstrate power. Leaders of new churches have commented to the writer that they would have many people if they could get a large sound system. African church members expect their pastor-preacher-man-of-God (*umfundisi*) to be powerful rather than meek or righteous in his conduct; to cause their church to become powerful, to heal, and protect them from magic (Van Rooy, 2006:5). No wonder, then, that the Charismatic Movement, with its emphasis on signs and wonders, and on wealthy, powerful preachers, has drawn such numbers on the African continent. Seeing one's life-force decrease is his greatest fear. Stepping down as a leader in the traditional mindset must never be done because of the loss of life-force. To the amazement of African leaders, President Nelson Mandela declined to stand for a second Presidential term, signalling to his comrades and the world that South African politics should follow Western, rather than traditional, ideals.

It is believed by many that life-force can only be markedly increased at the expense of someone else by way of witchcraft, ritual murder, or theft (Van Rooy, 1978:8). This is what Maseko mentioned above in connection with muthi murders (Buanews, 2010:1). If someone in a village suddenly has good luck, such as if a random philanthropic outsider gives him a large sum of money to start a business, he is often attacked by others nearby accusing him of witchcraft or of some dark misdeed. Moderate success is credited to industry, but immoderate success is always suspect (Van Rooy, 1978:19). The writer spoke with a vendor in Soweto in 2005 and asked what he would do if another person opened a stand on the

next block selling the same products as he, and began to take away his business. He responded, "He is killing me, so I must kill him." He felt that the other man had committed an evil and was stealing away his life-force, slowly killing him, so he must respond with what he felt was justifiable violence. Outsiders may view this as mere jealousy, but the sentiment is rooted in the fear of one's neighbour stealing life-force. An African who grew up in such cultures, Mbiti (1992:209) commented on this fear-driven communalism that brings both blessing and paralysis:

"This corporate type of close relations makes every member of the community dangerously naked in the sight of the other members. Everybody is loosely or intensely a relative, a fellow human, a brother, father or mother. Therefore everybody, within degrees, knows everybody else and everybody else's affairs fairly well to within certain limits. This corporate form of relations is paradoxically the centre of joy and sorrow, of generous tenderness and bitter jealousies, a sense of security and insecurity, forces of building and forces of destroying a community and the individual. It is within this context that frustration, psychic disturbances, emotional tensions and other states of the inner person become readily externalised and formulated in such a way that blame is laid on an external agent. Therefore, every form of sickness, illness, pain, misfortune, sorrow, suffering, every death, every failure of the crops in the fields or hunting or fishing, every bad omen and bad dream – these, and all the other unhappy experiences of the individual, are explained in the form of laying the blame on one or more members of the corporate community. People create scapegoats for their sorrows."

There are a couple of exceptions to this negative view of one notably expanding his life-force. Van Rooy (1978:7, 27) notes that the chief or king is seen as an exception since he is a representative for the whole tribe. If he grows in his cosmic good, largely by bringing about conquest of surrounding tribes, be they Africans or Europeans, he does so for the whole tribe. As his life-force grows, so does the life-force of his people. Many Africans view European colonialism as the ultimate theft of life-force, in which white tribes prospered at the expense of

African tribes by taking their land, killing their people, enslaving tens of thousands of others, and harvesting the great wealth of the earth. Diminishing the life-force of African people and communities is an injury that will not be quickly forgotten. To blend South Africa's ethnic people now into a rainbow nation, a peaceful colour-blind whole, comports with Western notions of democracy, but runs counter to traditional notions of Africans asserting and taking back the rights, land, and wealth of the African people to increase their life-force. Traditional culture will enshrine strong African men who become rich and powerful and lead their people to strength and wealth by taking back what was once theirs. Turaki (1999:120) also observes that:

“the principle of the hierarchy of beings, to some extent determines the concept of 'good' and 'evil'. What is considered evil or offensive functions from a lower to a higher level. Rarely does a person of a higher status do what is considered ‘an offence’ against a person of a lower status. In line with this principle, God does not commit evil against any of his creatures.... In like manner, ancestors do not offend against their living descendants, nor do kings offend against their subjects or parents against their children. This picture helps us understand the nature of morality and ethics in traditional society. Morality and ethics seem to be sanctioned by one's destiny, social status or hierarchy of beings.... The moral and ethical behaviour and practices of traditional chiefs and state officials, which are abhorred in modern Africa, can be understood from this perspective.”

Another exception that the writer has found to the evil of stealing life-force is that many people in the rural village areas seem to think it is acceptable to go to the big cities like Johannesburg and steal life-force there, and come back wealthy. Stealing from strangers who are not of your people, in a place that is known for evil, is not seen to be as egregious as stealing from one's neighbours, home community, or people. Still, the cities are feared for their evil and crime; a young person might sell his soul to evil ways or just as easily have his life force taken from him by dark magic.

Unfortunately, the threat of people stealing life-force also has a chilling effect on individual innovation, entrepreneurship, and success. Because Western cultures

value individualism, it sees the world as full of an abundance of opportunities that one can take advantage of through cleverness and industriousness; the West doesn't see the world relationally where one can only get ahead at the expense of others around him. A shop owner in KwaMhlanga commented to the writer that African culture is like many people being tightly tied together with a rope; if one person pulls more rope to himself for his own comfort, it will mean less rope and greater discomfort for those around him. Belief in a limited life-force therefore "accounts for the static character and lack of individual initiative so often displayed by Africans. One should not venture to acquire more status or influence than one already has by virtue of one's fixed place of seniority" (Van Rooy, 1978:4). As an atheistic journalist who spent his first 45 years in Malawi, Parris (2008:1) observed,

"Anxiety – fear of evil spirits, of ancestors, of nature and the wild, of a tribal hierarchy, of quite everyday things – strikes deep into the whole structure of rural African thought. Every man has his place and, call it fear or respect, a great weight grinds down the individual spirit, stunting curiosity. People won't take the initiative, won't take things into their own hands or on their own shoulders."

But contrary to his own beliefs, Parris (2008:1) asserted a great apologetic argument in favour of the Christian faith by arguing that only true, post-Reformation Christianity can make a lasting difference in freeing people from the crippling elements of the African way of life.

"Christianity, post-Reformation and post-Luther, with its teaching of a direct, personal, two-way link between the individual and God, unmediated by the collective, and unsubordinated to any other human being, smashes straight through the philosophical/spiritual framework I've just described. It offers something to hold on to for those anxious to cast off a crushing tribal groupthink."

Ubuntu, the wonderful traditional value of communalism and promoting the common good of society, discussed below, has an unfortunate downside in that it creates even more paralysis. *Ubuntu* helps deter the threat of stealing life-force by creating a web of accountability to make sure no one is getting ahead by

exploiting someone else. The community must talk together, think together, and move together. African traditional culture has “an almost infinite capacity for the pursuit of consensus” (Teffo, 1994:4). All significant players, tribal, political, and economic, must be involved in the discussion if a shopping centre or rail line is to be built, or if a bus line is to be instituted (Louw, 1998:3). Although there may be a hierarchy of importance among the participants, everyone gets a chance to speak until a consensus or group cohesion is reached (Broodryk, 1997:7). The advantage is that there is strength in unity (*simunye*), but the disadvantage is the fear that everyone is watching everyone else, so no one must step out and be creative or innovative. Sono (1994:xiii) called this dark side of *ubuntu* “totalitarian communalism” that “frowns upon elevating one beyond the community.” The role of the group is often overwhelming.

“This mentality, this psychology is stronger on belief than on reason; on sameness than on difference. Discursive rationality is overwhelmed by emotional identity, by the obsession to identify with and by the longing to conform to. To agree is more important than to disagree; conformity is cherished more than innovation. Tradition is venerated, continuity revered, changed feared and difference shunned. Heresies, the innovative creations of intellectual African individuals or refusal to participate in communalism, are not tolerated in such communities” (Louw, 1998:5).

The writer witnessed an outreach in a village in KwaMhlanga in which hundreds of children and young adults participated in a soccer tournament, which was followed by an evangelistic drama and an evangelistic challenge. When the speaker asked who wanted to receive God’s free gift of forgiveness of sins and have a home with Him in heaven, no one raised their hand. The speaker repeated the gospel and invited people to respond again, but with the same result. The local African pastor quietly noted that no one would put himself forward and lift his hand when the others hadn’t also done so. Such was the grip of group-think on these young people. Later, more than thirty children responded to the gospel in one-on-one discussions with youth leaders.

Some writers believe that the commitment to communalism in traditional culture is one reason for the rising African sentiment regarding nationalisation of farms and

mines in South Africa (SAPA, 2011:1). Great pressure has been put on post-colonial governments in Africa to nationalise farms, mines, businesses and any other sources of wealth to make sure that the community was growing in the cosmic good together (Van Rooy, 1978:7). No common individual or small exclusive group must excel alone. There are arguments that nationalisation is communism versus capitalism, or African versus Afrikaner, and there are sound economic reasons and observations from other countries to discourage nationalisation, but a significant underlying rationale for this counter expropriation of farms and mines lies in traditional African culture (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2010:1).

4.3.6 The African philosophy of ubuntu

Traditional African worldviews emphasise the importance of community. They create collectivist cultures that stress cooperation more important than competition, and people-orientation over task-orientation. These emphases are often summed up in the notion of *ubuntu*, a Zulu word that has no direct translation into English but has enormous philosophical, ontological, sociological, psychological, religious, and political implications in the African community. “Every facet of African life is shaped to embrace *ubuntu* as a process and philosophy which reflects the African heritage, traditions, culture, customs, beliefs, value system and the extended family structures” (Coetzee 1998:42). *Ubuntu* is one of the founding principles of the new Republic of South Africa, and has been connected with the idea of an “African Renaissance” (Ramose, 2003:231). In the political sphere, the concept of *ubuntu* is used to emphasize the need for unity or consensus in decision-making, as well as the need for a suitably humanitarian ethic to inform those decisions (Samkange, 1980:22).

4.3.6.1 Defining ubuntu

Ubuntu at its core carries with it the idea of humanness or the related concept of humaneness, relational kindness. Personhood is always developed and understood within a community of dignity (Forster, 2006:267). One might say, “I am because we are.” Whereas the individualistic Western worldview would follow Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”), the African would say, “I belong, therefore I am” (Meiring, 2007:735). The idea of “separate beings which find themselves side by side, entirely independent of one another, is foreign to

Bantu thought” (Tempels, 1959:28). *Ubuntu* is manifested in the phrase *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* (a person is a person through another person), meaning that a man has little meaning or value without those around him (Ramose 1999:49; Shutte 1993:46; Van Rooy, 1978:9). This phrase “articulates a basic respect and compassion for others.... As such, it is both a factual description and a rule of conduct or social ethic” (Louw 2001:1). *Ubuntu* “is a communal way of life which deems that society must be run for the sake of all, requiring cooperation as well as sharing and charity” (Broodryk 2002:13). An African is therefore a being in community. That community begins with the family, but includes one’s ancestors, and extends outward to include one’s neighbours, and the larger village community (Adeyemo, 1993:374; Gerloff, 1998:49, Tutu, 2000:35). A person’s value, being, and survival are integrated with his society. Like the parts of a watch, identity and value lie in community. As Wilber (1996:25) wrote, “You can take a watch apart but it won’t tell you the time...” Solidarity is critical, and to be rejected, isolated, and alone is the worst state of life. Many definitions of *ubuntu* have been offered by scholars and authors over the years, and all seem to include these basic concepts (Bhengu 1996:1–12; Pityana 1999:144–145; Prinsloo 1994, 1998:41–43; Sindane 1994:1–2, 1995:8–9).

“In Africa, a person is identified by his or her interrelationships and not primarily by individualistic properties. The community identifies the person and not the person the community. The identity of the person is his or her place in the community. In Africa it is a matter of ‘I participate, therefore I am’.... *Ubuntu* is the principle of ‘I am only because we are, and since we are, therefore I am’. *Ubuntu* is African humanism.” (Du Toit 2004:33).

Some have observed that *ubuntu* may be the natural result of living in a world of droughts, wars, famines, diseases, and scarce resources for several millennia where groups of hunters were far more successful than a lone hunter, and people shared food and other essentials merely to survive (Maranz, 2001:2). Maranz, who had experience in western Africa, observed (2001:4) that the “fundamental economic consideration in the majority of African societies ... [is] “the distribution of economic resources so that all persons may have their minimum needs met, or at least that they may survive.” In contrast, Maranz postulated (2001:5) that the

fundamental economic principle in the West is the accumulation of capital and wealth for one's family so that they can enjoy a comfortable life with ample goods.

Comparing the West with Africa, Maranz noted that in Dakar, Senegal, only 30% of the adults had full-time jobs, which didn't pay very well, yet in the midst of this situation everyone continued to have sufficient food, clothing, and shelter because those who had meagre means continued to share with their relatives, neighbours, and close friends. There were no riots such as those that have occurred in France and the United States when unemployment passed the eleven percent mark (Maranz, 2001:4). In speaking with an African pastor about *ubuntu*, the writer noted that gardeners in Johannesburg always sent a portion of their incomes back to their families in the villages. When asked if this was also done among the Africans that gained wealth in business or politics in the New South Africa, he answered, "No. They become white and keep the money for themselves." But Lederleitner (2010:38) interestingly remarked that even in the individualist American society, when infrastructures such as electrical or sewage systems fail, many people will become collectivist in their behaviours – communicating with each other, watching out for one another, and making sure each neighbour has sufficient resources to cope with the difficulty – but as soon as service is restored, each reverts back to his or her very independent lifestyle.

Volunteers who are used to a culture and society with strong infrastructure and an abundance of safety nets, and who have never been gripped by the genuine fear of starvation or frostbite, often fail to comprehend the importance and beauty of *ubuntu*, which has been the core cultural value that has most contributed to the survival of four million orphans in South Africa.

4.3.6.2 The religious and ethical significance of ubuntu

Louw (1998:2) makes the observation that *ubuntu* has religious significance in the African context. It suggests that the person who behaves with humanity will eventually be an ancestor worthy of respect or veneration. Those who uphold the principle of *ubuntu*, and have a humble, respectful, compassionate, and supportive approach to others and to the community throughout their lives will, in death, achieve a harmony with those still living. Whereas Western Christianity stresses one's vertical relationship with God as of primary importance, African

theology reverses the order and emphasizes the priority of the horizontal relationships (Meiring, 2007:736-7). Essentially reversing the first and second greatest commandments (Matthew 22:37-40), relationships and reconciliation within the African community determine one's relationship with God and one's place in the cosmos after one has died (Bedaiko, 1995:101).

Ethics and the moral code of behaviour in the traditional African culture are driven by this underlying value of *ubuntu* and the hierarchical structure of society. Van der Walt (2004:2) explains that the Western conscience is clear when righteousness (obedience to moral/ethical norms) has been maintained, and feels guilt when those norms have been transgressed. But in African traditional culture, a good conscience is the result of honour and acceptance in the community due to compliance with the collective ideas, and a bad conscience results when the offender experiences shame, exclusion, or rejection because he has failed to comply with his place and responsibilities in the community. As one Xhosa gentleman commented to the writer, "it is not wrong to steal until one is caught." The sin does not lie in the act of taking something that does not belong to you, but in depriving someone else of it and so violating the community. In the African worldview, society itself is a moral entity with a moral code given by the Creator, and sin is the violation of this code through disruptive ambitions and jealousy (Turaki, 1999:14). European missionaries in the 19th century complained that Africans had no sense of sin, and could not even be induced to have a sense of guilt for wrongdoing, and in their frustration called Africans "incorrigible savages and various other uncomplimentary names." (Maimela, 1985:65). In Western thinking, sin is unconditional and guilt is internal; in African thinking, sin is conditional and guilt is external and relational (Meiring, 2007:740). A shamed conscience is then restored when there has been reconciliation with society (Adeyemo, 1998:375). Even when there has been an offense, the transgression is normally not confronted directly because doing so may damage a person's honour, something worse than the transgression itself (Meiring, 2007:738). Thus, the community will often deal with an offense indirectly by telling stories, parables, or making other symbolic acts, things that even Jesus was known to do (Van der Walt, 2004:12; Luke 20:19; John 8:6-8).

Ubuntu, therefore, determines much of the moral and ethical code of traditional cultures. Van Rooy (1978:10) observed:

“Characteristics which are appreciated in Venda society are not, as in Western European society, those of honesty, truthfulness, frankness, integrity, resoluteness, consistency and perseverance in pursuing a goal, but rather of friendliness, compliance, adaptability, pliability, with willingness to compromise, modesty, respect for seniors, open-handedness, the willingness to share what one has with others, everything that contributes to smooth interpersonal relations and to avoid friction between persons.”

The Kriges (1981:110) observed of the Lovedu people: “The qualities that are most admired and that therefore are most insisted upon in children are generosity and unselfishness and ability to live in peace with others. Quarrelsomeness is one of the worst faults.” They noted that unpleasant, ambitious and competitive people were often accused of witchcraft and of trying to acquire more than their rightful share of the limited good (Krige, 1981:268). Years earlier, the Kriges (1955:78) wrote:

“The qualities and virtues which are stressed then in the moral code of the Lovedu are moderation and temperance, compromise and agreement, humility, respect for the personality and rights of others Right conduct is relative always to the human situation and morality is oriented not from any absolute standards of honesty or truth but from the social good in each situation Conduct that promotes smooth relationships, that upholds the social structure is good: conduct that runs counter to smooth relationships is bad. Courtesy and respect due to age or seniority and thus of greater importance than truth.”

They added that if a young man was tired of being asked by his wife’s father for a goat, he would not do the unpardonable act of merely saying so, but would rather agree to do so but always be “still looking for it” when asked about the goat (Ibid). One never says no to an older man or someone of senior position. A worker who is confronted by his boss about the dangers of smoking will exclaim, in deference to his superior, that he is quitting that day, when in fact he has no intention of

doing so, and both parties know it. Many first world ministers who go into the rural areas to evangelise and teach are amazed at how friendly and agreeable their audience was, given the nods of agreement and profuse thanks they received after their teaching. But a few questions afterward often reveal how little the listeners understood or how much they disagreed with what was said. Nonetheless, respect is always accorded to age and to the *umfundisi*. Even at a funeral, where the visiting pastor was almost a total stranger to the deceased, he will nonetheless be given a seat at the front and asked to give a few comments. Such is the outworking of the ethical code fostered by the African philosophy of *ubuntu*.

4.3.6.3 Ubuntu as it affects OVC

Ubuntu also has an obvious and incredibly important social significance for orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa. Archbishop Tutu made his famous quote regarding *ubuntu* in 2000 when he wrote,

“A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole, and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed” (Tutu, 2000:1).

Ubuntu sees someone else's need, especially that of a child, as one's own problem. Because *ubuntu* stresses the connection of all human beings and provides an ethic of compassion, care, humble service, the preservation of life, and the restoration of humanity in the African community, these children are seldom truly alone. Children are never orphans since the roles of mother and father are by definition not vested in a single individual with respect to a single child. A man or a woman with *ubuntu* will never allow any child around him to be an orphan. Often the writer has had to turn down well-meaning “voluntourists” who want to come to South Africa to “be with” the orphans, as though they feel that the children are sitting alone by the scores on dusty hillsides with no adults to look after them. OVC who are truly left alone without adult help are highly exceptional; such cases seem to exist only in isolated areas where too many

adults have perished or have moved to the cities for work (Maqoko, 2007:720, 730).

Beyond the thousands of extended family who are looking after OVC, small businesses are now being challenged, in the spirit of *ubuntu*, to help teenage orphans find work as they enter adulthood. Venter (2008:77) conducted numerous interviews and found businessmen who felt that “given the opportunity to develop, an orphan would not only be highly delighted but would tend to work harder and be more diligent than people who were of a privileged background.” Venter (2008:86) argued that family-run businesses who employ orphans not only engage in philanthropy by investing back into society, but alleviate poverty, instil values, build community morale for social responsibility, train the child in self-discipline, and possibly create entrepreneurs. The spirit of *ubuntu* would give an emotional soul to a business.

Unfortunately, some men misuse the value of submission and respect in the culture for their own nefarious ends, such as with child rape where 91% of the perpetrators know the child and 20% are acting in a fatherly capacity such as an uncle, step-father, grandfather, or the husband of the mother (Panoussian, 2005:1). OVC are particularly vulnerable since immediate family are one’s strongest defenders. South Africa leads the world in rape generally, but child and infant rape has increased dramatically over the past two decades with roughly 67,000 cases of child rape reported in 2010; about 183 each day. Welfare groups estimate that this is about a tenth of the actual cases (Rape, 2011:1). A little girl born in South Africa has a greater chance of being raped while she is growing up than of learning how to read (Lichtenberg, 2011:1).

4.3.7 The persistence of the Niger-Congo African worldview

Much of the above discussion deals with the past and the pure Niger-Congo African traditional worldview, and is perhaps an overly simplistic view of traditional African religions and culture. There are a decreasing number of South Africans who think only this way, although Theron (1996:11) and Anderson (1993:29) argue that African traditional religions and African worldviews continue to influence Africans in spite of modernisation and urbanisation. In addition to the more recent secular influences, there have been almost two centuries of mission

activity in southern Africa, and thus, according to the 2001 national census, almost 80% of the South African population professed to be Christian, 16% claimed to have no religious affiliation, and only .5% followed only an African traditional religion (State, 2010:1). The census also reported that many combine Christian and indigenous religious practices.

There is therefore a three-way struggle in South African culture between African traditionalism, Western Christianity, and secular materialism. One who keeps an eye on the news can readily discern this great struggle. The lively debates in the media and on the streets as to how many wives and women the President should have, the role of sangomas in first-world events, the redistribution of farmland, initiation ceremonies for young men, genital mutilation of girls, or the continuation of the Reed Dance ceremonies each year in KwaZulu-Natal all involve the ongoing, deep, and important wrestling match between our society's competing core values.

4.3.7.1 Challenged by Christianity

One might well ask how the traditional worldview persists in South Africa, despite the prevalence of Christianity and the fact that South Africa is the most modernised country on the continent. Part of the answer is that the traditional worldview contains a deep ontology and cosmogony (du Toit, 2004:30). These metaphysical ideas extend back several millennia and are an integral part of the societal fabric not only in Africa, but in the massive traditional cultures of Asia, and Latin America. The West brought technologies, ideas, values, and perspectives to Africa during the colonial era, and is still bringing these in the current global business environment, but as conquerors and outsiders, Westerners never built the relational bridge to support meaningful dialogue on the deeper metaphysical issues, and therefore never went deep enough for long enough with enough people to meaningfully modify the underlying African traditional worldview. Jayakaran (1999:33) explains that if one were to draw three concentric circles, the outermost circle could be labelled as behaviour, the middle circle as beliefs, and the innermost circle as worldview. Behaviour can be controlled by outside influences, and beliefs need stronger penetrative indoctrination to bring about

change, but the controlling centre of worldview, “if it is not properly understood, analysed and ‘disciplined,’ will by default revert to its original worldview.”

From the 15th century onward, Africa faced the increasing colonial ambitions of European powers, and with colonial expansion also came Western missionaries. Africans were faced with fighting colonial armies on the one hand, and being pressed with European religion on the other. Europeans felt that with the dawn of modern civilisation in Africa, traditional ideas would simply fall away. Hiebert (1998:18) notes that in the 1800s, at the height of Western colonial and missionary fervour, European thinking was increasingly affected by evolution, in which humankind was viewed as progressively evolving from primitive to civilised society. In the thinking of cultural evolutionists, animistic and ancestor-worshipping religions were viewed as the “prelogical” era of human thought, which then evolved into the polytheistic religions, and thereafter into monotheism in the “protological” era, and then finally into science and technology in final “logical” era of man’s thinking. European powers

“used this theory to justify the colonial expansion of Western governments and the spread of science and technology around the world. In this view, religious beliefs associated with magic, earthly spirits, living ancestors, witchcraft, curses, divination, and evil eye were seen as superstitions to be eradicated by the introduction of scientific knowledge. Because such beliefs would die out, there was no need to study or understand them as serious explanation systems” (Hiebert, 1998:18).

In the colonialist mind, the continent of Africa was a “haunt of savages,” was held in utter contempt, and was surely cursed by God (Sugirtharajah, 2002:17). The missionary-sending churches of Europe and America likewise assumed that the light of the gospel would dispel heathen darkness, both religious and cultural. In the thinking of many missionaries, the success of Christianisation depended on Westernisation, and religious conversions were followed by disciplining Africans into new cultural norms. Modern African theologians feel that this led to a cultural deprivation among African converts, where they felt like foreigners in their own churches (Bedaiko, 1996:4). Pobee (1982:168) notes:

“All of the historical churches by and large implemented the doctrine of the *tabula rasa*, i.e., the missionary doctrine that there is nothing in the non-Christian culture on which the missionary can build and, therefore, every aspect of the traditional non-Christian culture had to be destroyed before Christianity could be built up.”

Missionaries did their best to combat and destroy superstitions with biblical and scientific truth in piecemeal fashion, but because they didn't sufficiently address the foundational metaphysical issues or explain the fundamental change in worldviews that the Bible brings, the understanding of basic realities, the fears and superstitions, and the methods of dealing with them, did not go away. Further, missionaries who brought the gospel failed to recognise their own composite Western worldview, a mixture of Biblical truth, cultural Christianity, and the social values of Western society. Failing to understand their own cultural baggage and dismissing the significance and depth of the African culture, missionaries communicated a simple formulaic gospel followed by a long list of ethical behavioural commands that modified African behaviour somewhat, but failed to capture the mind and heart of the culture. Turaki (1999:10) commented:

“The problem of presenting and transmitting the Gospel of Christ is created by how the African sees, understands, interprets and constructs Christianity within his traditional religious worldview and context. This very seeing, understanding, interpreting and constructing of Christianity depended very much on how he, the African, received Christianity from his Christian mentors, the Western missionaries. The missionary model of presentation was overwhelmingly negative of the African pre-Christian religious and cultural heritage.... Nevertheless, the African received the Gospel while standing on the platform of his African religious and cultural heritage. How the Gospel was presented in Africa, created its own problems for Christianity in Africa.”

It seems that in the past Western Christian missionaries failed to walk with Africans long enough to properly understand their worldview and culture, to differentiate biblical from unbiblical elements, to celebrate biblical agreement with certain cultural values and practices, and to leave negative elements to the

transformation that the gospel and discipleship would bring. As a Christian Ndebele woman working with OVC, Ntuli (2011: Interview 1) commented to the writer that there is a difference between African culture and African traditional religion. "Culture has to do with the people themselves, their language, ways of communicating, respect, clothing, the way we decorate our homes, and the foods we like – things that are good and right – but religion and worship of ancestors is not the people themselves. They are just wrong ideas about God and spiritual powers" (Ntuli, Interview 1). Western Christians perhaps also failed to present a simple gospel in the context of the chronologically progressive story and message of Scripture and as part of the biblical worldview. There were exceptions, of course, such as Colenso who walked for a long time with the Zulus and helped to translate the Scriptures for them, noting amazing similarities between their culture and that of ancient Israel (Sugirtharajah, 2002:49-50).

"Acknowledging the centrality of Scripture ... does not mean that we demonize our own traditional culture When light passes through a prism, a rainbow of colours is revealed. Similarly, when our cultures pass through the prism of Scripture, we see them in a new way. The light and shade intrinsic to our cultures are revealed. We are no longer being defined by our traditions, but are allowing Scripture to interpret those traditions" (Adeyemo, 2006:3).

A large percentage of the African population adopted Christianity as their faith in the 19th century and assimilated Christian vocabulary into their worldview. Wanting to please the missionaries, many Africans simply moved their ideas underground. They split their lives into formal and functional, ostensibly Christian but practically pagan, and if challenged for their duplicity, touted their practices as "traditional" or a matter of culture; to lose these practices was to lose their African-ness. They went to church, but also had African traditional beliefs, with traditional medicine, and traditional healers. Williamson (1965:158) lamented:

"[African] Christians live on two unreconciled levels. They are members of a church and ascribe to a statement of faith. But below a system of conscious beliefs are deeply embedded traditions and customs implying quite a different interpretation of the universe and the world of spirit from

the Christian interpretation. In the crises of life and rites of passage, the Church is an alien thing.”

Today, these attitudes persist, even to the point of denying the religious nature of the beliefs and rituals, instead calling them African “traditions” that must be preserved against the challenges of Western modernity and colonialism (Prinsloo, 2011). Hiebert (1998:15) called this “split-level Christianity,” and stated that today “deeply committed Christians faithfully attend church services and pray to God in times of need, but feel compelled during the week to go to a local shaman for healing, a diviner for guidance, and an exorcist for deliverance from spirit oppression.” Shorter (1977:10) commented:

At Baptism, the African Christian repudiates remarkably little of his former non-Christian outlook. He may be obliged to turn his back on certain traditional practices which the Church, rightly or wrongly, has condemned in his area, but he is not asked to recant a religious philosophy.... Consequently, he returns to the forbidden practices as occasion arises with remarkable ease. Conversion to Christianity is for him sheer gain, an ‘extra’ for which he has opted. It is an overlay on his original religious culture.... Consequently, the African Christian operates with two thought systems at once, and both of them are closed to the other.”

Such an inconsistent split between formal and functional beliefs is not uncommon in Western cultures either, where church-goers live during the week as if there is no God, but many Western Christians who become involved in compassion ministry in the African community fail to understand the quiet syncretism of the two ontologically inconsistent belief systems in the communities in which they work.

4.3.7.2 The African Independent Church movement

While it will not be extensively discussed in this work, Western volunteers also need to recognise that the syncretised Christian and African Traditional religions became institutionalised and safeguarded in the indigenous Pentecostal-style churches begun in the 20th century by African leaders who had been influenced by Pentecostal missionaries. These churches, known as African Independent

Churches, are free from external control, unlike the Assemblies of God or the Apostolic Faith Mission churches that have ties overseas.

Although smaller isolated attempts at indigenisation were made in the late 1800s, the first major step toward Africanising the African Church took place with the founding of the Zion Christian Church or ZCC by Engenas Lekganyane (1885-1948). Lekganyane had been baptised and ordained in the Zion Apostolic Church, but following a division with its leaders, he joined the Zion Apostolic Faith Mission and served as a regional leader until another division occurred in 1924, at which time he allegedly received a vision from God to start a new church (Heath, 2008:1). The ZCC churches focus on power and manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the church, faith healing, revelations through dreams, abstention from pork, the wearing of special garments, riverine baptism, and freedom for Africans to worship in their own cultural way, including the veneration of ancestors (Anderson, 1993:26). Congregations multiplied throughout Limpopo Province and into neighbouring Botswana and Rhodesia. After going through more splits, the church officially registered in 1947, just before the onset of official apartheid policy, and with the opposition to the colonial government, the secret syncretism of the past became increasingly public and then was advocated as part of the process of decolonialising Christianity.

The African independent church movement was not just a rejection of European cultural values, it was also aimed at revitalizing the African society. According to some scholars, the separatist movement can be seen as the struggle of the African to assert his significance as a human being. His culture and religious views had been disrupted by the impact of Western culture (Steinitz, 2006:96). He had surrendered it in the face of the overwhelming presence and awe-inspiring wonders of the white man. He was then left without significance, and his degeneration as a human being began. The African initiated churches are part of the story in restoring this sense of purpose (Vilakazi, 2001:282).

The ZCC grew to be South Africa's largest denomination, and adherents can be seen all over South Africa proudly displaying their badges; the five-pointed silver star with a green and black ribbon on hats, lapels, shirt pockets or caps. Anderson's research in Shoshanguve, Pretoria in 1993 (1993:30) indicated that

only 4% of the Pentecostals interviewed practised the ancestor cult in any way, compared to 43% in the mission churches, 54% in the indigenous Pentecostal-type churches, and 68% in the indigenous Ethiopian-type churches. Leaders are often referred to as prophets, and if the leader becomes very great and is considered spiritually strong, like Isaiah Shembe of the Nazareth Baptist Church, he may be referred to as Messianic. As of the 2000 census, almost 12% of South Africa's population belonged to the ZCC (State, 2010:1; STATSSA, 2003:74). Another 8.2% were associated with the Pentecostal mission churches that were started by white Pentecostal missionaries in the early twentieth century and are still generally under white influence or domination, the largest being the Apostolic Faith Mission and the Assemblies of God.

Thus, Christian volunteers entering into the African culture today face not only a complexity and mixing of beliefs, but often different levels of beliefs. Many Christians have broken free of belief in the ancestors, stating that it is a very deep and difficult belief to overcome consistently. But they add that many professing Christians who uphold their local pastor (*umfundisi*) as a man of God and faithfully attend church, when faced with difficulties will pray fervently, but if the situation isn't resolved, will secretly seek the help of a sangoma.

4.4 A Christlike⁴ response to African worldviews

When a Christlike first-world volunteer reaches out in compassion to minister to orphans and vulnerable children and their caregivers, he or she must first engage in adaptive ministry, as has been noted above, asking, listening, learning, and morphing to become as the African, as someone who is poor, yet without sin (John 1:14; Luke 2:52; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23). The Apostle Paul emphasised the importance of there being a harmony between the gospel lived among the people and the gospel spoken to the people.

⁴ By "Christlike," the writer is referring to one who not only espouses the tenets of the Christian faith, but reflects the meek, incarnational servant-leadership of Jesus Christ. Much evil has been foisted upon the African community using the terms "Christian" and "Church," and therefore, it is sad to say that a "Christian" response is simply not sufficient. One must search more deeply in the Scriptures and rediscover the humble servant's spirit Jesus maintained in his first coming, who did not seek to impose and coerce, but to love, adapt, serve, and teach.

“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you. You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed” (1996, 1 Thessalonians 2:8-10).

Secondly, the Christlike first-world volunteer must guard against an attitude of superiority or paternalism, as Elmer point out, “taking the robe but not the towel” (Elmer, 2006:23).

“Usually superiority appears in disguises that pretend to be virtues – virtues such as

- I need to correct their error (meaning I have superior knowledge, a corner on truth)
- My education has equipped me to know what is best for you (so let me do most of the talking while you do most of the listening and changing)
- I am here to help you (so do as I say)
- I can be your spiritual mentor (so I am your role model)
- Let me disciple you, equip you, train you (often perceived as ‘let me make you into a clone of myself’)

These and other so-called virtues corrupt our attempts to serve others” (Elmer, 2006:17).

As products of their comfortable lives in a first-world culture, volunteers often engage in a sort of cultural imperialism, where they focus on transforming the world in which the suffering person lives rather than working to see God change the suffering person from the inside out. Volunteers often fail to see that they are the products and prisoners of their own culture, which is beset by myriad vices that come with wealth and comfort. As evangelical leaders wrote decades ago,

“We must have the humility to take the trouble to understand and appreciate the culture of those to whom we go.... We repent of the

ignorance which assumes that we have all the answers and that our only role is to teach. We have very much to learn. We repent also of judgemental attitudes. We know we should never condemn or despise another culture, but rather respect it. We advocate neither the arrogance which imposes our culture on others, nor the syncretism which mixes the gospel with cultural elements incompatible with it, but rather a humble sharing of the good news—made possible by the mutual respect of a genuine friendship” (Lausanne, 1978:16).

The Cape Town Commitment of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, held in 2010, echoed this same sentiment in response to centuries of well-intentioned cultural imperialism often led by missionaries:

“B) ... Our love for all peoples reflects God’s promise to bless all nations on earth and God’s mission to create for himself a people drawn from every tribe, language, nation and people.... Godly love, however, also includes critical discernment, for all cultures show not only positive evidence of the image of God in human lives, but also the negative fingerprints of Satan and sin. We long to see the gospel embodied and embedded in all cultures, redeeming them from within so that they may display the glory of God and the radiant fullness of Christ. We look forward to the wealth, glory and splendour of all cultures being brought into the city of God – redeemed and purged of all sin, enriching the new creation. *Such love for all peoples* demands that we reject the evils of racism and ethnocentrism, and treat every ethnic and cultural group with dignity and respect, on the grounds of their value to God in creation and redemption. (Lausanne, 2011:15).

Thirdly, Christlike first-world volunteers must recognise the overall differences and similarities between their worldview and the African worldview they will encounter in the informal settlements, townships, and villages. They must also learn to separate the elements in the African worldview that, from a biblical perspective, 1) are in harmony with God’s truth, 2) are extra-biblical and benign to God’s truth, and 3) are unbiblical and opposed to God’s truth. There are elements in every culture that are not incompatible with the lordship of Christ, and those ideas and values can be preserved and modified somewhat rather than being threatened or

discarded. As believers develop a deep understanding of their host culture, and a genuine appreciation of it, they will be able to “perceive whether the resistance is to some unavoidable challenge of Jesus Christ or to some threat to the culture which, whether imaginary or real, is not necessary” (Lausanne, 1978:13).

The modern secular worldview permeating the West is a single-tiered antisupernaturalistic view of life; a belief that there is nothing but the material, the sensory, and the scientific realm (see figure 4.1 below, modified from Myers 2006:8).

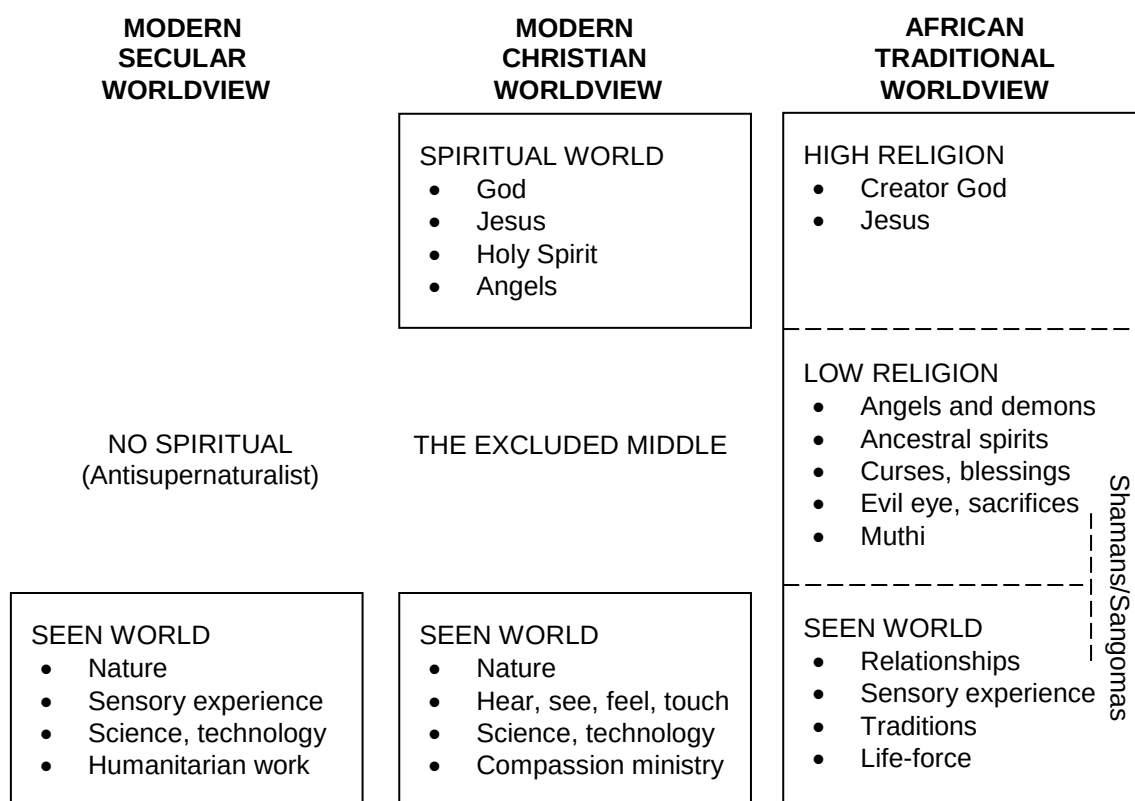


Figure 4.1 Comparison of secular, Christian, and African worldviews

Hiebert (1998:76) notes that the modern Christian worldview is two-tiered: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, angels, and spiritual activities are in the upper tier, and in the bottom tier are the physical world, sensory experiences, and science and technology. In the African traditional worldview, “there are no ontological gaps between existing entities. The Western, natural-supernatural dualism is foreign to them. God, humankind, extrahumans, and subhumans are all regarded as integral parts of a single totality of existence” (Du Toit, 2004:30). Traditional cultures have an entire realm of ancestors, sub-deities, angels, and other spirits

seamlessly located in the middle, that influence much of what happens in day to day life, and must be revered, communicated with, and appeased. Such are the great differences of these three worldviews.

Several theologians have commented that the biblical worldview is actually closer to the African traditional worldview than it is to the Western Christian worldview, and that, with a few key exceptions, is quite compatible with the overall message of the Bible (Bedaiko, 1995:97; Mbiti, 1998:140-42). Myers (2006:8) argues:

“The biblical worldview is holistic in the sense that the physical world is never understood as being disconnected or separate from the spiritual world and the rule of the God who created it. Moreover, Christ – the creator, sustainer, and redeemer of the creation – is both in us and interceding for us at the right hand of God the Father. The fact that the Word became flesh explodes the claim that the spiritual and physical can be separated meaningfully.”

The modern secular world misses everything spiritual, and dismisses spiritual activity as primitive superstition. Even the Western Christian worldview fails to consider the excluded middle realm, and therefore, Christian workers often fail to appreciate the fears and behavioural rationales in the African culture (Hiebert, 1998:78; Schwartz, 1977:7). For instance, when a fire takes place on a stove, a Western Christian will likely attribute the problem to their own lack of care (bottom tier) or state that sometimes God allows these things to happen (top tier). They will not likely blame ancestors or wicked spirits (middle tier) for the fire. In the African worldview, any such house fire, or virtually any kind of evil, takes place because an ancestor or some other spirit has been offended, or someone has used witchcraft.

Having noted the basic differences and similarities in their worldviews, Christian volunteers must delineate the positive, neutral, and negative elements of the African worldview in light of Scriptural teaching. This is not a simple, brief, or objective process, and the Africa Bible Commentary (Adeyemo) is about the most comprehensive treatment this writer has seen evaluating African ideas in light of Scripture. Van Rooy (2006:1) notes that if Christians are unaware of these differences in worldview,

“the Christian message will not be understood, but will be distorted in order to fit into the existing worldview of Africans. God will become a remote, impersonal being; the Holy Spirit will be reinterpreted as an ancestral spirit and will function accordingly in the young churches. Many elements of the Christian gospel will make no sense in the context of the traditional worldview, and will therefore not be of any significance in the life of the converts.”

Van Rooy therefore advocates that “the Christian message should not be communicated in isolated fragments, but that the main elements of the message should be communicated as a whole and against the background of the traditional African worldview in as short a time as possible” (Van Rooy, 2006:1). This was rarely done in the past. Most African church leaders learned basic Christian theology, held to it despite its incongruity with their own private ideas, and were pressed into the liturgical moulds of American and European missionaries.

Christlike volunteers have the privilege of reasoning from the Scriptures and presenting to those in the African worldviews a biblical God who, although magnificently transcendent and above our complete understanding, is a God who has revealed himself and his moral will for mankind (Exodus 20:1-17; Micah 6:8, Matthew 5-7). He is an eternal spirit (Isaiah 57:15; John 4:24), not the oldest ancestor who remains in a body in a distant place with other things to do. As their Creator, he is not distant or far away or busy; he is a God who knows when the sparrow falls, who knows the numbers of hairs on their heads, and who “is not far from each one of us” (Bible, 2001: Acts 17:27). God not only knows them personally but keeps record of their every thought, motive and intent, for which they will have to answer one day (Proverbs 16:2; 1 Corinthians 4:5, Revelation 20:12), and although each person’s sins are great, God loves them individually, and sent His Son, the God-Man Jesus Christ, to die a vicarious death for them and rise triumphant over sin, death, Satan, and hell (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8, 1 John 2:2). After placing their faith and trust in him, they are reborn to a new life and life-change from the inside out through his Spirit that comes to indwell them (Romans 8:9, 2 Corinthians 5:17, 1 Peter 1:23). God has come near to them, dwelling inside them, and as believer-priests, when they have prayers and

petitions they need only speak to God directly through Jesus, who remains the only mediator between them and God (Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Timothy 2:5, 1 Peter 2:5, 9). Thus, the Christian worldview, although using the basic structure of the traditional worldview, presents a God who is accessible, one with whom a person can enter a personal relationship, and one to whom a person can draw near and with whom he or she can freely communicate (Parris, 2008:1; Hebrews 10:19-22).

The biblical worldview also includes the existence and operation of angelic and demonic spirits in the material world, but denies the involvement of ancestral spirits, holding that the departed dead go to either heaven or hell at death and do not remain in the natural world (Luke 16:20-31; 2 Corinthians 5:6-10; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:11-15). The cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 12:1 is a reference to Jewish heroes of the faith who witness to the faithfulness of God, rather than being representative of the spirits of departed ancestors who are watching us (Adeyemo, 2006:1531).

But how can the periodic miraculous occurrences, after prayers have been made to the ancestors, be explained? The Bible is very clear about the kingdoms of Christ and Satan being in conflict, and it seems that the best explanation is that malignant spirits impersonate ancestral spirits. Demons can impersonate deceased people by appearing in a form that resembles them. Many people in Africa claim to have received messages from deceased family members, delivered either physically or in a dream. Many such incidents actually involve impersonation by demons (Adeyemo, 2006:1480). Flip Buys of the Mukhanyo Theological College noted to the writer that the college uses video footage of Satanic ceremonies in the United States to document to its students that local ceremonies of sangomas using herbs and blood sacrifices to appease ancestors are virtually identical to those used in Satanist congregations; that some of traditional medicine is actually occult practice. While this may be documented, such a view and its messenger would likely be rejected outright. The better alternative is to stress the closeness of God in hearing our prayers, the power of God that far exceeds ancestors, the love of God that is promised to work all things together for good to those who love Him, the superiority of Christ as our mediator,

and the work of the Spirit who also intercedes for us by praying according to the will of the Father.

“The best approach may be modelled on the one taken in the book of Hebrews, which was written against a religious background similar to that found in traditional African religions. Taking this approach, it can be said that Jesus has come to fulfil our African ancestral cult and has taken the place of our ancestors, replacing them with himself. He has become the mediator between God and African society. Consequently, African veneration, worship and respect for the ancestors should now properly be addressed to Jesus as the mediator. All the ‘intermediaries’ of African theology or of any other religion or culture are inferior to the person and work of Christ. He is the superior mediator by virtue of this deity and his work of redemption. And just as he fulfilled, transformed and supplanted the Jewish religious system, so he has fulfilled, transformed and supplanted the ancestral cult and traditional religions of Africa” (Adeyemo, 2006:480).

The virtues of the *ubuntu* philosophy are in accord with the interpersonal and community virtues in the biblical worldview and should be stressed and built upon by a Christlike volunteer. African commentator Adeyemo (2006:1251) described the Good Samaritan, noted above for his compassion, as one “with *ubuntu*, that is, someone who is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, with a servant spirit that affirms others and says ‘I am because you are; you are because I am.’” Western Christians, families, and churches could all benefit from some theological reflection on the African value of community and humanity (Setiloane, 2000:57). The change toward Christlikeness in an individual brought about by the gospel should result in those transformed individuals being committed to a community (*koinonia*) of both men and women, and people from many races, ethnic groups, walks of life and social classes (Galatians 3:28). The end of the Great Commission is to bring new disciples of Jesus Christ into communities of believers, local assemblies called churches (Acts 14:21-23). This redeemed community, committed to a selfless love of God and others, should set the example of *ubuntu* in the world by compassionately doing good to all men

(Galatians 6:10), by opposing injustice in society, by sharing resources with the needy, and by empowering the weak (2 Corinthians 8:9-15). No Christian should be an independent solitary entity.

“One is human precisely in being enveloped in the community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of life. To be is to participate. Such human interdependence is built into our very creation by our being created in God’s image. Recognizing our identity in each other shows us that we are more than either black or white, with abilities or disabilities, women or men—we are all human. People with *ubuntu* will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to carry out courageous acts of good works, especially towards the poor and the oppressed” (Adeyemo, 2006:1230).

Ubuntu is the predominant African traditional value that motivates mothers and grandmothers to take OVC under their roofs and feed them. It is the fulfilment of *thandanani* – the command to love one another (Adeyemo, 2006:877). The foundation for the solutions to the orphan-care crisis, therefore, lies in assisting, not supplanting, the informal foster-care network that already exists by reason of this cultural value. Not unless there are exceptional circumstances, such as abandonment or abuse or the absence of sufficient adults, should OVC be taken out of their communities and away from their people.

African churches have been trying to fill in the gaps left by government and other institutions (Steinitz, 2006:98; Tearfund, 2006:13-14). Just as *ubuntu* holds an African community together, *ubuntu* mixed with compassion, selfless love, service, and other Christlike virtues, should also hold together and motivate spiritual sub-communities known as local churches to care for OVC, or to assist those who do (Steinitz, 2006:93). The great advantage in South Africa is that small churches seem to be everywhere in the African communities, and are linked together formally and informally, but the disadvantage is that many are poor and ill-equipped to provide meaningful assistance (Steinitz, 2006:97-98; Tearfund, 2006:11). They need land, resources, training, and support in capacity building, OVC foster care, and counselling. As will be noted in the study of the Hands At Work ministry in Chapter 5, it is at community level that people living with HIV/AIDS find comfort and support, or suffer rejection and discrimination. Local

churches can lead the way in spreading awareness rather than reinforcing ignorance and by building a climate of compassion and solidarity. Community-based responses are always more cost effective and sustainable. Christian care workers are in close proximity to OVC and can mobilise support from within the community to assist affected families. Mobilised local churches are, therefore, a key to meeting the needs of an increasing OVC population (AFSA, 2007:7).

There is an important difference between meditating upon and practicing *ubuntu* and being enslaved or paralysed by it. *Ubuntu* has a bright side and a dark side; so often, a culture's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. "Suffocating community" can quench the drive and difference that individualism, initiative, and entrepreneurship might make in improving society (Meiring, 2007:747). Even an atheist argued that true reformed biblical Christianity is the only thing that can deliver Africa from this crushing group-think (Parris, 2008:1). The Bible teaches both community and individualism; sometimes strong leadership is needed, even from those who are younger or are women (Adeyemo, 2006:546).

Further, those who practice African traditional values often deny an objective standard, exclude a God-orientation from their rationale and motivations, and do not hold the virtue of others-orientation in check and balance with other virtues that are equally important, such as truth, which is actually the currency of relationships. One's superiors and the collective society become gods and redefine what sin and evil are. One will deceive and lie in order to please, and on the other hand, one will hurt and murder to visit retribution on those who have stolen or committed other crimes. The ethical teachings of Christ and the Apostles stand in stark contrast to these sins (Matthew 5-7, Ephesians 4:17-6:9).

A Christlike volunteer entering a traditional cultural setting to work with OVC in the community needs to be aware of the power of the traditional African belief system, to celebrate its strengths, and to operate within its guidelines while maintaining a Christlike servant attitude, a personal commitment to all biblical virtue, and a desire to communicate the gospel and the moral/ethical teachings of Scripture.

4.5 A comparison of African and Western cultures

Foreigners who visit South Africa often comment on the vast disparity of wealth and dissimilar cultures that exist side by side here. The first world is the next door neighbour of the third world. One can visit a stunning mall flanked by lavish hotels and restaurants and ten minutes later be in a squatter shack in a township or informal settlement. Yet, for all of their closeness, those in the third world aspire to first world living conditions, but not necessarily to the values that brought about such living conditions. And beyond the rumours, racial profiles, and anecdotes they hear, few in the first world care to learn about the third world culture or the traditional African worldview. As Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, the two worlds are strangers living side by side. Related to the African worldview and extending from it, the African community holds to a set of cultural values that are very different from culturally Western values. The deep-seated and behaviour-programming views of both groups regarding elements of life such as context, time, order, leadership, uncertainty, risk, individualism, status, and vulnerability are almost diametrically opposed. Adapting one's person and message to the African way of thinking is indeed a challenge for Western volunteers.

4.5.1 Businesspersons shifting from traditional to Western values

This chapter has focused on the ethics of a first world volunteer going into a third world African setting. To understand the difficulty of their transition into an African culture, it is instructive to look at the opposite scenario; a third world African moving into a first world setting in the business world. Prozesky (2008) conducted a study evaluating tensions between Western values and African traditional values in the marketplace, and he noted that emerging African businesspeople have changed from their traditional views in varying degrees based on their experiences. Prozesky (2008:2) identified seven values in the business world that have traditionally been considered Western, but due to the interconnectedness of globalisation are now "global business values." They are:

- Enterprise
- Competitiveness
- Individualism
- Material success

- Sustainability
- Good governance
- Social investment

By way of contrast, he then identified five key aspects of African traditional culture in the new South Africa (Prozesky, 2008:4):

- The presence and power of the ancestral spirits and the consequent need for traditional ritual observances
- Respect for strong but caring leadership
- A strong sense of the importance of *isithunzi* (meaning life-force, moral influence, or prestige)
- Their experiences with colonialism/apartheid, and experiences since it has diminished (or changed shape)
- Mutual supportiveness and respect signified by the word *ubuntu*.

Prozesky (2008:3) suggested that four different levels of change that might be experienced by an African working in the urban business community.

- The first group is comprised of traditional people with a strong sense of belonging to their particular cultural and ethnic tradition. Few of these are in higher positions in the corporate world.
- The second group has embraced Christianity to the extent that it defines their values more than traditional culture. He noted that both traditional notions as well as Christian values could conflict with business values.
- The third group has embraced the values of the secular west, and not Christianity, and he felt that these were few but growing in number. They are affluent, urban-based, English-speaking Africans who are very comfortable with business values.
- The fourth group, that he felt was most disturbing, was composed of Africans who turned their backs on traditional or any other guiding culture and became ravenous “takers” who were self-serving and cared nothing for the community.

As a result of his pilot study, Prozesky (2008:4) found that African business people face ongoing struggles because “some of the western expectations of their

companies clash with things that are important, even essential, to them as Africans.” Those interviewed indicated the following preferences:

- External (especially spiritual) control as primary, not autonomy
- Supportiveness above competition
- Community above individualism
- Wealth is holistic, not just financial or material”
- Time is qualitative, not quantitative
- Leadership must be established through care and integrity, not power and status
- Employees are firstly people, not workers or staff (Prozesky, 2008:4-5).

Just as the traditional African entering the global marketplace will never fully shed his cultural values but always keep them in tension and dissonance with his or her surroundings, the Western volunteer entering African traditional culture will likewise battle to adapt to the vastly different cultural milieu.

4.5.2 Four elements of cultural differences

The globalisation of industry, business, and missions over the past two decades has brought together business people from vastly different Western and traditional cultures, and in many companies they are working together on the same teams (Lanier, 2010:12, Livermore, 2009:18; Plueddemann, 2009:21). The many humorous stories and horror stories from the often sudden mixing of cultures has actually prompted a paradigm shift in leadership research with scholars focusing on multicultural communication, understanding, trust, and consensus-building. In the literature, there are many ways of dividing up and analysing cultures. For instance, Lanier (2000:15-21) summed up the differences as hot and cold climate cultures. Hall (1976) examined high-context and low context cultures. Peterson (2004:58) writes about cultural comparisons in the five areas of equality v. hierarchy, direct v. indirect, individual v. group, task v. relationship, and risk v. caution. Lingenfelter and Mayers (2003:33) made the six comparisons of time orientation v. event orientation, dichotomistic thinking v. holistic thinking, crisis (control) orientation v. non-crisis (risk) orientation, task orientation v. person orientation, status focus v. achievement focus, and concealment of vulnerability v.

transparency of vulnerability. While all of these books contain helpful perspectives and discussions, and no two seem to capture the same nuances, two enormous studies have been ground-breaking and are referenced in many of the works. Geert Hofstede's research (2001:41) of IBM employees in seventy countries evaluated the five elements of:

- High power-distance v. low-power distance,
- Individualism v. collectivism,
- Uncertainty tolerance v. uncertainty avoidance,
- Masculinity v. femininity, and
- Long-term orientation v. short-term orientation.

His evaluation of IBM employees in South Africa is found on the web (Hofstede, 2009:1). The ongoing GLOBE study of 62 societies, documented in a massive volume, also explores leadership and organisation in a multicultural environment, evaluating elements such as performance orientation, future orientation, gender roles, assertiveness, individualism, power distance, humane orientation, and uncertainty avoidance (House, 2004:235-720). Gleaning from what the two studies have in common, one can readily note, aside from worldview and religious differences, the vast differences between African traditional culture and the cultures of first world volunteers. All of the studies stress that when two cultures collide, wise people must turn off the cruise control, move and speak cautiously, and take nothing for granted (Livermore, 2009:147; Lewis, 2006:5). Hall's observations about cultural high and low context, and the first three of Hofstede's five elements, have been broadly received and commented on by authors in the field of cross-cultural ethics and seem to encompass the other evaluations of cultural differences. These cultural differences will be examined briefly below and comments made about ethically handling such differences in the OVC context.

4.5.2.1 High-context versus low-context cultures

According to Plueddemann (2009:78-79) who has made application of Hall's, Hofstede's, and the GLOBE's studies for missionaries, a high context culture is a one in which people are aware of what is happening around them, noticing the atmosphere of the room, the sounds and smells, the facial expressions, tones of voice, and body language of the people in it. The sensory world is emphasised

over the message or ideas being communicated. Harmonious relationships are valued, the group is more important than the individual, cooperation is more important than competition, quality time with people is more important than accomplishing a quantitative task, indirect or implicit communication is preferred over directness, and stability is preferred but change is resisted. Such cultures also have a cyclical view of time, are non-scheduled, favour ambiguous deadlines so as not to exalt task over people, have little or no personal space or privacy zone, and are polychronic, meaning that they are comfortable multiple things happening at the same time, which to others might seem to distract or interrupt (Hall, 1976:17-24). The African, Middle Eastern, Latin American, and some Asian cultures are high context cultures (Plueddemann, 2009:78).

Low context cultures, such as the Germanic, northern European and American cultures, emphasise content more than context, words and ideas more than the manner and method in which they are communicated, abstract ideas and concepts over concrete realities and stories, individual opinion over group consensus, entrepreneurship over solidarity, goals over relationships, direct and explicit communication over indirect or implicit communication, change more than stagnation, and are monochronic, meaning that they prefer one thing to happen at a time with no interruptions or distractions (Hall, 1976:91; Connerly, 2005:47). Such cultures also have a linear view of time in which schedules, pace, punctuality, and deadlines are important, and people value their personal space.

Plueddemann (2009:88) summarised the implications for these cultural differences in the organisational context in a chart (Figure 4.2). Of course, each person on the earth is unique and has his or her own temperament that may be congruous with the surrounding culture or not. While generalisations can be made, stereotyping must be avoided, especially since most South Africans are a mixture of cultural values and may respond one way under pressure and another way on holiday.

PERSPECTIVE	HIGH CONTEXT	LOW CONTEXT
Time	Many things happen at the same time. It may be difficult to begin and end a meeting on time, or to isolate one activity at a time.	Meetings begin and end on time and should be scheduled in an orderly sequence. People want to stick to the agenda.
Communication Style	Communication is indirect with emphasis on nonverbal messages. Tone of voice, posture and facial features have group meaning.	Communication is direct—either spoken or written. The idea being discussed is more important than the feelings behind the statement.
Authority	Prestige is given by the group and becomes almost permanent. Others will be expected to respect rank. Formal credentials are important and need to be evident. Age is often a criterion for respect.	Authority is earned by individual effort and accomplishment. It is temporary and dependent on continued successful performance. Formal credentials are not as important as performance.
Leadership Style	Leadership is usually controlling in order to maintain group harmony and conformity. The leader often has a charismatic personality. Leaders reward loyalty. Followers appreciate strong leaders.	Leaders allow others to have significant input into decision making. Followers are more likely to question the ideas and decision of the leader. Leaders respect individual initiative from group members.
Conflict Resolution Style	Indirect resolution is sought through mutual friends. Displeasure is shown through nonverbal, subtle communication. Direct conflict resolution may be avoided for as long as possible. Preserving harmony is emphasized.	Resolution is sought through direct confrontation. People will meet face to face and articulate difficulties verbally. Speaking the truth is emphasized and appreciated.
Goals	The highest goal is to build interpersonal relationships and make friends. Group harmony is highly valued.	Goals are task-oriented. The leader will want to accomplish a precise, predetermined job within a prescribed time frame.

Figure 4.2 Comparison and high-context and low context cultural values

Western volunteers endeavouring to help OVC are typically from low-context cultures and can become exasperated in the village milieu, even if they do understand the culture, because they perceive things as taking too long or never starting on time, they view people as being dishonest or unclear in their communication, and they feel that obvious solutions become bogged down in endless considerations. These differences become highlighted in emergencies. People in the host culture often see the complaining volunteer as reckless, defiant, proud, bold, unwise, shamelessly cold and independent, especially since they are not part of the community and haven't been there for very long. Pastor Muriu (2007:1) explained:

“When we communicate in Africa, we are very guarded in what we say. We don't want to offend. Westerners say that Africans never tell you what they really think. They tell you what you want to hear. And yes, that's true! Because from our perspective, every engagement between two people always has the potential of leading to a lifelong relationship, or preventing a lifelong friendship. Africa is a very relational continent. It's the relationships that make society work.... So we are always guarded and gracious in our communication. We want to guard the relationship. When the Bible says, "Speak the truth in love," we err on the side of love. The possibility of a relationship means I cannot tell you the total truth until I am secure in this relationship with you, until I know that the truth will not hurt this relationship.

[Americans] do it differently. Speaking the truth has a higher premium in your context, so you are unguarded. You speak the truth, call a spade a spade, at whatever cost. And if the relationship suffers, well, that's too bad, the important thing is that the truth was spoken. We never do that. I've had to learn to be more assertive in my dealings with Americans just so they would hear me! I have had to learn to speak truth more directly. Americans have to learn to listen to the relational side of things.”

A Christlike volunteer's surge of compassion must be coupled with enormous meekness, self-control, and patience with their host culture, noting that they are called to do God's will in behaviour, word, and action, rather than being the saviours of the children, meeting every need, or “fixing” the slow and disorganised culture they are visiting (Galatians 5:22-23). Although Western churches have de-formalised over the past decades, the writer has found African church services to be quite colourful and active, with loud singing and preaching, multiple things occurring at the same time, greetings and speeches by visiting people, pop-up special music items, people dancing their way up to the offering plate rather than it being passed to them, and an order of service that is determined as the service moves along. The church meeting is finished whenever everything is finished, and almost no one thinks to check their watch.

When teaching God's truth to children, volunteers must also stay with concrete ideas rather than using concepts and diagrams. An African pastor in

Hammanskraal noted to the writer that when presenting the gospel message in the African village context, it is important to simply tell the real stories of the Bible, highlighting the concept of substitute sacrifices from Creation to Christ, rather than using abstract concepts, such as the cross spanning the gulf separating God and mankind. He said that children would go out in the veld looking for a valley and the cross. Jesus used a progressive narrative method with the two men on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:27).

4.5.2.2 High-power distance versus low-power distance cultures

Every culture has people that it deems more powerful and influential than others, and societies develop cultural ideas to deal with inequalities. Some cultures have high power gaps according great respect and deference to those with high educational credentials, popular followings, positions in government, or extensive wealth. Other societies seek to minimise these differences by emphasizing equality and the right to climb through various levels of status through personal achievement. Both Hofstede (2001:79) and the GLOBE study (House, 2004:513) evaluated cultural differences in people's understandings of how power should be shared or not shared in a group or culture, something known as power distance. The GLOBE study (House, 2004:517) defines power distance as "the degree to which members of an organisation expect and agree that power should be shared unequally." Hofstede's definition is substantially similar (2005:46).

"In high power-distance cultures, both leaders and followers assume that the leader has more authority, respect and status symbols. The leader has the right to make unilateral decisions that will be obeyed without question. In these societies, employees do not question managers, students do not challenge teachers, and children obey parents or other elders without question.... Formal authority tends to be centralized.... Bosses are not questioned, and decisions are communicated from the top. For a leader in a high-power-distance culture to ask the advice of a subordinate could signal that the boss doesn't know how to lead." (Plueddemann, 2009:95).

Regions that are home to high-power distance cultures are Africa, Asia, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and much of Latin America (Hofstede, 2001:85). In such

cultures, notions of representative democratic government have a difficult time taking root until the culture makes a shift at the grassroots and educational levels.

“Leaders in low-power-distance cultures prefer a consultative, participative or democratic decision-making style. Power is delegated to team members or to subcommittees.... In very low-power-distance cultures, subordinates would expect to vote on each significant decision. Children expect parents to give them a rationale for their decisions. Employees are invited to give suggestions to management, and teachers are glad when students raise difficult questions.” (Plueddemann, 2009:95).

Regions that are home to low-power distance cultures are Northern Europe, the United States, Israel, Great Britain and its former colonies (Hofstede, 2001:85). Fascinatingly, corporate managers from every country that was polled in the GLOBE study, whether high-power or low-power distance countries, reported that “their societies practiced power distance more strongly than they believed they should” (House, 2004:539).

Holritz (2010:39) notes that religious beliefs are often foundational to power distance practices. Religions with hierarchical structures promote high-power-distance leadership values, or it may also be possible that cultures that value high power distance have historically provided a lovely home for hierarchical religions (Plueddemann, 2009:96). Islam, which emphasises submission, is very high power distance, as is Hinduism with its caste system (Christian, 1994:340). Confucianism is very hierarchical, which leads to high power distance practice in most of Asia.

On the contrary, countries impacted by Christianity are typically low-power distance cultures, although this is not always so because the Bible contains positive examples of both high-power and low-power distance cultures. Power distance between leaders and followers is not a matter of good v. evil. God did not take Aaron and Miriam’s challenge to Moses’ authority lightly (Numbers 12), and he harshly judged the sons of Korah who did the same (Numbers 16). While New Testament elders are not prophets on a Mosaic scale, Peter and the writer of Hebrews urged believers to be in subjection to them (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:5). On the other hand, Jesus excoriated the high-power distance culture of the

Pharisees of his day and taught his disciples, "Don't let anyone call you 'Rabbi,' for you have only one teacher, and all of you are equal as brothers and sisters." (2004: Matthew 23:8). Jesus also rebuked his disciples when they argued over who would have the chief places in the Kingdom (Matthew 10:25-28). Jesus was their Lord, and they his servants, but in his last day with them he said that they were no longer merely servants but friends (John 15:15). At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on all believers, not just leaders (Acts 2). Paul encouraged Timothy not to let anyone look down on him because he was a younger leader (1 Timothy 4:12). Aside from respect for the Apostles, the early church with its plurality of elders seemed to be fairly low-power-distance in its orientation, but due to the need to control heresies and coordinate a rapidly growing entity, the imperial church became more and more hierarchical, until it eventually held authority over heads of state (Plueddemann, 2009:97, 102). The Reformation brought back the belief in the priesthood of every believer and the authority of Scripture over ecclesiastical title-holders; the nations that birthed the Reformation are even today are some of the lowest power distance cultures (Hofstede, 2005:43).

Volunteers from predominantly low-power distance cultures must firstly accept the fact that the Bible does not frown upon high-power distance. Further, they must use great caution and show great respect to elders and position-holders when entering such cultures so as not to appear presumptuous and arrogant, or even be considered dangerous, and thereby be excluded. While paternalism may be frowned upon in some Western cultures, high-power-distance cultures value a rich and powerful leader, be it a president, parliamentarian or pastor, who loves and cares for his people. In Western culture, when a person of importance enters a room, people stand, acknowledge the person and perhaps approach with a handshake, but in African culture, people remain seated with their eyes on their work or the floor because they believe that to stand and make eye contact is to assert oneself as an equal to the important person. When addressed by the important person, they are happy to give a greeting.

Africa's OVC live in villages with established traditional, governmental, and organisational power structures. Bypassing the necessary stakeholders when

planning an event or creating a new organisation or initiative can be a great taboo. The writer has had conversations in the African community with local pastors and local government leaders who were very offended that they were not invited to a building's dedication or consulted about a new NGO in their village. For this reason, Christian volunteers should as much as possible work in a supportive role behind African churches or other faith-based NGOs whose leadership knows the culture and won't bypass the proper etiquette in the community.

4.5.2.3 Individualist versus collectivist cultures

Individualism and collectivism are two sides of the gauge of how individuals prioritize individual needs as against group needs. In collectivist societies, individuals are expected to look out for one another, unions and political parties are very important, and businesses are expected to protect their employees (Connerly, 2005:22). As noted above, collectivist thinking often arises as a result of mutual dependence due to the scarcity of goods, and it is therefore the predominant value system in third-world and emerging nations (Hofstede, 2005:74; Lederleitner, 2010:38). Lanier (2000:41) also makes the observation that collectivists tend to be from hot-climate cultures, whereas individualists are from cold-climate cultures. Hofstede (2005:87) comments:

“Personal opinions do not exist – they are predetermined by the group A child who repeatedly voices opinions deviating from what is collectively felt is considered to have bad character The loyalty to the group that is an essential element of the collectivist family also means that resources are shared. If one member of an extended family of twenty persons has a paid job and the others do not, the earning member is supposed to share his or her income in order to help feed the entire family. On the basis of this principle, a family may collectively cover expenses for sending one member to get a higher education, expecting that when this member subsequently gets a well-paid job, the income will also be shared.”

Under the collectivist value system, individuals are improved to achieve the end of a high-functioning group or society, whereas in individualist cultures, society is improved to create the end of a good life for its individuals (Trompenaars, 1997:58). Individualist societies stress the person and the nuclear family, but the

more collectivist a culture is, the more important the extended family, community, tribe, and ethnic group will be. The individualism index is negatively correlated with the power-distance index; that is, high-power distance is typical in collectivist societies (Hofstede, 2001:209; 2005:82). Consistent with these ideas, African traditional cultures are typically high-power distance, and as discussed above, the African *ubuntu* philosophy is the sum and substance of collectivist thinking. Your neighbour's child becomes yours if the neighbour passes away and no relatives come for the children. African cultures have been known to use the phrase, "It takes a village to raise a child" (Healey, 1998:1) indicating a shared responsibility for children even while all related adults are still living.

Neither value system has God on its side: both are subject to the sinful extremes of individualists worshipping themselves and their money to collectivists worshipping their leaders and community and feeling no guilt about sin except when shame results (Lederleitner, 2010:39). The Bible emphasizes individual accountability to God (Matthew 25:1-30, Romans 14:12, 1 Corinthians 4:1-5), but on the other hand indicates that we should share with the poor so they others have their basic needs met (1 Corinthians 8:13-14, Acts 2:41-47, 1 Timothy 6:17-19).

Compassionate Christian volunteers and missionaries from Western cultures who are attempting to assist with alleviating the OVC crisis are typically individualist in their thinking. "Few cultural values are more fascinating or frustrating for leaders in the global church than individualism and collectivism" (Plueddemann, 2009:114). One wonders if an outsider, even with years of incarnational ministry, would ever be seen as part of the community. Much depends on the sacrificial others-orientation of the Christlike volunteer, but over time some have related to the writer that they have been welcomed as part of the community, at least during times when there is no conflict or danger. Volunteers need to be careful in the terms they use such as "partnerships" which Africans may see as a lifelong and indefinite commitment, but individualists may see as a contract of limited scope and duration (Lederleitner, 2010:40). A classic African expression is, "If you want to go fast, walk alone; if you want to go far, walk together." Africans are interested in the long walk together, and doubt the intentions of those who want relationships

that last for a brief time. Further, NGOs in collectivist cultures seldom hire an individual, but hire someone who is in an “in-group,” be it a relative of an existing employee or of someone important (Hofstede, 2005:99). What can make this especially frustrating is that an employee is often viewed as a family member, and family members are never fired for slack performance. In addition to this, relationships and helping one’s own community are more important than the bottom line or staying within a budget, and thus, some NGOs may hire more people than they need or can afford to care for OVC. Outsiders may see this as senseless nepotism and poor business practice, but it extends from deeply held values. Volunteers also need to be careful about trying to reward competition between children or their caretakers, or singling out an individual for praise, because such commendation can often bring shame and reproach from others who do not want anyone standing out from the collective (Plueddemann, 2009:119).

4.5.2.4 Uncertainty-avoidance v. uncertainty-tolerance cultures

Both the GLOBE and Hofstede research evaluated the cultural element of uncertainty or ambiguity avoidance. Hofstede (2005:167) defined uncertainty avoidance as “the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations. This feeling is, among other things, expressed through nervous stress and in a need for written and unwritten rules.” Other authors call this value control orientation to avoid crises (Lingenfelter, 2003:71). These cultures stress good form, advance planning and adherence to rules, methods, procedures, and rituals, which is a way of reducing ambiguity and uncertainty, and they purchase insurance for when things go wrong. They formalise interactions in writing, reduce agreements to contracts, take more moderate risks, and have little tolerance for breaking rules and laws (House, 2004:602).

Other cultures stress experimentation, flexibility, function rather than form, dealing with problems as they arise in the present rather than fearing the unknown, downplaying potential problems, relying on one’s word rather than contracts, and less emphasis on orderliness and record-keeping (Plueddemann, 2009:128). These cultures stress loyalty to leaders and rule-givers, and adapt without

resistance if they change the rules in the middle of things. This emphasises the high-power distance value over uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2001:147). Plueddemann (2009:131) stated that in ambiguity-tolerant cultures the king is law (*rex lex*), where as in ambiguity avoidant cultures, the law is king (*lex rex*). High ambiguity tolerance cultures accept uncertainty as a normal way of life, they experience less stress, are more relaxed in their family life and typically have less respects for laws and rules (Hofstede, 2005:167). A classic example of this area of cultural dissimilarity can be seen in driving behaviours on South Africa's roads. Many Africans view the lines between lanes as rough guidelines, drive well below the speed limit while enjoying conversation with friends, or use the side emergency lane for passing; the focus is on the functions of the journey and getting to the destination, not the form with which one gets there. Those of European decent are often infuriated by this "bad form" feeling that it disregards traffic laws and leads to uncertainties such as accidents and traffic jams.

As with the other cultural factors noted above, individuals within cultures can be similar or dissimilar to their host culture depending on personality, gender, educational level, experiences, and age. African countries tend to naturally be ambiguity tolerant, but the more Western, urban, technologically developed, and business-oriented the culture is, the more they value predictability, controls, and formal agreements (House, 2004:621; Plueddemann, 2009:137).

From a Christian perspective, once again neither end of the ambiguity-tolerance scale is right or wrong, and a balance of the two is to be preferred. While the Bible is full of verses on the prudent person planning ahead, counting the cost, pondering his way, and making plans (Proverbs 4:26, 14:8, 20:18, 21:5, 22:3, Luke 14:28, Romans 15:24), other verses remind us that we walk by faith and not by site, that we cannot control the future that is set in God's hands, that we must not boast of or worry about tomorrow, or put our trust in uncertain riches (Proverbs 19:21, 27:1, Isaiah 46:10, Matthew 6:34, 2 Corinthians 5:7, 1 Timothy 6:17, James 4:13-14). Scriptures therefore give support for both planning and yet trusting God with the outcomes, and for working while resting in God's providence. Plueddemann (2009:137) observes that mission workers from farming backgrounds do better in ambiguity-tolerant cultures because they are used to

working hard while waiting and knowing that much of life, such as the weather, cannot be controlled. In poor areas, there is seldom money for preventive maintenance; things get fixed after they break, and it often takes weeks or months to get the needed parts. This gives Christian volunteers great opportunities to demonstrate overcoming joy, patience, creativity, and flexibility. Further, volunteers need to understand that in many places extensive rules and procedures regarding OVC activities, healthcare, and hygiene, for instance, will largely be ignored, especially if there is not extensive and ongoing training, patterning, underscoring of the significance new procedures.

Based on the above discussion, one can readily note that the typical Christian volunteer from a first-world culture, either in one of South Africa's cities or from overseas, will likely be remarkably different from the people he or she will encounter in our traditional African communities. In some cases, they will be polar opposites. In each one of the four areas considered, there are marked differences between a volunteer's home and host culture that will cause miscommunication, misunderstandings, friction, and frustration. In fact, they are diametrically different in each area.

FIRST-WORLD VOLUNTEER	AFRICAN CULTURE
Low-context culture	High-context culture
Low-power distance	High-power distance
Individualist culture	Collectivist culture
Uncertainty-avoidance culture	Uncertainty-tolerance culture

Figure 4.3 Multiple cultural differences between volunteers and Africans

Knowing these cultural value systems, and their impact upon thinking, communication, lifestyles, authority, and relationships, is imperative for those involved in cross-cultural ministries. Even though a volunteer is motivated by compassion, is committed to incarnational ministry, has a willing and teachable spirit, and understands the basics of the African worldview, he or she must still become familiar with and practice a consciousness of at least these four basic cultural differences in order to minister effectively and not harm others in the process (Elmer, 2006:146). Even after they have adjusted, Christian volunteers who live in the traditional communities often end up leading cross-cultural teams of locals and newer volunteers, trying to inspire people who come from two or

more cultural traditions to build a culture of trust and respect and then to work together to achieve a compelling and transformational vision (Lingenfelter, 2008:21). This takes the wisdom of Solomon, and the patience of Job.

4.6 Working with the poor

If Christian volunteers are to successfully enter the African cultural milieu and engage in compassion ministry to OVC with wisdom, discretion, kindness, and sensitivity, they must not only be motivated by compassion, but they must have a commitment to adapt to their host culture, they must have a basic grasp of what is generally understood as the African worldview, they must understand the basic differences between their home and host culture, and lastly, because the people in these settings are normally poor, they must also have a biblical view of the nature of poverty and the wisdom to know how to properly address it.

Plenty of mistakes have been made by well-intentioned first-world missionaries, mission teams, and volunteers from nearby urban areas that ending up hurting while trying to help. Corbett (2009:70) relates that a mission team from an American church arrived in Kibera, outside of Nairobi, Kenya, considered to be the largest slum in Africa with more than four million people. They brought with them a shipping container containing more than three tons of dry food parcels for these poor people. The superabundance of food lovingly given out of hearts of great compassion for this needy community, provided so much food that no one needed to buy food from the local vendors who were also poor. Within a few weeks more than a dozen of them went out of business. The American volunteers left with a thousand pictures, feeling happy and satisfied, and leaving in their wake greater poverty than before they had come. When one does not understand the causes and cures for poverty, helping can actually hurt.

4.6.1 What poverty is and is not

In the 1990s, after 30 years of trying to help poor nations by pouring billions of dollars into them, with little result, the World Bank (Narayan, 1999:6) consulted with poverty experts and the poor themselves, asking more than 60,000 poor people in 60 low-income countries questions such as: What is poverty? What is a

good life and bad life? What are poor people's priorities? Their conclusion was summed up by stating:

"Poverty is pain. Poor people suffer physical pain that comes with too little food and long hours of work; emotional pain stemming from the daily humiliations of dependency and lack of power; and the moral pain from being forced to make choices such as whether to pay to save the life of an ill family member or to use the money to feed their children" (Narayan, 1999:6)

The observations of the poor people who were interviewed were clustered into five main findings about poverty.

- "First, many factors converge to make poverty a complex, multidimensional phenomenon Poverty never results from the lack one thing but from many interlocking factors that cluster in poor people's experience.
- Second, as expected, poverty is routinely defined as the lack of what is necessary for material well-being — especially food but also housing, land, and other assets. Poverty is the lack of multiple resources leading to physical deprivation.
- Third, poor people's definitions of poverty reveal important psychological aspects of poverty. Poor people are acutely aware of their lack of voice, power, and independence, which subject them to exploitation. Their poverty also leaves them vulnerable to rudeness, humiliation, and inhumane treatment by both private and public agents of the state from whom they seek help. Poor people also speak about the pain brought about by their unavoidable violation of social norms and their inability to maintain cultural identity through participating in traditions, festivals, and rituals. Their inability to fully participate in community life leads to a breakdown of social relations.
- Fourth, the absence of basic infrastructure — particularly roads, transport, water, and health facilities — emerged as critical. While literacy is viewed as important, schooling received mixed reviews, was occasionally highly valued, but was often notably irrelevant in the lives of poor people.
- Finally, poor people focus on a lack of assets with which to make an

income (land, tools, transportation, and partners) rather than on income itself, and link their lack of physical, human, social, and environmental assets to their vulnerability and exposure to risk” (Narayan, 1999:26-27).

What was remarkable was that, although the poor mentioned in passing having a lack of material things, they described their difficulty primarily as psychological and social. They used terms like shame, fear, hopelessness, humiliation, isolation, inferiority, and powerlessness. Sen (1999:16) noted that poverty is the lack of freedom to make meaningful choices in life, or to have an ability to affect one’s situation or future. The Chalmers Center For Economic Development did a study asking believers in dozens of North American churches to define poverty. Christians there saw poverty as a lack of material things such as food, clean water, money, medicine, and housing. That was it; they saw poverty in a single dimension. Corbett (2009:53) observes:

“While poor people mention having a lack of material things, they tend to describe their condition in far more psychological and social terms than our North American audiences. Poor people typically talk in terms of shame, inferiority, powerlessness, humiliation, fear, hopelessness, depression, social isolation, and voicelessness This mismatch between outsiders’ perceptions of poverty and the perceptions of poor people themselves can have devastating consequences for poverty alleviation efforts.”

Helping in the wrong way can hurt, much the same as a doctor making a wrong diagnosis and therefore prescribing the wrong medication, or simply treating the symptoms rather than the root cause of an illness. Simply giving money to the poor for food can help alleviate their hunger but may also increase their shame and guilt of being poor, underscore that they should resign themselves to being takers and receivers in life, and destroy their incentive for creativity in generating income, being productive, and giving back to society. Corbett and Fikkert (2009:55) and Myers (2005:81) provide simple charts (combined in Figure 4.2) to explain the diagnosis/remedy differences in poverty.

If we believe the primary cause of poverty is ...	Then we will primarily try to ...
A lack of material resources	Give material resources to the poor
The personal sins of the poor	Evangelise and disciple the poor
A lack of knowledge	Educate the poor
Oppression by the powerful (sinned against)	Work for social justice
The flaws in their cultural values	Get them to behave like the non-poor
The flaws in their social system	Change the system

Figure 4.4 Correlating causes and remedies for poverty

The simple diagnosis of the Western world fifty years ago was that poverty was a lack of money and the material goods that money buys. After World War II, the World Bank therefore poured an enormous amount of money into both Europe and Africa based on the diagnosis that both places were suffering from a lack of material resources; the symptoms looked the same. While the plan worked in Europe, it didn't work in Africa, because they misdiagnosed the cause of poverty in Africa (Corbett, 2009:54). Europe had been destroyed by war, but the people had cultural values and an entrepreneurial work ethic to rebuild if given the finances and resources. Africa had never built much of an industrial infrastructure to be destroyed; its people were hunter-gatherers and farmers, and had cultural values that would spread and consume donated finances rather than investing in infrastructure. Easterly (2006:4-5) sarcastically notes that the great interventions of "planners," who think of poverty as a technical engineering problem and announce great intentions, but don't motivate people and systems to properly carry out those plans in the field, have caused \$2.3 trillion to be spent over a fifty year period to relieve extreme poverty and provide life-saving medicines to children in Africa with virtually no noticeable results. The money seems to disappear, and workers on the ground wait for supplies that never come. There is often a terrible disconnection between the administrative offices and the village volunteers in many organisations, a problem that seems to grow as the organisation becomes more successful, thereby causing failures that are often glossed over in their annual reports.

The causes of poverty vary from place to place, and therefore the diagnoses of, and remedies for poverty ideally require people with wisdom who are entrenched in the culture sending back information to the planners, and bringing the remedies down to the people. This 360° feedback and accountability pattern is crucial

(Easterly, 2005:15). Finding a good, honest, and perceptive pastor of a church in a targeted community of OVC is of great benefit to a charitable organisation trying to reach the children with compassion ministry.

Myers (2005:12-13) sums up several decades of thinking that has progressively developed regarding what poverty is.

“In the early days of development, many assumed that poverty could be explained by the absence of things. This was followed by adding the absence of ideas or knowledge to the mix, and then, as the systemic nature of poverty was explored, the absence of power, resources, and choices became part of our understanding of poverty. In the 1980s, Robert Chambers proposed that poverty is a system of entanglement. In the early 1990s, John Friedman added to the discussion by describing poverty as the lack of access to social power ... and political participation. Weighing in from a Christian perspective, Jayakumar Christian ... described poverty as a system of disempowerment that creates oppressive relationships and whose fundamental causes are spiritual.... Ravi Jayakaran’s holistic framework [described] poverty as a lack of freedom to grow.... I propose that the nature of poverty is fundamentally relational and that its cause is fundamentally spiritual.”

4.6.2 A Biblical view of the causes of poverty

Myers (2005:25-43) and Corbett (2009:51-71) provide a very helpful biblical approach to poverty and its causes. They argue that poverty is fundamentally a relational problem. It is a matter of the breakdown of four key relationships: with God, with self, with others, and with the creation. Myers (2005:86) integrates the writings of earlier Christian authors with concepts from Scripture in concluding that “poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable. Poverty is the absence of shalom in all its meanings.”

Beginning at Genesis 2, in the Garden of Eden and before the Fall, mankind had four foundational relationships, and when these four relationships, the building blocks of life, were all functioning properly, humans were safe and content.

- Mankind's relationship with God (upward) – Adam and Eve glorified God and enjoyed wonderful fellowship with Him;
- Mankind's relationship with self (inward) – Adam and Eve experienced the peace and joy and fullness of life that Jahweh intended from the beginning, and felt the value, worth, and dignity that God had placed on them;
- Mankind's relationship with other humans (outward) – Adam and Eve loved and interacted freely with each other; and
- Mankind's relationship with the creation (downward) – Adam and Eve took dominion as the stewards of the creation by managing, working, and understanding the garden around them in order to support themselves and their families. Work was not a consequence of the fall, but was made more difficult by it.

But Adam and Eve were deceived, disobeyed and fell, and the sons of Adam and daughters of Eve likewise inherited their sinful nature and were also fallen and broken (Genesis 3:8-24; Romans 5:12). All four relationships were severely injured by sin (Myers, 2005:87, Corbett, 2009:61). In Genesis 3:6-13, one can note the four relational consequences of the fall:

- They destroyed their relationship with God by disobeying and becoming sinful (Genesis 3:6). This violated their relationship with God and replaced fellowship with fear, lack of thankfulness, distance, and eventually idolatry and false religions and philosophies. Spiritual fullness was replaced by "spiritual poverty."
- They destroyed their relationship with self; now they had guilt and shame and a sinful nature with all of its noetic effects upon the will, intellect, and emotions (Genesis 3:7, 10). This replaced a healthy self-concept and the disciplines and values of a mentally healthy life with a broad range of wrong views about self, from low self-esteem, to god-complexes, to self-gratification, to excuses for their sinful behaviour. Abandoning God's view of the human condition, they created their own ideas and embraced a "poverty of being."
- They destroyed their relationship with each other by hiding and shifting blame (Genesis 3:12). Later, the firstborn son murdered the second-born

son. Sin had obviously moved them from selfless love, unity, and serving one another to self-centeredness, exploitation of others, and corrupt communication, which quickly brought about a “poverty of community.”

- They destroyed their relationship with the creation by using leaves for clothes, by bringing a curse on the ground and creation generally, and by causing animals to be slaughtered just to atone for their sins (Genesis 3:7, 21). Sin removed them from being careful stewards of a thriving garden, and mankind eventually became materialistic, mercilessly harvesting the earth for personal gain instead of being wise stewards of it. Some ignored their stewardship and became lazy; others became workaholics in an endless quest for more and for meaning. This brought a “poverty of stewardship.”

This was the beginning of poverty. Every human being is “poor” in the sense of not experiencing these four relationships in the way God intended. It is critically important for Christian volunteers to realise and confess that every human being is fallen, broken, and poor in the spiritual, social, psychological, and stewardship areas. The Apostle Paul wrote: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor [became a human being], so that you by His poverty might become rich” (2001: 2 Corinthians 8:9).

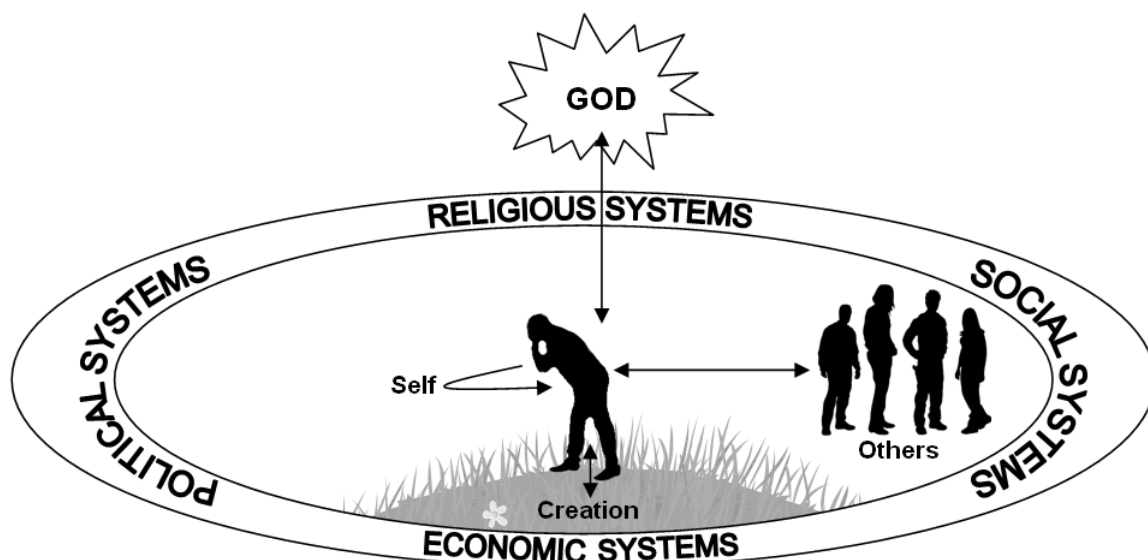


Figure 4.5 The four broken relationships and broken systems

The spiritual, psychological, social, and stewardship brokenness of individuals is just the beginning of sorrows since those relationships are the building blocks of

culture (Corbett, 2009:58). When four, or four hundred, or four million sinful people come together, the culture and systems they create will reflect their collective fallenness, brokenness, and poverty. Sin distorts human thinking and relationships (Myers, 2005:88). The economic, social, political, cultural, and religious systems and institutions of a society, and the norms, ethics, and behaviours they espouse, are a reflection of its collective dysfunction in these four relationships. A sinful society misunderstands, forgets, or outright disobeys God and His commands, does not correctly understand human nature, takes advantage of and dominates others for self-gain, and irresponsibly exploits the earth's natural resources.

Over time, several negative factors can change a person's basic four-fold poverty into material poverty and spiral the individual, his family, and descendants down into powerlessness and continual destitution.

- A person's own lack of diligence, laziness, speculative investments, drug or alcohol abuse, or other bad choices can bring on material poverty; this is the factor that most of the non-poor prefer to think is the cause of poverty. A man may want to work, but to get a business started his neighbourhood lending agent will charge him 300% interest, and so he turns to his brother who wants him to sell stolen car parts.
- Storms, veld-fires, droughts, diseases, and other environmental factors can also bring on material poverty.
- The sins of other fallen humans such as dishonest family members, partners, suppliers, customers, and lending agents can bring on material poverty, as can theft, civil unrest, wars, and economic recessions.
- It is often the case that the strong, diligent, and intelligent become wealthier and more powerful, and then use that power to further divide poor from non-poor. Powerful people and their heirs greatly influence the fallen and broken educational, governmental, and economic systems and institutions for their own purposes, and those systems and institutions then affect the rest of society and all of humankind, further hurting and crippling the powerless, and causing them to respond with even greater sinfulness, spiralling them downward into further desperation (Corbett, 2009:59; Curtis,

1981:332; Christian, 1999:4). A man may be poor because the educational system has failed him, or the economic system is run by those who profit from the poor wages they pass on to employees, or because he cannot gain employment because he is from the wrong tribe, or caste, political party, or religious group.

Therefore, a person may be poor because of his own conduct, because of the natural environment, because of other fallen people, because of the fallen system in which he lives, or because of any combination of the four factors.

The OVC are often poor because one or both of their parents have died of AIDS, in part due to the sexual misconduct of one partner, which some have blamed on the migrant labour system in South Africa where the breadwinner works in the city but cannot bring his spouse or children with him, or the mother works in the city but cannot handle the expense of commuting from the village each day. The cultural systems are broken, and the people within those systems are broken. The poor are left in utter hopelessness and despair hoping that some family member will, through education or connections, become wealthy and begin to bring the rest of the family out of their dire condition. Encouraged by the fallen television and music cultures, the despair is temporarily broken by the weekend alcohol party, one of the worst and most frequent expenditures of the poor, which often leads to further damaged goods, damaged bodies, and damaged relationships.

4.6.3 A Biblical view of poverty alleviation

Poverty was and is caused by sinful people and the broken systems they create. One of the first biblical truths volunteers must remember when entering poor communities is that God's children are commanded, and should be inspired by His example, to love and care for the poor:

“We love the world's poor and suffering. The Bible tells us that the Lord is loving toward all he has made, upholds the cause of the oppressed, loves the foreigner, feeds the hungry, sustains the fatherless and widow. The Bible also shows that God wills to do these things through human beings committed to such action. God holds responsible especially those who are

appointed to political or judicial leadership in society, but all God's people are commanded – by the law and prophets, Psalms and Wisdom, Jesus and Paul, James and John – to reflect the love and justice of God in practical love and justice for the needy” (Lausanne, 2011:15).

Body (1999:40-43) suggests that part of showing love to the poor is not to enter their communities with an emphasis on their emptiness and lack of skills, resources, and hope but to make an “appreciative inquiry,” by acknowledging that God is there and that He has given them things with which they can begin to make a difference (Myers, 1999:xviii; Alvarez, 1999:61). Energy, happiness, joy, and hope are indispensable assets of development, and as small projects move forward, one must keep a proactive mindset to highlight achievements and analyse the causes of mistakes with a view to doing better the next time.

A second truth a Christian volunteer must put into practice when entering a village to work with OVC is that poverty itself is not sinful (Corbett, 2009:70). It may cause pain and discomfort, but the poverty itself is not an evil. Jesus was born into a fallen, broken, sinful culture, and although sinless, He was poor. Jesus was born poor and lived poor, so there is nothing intrinsically wrong with being poor. Jesus didn't have a place to lay his head (Matthew 8:20). He didn't have indoor plumbing, he likely took a sponge bath in cold water now and then, he had to go and fetch water, and he had no electricity or refrigeration. The disciples kept their bag of money primarily for the poor (John 12:6). Jesus admonished those who would follow him to live the same way and to ask God to provide their daily food (Matthew 6:11; 19:21; Acts 3:6). What is evil is when a person's basic needs of food and clothing, and by extension, shelter are not being met (1 Timothy 6:6-8, James 2:15-17). It is, therefore, highly significant for first-world Christians volunteers to remember that when they enter the villages, if a person's basic needs are being met, poverty is not a bad thing and does not necessarily need to be changed. Many volunteers cannot imagine eating one meal of pap and sauce every day, or using a long-drop toilet, or carting water in a wheelbarrow for several blocks every morning, but these hardships have been the common elements of the human experience for millennia and are not wrong such that they must be eradicated. Most rural Africans today live more comfortably than Jesus lived, and

yet when first-world visitors come upon a high-functioning church with biblically qualified elders in a poor African village, they feel that something must be dreadfully wrong; if they were truly godly, they wouldn't be so poor. Even if they deny the prosperity gospel, many Christian volunteers still feel that God rewards increasing levels of faith and righteousness with increasing levels of wealth, but this is simply untrue (Corbett, 2009:69). This rationale sadly leads to a misuse of finances by well-intentioned Western faith-based NGOs.

A third truth a Christian first-world volunteer must be careful to note when entering a village to work with OVC is that they themselves are broken, fallen, and sinful, although their finer clothes, hairstyles, and electronics may obscure this reality (Corbett, 2009:64). The brokenness of the non-poor manifests itself differently. Their psychological poverty may manifest itself in self-sufficiency and in thinking too highly of themselves. When they come in contact with the poor, their wrong self-image may spawn a god-complex in their hearts, a blissful desire to condescend to help the poor and make things happen that would otherwise be impossible (Corbett, 2009:65). "One of the biggest problems in many poverty-alleviation efforts is that their design and implementation exacerbates the poverty of being of the economically rich – their god-complexes – and the poverty of being of the economically poor – their feelings of inferiority and shame" (Corbett, 2009:65).

A fourth truth that Christian volunteers must remember is that it is easy, quick, and exhilarating to throw money at problems, and it provides the giver with the euphoria of helping (Acts 20:35), but it is seldom a wise thing to do. Many Christians are motivated by their emotions to give money to the poor, trying to avoid the negative emotion of guilt due to the disparity of wealth between their homes back in suburbia and those they are visiting in the villages, or revelling in the positive emotion of joy at bringing joy to others. It is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), but the strong impulse of compassion coupled with the joy of giving, and seeing the resulting joy in others, is a forceful emotional combination that is difficult for volunteers to overcome. In reality, such giving can be a paternalistic insult, underscore the wrong belief that "the rich are the gods of the poor," or "the whites are more powerful than us," or serve to create

dependency (Schwartz, 2007:45). Christians, motivated by compassion in the gut, must discipline themselves to serve the poor with minds of wisdom rather than merely with hearts of sympathy.

A fifth principle that a Christian first-world volunteer must be careful to note when entering a village to work with OVC is that if poverty is due to a failure in the four foundational relationships, then poverty-alleviation should also be multi-faceted and holistic as well, recognising that people do not just need to be given money or material resources, but need fundamental spiritual, psychological, social and stewardship remedies, a transformation from the inside out that takes time and that only God can do (Chalmers, 2011:1; Corbett, 2009:60). If first-world volunteers and charitable organisations think that poverty is wrong and simply a lack of resources, then they will help by throwing money at it, or by coming in and doing things for people that they should be doing for themselves, like one Western mission team the writer witnessed fixing up a third-world church building while several members of the local congregation stood by and watched, and other members didn't even come. What is often worse is that the materially non-poor will do for the poor what the poor would never dream of doing for themselves. Some abandoned OVC are not placed in foster care back in their culture but are placed into large, well-furnished suburban homes around South Africa's cities provided by extremely well-funded NGOs with American funding, and the children are sent to fine schools in the area. While this is certainly commendable, the purpose of this arrangement would surely not be to rear the children for readmission back into the African culture but to prepare them to serve as the next generation of urban African business, media, and political leadership in South Africa. It also leaves the observer with the strong impression of "cultural paternalism," that African children are best helped by changing them over to European culture (Corbett, 2009:116). This can also be the case with orphanages built with Western funding that lift children far out of their cultural and economic context, and rear them to be first-world Western Christians.

Poverty for most unbelievers is a result of extreme brokenness in the four relationships. It is caused by a bad mindset where a person's thinking is distorted by community perceptions, deceptions and exclusions, and closed up from

bitterness, guilt, ignorance, fear and anxiety (Wink, 1992:101). When a poor man accepts his marred identity, he becomes trapped in “a web of lies” that his situation will never change and that he is fundamentally different than the non-poor whom he views as gods (Chambers, 1983:109; Christian, 1994:336; Myers, 2005:77). Because of this, if one gives a poor man R10,000 isolated from any holistic approach, he will often be just as poor, or poorer, next month. His lack of education or principles causes him to think of how to spend the money immediately rather than investing the money in order to make more. He often engages in needs-based behaviours; his sorrow or sinful self-image may cause him to drink his money away or to buy consumer goods or services to make himself happy or to impress his friends and family, or to spend his fortune on religious observances to appease false gods or ancestors (Myers, 2005:86).

Volunteers need to help change the internal thinking of the people who are broken, which involves a great deal of time and energy to get to know them and their story. Giving money or buying them goods gives the donor a much better feeling in a much shorter time, but when donations are not connected with a broader holistic plan, they underscore the wrong thinking, held by the poor and non-poor alike, that the donors are gods and that the poor cannot help themselves but simply need to ask and wait for the gods to provide. It creates dependency and harms their dignity and nobility as being made in the image of God. Corbett and Fikkert (2009:78) advocated this holistic approach and defined poverty alleviation as “the ministry of reconciliation: moving people closer to glorifying God by living in right relationship with God, with self, with others, and with the rest of creation.... Material poverty alleviation is working to reconcile the four foundational relationships so that people can fulfil their callings of glorifying God by working and supporting themselves and their families with the fruit of that work.”

A sixth principle for volunteers to remember when entering poor villages is that it is impossible to properly heal any of the broken relationships or to heal man's grinding poverty without dealing with his spiritual poverty first. Being reconciled to God, and making peace with Him through Christ, is the first step toward healing the other relationships (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Corbett, 2009:80). Jesus lived

righteously within a broken system and with broken people. In his great compassion, he came to reconcile people to the Father. Ever since Jesus went back to heaven, he committed this message of reconciliation to his disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). The apostles who followed Jesus had very little money (Acts 3:6), so money cannot be the main way to help the poor. Paul wrote this in 2 Corinthians 6:10, "We have this to commend our ministry: we are seen by all as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." What poor South Africans need first is to hear and respond to the gospel, and to experience true reconciliation with God through the full forgiveness obtained by grace through faith in the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ at Calvary (Myers 2005:88). From that point onward, God begins a transformative process by using His Word, experiences, and godly mentors to move the new believer away from the world's system and philosophies and closer to the image of Christ (Romans 8:28-29).

Even an atheistic journalist who grew up in Malawi, Matthew Parris (2008:1), observed the order of the four restored relationships. He noted that conversion to Christianity had to come first, and then the other areas of a person's life began to change. He observed that the African Christians were cheerful, lively, they stood tall. He mentioned that they were confident, engaged others kindly, were honest, and looked you in the eye. And he concluded that they were diligent, inventive, and worked hard. When spiritual poverty was dealt with first, the psychological poverty, the social poverty, and the stewardship poverty each began to improve. No doubt, this is not merely a mystical internal transformation, but the result of good discipleship by wise believers.

A seventh principle that volunteers must remember when engaging in compassion ministry in poor communities is that it is impossible to eradicate poverty by having broken humans modify broken systems, whether one chooses capitalism, state socialism, or communism, or one form of government over another (Myers, 2005:92; Corbett, 2009:91). There are rare instances in which God used particular Christians to awaken the conscience of broken cultures such as William Wilberforce who opposed the slave trade, brought debt and prison reform, started free public education, and the SPCA in England. But most often, there are no

short-cuts, and Christians need to show the world that “the meaning and goal of history are not to be found in any of its projects, programs, ideologies and utopias which offer themselves in competition with each other ... but that it is to be found in a person...” (Newbigin, 1989:129). When the cry of “who will save us” goes up, modernity confidently asserts that the three horsemen of capitalism, science, and technology will save mankind from poverty, but the answer for poverty, as with any other social malady, lies in the cross of Jesus Christ, “in divine action making right what we cannot make right ourselves” (Myers, 2005:93). Just as fallenness spread from a pair of individuals to many, so Christians must do the hard work of making more and better disciples one by one through redemptive relationships (Corbett, 2009:83). Then through transformed people, society will slowly be changed; the whole is changed by helping the many pieces come right. The poor must save themselves but only after they themselves have been saved through a life-transforming gospel, where they have rediscovered the value and purposes God places upon them, have begun to pull down the web of lies, and are slowly replacing a broken worldview with a biblical one (Corbett, 2009:84-89). If volunteers come with money, technology and expertise to help the poor with their health, education, and income-generating capacity, there will be improvements for a time, but lasting change will falter without the spiritual rebirth and discipleship of those involved. Even then, Christians are fallen and can walk according to fleshly impulses and wrong thinking, as those professing Christians who supported slavery in 19th century America or apartheid in 20th century South Africa, so the hope of eradicating poverty without the personal rule of Jesus on earth is doubtful. Knowing our broken condition and broken systems, Jesus said that we would always have the poor with us (Mark 14:7). This should not lead to a spirit of resignation at institutionalised evil, but on the contrary, motivate Christians to speak up on behalf of the poor.

“Such love for the poor demands that we not only love mercy and deeds of compassion, but also that we do justice through exposing and opposing all that oppresses and exploits the poor. ‘We must not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist.’ We confess with shame that on this matter we fail to share God’s passion, fail to embody God’s love, fail to reflect God’s character and fail to do God’s will. We give ourselves afresh

to the promotion of justice, including solidarity and advocacy on behalf of the marginalized and oppressed” (Lausanne, 2011:16).

An eighth principle for Western volunteers to remember is that not all poverty is created equal (Corbett, 2009:103). Writers and workers in the development field hold that there are important differences between emergency, re-emerging, and improvement situations, and the relief, rehabilitation, and development responses that correlate with them (see figure 4.6 below adapted from Corbett, 2009:104).

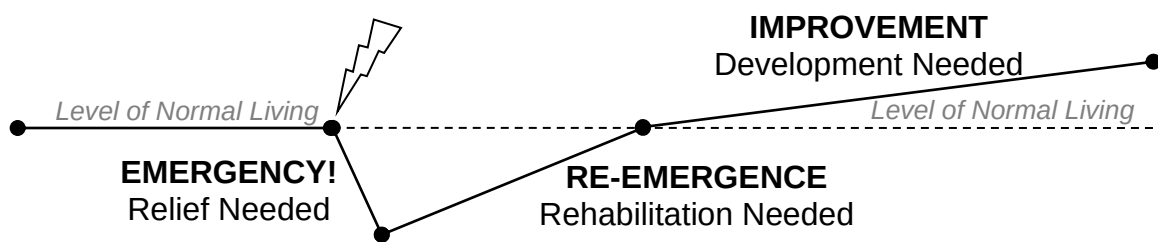


Figure 4.6 Different stages of suffering need different remedies

When a crisis takes place, a natural disaster such as an earthquake, tsunami, drought, or storm, or a man-made disaster such as a fire or crime, people’s homes, livelihood, family, and health are often devastated. Those involved are suffering badly and are nearly or completely helpless. They need urgent and temporary provision of emergency aid to reduce immediate suffering from this natural or man-made crisis. This is known as “relief” (Corbett, 2009:104). Outsiders come on the scene to help provide supplies and financial assistance to “stop the bleeding,” much as the Good Samaritan did (Luke 10:30). In Acts 11:27-30, the Antioch church heard that a famine would soon plague Judea, so they took up a collection and sent “relief” to the believers in that area.

When the emergency element of the crisis has passed, the work of helping people and their communities to re-emerge back to the positive elements of their pre-crisis condition is known as rehabilitation. At this stage, volunteers should work *with* the victims, rather than *for* the victims, to help them get back up to where they were, letting the victims drive the process. Financial and material assistance should no longer be given as gifts, but may be extended through low- or no-interest loans (Corbett, 2009:105). Many people in third world cultures know of the largesse of the first-world and, rather than mending their own lives after a crisis, have a predetermined dependency on Western countries to send in food,

medicine, finances, and supplies. This is neither natural nor ideal, and it is not others-oriented compassion to destroy a society's proper work ethic by doing for others what they can and should do for themselves as God's image-bearers who were created to work. Jahweh directed Israel to give no-interest or low-interest loans to help the poor, and never to exact "usury" or high interest payments:

"If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns ... you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you to open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy, and to the poor around you" (2001: Deuteronomy 15:7-11).

If the crisis has passed, and by rehabilitation, a person or family has re-emerged to the positive elements of their pre-crisis condition, or if the person or family is poor and there has been no crisis in the immediate past, the "process of ongoing change that moves all the people involved – both 'helpers' and the 'helped' – closer to being in right relationship with God, self, others, and the rest of creation" is known as development (Corbett, 2009:104). Here again at this stage, it is important for volunteers to work *with* people and not *for* people, to teach them how to fish rather than giving them fish, to educate, train and mentor people in order to build capacity in the community. Some outside start-up investment in capital projects might be needed, and temporary modelling may be needed in running a shop, school, or service, but the endeavour should shift to local control at the earliest possible time. God's instructed Israel to help the widow, the orphan, foreigners and the poor, sometimes providing raw materials for them to work with, but seldom giving handouts. People weren't to harvest every part of the field or the trees or the vines during harvest, but to leave amounts behind for the orphans, widows, and foreigners to gather and process for themselves (Deuteronomy 24:19-22). God struck a balance between the poor having an unbearable life and an easy life; their capacity to earn an income was to be augmented by the non-poor nearby.

Corbett and Fikkert (2009:105) state that “one of the biggest mistakes that North American churches make, by far, is applying relief in situations in which rehabilitation or development is the appropriate intervention.” Compassionate volunteers see no emergency or crisis, but simple poverty, in front of them and they want to make it go away so they throw money at the problem, which in turn creates another set of problems. Therefore, the first question to ask is whether there is a genuine crisis where failing to provide help would have serious consequences within a few hours. As part of this first consideration, one must consider the following:

- whether the crisis was due to one's own doing, such that helping would be enabling them to engage in further wrong behaviour,
- whether the individual is able to help himself, such that helping would hinder his proper stewardship his own time, energy, and money,
- whether the person has been helped before and is likely to receive help again in the near future, and
- whether the person refuses counsel that will help him get on a better path in life.

If there is no crisis, then relief is not necessary. If the answer to any of the four considerations above is yes, then giving relief should be greatly discouraged (Corbett, 2009:106). In light of this evaluation, giving to a beggar on the street corner is almost never the correct option. Building a relationship with them, learning their story, and providing training, counselling, and coaching is the far better approach, but that takes time and effort. Writing about the Kibera slum outside of Nairobi, Kenya, which has received millions of dollars in aid with little effect over the years, Mbola (2007:1) wrote:

“Most remedies directed towards Kibera are motivated by the sympathy of outsiders, who often give handouts in an attempt to cushion the residents against their perceived, gigantic problems. In reality, many of the problems of Kibera stem from chronic issues that can only be solved through a consistent and long-term relationship between the change agent and the residents.... The people in Kibera have capacities, skills, and resources that need to be tapped if genuine development is to be realised, but the

process of identifying and mobilizing these gifts and assets takes time. Unfortunately, for many years non-governmental organizations working in Kibera have tended to operate on the basis of 'quick fixes'.... Even in these [relief] situations, caution should be taken so that the relief efforts are not prolonged to the point in which they undermine local people's stewardship of their own lives and communities. The root issue in all of these considerations is that God, who is a worker, ordained work so that humans could worship Him through their work. Relief efforts applied inappropriately often cause the beneficiaries to abstain from work, thereby limiting their relationship with God through distorted worship or through no worship at all."

A majority of OVC in South Africa are being looked after in informal foster care arrangements, but there are many locations in which children are being abused or have been abandoned, and therefore a crisis is present, and practical and financial assistance should be immediately provided. In a few situations, winter fires or storms have destroyed homes, and rehabilitation is needed. But in most cases, volunteers can best benefit OVC by helping to develop the income-generating capacities of the families with whom they live (Corbett, 2009:115). Caregivers and even teenage OVC must be trained in income-generating skills in their particular context so that they are better able to glorify God by working to support themselves and their dependants. It takes creativity, imagination, and hard work to build capacity within an African community, especially when the entire community is poor and there are few products one could make, or few services that one could provide, that anyone nearby could afford. Sewing uniforms, bead-making, brick-making, jam-making, newspaper publishing, greeting card-making, furniture-making, quilt-making, wood-working, glass-blowing, chicken-farming, teaching English, and vegetable and herb gardening are a few of the income generating projects the writer has seen done in connection with supporting and caring for OVC.

4.7 Summary and Conclusion

When Christians, churches, and Christian organisations reach into South Africa's African communities, motivated and energised by well-intentioned compassion,

they bring together two vastly different cultures. If these volunteers and organisations fail to understand certain key ethical principles regarding servanthood, incarnational ministry, biblical contextualisation, worldviews, cultural differences, and poverty, or fail to act with discretion, wisdom, and discipline based on these principles, they can cause hurt or conflict while trying to help, or at the very least make contributions that are irrelevant.

Christian volunteers must ideally do the hard work of entering the African culture incarnationally, adapting themselves and biblical truth to the African cultural context. They must study and remind themselves of the African worldview such that they are able to properly process the attitudes, fears, values, and behaviours of individuals, families, and groups in the African community, celebrate similarities between the African worldview, culture, and values with those of the Bible, and be able to humbly and correctly communicate where God's truth conflicts with the culture. Christian first-world volunteers must also understand that their internal wiring, their thought processes, values, motives, and behaviours, may be fundamentally different than that of the African community, and must take the time to listen, learn, and to humbly and patiently adapt to their host culture. As those who are comparatively wealthy by world standards, Christian first-world volunteers must also be careful to re-examine their views and values about wealth and poverty in light of the Scripture, to avoid paternalism, and to exercise great caution when evaluating the level of need in front of them.

In light of the vast differences between a Christian first-world volunteer and the people with whom he or she is interacting in the African culture, it is the recommendation of this writer that first-world NGOs and FBOs should not try to work directly with African OVC, but should work to strengthen and support the existing network of Bible-teaching African churches spread throughout our African communities, and reach the OVC through these churches. If poverty is caused by brokenness and dysfunction in the four basic relationships with God, with self, with others, and with the creation, and if alleviation of material poverty is brought about by working to heal these broken relationships, beginning with one's relationship with God, then true Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, non-syncretised local churches in the African communities are the key to the solution. African churches

are already incarnated into their context of ministry, are fully familiar with the African worldview, culture and languages, do not have to cross cultural divides to minister to their people, and have the gospel in their hands. Rather than first-world volunteers trying to reach OVC directly by running homes, orphanages, care centres, clinics, and schools that are expensive to build and maintain, that are not locally sustainable or reproducible, and that will reach only a select few of our country's four million OVC, the far easier and more natural approach would be to strengthen African church leaders and congregations to engage in foster-care ministry to OVC.

An African church that has sufficient land could, if assisted by NGOs or FBOs, build a cluster of basic foster houses, a church building, and a borehole-irrigation system for gardening on the property. With training in Scriptural principles, foster care, and basic agriculture, a congregation could begin a foster-care village ministering to OVC in their spiritual, psychological, social, and stewardship needs. Further capital investment and training in capacity-building would help the project become sustainable and reproducible. The Christian foster parents involved with the project could raise chickens, make crafts, provide English or other educational classes for the community, run a basic community medical clinic, or begin a school. In time, funds could be set aside to create another similar ministry. In such cases, the first-world volunteers would remain in a supportive role, training and mentoring African men and women who would shape the ministries to be both Biblical and African, but never leading or running the program.

In 2004, well-known American author and theologian, Dr. Bruce Wilkinson had conducted his "Never Ending Gardens" project in Swaziland for two years. The project had flown hundreds of volunteers to from America Swaziland each week to help people plant backyard vegetable gardens to overcome the ongoing plague of malnutrition and starvation. Apparently, the teams planted 500,000 gardens. But Wilkinson was overwhelmed by the more than 100,000 OVC he learned of in Swaziland and, without local consultation, launched his "Dream for Africa." Johan Malan (2005:1), an anthropologist, son of missionaries in Swaziland, and professor at the University of Limpopo, observed:

“As a very able, influential and wealthy man, Bruce ... had a dream, a vision, an ambitious plan to channel vast humanitarian aid from the US to communities in Africa where it is most needed. He selected the poverty-stricken, former British colony, Swaziland, as a role model for the rest of Africa on how to successfully change lifestyles and eradicate poverty and suffering. Swaziland has one of the highest infection rates of HIV/Aids in the world. Bruce secured an extensive support-base among private companies and churches, and also received a large grant from the US government to combat AIDS in Africa.”

For months, Wilkinson negotiated with the Swazi government to give him a 32,500-acre complex in order to build an “African Dream Center.” The centre would house, educate, and feed more than 10,000 OVC whose parents had died of AIDS. It would also have a bed-and-breakfast, game reserve, golf course, a Christian school and Bible college, industrial park, and Disneyesque tourist attractions (Phillips, 2005:1). There was no attempt at adaptive or incarnational ministry or of dialoguing with or understanding the local African culture. The desire was to use an enormous amount of land and money to build a world in which suffering African children would be taken away and protected from their own people and culture. Wilkinson even took US Ambassador Lucke to the proposed site in a convoy of SUVs. “He admired Mr. Wilkinson’s enthusiasm and altruism, but was wary of groups with little overseas history claiming to know the answers for Africa. A few days later, Mr. Lucke showed up at Mr. Wilkinson’s door and told him he considered it unwise to move orphans away from their villages. ‘It’s laudable that you’re trying to do something about Swazi orphans,’ Mr. Lucke told Mr. Wilkinson... ‘but do it in a way that doesn’t conflict with Swazi culture” (Phillips, 2005:3).

Lucke was correct. The plan did not sit well with King Mswati III who began to avoid Wilkinson, and the Swazi press began to circulate rumours about Wilkinson’s intentions, raising the hostility of the people against the plan (Morgan, 2006:1). Malan (2005:2-3) points out that Wilkinson acted contrary to Swazi culture by 1) being ignorant of the desire of the Swazi people to be responsible for their own future in the emerging post-colonial African renaissance, 2) being

ignorant of the pride of the Swazi government in not having to be helped by outsiders, 3) the commitment of African leaders to help each other along the path of sustainable growth, 4) demanding land, which was seen as colonialism all over again, 5) violating the communal values of the Swazi people in which they care for their own children rather than having them stolen away and “fixed” by outsiders, and 6) failing to use the correct approach to development in African culture, which is “an indirect approach aimed at grassroots development ...by training and empowering local (Swazi) pastors and other community leaders to take initiative in the development of their own communities” (Malan, 2005:3).

In late 2005, Wilkinson, closed down his ministry in South Africa and Swaziland and headed back to the United States. Morgan (2006:1) reported that “Bruce was quite broken at this time. Dream for Africa had physically, emotionally, spiritually, and financially taken a serious toll on Bruce.” Alan Wolfe, a political science professor at Boston College, stated in response to the debacle that greater realism is needed by first-world volunteers engaging in relief and development work in Africa. “I don't think you undertake these kind of efforts without a certain kind of naiveté. I don't mean that as bad. If you were totally cynical and corrupted, you would probably never do what Bruce Wilkinson did in the first place. If people attracted to go to these places had a more balanced view in the beginning, they might accomplish less, but they might also burn out less” (Morgan, 2006:2). Such are the lessons learnt the hard way when compassion ministry is not governed by the wisdom of contextual sensitivity in Africa.

Thus far in this thesis, the plight of millions of South African orphans and vulnerable children has been established, the initial response to the OVC crisis has been reviewed, a biblical and theological foundation for compassion ministry to OVC has been laid, and cautions have been given for first-world Christians to enter the African milieu in an informed and adaptable way. But still more information is needed from Christian organisations currently caring for OVC on the ground in South Africa. The purpose of Chapter 5 is to evaluate and gain further wisdom from the philosophies, values, models, and methods being used by a cross-section of ten Christian OVC care ministries operating in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Free State.

CHAPTER 5

Orphan-care models and approaches being used by Christians, churches, and organisations with a Christian ethos in the field in South Africa

Thus far, this work has examined the plight of OVC in South Africa, surveyed the biblical ethical principles regarding compassion ministry generally, and ministry to orphans in particular, and reviewed a number of ethical-cultural principles that apply when first-world Christian volunteers enter the milieu of African culture to engage in compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children.

5.1 Appreciative inquiry and discovering what works

In this chapter, the successful philosophies, structures, and methods of ten actual Christian-based orphan-care ministries in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Free State will be presented in an effort to glean further ethical principles and ideas that are working. “Despite the magnitude and negative consequences of the growing number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in South Africa, there is insufficient documentation on ‘what works’ to improve the well-being of these children affected by HIV/AIDS” (Khulisa, 2010:6). The writer has used the appreciative inquiry method in his research to help narrow the inquiries and to focus on collecting data about what works, with minor references to what has not worked. Appreciative inquiry delves into and identifies “the best” in an organisation’s structure, methodology, and impact. The object is not to critique what the writer has seen that seems to be ethically wrong, questionable, or lacking, but to seek out the best of what is done in the field of Christian compassion ministry to OVC in the hopes that such performance will be continued by those involved and replicated by other similarly situated ministries. “Appreciative Inquiry is about the coevolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. In its broadest focus, it involves systematic discovery of what gives ‘life’ to a living system when it is most alive, most effective, and most constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves, in a central way, the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential.... In AI, the arduous task of intervention gives way to

the speed of imagination and innovation; instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, and design” (Cooperrider, 2005:8). The writer used the informal interview method to gather information. In most cases, the interviews were audio recorded.

There are heroes dotted throughout the urban and rural communities of South Africa, Christians with whom the writer has interacted who have been caring for OVC for many years despite heat, dust, poverty, suffering, stench, death, dishonesty, immorality, insufficient funding, troublesome volunteers, endless needs, and an uncertain future. The energy of their initial compassion could have only been sustained by a God of infinite resources and their own need to continually download His sustaining grace for the next day’s work. There are large government plans and programmes, and even better funded mega-charities that give press releases and speak at conferences, but the real work is being done by these heroes on the ground with a rush of faithfulness and a trickle of funds. Among their ten lessons from the field in doing AIDS work in southern Africa, Wangila and Akukwe (2005:1) lamented that:

“families and communities battling AIDS in Africa barely receive support from current domestic and international relief efforts. The mismatch between domestic and international intentions ... and the reality on the ground in Africa is unprecedented.... [OVC] affected by AIDS in Africa appear abandoned to their fate.... Entire generations of African children who lost one or both parents to AIDS now grow up in abysmal poverty, largely abandoned by local and national governments, and, for all practical purposes, neglected by the international community.... Ongoing studies show another dark side of the AIDS orphan saga in Africa: sexual predation of AIDS orphans. [Further,] domestic and international HIV/AIDS remedial efforts continue to ignore indigenous community-based organizations and civil society in Africa.”

Over the past six years, much has happened positively, with a greater infusion of capital and interest from the international community, the reversal of the South African Presidency on ARV medication, and an increasing number of NGOs and their care workers who are assisting caregivers. As used in this work, “care

workers” refers to employees of non-profit organisations who are involved with coordinating and supporting care for OVC and their caregivers, and “caregivers” refers to someone directly caring for, and typically living with, OVC. This is consistent with definitions used in section 1 of the Children’s Act of 2005 (38/2005). The writer has also witnessed that negative indicators still persist with organisations, caregivers, and care workers losing the heart of caring for children and woodenly relying on systems to carry them forward, or worse yet, seeing such a ministry as a means of personal gain. Some involved with OVC care projects have fallen prey to financial opportunism in four areas: 1) some caregivers collect monthly child-care grants but don’t pass along the benefit to the OVC living in their homes, 2) some care workers work for pay, and in time feel that getting funding for their OVC care centre is not about caring for the children but ensuring their own income, 3) some care centre buildings end up being used, or even taken over, for profiteering schemes such as a for-pay crèches, government offices, or other businesses, and 4) parent NGOs hire too many administrative personnel or invest too heavily or quickly in their own infrastructure when there is a strong infusion of capital, but thereafter become insolvent during recessions or when partners withdraw funding. In an interview with the writer, Prinsloo (Interview 3) noted that the worldwide economic recession from 2008 to the present has increasingly reduced charitable donations, and at the end of 2011, the PEPFAR grant monies that infused millions of dollars each year to combat the AIDS crisis and care for OVC will cease, leaving many South African NGOs to look to their own near-bankrupt municipalities for assistance or to fend for themselves. South Africa’s nationwide network of orphan care organisations will meet with serious challenges in the near future. It is imperative that Christian compassion ministries adapt to the best and most sustainable models to survive.

5.2 Basic needs of OVC targeted by compassion ministries

Christians involved in compassion ministry to OVC, who were recently interviewed by the writer, believe that the three most critical needs of the children that organisations must seek to meet are food and water security, primary education, and health and safety security (Snyman, Interview 1; Prinsloo, Interview 3). These three needs are addressed in the UN Millennium Development Goals for

the country, which South Africa subscribed to in September of 2000 (MDG, 2007:11). Firstly, a “lack of a secure food source is a primary cause of vulnerability among Africa’s poorest children, driving many to incredibly dangerous survival practices. Young girls across Africa are daily selling their bodies just to secure a plate of food” (Hands, 2011:1). One-off food parcels, while helpful in the short-term and for emergencies, are not food security. Children need an assured, regular, and sufficient source of food such as a meaningful gardening project, a basic household income, or an external support system that helps provide food for them. Properly sanitised water is also essential for proper health, hygiene, and hydration. Secondly, enrolment and attendance in primary school is also a key to a child’s future and often means the difference between one who eventually takes from society and one who gives back to it, between a fragmented home and a unified home. “Orphans are often forced to abandon school for a number of reasons: inadequate funds for school fees, caring for sick family parents or younger siblings, emotional distress, and discrimination” (Hands, 2011:1). In some cases, children born to farm workers, like their parents, have no identity documents and they cannot attend distant area schools because they have no transportation, so they simply receive no education at all, even well into their teen years (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Many OVC can benefit from pre-school activities to ready them for a learning environment, many OVC are older but have never been to school and need remedial lessons to prepare them for the school setting, and most who are enrolled in school can greatly benefit from after-care programmes that help with homework. Thirdly, the health and physical security of OVC is also a primary concern. Systems need to be put in place to ensure that the children are not suffering from neglect, abandonment, physical abuse, or sexual abuse, to see that they have assistance and guidance caring for sick relatives, and to make sure that they have access to basic healthcare services in order to combat malaria, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases.

In an interview with Dinhira of Hands At Work (Interview 1), she noted that beyond these basic critical needs, Christians involved in compassion ministry aspire to meet three additional essential needs of OVC, namely spiritual development, psycho-social support, and job skills training. One of the most difficult things for Christian OVC ministries to do well and consistently is to present God’s

transformational truth to children. The gospel message is critical for it alone is the tool God uses to bring someone to spiritual life and begin a personal transformation process from the inside out. George Snyman of Hands At Work (Interview 1) states that compassion ministry and gospel preaching must go hand-in-hand; the cross has both a vertical piece linking God with humans (where love brings righteousness), and a horizontal crosspiece linking humans with other humans (where love brings justice). According to Prinsloo (Interview 1), formerly of Mukhanyo Community Development Centre (MCDC) in KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga, “in compassion ministry, important but mundane things like food, activities, funding, transportation, interaction with social workers and government agencies, and handling emergencies eat up 95% of your time and energy such that you have nothing left over when it comes to giving anything of a spiritual nature to the kids.” The writer, as a missionary with an organisation that focuses on evangelism, discipleship, and leadership development, was asked by MCDC in 2007 to come to KwaMhlanga and parallel their work with Christian youth outreaches, Bible clubs, and other evangelistic and discipleship activities. As will be discussed further below, it seems that there can be a greater spiritual impact on OVC when they are brought “within the walls” into a residential care environment or are in a truly Christian educational institution. Secondly, despite the general observation that children are resilient when enduring significant suffering, they need grief counselling, and mentoring by adults who know them by name and care for them personally (Snyman, Interview 1). Hands At Work, which coordinates care for more than 20,000 OVC in eight sub-Saharan African countries, is undertaking over the next few years to “go deeper,” by training care workers in their affiliated community-based organisations (CBOs) in the “Walking With Wounded Children” approach to child counselling and mentoring developed by Petra College for Children’s Ministry in Masoyi (Dinhira, Interview 1). One of the great advantages of organisations “within the walls” is that there is a much greater amount of personal time for Christian caregivers to interact with the children on psycho-social issues. Thirdly, as children mature, they can greatly benefit from learning skills that will help them transition to adult life where they must earn an income, lead a household, and perhaps pursue further education. Training in computer skills, English language skills, or other manual income-

generating skills such as gardening, craft-making, carpentry, building, or welding need to be provided to OVC on an ongoing basis. Many care centres working with OVC struggle to get these programmes up and running, and often lack the space or resources that are needed to meet this critical need.

5.3 Inside the walls and outside the walls

In the writer's observation and research, there seem to be two vastly divergent approaches used by Christian organisations when engaging in compassion ministry to OVC, which will herein be designated as "outside the walls" and "inside the walls." Some OVC are left in their African home environment and provided with care in a method that may be designated as "come and go," caregivers "coming" to visit them in their homes, and OVC "going" to local care centres that provide food, healthcare, supplemental educational assistance, and other services. These children are "outside the walls." This model is used typically in the rural setting, the cost per child is much lower, and care can therefore be provided to a larger number of children, but the ability of the NGO's to protect or influence the children in their school and home environment is small. Christian ministries such as Hands At Work, Mukhanyo Community Development Centre, Emthonjeni Wokuphila Community Development Centre, Ubuhle Care and Development Centre, and Morning Star Children's Centre follow this model, funded by individual Christians, Christian-run businesses, and churches, locally and abroad.

In the second approach, OVC are cared for in a residential arrangement, typically on a property with a protective perimeter such as a wall or electric fence; they are "inside the walls." This model is most often used in the urban/suburban setting where accommodations are first-world, the cost per child is high, and just a few children are cared for in a comprehensive, protective, and holistic way (Gillig, Interview 1). The NGOs function in *parens patriae* fashion, having legal custody of the children, and are charged by the government with protecting and acting in the best interests of the child. In a vast majority of cases, the children are not really from a traditional African culture, but more from the horrid life in the townships and informal settlements around the cities, and are abused or abandoned rather than being orphans (Oasis, 2011-1:1). Christian ministries

such as Bethesda Outreach, Oasis Haven, Acres of Love, Lambano Sanctuary, and The Pines follow this model, funded by local and international financial partners that are primarily individual Christians, Christian-run businesses, or churches.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS	INSIDE THE WALLS
Hands At Work Masoyi, Mpumalanga Province	Bethesda Outreach Hammanskraal, Limpopo
Mukanyo Community Development Centre KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga Province	Oasis Haven Hunziker Hills, Gauteng Province
Emthonjeni Wokuphila Community Development Centre KwaMhlanga, Mpumalanga Province	Acres of Love Bryanston, Gauteng Province
Ubuhle Care and Development Centre Bronkhorstspuit, Mpumalanga Province	Lambano Sanctuary Wichwood, Gauteng Province
Morning Star Children's Centre Welkom, Northwest Province	The Pines Welkom, Northwest Province

The writer has visited and followed the progress of most of these ten organisations over a five year period. Each of these ministries has been examined and key persons interviewed. An overview of the history, model, and activities of each organisation will be given, their distinctive contribution to the Christian OVC-care community will be highlighted, and their approaches compared and contrasted against each other and against the ethical principles dealt with at length above.

5.4 Caring for OVC outside the walls

5.4.1 Hands At Work, the best practice model

Hands At Work (hereinafter “Hands”) is a Christian non-profit organisation working in the poorest of the poor communities across sub-Saharan Africa where HIV/AIDS, poverty, and numbers of orphans are highest and support structures are very low. It utilises cooperative local churches in those communities to effectively care for OVC by forming community based organisations (CBOs). Hands was born in South Africa as a result of years of an increasing burden in the hearts of George and Carolyn Snyman. Beginning in 1994, George walked through six countries of southern Africa living with the poor in their rural villages, learning about their way of life and their struggles, ministering to their spiritual needs, and helping them with what little he had (Snyman, Interview 1). This incarnational trek gave him a burden for the “bottom billion” of the world that live

on less than R7 per day, people who are the poorest of the poor, who are “off the ladder” and have no choices or hope. The Snymans began “Masoyi Home-Based Care” (MHBC) in 1998 in the rural Mpumalanga cluster of villages known as Masoyi, home to the Africa School of Missions, which also provided the first offices for MHBC. “It began simply by challenging and training local volunteers to visit the sick and dying in their homes, but quickly expanded to include orphan care, feeding, pre-school care, support groups, and youth work” (Hands, 2011:1). The success of Masoyi’s orphan-care approach in its early years, and its recognition as a “best practice” model by USAID in 2000, inspired those involved to replicate the endeavour in the poor rural communities of other African countries, and thus, Hands was born. MHBC and Hands are now separate organisations functioning side-by-side, with Hands focusing on orphan care. Hands now has ministries in Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and more recently in Malawi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Swaziland and Nigeria. In 2006, Africa School of Missions gave Hands its property across the street as a home base. Since then, eight residences for full-time staff, a hospitality block with a meeting hall, kitchen, and rooms for short-term staff (6 months to 2 years), and front offices for its service centre personnel have been built on a property surrounded by a study game farm electric fence. The full-time staff are both black and white, foreign and South African, and Hands emphasises that their staff are family to each other, building a “kingdom culture” that is a model for the world to see (Hunziker, Interview 1). All fulltime and short-term staff live on the property rather than out in the community for security reasons, and to have a place of retreat and refreshment at the end of days that are often physically and emotionally gruelling. While they recognise this as a step away from truly incarnational ministry, Hunziker (Interview 1) said in an interview that it is chiefly for security reasons, and they would not need to or choose to live away from the villages in any other country in southern Africa; South Africa is unique. Further, Hands personnel, both full-time and short-term, frequently spend nights in the village as needed. Hands At Work now coordinates care for over 9000 OVC in 63 communities in eight countries in southern Africa.

According to Snyman (Interview 1), there are four pillars to the Hands model: 1) working with the poorest of the poor, 2) local community ownership of orphan

care, 3) long-term relationships, and 4) ensuring the provision of the three essential services of food security, primary education, and health/security. Each will be dealt with in order. Firstly, as mentioned above, there is nothing morally wrong with poverty if one's basic needs are being met; the evil lies in grinding poverty in which no one can survive. Hands works with the poorest of the poor because they are destitute and dying, not just from HIV/AIDS but simply from malnutrition due to lack of food, clean water, and access to healthcare. At this level of poverty, people have no choices and are very open to suggestions of cooperation for survival. Snyman (Interview 1) notes that very poor African churches are willing to work together, whereas those with some level of wealth in the villages that have seen some development become increasingly territorial and defensive and will not work together.

When Hands personnel walk into a poor village, they look for three things that will be discussed further below: a Mother Theresa, a Man of Peace, and local churches. Due to centuries of mission work, one thing Christian volunteers can count on finding in South African villages is a number of local churches. Threading these two key individuals together with nearby local churches in a new community-based organisation (CBO) is what Snyman means by local community ownership of orphan care. "Among the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable communities on earth, God has planted Christians with all the passion, gifts, and potential to be the ones who transform their communities. We must honour God and partner with those whom He has chosen.... Our vision is to see the local church in Africa effectively caring for the dying, orphans, and widows, and unified in this mission with the Church outside Africa" (Hands 2011:1-2). Hands At Work, therefore, does not directly engage in orphan care but, through their service centres, their personnel equip and support local CBOs formed by key people and congregations in the community as they care for OVC (see Figure 5.1).

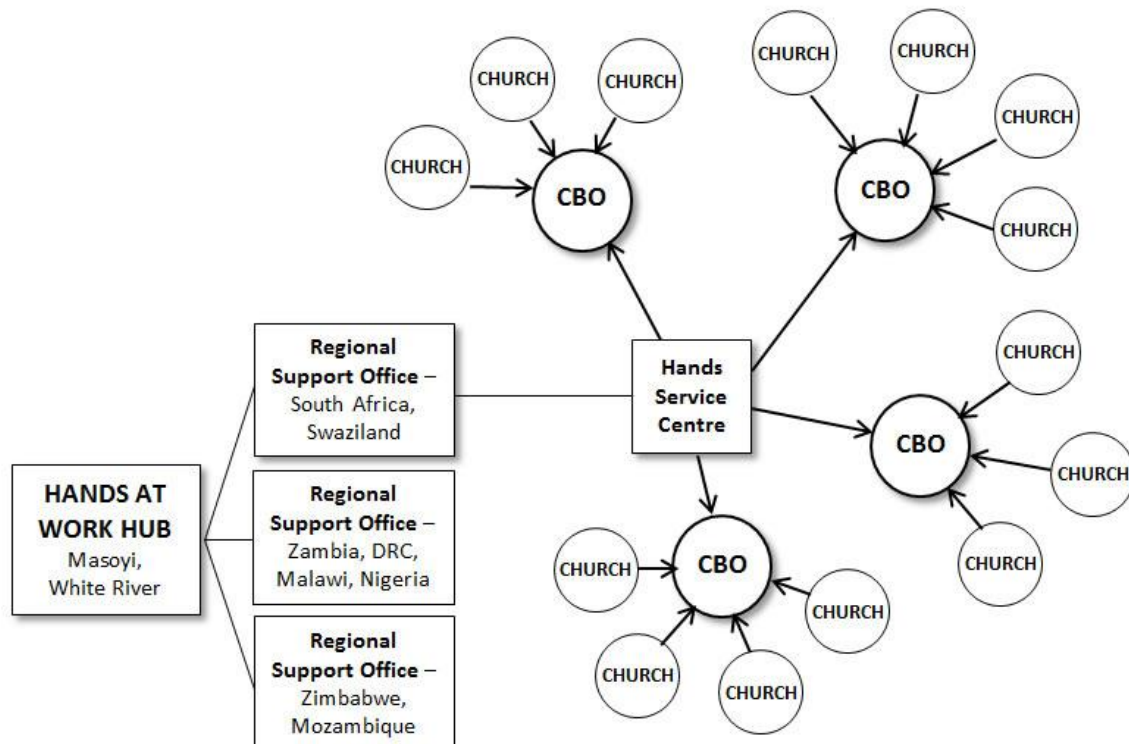


Figure 5.1 Structural model of Hands At Work, Masoyi, Mpumalanga

The relationship between Hands and the CBOs is not a matter of channelling funds; quite the opposite is true for one to three years. The entire approach from the beginning is very relational and is not pushed in a Western style. To help with this approach, most of the frontline personnel of Hands are Africans who have been trained both in a formal Bible college setting as well as through years of hard practical experiences out in the villages. Snyman (Interview 1) says “one must enter the villages with feet, not wheels. The approach must be humble and incarnational. It begins with listening and learning since the answers offered by compassion are not one size fits all. Different villages have different problems and dynamics. It is a matter of discovering the answers together, which may take many days and repeated meetings,” and building a “kingdom culture” that is neither Western nor African, but one based on Scriptural principles and the character of Christ. “God’s culture supersedes any of the paternalistic cultures that we come from. In our first-world cultures, we do not see our own weaknesses, idols, and errors, and we tend to see money as the answer for everything. We must live cross-culturally for others to point out our cultural

weaknesses, which we will deny at first, but in time realise that they are right” (Snyman, Interview 1).

In the Hands model, the initial approach and method of establishing a new CBO in a community is critical to create the “right DNA” in the organisation and its relationship with Hands. According to Mwende (Interview 1), who heads up Hands’ Regional Support Team in South Africa, there are roughly seven steps in establishing a fully operational Hands affiliated ministry in a village, a process that honours and respects the African way of doing things and mirrors the spirit of Christ, while avoiding pitfalls that OVC ministries often fall into from the outset.

- **Discern the Community Needs:** A Hands worker enters the community on foot during a weekday without any NGO markings. Shirts or cars with labels on them typically indicate the likelihood of coming money, and thus, people will often portray things as poorer and worse than they truly are to engender sympathy. An African must go because “white people have dollar signs all over them” since they don’t enter these areas unless they are coming with finances to help (Mwende, Interview 1). The Hands worker asks questions of widows and orphans in the community about where and how often they get water, whether it is from the river, from a public Jo-Jo, or from the municipal water system. He also asks how frequently the water is available. He inquires as to whether they have food and where they get money to buy food. He asks where the nearest clinic is located where people can get medical help, and he later visits that clinic to see if they have basic medical supplies; very often they do not. He also asks children where the school is located. Most public schools in these poor areas are free but still require uniforms and other supplies, which are not free.
- **Find Mother Theresa:** The Hands worker also asks around to see what lady is already demonstrating a care for orphans and those who are suffering. He then speaks to her to see what she does, why she does it, and to see if she is passionate about OVC and has inspired other friends to do the same thing. Mwende commented that in almost every case, she is a professing Christian (Mwende, Interview 1). Even though she may have little education and may not be able to read or write, he seeks to determine

if she is a leader, a person of influence. If she believes in caring for OVC, has done so with no help, and has inspired others to do likewise, she is what Hands calls a “Mother Theresa” who should be highlighted to inspire the community to do something larger.

- **Find the Man of Peace:** Psalm 37:37 says, “Mark the blameless and behold the upright, for there is a future for the man of peace” (2001). The Hands worker asks Mother Theresa and the orphans in the village what man in the community they would go to if they needed help, what man they could trust. The worker continues to ask around to see if one man’s name keeps coming up. The man might be a headmaster or a pastor or a businessman in the community. The Hands worker then approaches him, mentioning the recommendations of others, and spends time with him talking about what Mother Theresa has been doing, sharing with him the Bible’s teaching concerning caring for orphans, and building a vision by sharing what other Hands communities are doing. In most cases, this man, who Hands personnel call the “Man of Peace,” will get behind any new initiative to help the OVC and bring people together.
- **Gather church leaders and their wives.** One social structure that is almost everywhere in the African communities is the local church. The Man of Peace calls local pastors, other key church leaders, and their wives together. He begins by describing the situation of OVC in the community, and points out what Mother Theresa has been doing. He then presents the Hands representative to them with his full support. The Hands worker explains the biblical mandate for churches to care for the poor and orphans, explains the Hands model, reviews what Hands is doing in other communities and countries, and then asks if they would begin to support Mother Theresa in her vision, in line with the biblical mandate. Sometimes the men will agree and give their blessing to an idea but not follow through, and that is why Hands strongly advises that their wives come to the meeting, because the wives will not forget about the children. Often the question arises, “But we are so poor, what can we do?” The Hands worker responds with God’s response to Moses in Exodus 4:2, “What is in your hand?” If ten families would each give one-half cup of rice or mealie meal

each day of the week, Mother Theresa could feed 40-50 orphans on Saturday. But Mother Theresa doesn't just need food; she needs volunteers to help. The idea is then introduced to form an informal community-based organisation in their community staffed by Mother Theresa and others, and supplied by families in the local churches. The CBO would be led by a "Board of Servants" (not directors) who do not feel themselves too significant to help children. Typically the board includes teachers, headmasters, pastors, the Man of Peace and others who have demonstrated personal commitment to the children in the community. Some churches will not agree to the plan, at times because no outside money is involved and they believe the plan will fail. Hands workers advise the participating churches not to hold that against them, because often when the effort succeeds in time, the other churches will want to get involved.

- **Secure the agreement of stakeholders:** The Hands worker has the Man of Peace accompany him to the local police and government offices, to visit social workers, to visit the local hospital or clinic, and to meet with the tribal chiefs in the area informing them about the new initiative to care for the orphans in the targeted village, and asking their blessing and support. Social workers may often say they knew nothing of the area and may begin to make visits. Hospitals may have mobile clinics that will begin visiting the area. The police may be needed in cases of rape or abuse. In most cases, the community stakeholders are overly thankful and supportive.
- **Train and support the CBO during its test run for a period of years:** Hands personnel then guide the CBO in organizing and setting up its scheme of ministry. Each case is different due to myriad factors. "In the Hands model, orphans are kept within family-unit groups headed by a local caregiver (a granny, an aunt, or an elder sibling) within the community, where they receive the psycho-social care that family and community provide. The community-based organisations then support these families through community care points and teams of trained local care workers who visit the children in their homes" (Hands, 2011:1). This is the "come and go principle" where children come and receive holistic care at

community centres and also gain the protection and benefit of typically bi-weekly visits by care workers who go to their home.

One of the keys to the lasting success of the Hands model is that it offers no financial assistance to the CBO in the first couple of years since this is often why people in the community get involved in caring for OVC – it is merely a job. If care workers see their work with OVC as a job rather than a ministry, and the outside money runs out, they will stop helping the children and leave the centre, whereas if they see it as a ministry and funds become scarce, they will keep on working because they have a calling in their heart to do so. Many care centres develop a detrimental dependency on outside funding which will vary with the economic condition of the first world. In the current recession, charitable contributions are being greatly reduced, and millions of dollars in PEPFAR funding will cease at the end of 2011.

In the initial years of the relationship between Hands and the CBO, the ideas, encouragement, training, guidance, and capacity-building for the new ministry to OVC come from Hands personnel, but the CBO is independently staffed and sourced by Christians and churches in the community. Hands personnel see themselves as a scaffolding to assist with the building of the CBO, to be taken away as the building takes shape (Hunziker, Interview 1). Hands personnel help the CBO care workers as they walk through the community and begin to identify who are truly qualified as OVC, start making home visits, and start trying to meet the three critical needs of food security, primary education, and healthcare/security. CBO's care workers have such pride when they achieve their first small successes.

- **Food security of OVC.** OVC are seldom getting enough food at home, so Mother Theresa's home, a church building, a community centre, or some other neutral area serves as a "feeding point" for the children. When the CBO begins, it struggles to provide a weekly meal, but as more people get involved over time, it can eventually provide a daily meal after school. In Belfast, Bushbuck Ridge, the ladies of the CBO

used a large pot to make food, taught Bible lessons, and had activities for the kids under a large tree near the river every day for three years unless it was raining. In time, they began a gardening project to provide a nutritional supplement to the basic starch diet. At times, orphans or the adults looking after them are trained by Hands personnel in gardening skills at their homes, sometimes using the three-circle method advocated across Africa by the UN (MCDRC, 2008:1). Snyman (Interview 2) said that it adds incentive if the CBO care workers can take home some vegetables for themselves.

- **Primary education of OVC.** If the care workers are educated well enough, they give the children help with studies after school. At times, they can mobilise local teachers to provide help. By making home visits, they also ensure that the children are regularly attending school. A pre-school crèche tends to be a natural part of these care centres to enable single parents to get work and to prepare the little ones for school-readiness.
- **Health and personal safety of OVC.** The CBO, together with Hands, tries to secure a source of clean water for the children, and to arrange for the periodic visit of mobile medical clinics to the centre. A CBO may be given a cell phone to use in case of medical emergencies. Counsel is given to the care givers and to children who are caring for dying family members. CBO volunteers may have wrong ideas about HIV/AIDS and need to be trained on proper hygiene and bathing for the ill, administering medications, and proper diet. Making home visits greatly reduces rape, abuse, and neglect because, according to Snyman (Interview 1), children are taken advantage of when they are alone and have no meaningful linkage to a nearby adult. In Cork, Bushbuck Ridge, 85 of the 150 OVC at the care centre were in child- or orphan-headed households, and therefore, regular home visits were critical. CBO volunteers often need training in providing security in the homes of OVC because they grew up in similar bad circumstances and do not appreciate the dangers. According to Hunziker (Interview 1), one teen girl and her two younger sisters slept in a closet on a urine-soaked

mattress so that they could be behind a door with a lock to keep from being molested. Walkabouts in the community are also critical for detecting new OVC needs. The writer remembers Zamse, a 10-year-old boy living in Shongwe Mission who had AIDS, and was being left to die by an alcoholic grandmother; she had refused him food and clothing. Sally McKibbin of Thembaletu, an organization providing food, youth programmes, and protective visits for more than 4000 orphan-led households in the area, walked by the house and saw the emaciated naked boy sitting and leaning against the front doorframe. Sally asked him to get up, but he couldn't. Sally then told the grandmother that she was taking the boy, and the grandmother shrugged. It seemed like kidnapping, but everyone in the community knew about Sally, and the go-go thus knew where she could find the boy. Zamse was treated in hospital and released to Sally's care where, with proper diet and medications, he was much improved and began to speak again in three weeks' time. His go-go had still not come looking for him.

- **Support the CBO with additional personnel and finances:** After the CBO and its volunteer care workers have proven themselves faithful during the years of the test-run, Hands then considers moving the CBO into the full Hands model by increasing its capacity, diversifying programmes, and connecting the CBO with outside resources from partner churches in South Africa and abroad. At this point, Hands takes great pains to make sure that the initiative stays community based and empowered. According to Mwende (Interview 1), financially helping too much or too early causes the volunteers to sit back and give over the work to others; this fundamentally destroys the DNA of the Hands model. Volunteers are to remain non-paid volunteers, but Hands may distribute funds to the CBO for additional and more nutritious food supplies at the care centres, and for food parcels to be delivered to households facing malnutrition. Parcels typically cost about R200, are filled with very basic non-perishable food supplies such as meal, rice, and sugar, and are intended to be sufficient for one person for one month (Mahlangu, Interview 1). With the funds, Hands provides CBO staff

with thorough training and accountability for budgeting, expenses, receipts, and record-keeping to ensure proper stewardship. In several cases, Hands-related CBOs have heard that there is ample funding from government departments or other charitable organisations and have pursued those resources so that their staff can be paid. Hands views this as fundamentally changing the DNA of the organisation because the programme becomes money-driven, becomes dependent on sources outside the community, and it is departing from its long-term relationship with Hands. In such cases, the CBO is “graduated” to working with its new partners (Hunziker, Interview 1).

In this seventh phase, Hands Service Centre personnel increase their ongoing CBO care worker and home caregiver training to expand the community’s capacity to provide OVC care in a more well-rounded and holistic manner. The CBO moves from being merely a “feeding point” to being a full-fledged “care centre” that offers more nutritional meals and provides better developed and supplied after-school activities, counselling, and job-skills development. At times, Hands will offer youth camps and special outings or activities for the OVC connected with these centres. The CBO’s care workers continue to assess the health and security of children through home visits, identifying urgent needs, bringing in healthcare support, and providing basic physical and emotional care. They teach OVC about HIV/AIDS transmission because care for vulnerable children often begins with care for their dying parents. Skills training is also provided to care workers, caregivers, and older OVC enabling them to develop income-generating capacity by teaching skills such as gardening, brick making, sewing, and bead or craft making. Home gardens are encouraged, and when income-generating activities are done at the care centre, profits are recorded and given to the centre. Healthcare training enables the CBO care workers to further coach caregivers in the home regarding nutrition, hygiene, child-care, and giving psycho-social support to OVC.

Whether the children receive Bible teaching or Bible-based activities is up to the CBO, which is backed by the surrounding churches in the

community. Hands personnel hope that this is happening, but Hands has not pushed involvement in these activities, given training or materials to the CBOs or churches to do this unless asked, or held the CBOs accountable for this kind of ministry (Mwende, Interview 1). Because the overarching problem with orphaned and abandoned children is the lack of guidance in their lives, Mwende (Interview 1) expressed the aspiration for Hands to move these CBO's to yet a higher level, from "care centres" to "life centres" where more psycho-social support, Christian ethical teaching, social-sexual counsel, and practical life skills training are provided for the children.

It is in this seventh stage that Hands may consider purchasing property and erecting a building for the CBO using donations from partners. An effort is made to build simple and functional structures that reflect the surrounding community. Snyman (Interview 2) felt that one of their community centres, used to minister to over 150 OVC daily, was too big as compared with other buildings in the neighbourhood and, therefore, became the target of those who wished to use it for business purposes. The more common and modest approach is to purchase and modify a house in the community, preferably on a double lot or contiguous to unused open land (Snyman, Interview 2; Mahlangu, Interview 1).

Hands' overseas partners, be they individuals, churches or businesses, are located in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, and Australia. The remote offices for Hands in those countries are normally very basic, perhaps in someone's home, are registered in those countries as non-profit organisations, issue receipts, maintain financial records, serve as recruitment centres, and maintain the websites in those countries. "Hands at Work's network of international churches and organizations also participate as capacity-building tools for our communities by 1) supplying resources, 2) sending short-term teams and 3) sending individuals for mid-term and long-term service. Our international offices stir up individuals and groups to partner with our African brothers and sisters in caring for the broken communities in Africa. As the church-partner relationship begins, 1) it is an introductory one of friendship, discovering and understanding one

another's heart and values that 2) grows into a membership role, actively visiting and supporting projects on the ground, and 3) develops to become an anchoring presence, influencing vision and direction as well as pulling new partners on board" (Hands, 2011:1).

The genius of the Hands model is that it is both sustainable and reproducible in a third-world African culture, as proven during the test-run phase of the CBOs where Christians and churches are using what little is in their hands to help the OVC. Very few other models can make such a claim, and certainly none of those compassion ministries where OVC are living "behind the walls." All other OVC-care models, in the writer's experience, rely on outside donations. Only Hands has inspired and equipped Africans in their own communities to use what little they have to care for the children. The full Hands model, where money begins to flow from Hands to the CBOs for better food, programmes, and facilities would not be sustainable and reproducible until either Hands or the CBO's could generate enough non-donor income on their own, through local income-generating projects, to fund new CBOs. The Hands model is also rooted in the existing network of relationships and the spirit of *ubuntu* within the communities. Little wonder then that USAID labelled the model as the "best practice."

5.4.2 Mukhanyo Community Development Centre

Mukhanyo Community Development Centre (hereinafter referred to as "MCDC") is an NGO that endeavoured to follow the Hands At Work model in the poor rural areas of KwaMhlanga, in western Mpumalanga, 100 kilometres northeast of Pretoria. Although it accomplished much in its eight years, and was the writer's chief source of learning about OVC over the years, MCDC is no longer functioning in the way it used to for reasons discussed below.

In 2002, MCDC was birthed out of Mukhanyo Theological College, a local school that has been training pastors and church leaders since 1994. Like Hands, MCDC was created to partner with local churches in the area and to assist them in improving the unacceptable levels of suffering due to large numbers of OVC, people living with AIDS, and people living in extreme poverty. MCDC was to develop care centres that were operated by local churches "so that the local church could be the hands and feet of Jesus to the community" (MCDC, 2008:1).

The board called on Melanie Prinsloo to give life and direction to the organization. A strongly compassionate Christian and champion of OVC in South Africa, Melanie also began and developed the Lambano Sanctuary in Johannesburg in 2001 (examined below), and the new Ubuhle Care and Development Centre in Bronkhorstspuit in 2010 (also examined below). Although MCDC never grew to the size of Hands, it acted somewhat like a Hands Service Centre (see Figure 5.1), working directly with churches that doubled as CBOs. Like the Hands model, MCDC followed the “come and go” OVC care centre model where children lived with a caregiver in the community, attended school, and came to the care centre for a small lunch, a large after-school dinner, and after-school activities. MCDC care workers also made home visits and distributed food parcels to OVC households that were too far away from the care centres.

At its height, MCDC, with the motto of *Masibambisani* (“let us bear the burden together”), ran five orphan care centres at Sun City, Vezubuhle, Thembaletu, Phumula, and Malaleli providing holistic services for an average of 90 OVC each. The organisation also ran an 8-bed AIDS hospice facility at Nakekela, which was well-funded and staffed by overseas medical volunteers. MCDC had a team of about fifteen missionaries and volunteers from South Africa, the United States, and Holland working at the head office and coordinating ministry to the care centres. Its offices were located at the Mukhanyo Theological College for a time, and then at a donated farm on the western edge of KwaMhlanga, where it also had facilities to host multiple short-term mission teams. It also mobilized about 120 care workers from local churches in the wider KwaMhlanga area who were trained and worked in qualifying OVC, making home visits, caring for sick adult caregivers, providing guidance and running support groups for caregivers, delivering monthly food parcels if the home was too distant from a centre, counselling OVC, running pre-school crèches, preparing food, maintaining care centre gardening projects, running after school games, sports, arts, activities, educational programmes, and Bible clubs, and engaging in community development and capacity building projects (MCDC, 2008:1).

Several key differences between the Hands model and the MCDC model were that MCDC 1) asked local churches to run orphan care centres rather than

creating a CBO supported by a cluster of surrounding churches, 2) asked local churches to run the care centres on their own properties rather than using a residence or a neutral third location as a care centre, 3) began channelling funds to the churches immediately without requiring a test-run phase for churches to perform on their own without financial help, and 4) paid the care workers a small wage as employees. These differences led to several negative consequences. In some cases, a church that wanted to help with OVC did not have a building, but when it entered an MCDC partnership, MCDC bought a property and modified the building for the church to use as a care centre. In those cases, the church was blessed with a building but did not have the right to use the building as it might have under a lease. Thus, it was often unclear what the church could or could not do with the building, and when chairs, tables, desks, podiums, lights, computers or sewing machines were bought for the centre, there were debates about who owned the donated items, MCDC or the church; such disputes were normally resolved in MCDC's favour. Thus, according to Pastor Mahlangu (Interview 1), the church's leaders in some cases felt captive. The church also became known in the community as "the orphan church," and often a majority of the congregation were OVC. Due to the stigma, few others in the community would attend, and the pastors of other churches began to refuse to have such ministries in their churches (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Churches hosting the care centres also battled with an inability to run church activities or other youth events on the church property because OVC from the community (often 80-130 children) were almost always there. Further, if the church lacked adults to serve as care workers for the centre and asked Christians from other churches to get involved, pastors were accused of "sheep-stealing." Efforts to involve other churches with supporting the care centre also met with resistance for the same reason (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Prinsloo (Interview 3) comments in retrospect that cooperation between several churches from the beginning is the best arrangement; if an OVC ministry belongs to one church, the other area churches will get jealous and oppose it. She also notes that donors are reticent to give money to churches, whereas they will give to an NGO, even if it is a church-run NGO.

MCDC went through growing pains and internal struggles, as NGOs invariably do. Prinsloo (Interview 2) comments that there was infighting among staff who would

also complain to American and European volunteers that they were underpaid and mistreated by MCDC administration. This unfortunately prompted compassionate foreign volunteers to give money to the staff and become their advocates against MCDC's leadership. One well-meaning American visitor returned to the United States and filed an application for MCDC to obtain a PEPFAR grant without MCDC's knowledge. The NGO was then approached by PEPFAR stating that if they could document the care of 20,000 OVC in the area, they could receive millions of dollars over a five-year period toward its offices, vehicles, medications, and food supplies. Prinsloo (2008) felt that this would fundamentally redefine the nature of MCDC and destroy its Christian character since there were not enough Christians in the area to staff the expansion. Thus, the application process was halted. To make matters worse, the 2,000 hectare farm given to MCDC to use during the life estate of the lessor was in the KwaNdebele homelands. When only 20 acres of it was being used by MCDC in 2008, the local chiefs ordered that the land be taken back and sold in parcels for residential expansion, except for the 20 acres being used.

Believing from the beginning that MCDC was meant to fully and finally become a community-based organisation, Melanie Prinsloo began preparations in 2008 to leave MCDC in the hands of its capable African administrators who had grown with the organisation. She mentored these future leaders in running the operations of the office and the connected care centres, conducting fundraising, and maintaining accountability with sponsors. Finkbeiner (Interview 1), an American long-term volunteer with MCDC, commented to the writer that many of the African staff were concerned about Prinsloo's coming departure, believing that the organisation would not survive under African leadership. With Prinsloo's departure, according to Snyman (Interview 1), the DNA of the organisation changed. Although opinions vary, and it is not the aim of this work to examine the reasons for MCDC's demise, it seems that due to several problems involving both the board and administration, several key sponsors withdrew their support of MCDC while expenses remained constant or increased (Prinsloo, Interview 3). By May of 2010, accountants advised MCDC that it was almost insolvent and should cease its activities immediately. The good postlude to the MCDC story is that volunteer accountants stepped forward, incorporated each of the care centres as

a separate NGO or public benefit organisation, and gave each the list of sponsors who had traditionally supported the care centre. These accountants are currently working to transfer the MCDC property in each village to its local care centre. MCDC stills exists in a very basic corporate form, and still channels funds periodically to its five former care centres, but has minimised its website and fundraising activities and is exploring the possibility of redefining its purpose for the future (Prinsloo, 2011).

5.4.3 Emthonjeni Wokuphila Community Development Centre

The volunteer accountants involved in the closure of MCDC's operations organised its Sun City Care Centre under a new NGO known as Emthonjeni Wokuphila Community Development Centre (hereinafter referred to as "Sun City") in 2010. The writer helped develop the new centre's business plan and fundraising tools, but the leadership's task of meeting with financial partners in the cities of Gauteng was extremely daunting to them as residents of a rural area; all prior fund-raising had been done by Melanie Prinsloo and her assistants at MCDC. The new leaders at Sun City overcame their fears, communicated with the financial partners, and had been able to maintain a steady stream of income until the economic downturn hit the centre hard in the winter of 2011, forcing some transformational decisions to be made (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Firstly, the 18 care workers at the centre were moved from monthly salary to volunteer status, and are now paid a "stipend" at the end of the month only if extra funds are available after the needs of the OVC have been met. This reduced the staff from 18 to 8 in number, with three administrators. The experienced care centre coordinator, who was a head of household, had to leave and find other work. Secondly, due to the shortage of personnel, the early childhood development programme (crèche) that had been maintained so that single parents could work, was closed and the children transferred to a nearby government school that was running a free crèche. Thirdly, the Sun City leaders approached other area churches and asked if they would partner with the centre, and if their pastors would help on the board of directors; five churches agreed to do so. Fourth, the host church of the Sun City Centre, God's Ark Assembly, purchased another property on which it will hopefully build its own building in 2012, and will,

therefore, not have to comingle its activities with the OVC care centre. The church is part of the Apostolic Faith Mission, which is a fellowship of churches that endorses but does not fund the compassion ministries of its churches.

It is interesting to note that although the Sun City Care Centre maintained its operations steadily through MCDC's organisational crisis, it was eventually changed by its financial crisis into a CBO that is much more aligned with the Hands At Work model. It is now staffed by volunteers rather than paid staff, the Christian volunteers come from a cluster of supportive churches nearby in the community, it is no longer a single church-run CBO but is governed by a board of Christian leaders and pastors in the community, and since the church will soon be moving, it will be run at an independent, non-church location. The key difference between Sun City and the Hands model, of course, is that Sun City is not relying on local Christians and area churches to provide food for the OVC, but is still being funded by first-world partners in the urban areas of Gauteng Province. One cannot conclude that the Sun City model is not sustainable or reproducible in its third world setting because it has never been actually put to that test. If the current economic recession does not turn around, and charitable giving further declines, such a test might occur. Currently, the centre provides daily food and after-school activities for 76 school-age children, and delivers monthly food parcels to 73 OVC and HIV/AIDS patients further afield in the community. The budget is based on spending roughly R300/month per child coming to the centre, and R200/month on each food parcel. Sun City is the OVC-care ministry that the author has had the closest relationship with over the past five years, and the faithfulness and commitment of its staff, through all of the changes and challenges, has been a blessing, an inspiration, and a source of learning.

5.4.4 Ubuhle Care and Development Centre

In the 1980s, Thoko Ntuli grew up on a farm near Bronkhorstspuit and started her education when she was ten because she was finally big enough to take the 2-3 hour walk to school. Thoko continued her education through university, and in 2009, as a successful African businesswoman in the ecotourism industry in Pretoria, she came back to the farm where she had spent her childhood and was troubled when she encountered a grandmother who could not bury her son

because he had no identification papers. The authorities had kept his body in the morgue in Bronkhorstspuit for a month thinking that he might be a Zimbabwean. Thoko was able to secure the proper papers for the deceased man, but through the experience, she learned that 1) most of the people living in the farm areas had no registration documents (ID books), 2) the workers living on the farms of supposed first-world church-goers lived in horrid conditions without electricity or running water and lived very far from any shops where they could purchase food, and 3) sitting among them were many children who also had no identification papers, had never attended school because there is no transportation available to them, and were constantly faced with the morally degenerate conditions of alcoholism, rape, pregnancy and abortions right there within the camp. Children were burned while trying to hold their food over an open fire, and if angry, would burn each other with sticks from the fire. Typically, one person worked on the farm and supported 20 others in the camp (Ntuli, 2011). Ntuli began working to get the adults and children their ID books so that they could apply for the child-care and foster-care grant monies.

As Ntuli saw the need for more localised education and spoke with Melanie Prinsloo about opening a farm school, and thus, Ubuhle (meaning “beautiful”) was born on the farm where she was reared. Ubuhle Care and Development Centre (hereinafter referred to as “Ubuhle”) is the parent NGO, which runs the Ubuhle School, and because churches are also too far away, the Ubuhle Church on the same premises. Prinsloo (Interview 3) commented that in almost every instance of compassion ministry to OVC, it is women like Thoko who take the initiative, and it is mostly women who are running the projects. The school building, located on the Prinsloo farm, is made of maintenance-free klinker brick with a tin roof, and a parallel building to double the size of the school is under construction and will be ready for the beginning of the 2012 school year.

Ubuhle is registered as a primary school and uses the Accelerated Christian Education (ACE) curriculum in which children move through a series of lessons in booklets at their own pace guided by a classroom monitor. The ACE curriculum was developed in America but has been adapted for South African Christian schools, and is vastly superior to what most children will find in the public sector.

Each student has his or her own materials, and the classroom walls are covered with colourful learning posters. Ubuhle currently has 100 students, beginning with 20 two and three year olds in the pre-school who are taught in their African language but are introduced to English. There are 30 four and five year olds who are taught in a mixture of their African language and English, 30 in Grades 1-3 who are taught only in English, and 20 in a remedial class for older children and teens who have never been to school and are having to catch up. The school's expansion will help them to accommodate Grades 4-7, and that is as far as the school intends to go. In Grade 8, as is the plan at Bethesda Outreach (below), children will be channelled into the government high school.

The heart of the school is not merely to provide a superior education, but to educate from a distinctly Christian worldview and to communicate the gospel and biblical ethical truths to the children. In this sense, the model is superior to the care centre model in that children are learning from a Christian worldview, under the discipleship of Christian teachers, and avoiding the, at times, immoral atmosphere in the public schools, for almost eight hours a day. "For us, the school is about evangelism, about reaching the children with the gospel and preparing them for life" (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Bible is part of each field of study in the curriculum, and children are also challenged in special Bible times by area pastors in the Zithobeni township who are starting to participate now that the school is well established. Most of the children stay until late afternoon to socialise and to do their homework, since the go-gos at home are normally illiterate and cannot help. Ntuli is the school's administrator, but Prinsloo (Interview 3) notes that it has been hard to get some African teachers to recognise and respect Ntuli as the one they are to go to when they have questions or difficulties, even though Ntuli is highly qualified and started the ministry. If they approach Melanie, she refers them to Ntuli, and if the problem persists, the teacher is dismissed. Due to her compassion and hard work, Ntuli has also become the farm-workers' advocate to the municipality, and she commented to the writer (Interview 1) that they are seeking funding to hire a local social worker to have an office based at the school.

All of the school's 100 students are transported to and from the school each day in the school's one combi. As with so many ministries, the vehicle is dying and will need two replacements as the school expands. The school provides a porridge-type breakfast at 9 am, mid-morning snacks, a protein, carbohydrate and vegetable lunch, and mid-afternoon snacks. Most of the children stay until late afternoon to socialise and to do their homework, since the go-gos at home are normally illiterate and cannot help. The school's driver observes the home setting each morning and evening, and additional periodic visits are made by Ntuli, especially if the children report trouble in the camp. There is no HIV testing on the children because the NGO/school does not have custody of them, and HIV status is guarded by the privacy provisions of the Children's Act (38/2005). However, the school does monitor the health of the children generally, educates them about sex and sexually transmitted diseases, and has arranged for the Department of Health to send a mobile clinic to the school once a month where the children and caregivers may have their health needs attended to and get their immunisations up to date. This has been a huge benefit to the community (Prinsloo, Interview 3). The school also runs an HIV workshop for the community periodically.

Prinsloo began the school with no funding because it is difficult to secure donations with just an idea. However, as she prayed, gave her personal funds, and began the work, she was approached by donors who heard what she was doing, and the project has grown from there. Ideally, Ubuhle will be funded by many smaller donors to avoid the impact of losing a key sponsor. Prinsloo states (Interview 3) that she will rarely use American or European volunteers because they have never worked out well for her. Such a person's individualistic, rapid, technologically-driven, and money-driven culture is vastly different from the African culture. Prinsloo also feels responsible for their happiness while they are visiting, they want to socialise in off-hours while she is with her family, they complain when the water or electricity is out, and, out of compassion, they get involved with the community and take the side of local Africans and staff against the her and other leaders of the NGO (Prinsloo, Interview 3).

When asked about the involvement of local Christians and churches in the project, Prinsloo (Interview 3) replied that most first-world Christians in the towns nearby

“are about capitalism, accumulating things, and individualism, and I feel very alone. Friends tell me ‘you must take time for yourself and not give away your money.’ The Christian community of today is missing the calling of what Jesus came to teach.... They reply that it’s about survival, but it’s not; it’s about comfort and a quality of life. [People] say that I’ve wasted my education, I’ve wasted my life” (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Her local church is very evangelistic and missions-minded, but racism runs deep locally and everyone is so busy with their own lives, no one in the church comes to visit, no one shows concern, and no one even gives financially to her work. Prinsloo laments that she has been isolated from, and shunned by, her own culture while still not fitting in fully with the African culture, so she feels quite lonely and misunderstood, a cultural-emotional problem normally experienced only by foreign missionaries. Even after twelve years of working closely together with Africans in their culture, she says that she still fails to see that she is offending someone by what she says or does, and her African co-workers simply keep quiet and let her take over.

The mission of Ubuhle is to reach OVC on the farms, but Ubuhle is an interesting and innovative variation on the OVC care model because it has created a Christian school to help OVC and not a “care centre” with an after-school programme as is used by Hands, MCDRC, Sun City, and Morningstar. This is driven by the fact that the children are scattered among the farms, are almost all OVC, and can’t walk to a centre, whereas in the other contexts the children are clustered in villages where schools are available, only a portion of the children are OVC, and most are within walking distance of a centre. Years ago, Prinsloo was asked by municipal officials in KwaMhlanga to start a school (Prinsloo, 2006), and one wonders if such an approach would have a greater spiritual, educational, and whole life impact than a care centre. The Ubuhle School provides food, healthcare, education, biblical and ethical teaching, and psycho-social counsel and support for OVC, and is the dominating presence in the children’s lives from early in the morning until late afternoon. It also uses the “come and go” approach by its staff making home visits. In addition, the school is exactly that, a school for farm children and doesn’t carry the stigma of an orphan care centre, even though virtually all of the children are OVC. “Things got stigmatised in KwaNdebele [reference to MCDRC] because there was an ‘orphan care centre’ that people were

afraid of, whereas here with Ubuhle School, you can accomplish the same things but without the stigma” (Prinsloo, Interview 3). The negative side is that the cost of care per child is far greater than the other “outside the walls” models, yet not as high as “behind the walls” models. By way of mitigation, greater funding is also available from the public sector by virtue of being both a school and an NGO (Prinsloo, Interview 3; Mixon, Interview 1).

5.4.5 Morning Star Children’s Centre

Morning Star Children’s Centre, operating in and around Welkom, Free State Province, was begun by Joan Adams in January of 2000 “out of deep Christian compassion for the plight our nation finds itself in due to the escalating HIV/AIDS pandemic currently sweeping through our land” (MSCC, 2011:1). It is currently a network of four care facilities for OVC who are infected with HIV/AIDS, as opposed to OVC in general. The conditions in most of the townships and villages in the Free State are so poor that virtually all African children are OVC, and care centres must focus or be overwhelmed (Adams, 2011-1:1). Morning Star’s mission, therefore, is “to provide an interdisciplinary daily program of optional care for HIV/AIDS children so that they can experience the very best quality of life possible in a Christian environment” (MSCC, 2009:4). While the numbers are continually fluctuating, Morning Star had 485 children on its register in May of 2011; 80 attending the crèche and pre-school programme in Welkom, and 405 attending area schools and receiving after-school food and care at one of the four centres in Welkom, Kutlwanong, Thabong, and Bronville. Another 74 were on the waiting list (MSCC, 2011:1). In recent years, MSCC began the Morning Star School for Grades 0-2 to provide education and optimum care to children who are too sick or disabled to attend regular schools with the focus on getting them ready to re-enter the mainstream educational system by Grade 3. Some older children, due to overseas sponsorships, are able to attend the nearby private Dunamis Christian School.

HIV/AIDS testing is strictly voluntary, and must be authorised by a child’s parent or guardian. While the care centres provide HIV testing and distribute ARVs (antiretroviral medications) with instructions to the caregivers of infected children, there is no way of insuring that the medications are given as prescribed, and

MSCC personnel typically learn that one or more children have died each month; they have seen more than 270 children buried over the past 12 years. On the other hand, many infants and small children have responded to the medications, and more than a hundred who were HIV positive at birth are now HIV negative (MSCC, 2009:8). Still, other children who have recovered from AIDS are suffering from the ARVs over the long term. “The heart-breaking thing these days is that our children are dying from the side effects of the anti-retroviral drugs rather than from HIV/AIDS itself! We’ve always known these drugs are highly toxic and, although they generally improve the health of our little ones, we’re increasingly aware that a child’s immature immune system doesn’t cope as well on them as does an adult’s” (Adams, 2011-1:2).

In addition to medications, the centres also help parents or caregivers to enrol for child care and foster care grants, and provide them with encouragement and training in monthly support group meetings. The centres also provide special programmes for teens who have grown up under the care of the centres and now number more than 60 young adults, “exposing them to Biblical teaching, providing them with the opportunity to get to get to know and support one another in their illnesses, to reach adulthood aware of their HIV statuses, to abstain from sex before marriage, and to commit themselves to being faithful to one partner for life” (MSCC, 2011:1). Morning Star even promises the teens that if they finish their schooling and abstain from sex until marriage, “they will be rewarded with an aeroplane trip to Cape Town at the age of 21 years.” This hasn’t happened yet. “Our township children are born into a culture of immense promiscuity, live in overwhelmingly deprived circumstances, and are subjected to such extreme peer pressure that one wonders if it’s even possible for them to overcome against all these odds. Only God can change hearts and minds. Only a spiritual revival in this land would stem the ongoing spread of this awful disease – HIV/AIDS – and alter people’s mind-sets and sexual behaviour” (Adams, 2011-2:2).

In addition to providing nutritious meals, Bible teaching, children’s games, and activities on the premises after school each day, the centres distribute food parcels to 100-130 households on a monthly basis, including some families on the waiting list. They provide clothing and blankets from in-kind donors, although

Adams notes that the South African government has now banned the free importation of second-hand clothing to charity organizations (Adams, 2011-3:1). The centres are also involved with income-generation projects such as gardening, embroidery, and making school uniforms. Outside of the normal routine, the highlight of the year is Morning Star's annual trip to the sea where the organisation transports their older children down to Durban to enjoy the surf first-hand.

Morning Star's main facility is located in a building that once served as a provincial hospital and has been provided to MSCC rent-free, and with free water and electricity (MSCC, 2009:3). Morning Star also receives funding from the Free State Department of Health, but those amounts have been declining over the past few years, and the organisation now relies on overseas sponsors for more than 80% of its income. Adams was in the UK three times in 2011 speaking in churches and raising funds. Morning Star has undertaken the added administrative task of linking hundreds of donors with sponsored children in its "Adopt-A-Child" programme; such sponsorship may create monthly contributions to MSCC in the child's name or be the source of actual purchases of clothing and birthday gifts (MSCC, 2009:3).

MSCC employs 39 staff members for its various ministries, and has a number of women who serve on a volunteer basis cooking meals and preparing food parcels with the understanding that they will be considered first if a paid position becomes available (MSCC, 2009:9). In addition to paid and volunteer staff, MSCC also hosts a number of overseas volunteers who come to work on anything from construction to educational programmes to medical needs. Coordinating these teams is a lot of work, but Adams' experiences have been better with overseas teams than Prinsloo's (Adams, 2011-3:1). MSCC also has six vehicles that it maintains and operates to transport children, food, and other supplies. Adams is the General Manager of the operation and writes a lengthy quarterly newsletter to donors around the world, but is now looking for a replacement since she is ready to retire (Adams, 2011-3:1). The retirement of women or couples who had the compassion and vision to create and run these OVC ministries for more than a decade will increasingly become an issue with OVC care ministries in South

Africa, and will be exacerbated by the decline in available funding. Transitioning the DNA and heartbeat of such a ministry to a successor is not easy, and has seldom been done where the organisation does not falter or close within two years (Snyman, Interview 1).

5.5 Caring for OVC inside the walls

When one considers Christian compassion ministries to OVC that are “inside the walls,” the model shifts from secondary support for OVC to one of providing primary custody and care for the children. There is, therefore, a necessity to become familiar with the Children’s Act of 2005, and the 2007 Amendments, which govern the stewardship of children in one’s custody (38/2005; 41/2007). Under Chapter 9 of the Children’s Act, there are three basic types of facilities that may receive children into residential care when they are deemed by a court to be in need of protection. They are:

- **Cluster Foster Care Scheme**, which may support no more than six foster mothers/parents looking after no more than six children each (Gillig, Interview 1; Prinsloo, Interview 3). In this arrangement, the OVC are legally in the custody of the foster mothers/parents who may collect the child-care grant or foster-care grant monthly, in addition to whatever other pay and benefits the organization may provide for them. The disadvantage to the organization is that they have limited control over the behaviour and parenting skills of the custodial parents, and if foster parents get upset with the organisation or there are other interpersonal issues, they may leave the organizational premises with their custodial children at any time (Gillig, Interview 1; Mixon, Interview 1).
- **Temporary Place of Safety**, which may provide immediate residential care on an emergency basis. Such facilities are supposed to accommodate a child for no more than six months, but if no outplacement homes are available, the children stay for much longer periods. According to Gillig (Interview 1), most of these facilities are beyond maximum capacity, and many children stay there for years.
- **Child and Youth Care Centre (CYCC)**, which replaced the older concept of a “children’s home,” and offers a therapeutic programme that provides

for residential care for up to ten children per household, but no more than six children per adult, and may provide for temporary safe care. In such cases, the head of the CYCC has legal custody of the children, and the “house parents” are employees of the organisation and therefore subject to training, review, behavioural monitoring, and other terms of employment (Gillig, Interview 1; Mixon, Interview 1). Sections 192 and 193 of the 2007 Amendments called for governmental departments to work together to assure the spread of this model across South Africa and to fund such centres through the provincial legislatures, and thus, CYCCs are preferred from the government’s standpoint (41/2007). Gillig (Interview 1) says that there is a waiting list for such funds. Bethesda Outreach was approved for such funding by the Gauteng Department of Social Development in 2007 and receives R2200 per child each month (Mixon, Interview 1); Oasis applied in 2010, but they were informed that no funds were available (Gillig, Interview 1).

The OVC-care models examined below are all Child and Youth Care Centres under the Children’s Act but care for OVC, and subgroups within OVC, using approaches that vary somewhat.

5.5.1 Bethesda Outreach, a discipleship cluster community

Bethesda Outreach (hereinafter referred to as “Bethesda”) is a 106-acre residential and educational facility for OVC in Hammanskraal, Gauteng Province, due north of Pretoria. Like The Pines (dealt with below), it is a first-world OVC compassion ministry in more of a rural setting. Bethesda was born out of the desire of American missionaries with Evangelical Baptist Mission to get involved with compassion ministry to OVC in South Africa. After a research trip in 2000, John Mixon and his team formed an NGO, purchased property with overseas funding, and began a baby-care ministry in 2001. Due to zoning conflicts on the first property, Bethesda purchased its current property in Hammanskraal and moved in 2003, blessed by the fact that they were much closer to the churches in Hammanskraal with which they had growing relationships. Intensive building projects followed in 2004-2005. The buildings are klinker brick with tin roofs, are very low-maintenance, have basic finishes, and according to Mixon (Interview 1),

reflect the building materials used in proper homes and offices in nearby Hammanskraal. The mission of the organisation is “to glorify God through assisting local churches in orphan care by 1) providing a working model of functional Christian families magnifying Christ, and 2) training and encouraging churches, pastors, and parents” (Bethesda, 2010:1). The stated core values of the organisation are “God’s Word and prayer, the local church, integrity, families, partnership, and excellence” (Bethesda, 2010:1).

The Bethesda village now has 33 OVC residing in six childcare homes on the property, each with a married African Christian couple and up to eight children, in addition to the couple’s own children, which are to be no more than two in number (Bethesda, 2011-2:1). “Biblical families are God’s design to train and nurture children, all of whom are created in God’s image. Therefore, each child coming into Bethesda is placed with a family that has a father, mother and siblings” (Bethesda, 2011-1:1). Another two residences have been built and furnished but are awaiting residency permits by the municipality. The property also contains the Jabulane Christian School buildings, Bethesda’s administrative offices, and rental offices for local social workers, which has proven to be both a financial and functional benefit. Like Hands At Work, Bethesda has a team/guest centre, and has an electric game farm fence guarding the perimeter of the 160-acres campus. It has hired an independent security company to man its gate and provide round-the clock surveillance due to crime prevalence in the area.

Like other CYCCs, Bethesda prefers to have custody of the children and employ the house parents, rather than merely providing housing to foster parents who have custody, collect the foster care grants, and are free to leave with the children whenever they choose. A distinctive of Bethesda is that each house mother is an employee of Bethesda and works as a mother; the fathers may work either for Bethesda in another capacity (one works maintenance and another is the house parents’ supervisor) or get a job in the community. But the parents are then responsible to purchase their own food and clothing for their household using the income they earn, which is truer of a real family. In the four other models “within the walls,” the organisation purchases and provides food and clothing.

Bethesda currently has custody of 33 children, ages 3 months to 18 years old, and hopes to one day handle a maximum of 64 children in eight homes. Most of the children were initially referred to Bethesda by local churches in Hammanskraal with whom it has ongoing relationships, and always in conjunction with local social workers. Bethesda prefers to take in children ages six and under, and preferably for permanent care rather than as a temporary place of safety or an intermediate facility for adoption placement. As opposed to Morning Star and Lambano, which care for only HIV positive children, Bethesda does not accept HIV positive children because it has not had the vision, facilities, or manpower to develop a medical side to its ministry. It accepts HIV-affected children, not HIV-infected children; the one exception is if several siblings come together and one is HIV positive. There are three HIV positive children currently at Bethesda who are looked after by an area doctor that makes periodic visits. Mixon (Interview 1) believes that Bethesda is preparing its children for the increasingly first-world Westernised South Africa of tomorrow, not the third-world of yesterday. Three of the Bethesda teens, who had arrived at Bethesda in their teen years, preferred to go back to the village and learn a trade rather than attend a university, so the Bethesda staff helped them to find those who would apprentice them in their desired job skills, helped them find shacks in which to live, and helped them learn homemaking and gardening skills. But Bethesda's goal with any child is to release a disciple of Jesus Christ with the education, decision-making, and life skills necessary to succeed in the South Africa of tomorrow, and with the character and heart to impact whatever culture he or she is in for the Kingdom of God (Mixon, Interview 1).

There are three realms of spiritual input into the lives of Bethesda children. Firstly, Bethesda children attend area churches and Christian youth activities in Hammanskraal, either the churches from which they were initially referred or their house parents' church. Secondly, Jabulane Christian School was begun on the property in 2005 and now offers Grades 0-7. There are currently 69 students enrolled, about one third of which are Bethesda children and two thirds of which are children in the community. With anticipated expansions to its school buildings, Bethesda hopes to have an enrolment of 200 children in the next few years, and in that case, the fees paid by outside children would cover all of the costs of educating Bethesda children. The writer has witnessed this arrangement working

successfully at a Christian orphanage and school in Mbale, Uganda, where government leaders were pleased to pay for their children to have a superior education in their own locality. Bethesda plans for their children to begin at nearby Prestige College, a private high school with a Christian ethos, in Grade 8 (Prestige, 2011:1). Thirdly, the house parents at Bethesda are committed Christians and spend daily devotional time with the children. Three of the five house fathers are graduates of Christ Seminary in Polokwane and are pastors; two of the fathers are from area churches in Hammanskraal. Mixon (Interview 1) says that the house parents are very committed in their personal walk with God and to their calling to work with children, and all of them attend continuing education classes in childcare and development.

This three-fold spiritual input into the lives of Bethesda's OVC in the home, at school, and in a local church, underscores the key strength of this model in the Christian value system. Children are not merely being provided food, water, education and health security, as important as those things are, but are also being reached with the gospel and biblical ethical teachings. "We still could change the world with 60 kids. Christ did it with twelve. One of our core values is excellence, and we don't want to have lots of children just to say we have lots of children. We want to work hard on raising them in a way that will honour God through it all" (Bethesda, 2011-1:1). Mixon (Interview 1) stated that Bethesda's core value of excellence is what compels it to limit the number of OVC that it reaches and to provide the best family life, education, and spiritual exposure that it can for each child.

Bethesda also began "Hands of Mercy Ministry" in 2004 through which it trains, coaches, and encourages local pastors and church leaders to develop and run OVC care ministries connected with their congregations. More than a dozen churches in Hammanskraal, Shoshanguve and Johannesburg have benefitted from this training and several have established self-funded compassion ministries providing hospice care, home-care, and feeding schemes for OVC. In some cases, Bethesda assists these churches financially but always under a written agreement with accountability and diminishing contributions each year (Mixon, Interview 1). Bethesda is helping to develop other organisations similar to itself in

Zambia and South Africa, but Bethesda is not interested in having a multi-branch organisation such as Hands At Work; it rather wants to see its model reproduced and the name shared such that the name “Bethesda Outreach” is representative of a network of interdependent autonomous orphan-care ministries worldwide (Mixon, Interview 1).

The negative side of OVC care models that are “inside the walls” is that expenses per child are far higher. Therefore, such ministries can reach fewer children, and the model is neither sustainable nor reproducible in the African culture or even in a first-world urban culture. If capital improvements to the property could create an income-generating scheme that was well-managed, the project might be sustainable, but is still not easily reproducible. The model relies heavily on outside charitable contributions, which are affected by local, national, and world sentiments and economic conditions. Bethesda is debt-free and operates on a cash basis for all of its building projects, but the capital investment in property and buildings at present exceeds several million rands (Mixon, Interview 1). Monthly costs are also high. Bethesda’s total monthly cost per child in 2010 was R4932, broken down as follows: R1387 for the administrative costs of salaries, utilities, vehicles, equipment, and fundraising, R1114 for the educational costs at the Jabulane Christian School of salaries and supplies, and R2431 for the childcare costs of salaries, groceries, clothing, medical, housing, and transport (Mixon, Interview 1). That’s an approximated annual budget of R1.9 million for 33 children, as compared with R480,000 for the Sun City Care Centre, which cares for 80 children. The increase in cost benefits Bethesda’s children by paying for housing, mature Christian parenting, increased personal safety, a superior education, and comprehensive Christian discipleship, which Sun City does not provide. In 2010, Bethesda hired a South African business manager, and a South African school administrator in addition to their 22 other paid South African staff who serve as teachers, house parents, and maintenance staff. Three of the school’s teachers are South African, and three are American. Mixon (Interview 1) comments that the organisation is intentionally becoming more South African, and half of its board is South African. Bethesda’s six American staff (20% of the total number of staff) have raised their own income overseas and serve as volunteers. The sudden shock in August of 2011 was that the six American missionaries

working at Bethesda were informed that their USA-based mission was closing. Through their American contacts, Mixon was able to form Bethesda Outreach Ministries International as a non-profit organisation in the United States, and the supporters of the six missionaries are now channelling their continuing contributions through the new organisation. Approximately 52% of Bethesda's income is generated within South Africa, approximately R2200/month/child from the Gauteng Department of Social Development since Bethesda is a registered CYCC, and the balance from South African companies. Mixon (Interview 1) says that they could also apply for funding for the school, but they would rather reduce their dependence on government grants. About 48% of Bethesda's income is derived from charitable contributions in the United States. Bethesda does not use an "adopt-a-child" approach but does use its children in its promotional materials and videos (Bethesda, 2011-2:1).

Bethesda hosts close to ten short-term overseas mission teams each year that come to develop infrastructure on the property, such as finishing new buildings, and installing irrigation and electrical solar panel systems that was done last year, and to work in outreach ministries in the community of Hammanskraal (Mixon, Interview 1). Bethesda is actively recruiting interns to serve from 1 month to 2 years, and although they have had several negative experiences with short-term volunteers, most of the experiences have been very positive and helpful (Mixon, Interview 1).

5.5.2 Acres of Love, the finest "forever homes"

Acres of Love (hereinafter referred to as "Acres") is a child and youth care centre that began in 1998 when Ryan and Gerda Audagnotti, Christians in the affluent northern suburbs of Johannesburg, were moved with compassion for OVC and converted their residential investment property into a residence for abandoned children. Their goal was to provide these children with much more than the basic living conditions offered by institutional orphanages; they wanted to give them something on par with what they would provide for their own children (Acres, 2011:1). A high standard of living and unmatched care has, therefore, been the distinguishing characteristic of Acres over its 13 years of ministry. "Each home is located in a carefully selected neighbourhood where the children are distanced

from the hopeless poverty from which they were rescued and where they have access to the highest quality medical services and educational facilities” (Acres, 2011:1). Like the Oasis and Lambano ministries dealt with below, Acres has purchased, adapted, and maintains a network of suburban homes in the greater Johannesburg for OVC care. Benefiting from its well-established and strong financial support from both South African and USA partners, Acres now maintains 20 forever homes in the Bryanston, Blairgowrie, and Benoni areas, and is continually acquiring new homes to keep up with demand. The NGO’s administrative activities, its training and coordination of staff, volunteers, and professional consultants, and its intake of new children, take place at its massive Provision House that was purchased with a large gift in 2009, a move that caused some scandal among employees, volunteers, and donors (Gillig, Interview 1; Peasey, Interview 1). Still, the professionalism and the fiscal strength and accountability of Acres of Love is the best this writer has seen in South Africa, and the organisation has been featured and lauded in articles around the country (Acres, 2011:1). Acres also maintains another property that serves as its hub for receiving donations, storage, and the distribution of goods and supplies to its various homes. The property is also used as a centre for family support, visitation, and reunification, and for therapy sessions with the children conducted by area professionals most of whom offer their services free of charge.

Initially, Acres had a 24-hour rotating staff model of care for the children, but in 2004, it began to transition its homes to the current house-parent and “forever home” model where 6-10 children have one steady African Christian couple as parent figures in the home for the duration of their childhood years, supported by other specialists, caregivers, and volunteers. Younger children have activities and childhood development classes on the premises, and school-age children attend good public or private schools in the area. The homes have fine and colourful furnishings; toys, activities, and outings abound. Acres is also developing a programme to provide life-saving treatment and education solutions for special needs children who come under their care.

There are two primary realms of spiritual input into the lives of Acres children, the first being the presence and ministry of Christian house parents, and the second

being attendance at area churches. Acres claims that local church involvement is a priority, but Peasey (Interview 1) notes that it does not provide transport for their families to area churches or youth meetings; families must secure their own transportation, or churches must come and get them. At times in the past, churches like Sandton Bible Church in Fourways, have lined up volunteers to visit one or two homes several nights a week to encourage the children and even have devotional activities with them. A third possibility for spiritual input is if a child attends a Christian school in the area; about 50% of Acres children attend private schools, some of which are overtly Christian or at least have a Christian ethos (Peasey, Interview 1). Acres regularly uses foreign and domestic Christian volunteers who have a meaningful skill to contribute, and encourages the visits of short-term mission teams from overseas (Acres, 2011:1).

To date, Acres has cared for over 350 children in more than a decade of ministry (Acres, 2011:1). Except for its HIV positive children who will not likely be adopted, Acres views itself as a temporary facility and receives new children through a network of social workers across the city. Most of the children have been abused or abandoned rather than orphaned. Their families are still alive but typically live in horrid conditions in the townships and informal settlements around the city. Acres aims to reunite these children with their re-stabilised families or to place the children in long-term foster care, but this is a difficult task. Gillig (Interview 1), who runs Oasis but used to work at Acres and still coordinates her organisation's efforts with Acres, comments that almost half of the children in the Acres homes are visited by their families on the weekends, but their families will not take them back knowing that they are having a superior life and education in an Acres home. "Permanent custody" is a perplexing problem faced by organisations, like Acres, that provide a level of care in line with its board's standard of living rather than the OVC's standard of living; the child does not want to leave, and their natural family does not want them to leave. Such a model also somewhat reveals the error of suburban Christians who suppose that poverty is morally wrong and that wealth is a perfectly suitable answer (Snyman, Interview 2). It may certainly be argued that there is no meritorious African culture to preserve in the communities where these children come from, but OVC care centres with fine and entertaining accommodations virtually destroy a child's desire to return to its real home, and

urge them to choose lifestyle over family. One volunteer who worked both at Acres as well as with MCDC in KwaMhlanga commented that the Acres children seemed spoiled, selfish, and poorly behaved, like normal suburban kids, compared with quiet, easily entertained, and obedient OVC in the villages (Postell, Interview 1). If an Acres child stays in a “forever home” through high school, and scholastic achievement and spiritual maturity have been taught in the home, it is possible that Acres, like Bethesda, could produce young adults with the education, decision-making, and life skills necessary to become tomorrow’s African Christian leaders in South Africa.

5.5.3 Oasis Haven and the adoption option

Oasis Haven was created in 2000 when Lorna Campbell-Salmon and two others, with the support of the leadership of the New Creation Family Church, were moved with compassion to do something for the infants being left behind in Johannesburg area hospitals due to the AIDS-related deaths of birth mothers. In the writer’s five years of exposure to compassion ministries to OVC in South Africa, this is the only such ministry actually begun by a church and its leadership. Most often such ministries are begun by individual Christians whose compassion has moved them to action, and they battle to get churches involved (Prinsloo, Interview 3; Snyman, Interview 1). Oasis began as a babies’ home and drug rehabilitation programme. In time, two houses near the church were purchased and over a period of eight years, 50 babies came into Oasis, 37 of which were subsequently outplaced with their own biological families. A few children were placed for adoption. Ten of the fifty OVC were HIV positive, and two were special needs; none of these children were returned to their biological parents or placed for adoption.

After eight years of operation, the board felt that Oasis needed to either close down, having fulfilled their stewardship to the community, or reinvent itself. Their consideration was two-fold. Firstly, the board studied other models of what Christians were doing to care for OVC around Johannesburg, a practice that should be done by such organisations more often (Gillig, Interview 1). Secondly, the board prayerfully searched the scriptures for God’s leading, and as they studied and prayed, they were impacted with the phrase in Psalm 68:6, “God sets

the lonely in families.” They asked, “What is God’s heart for orphans?” and they concluded that God created families, not children’s homes or government places of safety, as the place for children. Thus, Oasis should be in the business of “placing abandoned children into forever families.”

Oasis is now a separate NGO, keeping separate books, but three of its seven directors are from the New Creation Family Church. Gillig concurs with Prinsloo that donors hesitate or refuse to give funds to a church-run ministry, but will do so to a separately incorporated NGO with church members involved on the board, so that is the best practice to follow (Gillig, Interview 1). The Church owns a house across the street from its main campus that it uses for its offices. Oasis leases the garage from which it conducts all of its administration and the storage and distribution of food and supplies to the two Oasis homes. No children come to the office house; most do not even know that the office exists. The house parents pick up food and clothing from the garage while the children are at school. The two “family homes” that Oasis maintains are both in Robin Hills and are conveniently within walking distance of the church, and the church’s Christian school. The residences are currently temporary family homes for 18 children, nine of whom are abandoned, nine orphaned; nine are HIV positive and nine are HIV negative.

Oasis has three primary distinctives. Firstly, it has a tenacious focus on placing children for adoption in Christian homes, and its office tries to spend 50% of its time placing its OVC for adoption. Oasis follows the Acres model noted above but does not intend to create “forever homes” because they are expensive to maintain for the years of a child’s life, and because organisations are simply not forever; they may close due to lack of funding or the government changing its views about such models (Gillig, Interview 1). Children should be able to return home to a truly forever family, not to a house run by an organisation. When challenged that Oasis cares for just a few children when the OVC numbers are so high, Gillig (Interview 1) responds that Oasis is not the answer to the OVC problem; families are. Therefore Oasis exists as a “waiting room” and has an ethical imperative to move abused and abandoned children into adoptive families, while providing a safe, comfortable, and normalising home for the children in the interim. As they

build their expertise, Oasis hopes to serve as a model for other organisations to follow since there is so little emphasis on placing OVC for adoption due largely to the fact that South African adoption statutes, regulations, and procedures are not well understood in the childcare industry or even by area lawyers (Gillig, Interview 1). According to ADDoption.com, a website run by the National South African Adoption Coalition, 1.2 million children are currently available for adoption in South Africa (NSAAC, 2011:1). Through its presentations at baby and maternity fairs, churches, malls, and other locations, Oasis is challenging the middle class to take responsibility and ownership for the OVC crisis rather than simply giving money to keep the children in homes. Gillig (Interview 1) notes that many young white South African couples are responding with interest to the adoption alternative, but Oasis has struggled to get access to the emerging black middle class. The writer has noted area churches such as Midrand Chapel and Antioch Bible Church where multi-racial families make up the bulk of the young families. According to Gillig (Interview 1), Oasis is the only OVC-care organisation “fishing for families,” trying to find the right family for each child, a family that sees adoption as a calling or ministry rather than something self-satisfying. Oasis turns the traditional approach of helping families find the right child on its head. Oasis also provides professional training for prospective foster and adoptive parents and runs support groups after the placement has occurred (Oasis, 2011:15).

The second Oasis distinctive is that it limits public access to the children (Gillig, Interview 1). In its family home model, Oasis wants as much stability and normalcy for its children as possible. The two homes where the children live have no signs, no tours are permitted when the children are at home, supporters, visitors, or short-term teams do not come to play with the children or take pictures of them, and the children are not to be used in promotional adds. Oasis uses child models for its website and literature (Oasis, 2011-1:1). The ethical rationale is that Oasis homes should be as much like normal homes as possible, and it is not normal for families to bring in strangers to take pictures of their children as little peculiar people (Gillig, Interview 1). Few volunteers serve in Oasis homes, unless a person is bringing some special counselling skill to the household, and then he or she enters as something like a visiting relative. In-kind donations go to the Oasis office and not to the homes. Oasis does not allow its children to be

exploited for advocacy, promotions, or supporter satisfaction. Standing by this principle cost Oasis the loss of a major sponsor in 2010 (Gillig, Interview 1).

The third Oasis distinctive is to allow a limit of five children per adult, and ten per household. In one of its homes, a husband and wife couple serve as parents, and in the other home, a house-mother leads the household along with an assistant who comes in daily from 6-4 to do washing, cleaning, and some cooking. The homes are basic four bedroom homes, and the furnishings and toys are typical in a middle class community like Robin Hills. Like many CYCCs, Oasis has custody of and responsibility for its children, and it hires its parents as employees under a contract specifying pay, benefits, and other terms of employment. The parents do not collect the child care or foster care grants, and cannot leave with the children. Like the parents at Bethesda, they are permitted to have up to two children of their own, but are viewed as seeking another ministry if they have more (Gillig, Interview 1). Like real parents, house parents are referred to as “mom” and “dad,” have personal time when the children are in school, and have access to a vehicle. Beginning at age two, all children are in a school of some sort during the day, and many attend special therapy sessions to ameliorate the emotional, behavioural, cognitive, and physical symptoms of orphanhood and abandonment (Gillig, Interview 1; de Walque, 2011:86).

Oasis prefers children under the age of 10 due to socialisation problems that older children typically have. For Oasis to receive a child, it must have no identifiable parents, or the parents must have given up parental rights or had them terminated by the state (Oasis, 2011:7). The difficulty for the Christian house parents at Oasis is that, with the emphasis on getting the children placed for adoption quickly, they find it difficult to wrap their arms and hearts around the children, only to have them taken away. Gillig (Interview 1) says that the children are more matter-of-fact. “They live in a family environment, but they know that they are not in a normal family but are waiting for a real family. Many of the kids pray for a family, and when they are placed, run to their new parents and don’t even say good-bye.” Even some HIV positive and special needs children at Oasis have recently been placed for adoption. The preference according to the Children’s Act is to place children in adoptive homes that are similar to their home culture, and if

that is not available then cross-culturally within the country, and if that is not available then internationally (38/2005). Oasis prefers to work with the Wandisa Adoption Agency and Abba Adoptions, both of which are Christian adoption agencies in South Africa (Wandisa, 2011:1; Abba, 2011:1). Because the United States ratified the Hague Convention on International Adoption, and passed the necessary laws that went into effect on April 1, 2008, American Christian families are now able to receive HIV negative South African children for adoption, and Wandisa is coordinating such Christian adoptions through Bethany Christian Services, but there is a backlog (Bethany, 2011:1).

Like Bethesda, Oasis provides strong spiritual input into the lives of the OVC in its care in three ways. There is committed Christian parenting in the home by those who feel the call of God to serve children in this way, with an emphasis on the Bible's teachings about behaviour and a daily devotional time. Secondly, the children attend the youth and regular functions of the nearby New Creation Family Church. And thirdly, the school-age children are enrolled at the King's Christian School run by the New Creation church. Although this spiritual input is not provided by Oasis, the organisation requires its children to attend, and because of their history together, and because Oasis is its largest client, the school has reduced its fees for Oasis children. The school is not entitled to know the HIV status of any of the Oasis OVC because a child's right to privacy is guarded by the Children's Act (38/2005). Oasis provides training for teachers and parents about HIV/AIDS transmission so that there is no unnecessary fear. The public school nearby is not an option according to Gillig (Interview 1) because few of the children know English or any of the South African languages, and there are in excess of 50 children to a classroom.

Oasis has a vision to expand to five homes with ten OVC in each in the coming years, while striving to place 100 OVC for adoption each year, an average of one complete rotation every six months (Gillig, Interview 1). This envisions rather quick placements for adoptions. Some would say such a pace is unrealistic, but as a visionary, Gillig (Interview 1) says the goal is realistic but ambitious. Oasis personnel are building their expertise in the adoption field with two major goals in mind: 1) to get out the word to Christian families and churches in the urban,

suburban, and rural settings about the adoption option and process, and 2) to train other organisations in the temporary “family-home / adoption-placement” model. Like Prinsloo, Gillig has had bad experiences with overseas volunteers, tends to question the motivations of short-term mission teams, and therefore doesn’t seek their involvement (Gillig, Interview 1).

5.5.4 Lambano Sanctuary and HIV positive babies

Like the Morning Star Children’s Centre, Lambano Sanctuary (hereinafter referred to as “Lambano”) has a focused mission to care for only HIV positive children, but using the “inside the walls” model on the east side of Johannesburg. Melanie Prinsloo (also of MCDC and Ubuhle above) was a market researcher by profession, but as a committed Christian she was struck by “the great need for a family-based home for HIV/AIDS babies in South Africa. In 2001 she visited all the children’s homes in the Gauteng Province and found that most of them were for abandoned babies with the view of adoption, but when the babies test HIV positive, most of the existing homes were not equipped to keep the babies longer term” (Lambano, 2011). As a single woman who loved children, Prinsloo was personally challenged to minister to OVC by Isaiah 54:1-3:

“Sing, O childless woman, you who have never given birth! Break into loud and joyful song, O Jerusalem, you who have never been in labor. For the desolate woman now has more children than the woman who lives with her husband,” says the Lord. “Enlarge your house; build an addition. Spread out your home, and spare no expense! For you will soon be bursting at the seams” (2004).

With the support of her church’s leadership, an NGO was formed and Prinsloo began to raise funds from banks and businesses in the Johannesburg-Pretoria area. The first properties to serve as baby houses from 2001-2006 were secured in Kensington, but Lambano eventually sold those properties and moved to Wychwood, on the east side of Johannesburg, where it has purchased four houses since 2002 that are all within walking distance of each other. The primary communities from which Lambano draws its children are Germiston and Katlehong. Lambano has four administrators who supervise its personnel, properties, and programme. Each house has a house mother supported by day

assistants, volunteers, and a driver, and all of the staff are committed Christians. Like other “inside the walls” facilities, Lambano hires its foster parents as employees, but unlike the others, the house mothers have custody and Lambano asks the mothers to collect the R800 foster-care grant and transfer it back into Lambano. There is no fear that the mothers will leave with the children due to the children’s medical condition (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Thus, Lambano qualifies as a cluster foster care facility rather than a CYCC. Over the past 10 years, Lambano has been home to 206 children; 30 still live there, 49 were placed for adoption locally and overseas, 41 were placed with foster-care families, 38 were reunited with family, 10 were discharged to other homes, 8 had special needs and were referred to better facilities, and 30 children passed away (Croote, 2011:1).

The longevity of the children has been a surprise. According to Prinsloo (Interview 3), Lambano intended to provide a “life-long home,” thinking that the children wouldn’t make it into their teen years, but 30 of the children have been thriving, and have stayed on at Lambano, attending area schools. Lambano has yet to see the long-term effects of the ARV medication on the children, since the medicines are toxic. “Time will tell if there will be multi-organ failures” (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Lambano now has 18 children attending an area primary school, and several more attending pre-school. Attempts to enrol three children in a school for disabled children have been unsuccessful, so they are provided with classes and activities at home (Croote, 2011:3). A retired teacher helps the children daily with their homework. The aim of the four house parents and other volunteers in what Lambano now calls its “forever homes” is to provide the children with as normal a life as possible by giving them unconditional physical, emotional, and spiritual care. The attention to medication and medical equipment for the children is obviously higher than in most other OVC care facilities, and Lambano therefore serves as a model to other organisations like Acres and Oasis who are improving their ministry to the few HIV positive children in their care (Gillig, Interview 1). There are two primary realms of spiritual input into the lives of Lambano children, the first being the presence and ministry of Christian house parents, and the second being attendance at area churches for which transportation is provided.

Croote, the Director of Lambano, writes (2011:1) that approximately 60,000 HIV positive babies are being born each year in South Africa. As Lambano witnessed how stretched the public health sector was in caring for an increasing number of HIV positive babies, it chose to start its own hospice facility. According to Prinsloo (Interview 3), “the hospitals in Katlehong are useless and the child will die of no care or no medicine. They keep the beds for the people who they think will make it. The others they tell to go die at home.” Lambano therefore purchased and renovated a fifth house in 2007 that now serves as a 12-bed hospice and step-down facility (after being discharged from hospital) where qualified nursing staff care for very sick babies that have been brought in for emergency, short-term care. In most cases, the babies are stabilised with ARV medication and proper diet and then returned to their families. Some are placed in another children’s home, some in a foster home, and some are referred to a special needs home; five have died in the last four years. Lambano was involved in compassion outreach into the community as well, assisting over 2000 people in Germiston and Katlehong with food, clothing, shelter, school clothing, healthcare, and training in eco-circle gardening projects, but due to declining contributions in the current recession this ministry was brought to a conclusion (Croote, 2011:5). The Luxembourg government also made a massive contribution in 2007 that enabled Lambano to build two kitchens and dining halls for primary schools in Katlehong, which are still feeding 2400 children each day.

When Prinsloo began Lambano, she tried to get the local church of which she was a member involved, because she felt that such a ministry was the church’s responsibility. Although the church created a board to oversee the ministry, she states (Interview 3) that the church never contributed funds to the project, and its 200 members never made in-kind contributions of food and supplies, even when asked, and no one even volunteered their time to help out, expressing fears of infection or emotional trauma if one of the babies died. Prinsloo then moved to another church, and found the same response except for a few members who helped. Lambano receives little financial support from America, and receives large one-time donations from Germany and Luxembourg. With the economic recession, Lambano retrenched some staff in 2010 and narrowly averted selling one of the houses. The ministry enjoys good and steady support from many

smaller donors, mostly South African businesses, has no reliance on large donors, and uses fund-raisers to secure more donors. The Gauteng Department of Health contributes R300,000 each year toward the hospice as long as it maintains a registered nurse on staff. Like Acres, Bethesda, Morning Star, and Hands, Lambano uses its children in its promotional literature and on its website. The website refers to them collectively and not by name. There is no signage on the houses, but individual and group visitors are permitted. Lambano's volunteers are mostly Christians from nearby churches. It occasionally utilises the skills of individual overseas volunteers who come for a number of months, but it cannot host teams.

5.5.5 The Pines, caring for OVC on a gold mine

The Pines Christian Care Center (hereinafter referred to as "The Pines") is a CYCC located in Welkom, South Africa, in the Matjhabeng region of the Free State, not far from Morning Star Children's Centre referenced above. Morning Star is an "outside the walls" ministry, and The Pines is "inside the walls," but both are Christian organisations spawned and motivated by compassion and they frequently coordinate their efforts. In 2000, David and Sally Seefried, American missionaries serving with Ambassadors International Ministries, visited South Africa to see what a faith-based organisation could do to help in the growing AIDS pandemic and consequent orphan crisis. They found at that time that most South Africans were in denial about the coming effects of the virus (Seefried, 2011:1). The Seefrieds arrived in 2004 and began developing South Africa partnerships. In the spring of 2005, in answer to much prayer, Harmony Gold Company donated a large office complex and property to the NGO, and initiated the Seefried's dream of beginning a compassion village for orphans in the Free State. The Pines "was born out of Christian compassion that drives us to do what we can to alleviate the pain and suffering of the children and communities as a result of the AIDS pandemic" (Pines, 2011:1). A decade ago, orphans were invisible in their communities because extended families cared for them, but now, according to Seefried (2011:1), so many adults have died in "the lost generation" that the traditional support system has almost disappeared. The grandmothers and the young survive, but they cannot support themselves. Responding to these social,

medical, and moral needs, The Pines not only provides a residential care facility for the children, but endeavours to raise them “in a Christian environment to be morally pure, thus changing their lifestyle so that they will live through the pandemic and make a lasting impact on South Africa. Already a large portion of a generation has been lost to the AIDS pandemic. The Pines is stepping into the gap and saving these children from becoming a second lost generation” (Pines, 2011:1).

The Pines considers its facility outside of Welkom a “compassionate community” designed to provide families and education for the children, medical treatment where necessary, training in life-skills as they move through their teen years, and mentoring and biblical discipleship to build Christian character into the children so they stay morally pure and HIV free. The Pines is now home to 30 children living in four residences with six housemothers who are committed believers, but the demand for taking in more children is immense (Seefried, 2011:2). The Pines endeavours to be culturally sensitive by creating a home environment that is quintessentially African, with African food and African languages spoken (Pines, 2011:1). The accommodations are modest and clean, and there is a playground area outside and a sports field for the children. Like Bethesda, the primary target of The Pines is to accommodate children not yet infected with the virus, but they will not separate siblings, and thus only a few are HIV positive. Like most CYCC, the house mothers are paid staff and do not have custody of the children.

Most of the OVC coming to The Pines are placed by social workers and have had little or no schooling. Most attend school on the premises. Due to several sponsors, some of the children attend nearby Dunamis Christian School, but must work hard to attain their grade level. There is a good routine at the centre; “each day when the children return from school, they change their clothes, have a snack and do their assigned chores. If the children have homework, they report to the activity room at 15:30 and the Pines staff assists them with their homework” (Pines, 2011:1). Two staff families live on the property; the General Manager and his wife are American missionaries who oversee improvements and maintenance to the property, serve as teachers and mentors, and care for the children when they are sick, and an African pastor and his wife who also teach and counsel,

oversee the housemothers, hold Wednesday night prayer meetings, and oversee the gardens and orchard on the property.

Like many OVC-care ministries, The Pines is also involved in community upliftment by training, assisting, and enabling local pastors, congregations, and communities in biblically-based life-skills development, in home-based OVC care, in basic biblical morality, and in job-creating ventures such as the tunnel farming project. Where funds and relationships permit, The Pines will help local African congregations build a building or work to plant a new church.

Aside from the huge initial gift of land and buildings that The Pines received from Harmony Gold Mines, and the free electric and water it receives from Welkom, the funding for the regular operation of the ministry comes from numerous churches, individuals, and businesses in the United States where Ambassadors International Ministries is incorporated as a non-profit organisation, and from financial partners in South Africa. Its nine US Directors are of different ethnicities and have all lived or travelled abroad. Paracletus Ministries Trust was also formed by the Seefrieds in South Africa, and three of its trustees act as management for the operations of the ministry. Unfortunately, David Seefried died in 2009, and Sally is serving as interim director, and thus, The Pines is looking for new leadership. As Snyman (Interview 1) and Prinsloo (Interview 3) both noted, finding a successor for these ministries is difficult because the DNA, rooted in the passion of the founder, changes with new leadership. Sadly, both of the OVC care ministries in Welkom dealt with in this work are being led by older women who are looking for successors.

The Pines has welcomed volunteers from America, Canada, England and Australia who bring skills such as construction and nursing to the ministry. It also hosts mission teams from numerous countries that stay for two weeks on average and are asked to accomplish a special project and to engage in Bible club-type ministries in community schools and churches (CIN, 2011:2). As far as identifying the children as OVC, The Pines uses pictures and names of its children on its website and in its newsletters, and there is a large sign out in front of the property designating it as a “Christian Care Centre for Children.”

5.6 Comparative analysis of Christian OVC care models

Each of the ministries studied in this work was started and has been maintained by Christians who are deeply motivated by compassion for orphans and vulnerable children in the current AIDS crisis in South Africa. Most of their websites and promotional literature discuss the history of the ministry and invariably mention the horrible conditions that existed in their communities due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and the children that were left behind to suffer loneliness, starvation, abuse, and disease. To encounter such children, individually or as a group, is a gut-wrenching experience in the literal Hebrew and Greek meanings of the word compassion. The founders of these organisations responded to the plight of the children as if they were struggling to free themselves. As Christians, their response was not just sentimental or practical, but also biblical since their core motivation was to obey and glorify God by caring for widows and the fatherless. Each founder emphasised the importance of Scripture in formulating their motivation, the importance of prayer in formulating their vision, and the importance of doing a great deal of learning before settling upon a model and putting plans into action. Each organisation possesses a biblically-based motivation, mission, and mindset, and each continues to have an overtly Christian stance in the community. All of the organisations care for the vast array of young ones known as orphans and vulnerable children; none try to single out orphans for care. Lambano and Morning Star single out HIV positive children as the focus of their ministry due to the fact that few other OVC ministries are properly equipped from a medical standpoint to care for the special needs of this subgroup.

While all of these compassion ministries provide food and water security, health and safety security, educational security, and limited amounts of spiritual and psycho-social ministry to OVC, there is a rather clean division between OVC care ministries “outside the walls,” which provide for these critical and essential needs, and OVC care ministries “inside the walls,” which typically go beyond these basic needs to afford the children a better quality of life (Figure 5.2).

OUTSIDE THE WALLS						INSIDE THE WALLS				
	Hands	MCDC	Sun City	Ubuhle	Morning Star	Bethesda	Acres	Oasis	Lambano	The Pines
Food security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Water security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Education security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health/safety security	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spiritual discipleship		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Psycho-social support		/	/	X	/	X	X	X	X	X
Personal home safety						X	X	X	X	X
Christian education				X		X	/	X		X
Job skills training		/	/			/				

Figure 5.2 Comparison of basic services outside and inside the walls

Ministries outside the walls tend to focus on quantity because the overwhelming reality in the villages is that there are multiple thousands of children who are dying of starvation and disease. If one has R100,000 to spend, he or she will spend it to keep 1000 children alive rather than keeping 100 children alive and improving their quality of life while the other 900 die. Ministries inside the walls tend to focus on quality because of personal preferences, because they are located in suburban areas where the lands and houses available to work with are more expensive, and because children are not orphaned and dying of starvation as much as they are being abused or abandoned and need an improvement in their quality of life. The ethical tension and debate between two categories of ministry models will be discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 4 dealt at length with ethical considerations in cross-cultural ministry when a first-world volunteer enters a third-world milieu dominated by the African traditional worldview in order to do ministry to OVC. The writer's research of the ten ministries above reveals that virtually no first-world volunteers, South African or foreign, enter the third-world milieu of African culture to stay. They may come to live there for a period of days or even weeks, but few can endure for months or years. Living and working in the villages can be difficult even for those who have lived there all of their lives and know nothing else. But few first-world volunteers

can live there for very long due to the lack of reliable electricity and water, lack of quietness, and lack of privacy to which they are accustomed, and because many charitable workers report people knocking at their doors at all hours of the day and night to help them with pressing needs (Snyman, Interview 2). In South Africa, crime is a problem even in the villages, and thus, many workers who labour out of compassion all day long still retreat behind a wall or electric fence on a plot near the village for safety and protection from evening until morning. Hunziker (Interview 1) of Hands At Work says that its first-world staff would likely be able to live in the villages in Zambia or even Malawi, but South Africa is different because of the crime and violence that persists almost everywhere. All of the caregivers in the ten ministries studied are African, and all of the care workers, the primary eyes, mouth, feet, and hands of the OVC care organisations in the community, are Africans. When it comes to administration, first-world whites dominate the “inside the walls” model although most have Africans involved in training for administrative posts. For the “outside the walls” model, although first-world whites began those five organisations and may still serve in the senior post, most of the administrative personnel are African. Most of the ten ministries studied reflect the dynamic of Christian African women caring for OVC supported, organised, and trained by the administrative and fundraising capabilities of Christian first-world administrators.

All of the ten ministries reflected the deep compassion and commitment of its founder and its personnel, many of whom have been working in this difficult field, and in the same town or village, for more than a decade. The “compassion DNA” of a ministry is difficult to transfer to a new branch of the ministry, or to a new leadership team of the ministry. All of the ministries communicated that to begin a compassion ministry, there must be someone who feels a deep compassion and a calling to start and run a care centre and preferably staff that feel equally strong about it. “You can’t say ‘let’s go start a centre in that village’ and move in from the outside and hire people” (Prinsloo, Interview 3). The compassion DNA simply won’t be there. Mixon (Interview 1) and Prinsloo (Interview 3) both said that it is best to have a stand-alone model for others to imitate because you can never reproduce the heart of a ministry. But as Snyman (Interview 2) observes, you can create another similar ministry if you find, or are approached by, a “Mother

Theresa,” someone who is already caring for OVC in another area, and come in behind her with support. Because the compassion DNA, and the motivations, values, and vision extending from that compassion, lie with the founder, transitioning leadership of a compassion ministry is very difficult. Prinsloo (Interview 3) also observes that the energy created by compassion for the children is also reflected in the leader’s integrity with his or her staff and financial sponsors, because without integrity, “people will walk away from you, and everything will come crashing down. Integrity is *the* thing. You cannot operate a project without 100% integrity, without honesty, transparency; not shifting designated funds between projects, keeping your promises about what you intend to do, or rounding up figures of the number OVC you care for.” The loss of compassion DNA in its transition marked the beginning of the end for MCDC in KwaMhlanga, and this great challenge is now facing Morning Star, which is seeing Adams retire, and The Pines, which is seeing Seefried retire.

There are other observations that the writer has made comparing and contrasting OVC-care models both outside the walls and inside the walls that are of lesser importance but still helpful to others who are seeking to understand what is being done, what is working, and what is not working. While pragmatism should never be used when a principle is involved, there are few biblical and ethical principles guiding exactly how ministry to orphans and vulnerable children should be carried out. Therefore, examining what is working and not working can be helpful to those currently working in the field and to those with the prospect of doing so in the future. Continuing the grid in Figure 5.2, other observations are made below in Figure 5.3.

OUTSIDE THE WALLS						INSIDE THE WALLS				
	Hands	MCDC	Sun City	Ubuhle	Morning Star	Bethesda	Acres	Oasis	Lambano	The Pines
Receives SA funding	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Receives foreign funding	X	X			X	X	X			X
Received PEPFAR	X									
Receives prov. gov't funds	X			X		X	X	X	X	X
African caregivers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Paid caregivers		X				X	X	X	X	X
Theologically trained house parents						X		X		X
African care workers	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Multi-racial administration	X	X	X	X						
Sustainable & reproducible in third-world context	X		X							
Local church involvement	X	X	X					X	X	
Ministry to local churches	X	X			X	X				X
Woman's vision to start		X	X	X	X		X		X	
Woman-led currently				X	X		X	X	X	X
HIV-positive OVC	X	X	X	X	ONLY	FEW	X	X	ONLY	FEW
Long-term care	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X
Adoption-focus								X	X	
Host foreign volunteers	X	X			X	X	X			X
Urban/suburban							X	X	X	
Rural/town/village	X	X	X	X	X	X				X
Enclose OVC on 1 property						X				X
Use OVC pictures on web and in literature	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X

Figure 5.3 Comparison of extended services and other characteristics outside and inside the walls

Based on the writer's examination of the ten ministries above, one can list a number of things that are working in Christian OVC-care ministries:

- Meeting the critical OVC needs of food and water security, health and safety security, and educational security

- Endeavouring to meet the additional essential OVC needs of spiritual discipleship, psycho-social support, and eventual job-skills training
- Widespread volunteerism by church-going Christians in the community following the lead of the “Mother Theresa’s” and the “Men of Peace”
- Community sourcing/funding and ownership of OVC care centres
- Cooperative involvement of churches supporting a community based organisation
- Helping CBOs after they have proven their commitment on their own
- Having African Christians function as primary caregivers or house parents
- Having African Christians function as the eyes, voice, feet, and hands of the organisation (care workers) in the community
- Having a Christian administration that is multi-racial and deeply committed to developing a “kingdom culture” within the organisation
- Having someone with Western administrative and fundraising abilities in a senior post in the administration
- Arranging frequent care worker visits to OVC homes if “outside the walls”
- Christian education, which although more costly, is the most intensive and effective way to impact OVC for Christ
- An active commitment to place children for adoption in Christian homes
- Teaching, encouraging, and investing in income-generating skills and projects for OVC and their caregivers
- Involving OVC in the youth and other functions of a local church

Based on the above examination of ten ministries, one can list a number of things that are *not* working in Christian OVC-care ministries:

- Getting first-world churches involved with OVC-care ministry
- Paying caregivers or care workers, if “outside the walls,” due to the dependency issue, them having mixed motives for being involved, and stopping if the funds are not available
- Hiring too many administrative staff
- Involvement in too many ministry areas instead of focusing on what the organization is best at

- Failing to have integrity, shifting money between projects, not following through on promises, and overstating ministry figures
- Having a church double as an OVC care centre
- Sending whites into African third-world areas to start or staff the ministries on an ongoing basis
- Having care centres that are far above the size and finishes of the surrounding community
- Transitioning the leadership of an OVC care ministry to those who do not have the same heart of compassion and a similar ministry history as the prior leadership

Based on the above examination of ten ministries, one can list a number of practices that are of debatable benefit in Christian OVC-care ministries:

- The use of volunteers and teams from first-world settings or foreign countries
- The use of OVC on website, in promotional materials, or for fund-raisers
- Relying on funding from outside the immediate community

Is one of these OVC care models ethically the best? Is a model that is functionally the best also an ethically superior model? Is there a hybrid model that is ethically superior but hasn't been tested? Should Christians be focusing on quantity or quality when it comes to caring for OVC? How is Christian compassion ministry different from secular compassion ministry? What are the benefits and pitfalls of models "outside the walls" and those "inside the walls?" Is one category ethically superior to the other from a Christian ethical viewpoint? What would Jesus and the apostles say if we asked their input on compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa? How does one go about applying Christian ethical principles to existing orphan care models? These and other remaining questions will be explored in chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

The application of ethical principles regarding Christian compassion ministry to current models being used in the field

Chapters 1 and 2 set forth the crisis conditions and struggles being faced by South Africa's orphans and other children made vulnerable to a loss of life, health, and other human rights as a result of the impact the HIV/AIDS pandemic has had on the country. This crisis raised the ethical dilemma of what Christians and churches should be doing to respond to the physical, psycho-social, and spiritual needs of these children. Chapter 3 establishes a biblical and theological ethical basis, substantiated from both the Old and New Testaments, for God's people to be engaged in acts and patterns of compassion ministry generally, and to the fatherless in particular. Chapter 4 addresses the ethical imperative of adaptive ministry in which well-meaning first-world Christians trying to help the situation must use great wisdom and caution when entering a traditional, third-world African setting to minister to OVC. Chapter 5 examines ten different Christian OVC care ministries in an attempt to discover what has and has not been working in the field. In this chapter, the writer will attempt to thread the considerations raised in these previous chapters together in a cohesive ethical analysis of Christian orphan care ministry in the hopes of coming up with one or two ethically preferable models.

As one makes a Christian ethical evaluation of compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children, one must first seek to determine *if* Christians can ethically engage in such compassion ministry at all. If the answer is "no," then a firm recommendation should be made that Christians cease such efforts immediately because they are immoral or unethical. Such a recommendation, however, should be accompanied by an alternative and ethically superior Christian approach to the orphan crisis, a slowly unfurling calamity that involves the suffering, abuse, abandonment, and death of millions of children, which is abhorrent to a God who created life. The alternative offered by some South African Christians, mentioned in an interview with Babette Pieterse of MCDC (2008), advising her to "Just let them die; they have always lived this way," is unexamined, unethical, and unacceptable.

If, on the other hand, the answer to the question of whether Christians can ethically engage in compassion ministry to OVC is “yes,” then one must consider *how* Christians should engage in this kind of ministry. There must be guidelines for ongoing ethical evaluation. Compassion ministry is not a solitary action, but a course of multiple activities carried out by many Christians over a period of years. Therefore, just as doctors have a code of medical ethics, and pastors should observe the principles of pastoral ethics, those involved in compassion ministry should likewise have available to them a number of ethical principles to guide their ministries. In this chapter, the ethical questions of *if* and *how* Christians should engage in compassion ministry to OVC will be dealt with, using as examples the ministry models referenced in chapter 5.

6.1 Choosing an ethical norm

The duty of ethical inquiry is to question, evaluate, and either justify or reject theories and applications about the moral rules by which we live (Rosenstand, 2003:8). When making an ethical evaluation of ideas or behaviours, one must compare the idea or action to a standard or norm, and therefore, the first step in ethical inquiry is to settle upon that norm. Mankind has only two sources for moral norms; either they are autonomous (self-ruled) or they are theonomous (God-ruled). Christians believe that morality originates and extends from the immutable and perfect character of God who has revealed himself and his will in the compilation of special revelation known as the Bible or the Scriptures (De Bruyn, 2000:14). If a Christian’s practice is consistent with his professed belief system, he will reject the autonomous and heteronomous norms of the world system, which are rooted in pragmatic, consequentialist, or utilitarian thinking (De Bruyn, 2000:2; 1 John 2:16-17). This is not to say that Christians cannot be pragmatic or utilitarian or aim for the best results in an action or set of activities where there is no conflicting biblical principle, but they must not create ethical norms based on such shifting, subjective, and amorphous philosophies because they will inevitably conflict with God’s truth (1 Corinthians 3:18-20, James 3:13-18). The moral principles of God’s Word stand as a sure foundation, and if there are no conflicts between those principles and one’s intended conduct, then one can make his decision based on pragmatic and collective wisdom.

The theonomous norms of the Christian faith are based on the moral principles of Scripture, which, rooted in God's character, transcend time and culture and therefore apply to all human beings who were created by and belong to God. As the Creator, God lovingly prescribed and prohibited certain thoughts and behaviours because they are good or bad in his opinion, and because they are also in humanity's best interest over the long term.

"The good is what God wills is good. Whatever action God specifies is a good action is a good action. Conversely, if God wills an action to be evil, then it is evil. Thus, moral good is both ultimate and specifiable. It is ultimate because it comes from God. And it is specific since it can be found in his revelation to mankind" (Geisler, 1989:21).

It is also important to note that the decisions God has made about good and evil are not arbitrary or even voluntary, but are simply in accordance with his nature. Because God is holy, holiness is a moral virtue and unholiness is a sin (Nash, 1994:40; Leviticus 11:45). Many people tend to view the moral principles of the Bible as primarily negative and filled with "thou shalt nots." However, Jesus pointed out that the moral law is summed up in the two great positives of loving God and loving one's neighbour as oneself (Matthew 22:36-40). Ethical considerations are, therefore, not merely about evaluating and testing attitudes and actions against norms filled with prohibitions, but also against norms filled with positive prescriptions of a God who knows what is good and beneficial for each individual and for humanity as a whole.

Aside from the Bible, there is also some value to the input of the conscience, the moral database of the soul that recognizes the distinction between right and wrong and then speaks forth with an inner voice its unsolicited opinion. Programmed with the natural law or moral law, the conscience is both friend and foe, accusing or else excusing past, present, or future conduct (Romans 2:15). But one must use great caution when relying upon the conscience or deriving moral principles from what Kant called "common knowledge" (De Bruyn, 2000:6; Andersen, 2001:349). Thomas Aquinas, the medieval Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher, placed natural moral law theory alongside divine command ethics, giving them virtually equal weight. Calvin, although not rejecting the

corroborative role of *lex naturalis*, focused on the Scriptures, and chiefly on the Decalogue, as the root of all Christian ethics (Nullens, 2010:53).

Compassion is described throughout the Scripture as a response of the inner viscera to the sufferings of another who cannot help him or herself. Compassion is gut-wrenching; it is an inner compulsion to remedy a person's suffering as though one was trying to free himself from such suffering. As often as compassion is mentioned in the Scriptures, it is the writer's observation that the "feeling" of compassion, and not the doctrine or ethical imperative of compassion, is the primary motivation behind Christians getting involved with ministry to orphans and vulnerable children. The deep visceral emotion of compassion just "feels right" and pushes one to bypass reflection or evaluation. One of the duties of Christian ethics, however, is to test and evaluate the motivation, direction, timing, and expression of human emotions or impulses of the conscience in light of Scripture. Are the desires and impulses of even a Christian heart always in harmony with the revelation of God? While it is true that humans bear the image of the Creator, it is also true that man is fallen and that his abilities to understand moral perfection, to reason properly, and to make value judgements have suffered profoundly under the noetic effects of sin caused by his total depravity (Nash, 1994:22; Vorster, 2004:93; Romans 1:21-22, 3:10-12).

God's grace in salvation begins the slow process of reversing this damage. Once a person has been justified through faith in Christ's finished work, he becomes a new creature who must put off the old self, put on the new, consider himself dead to sin, and cooperate with God in the lifelong process of sanctification to become Christlike in character and to gain the mind of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 6:11-13; 1 Corinthians 2:15-16; Philippians 4:7). Yet sin in the flesh continues to affect the impulses of the body and the cognitive abilities of the mind (Romans 7:13-25). The conscience may be wrongly taught or influenced, it may be ignored, and it may be seared into a state of diminished function (Vorster, 2004:93-95; Romans 2:15; 1 Corinthians 4:3-5; 1 Timothy 4:2). It is, therefore, unreliable as a solitary moral guide in life, but becomes more useful as a Christian's mind is renewed and reprogrammed by the Word of God (De Bruyn, 2000:6; Romans 12:2). Therefore, feelings from the heart or impulses from the

gut must be evaluated with the greatest scrutiny, for they can be born from a host of worthy or unworthy sources, be properly or improperly directed, and wisely or unwisely expressed. The Bible is our sure word and its moral principles are our changeless standard (2 Peter 1:19).

6.2 An analytical framework for discerning a theonomous norm

The moral principles that create the basis for theonomous norms are derived from three levels of consideration as one studies a particular attribute or action in the Bible. The writer will designate these three levels as:

- 1) Specific commands
- 2) General commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions, and
- 3) Guidelines for Christian liberty

Most often, these principles are corroborated by the moral principles written within a high-functioning conscience (Figure 6.1).

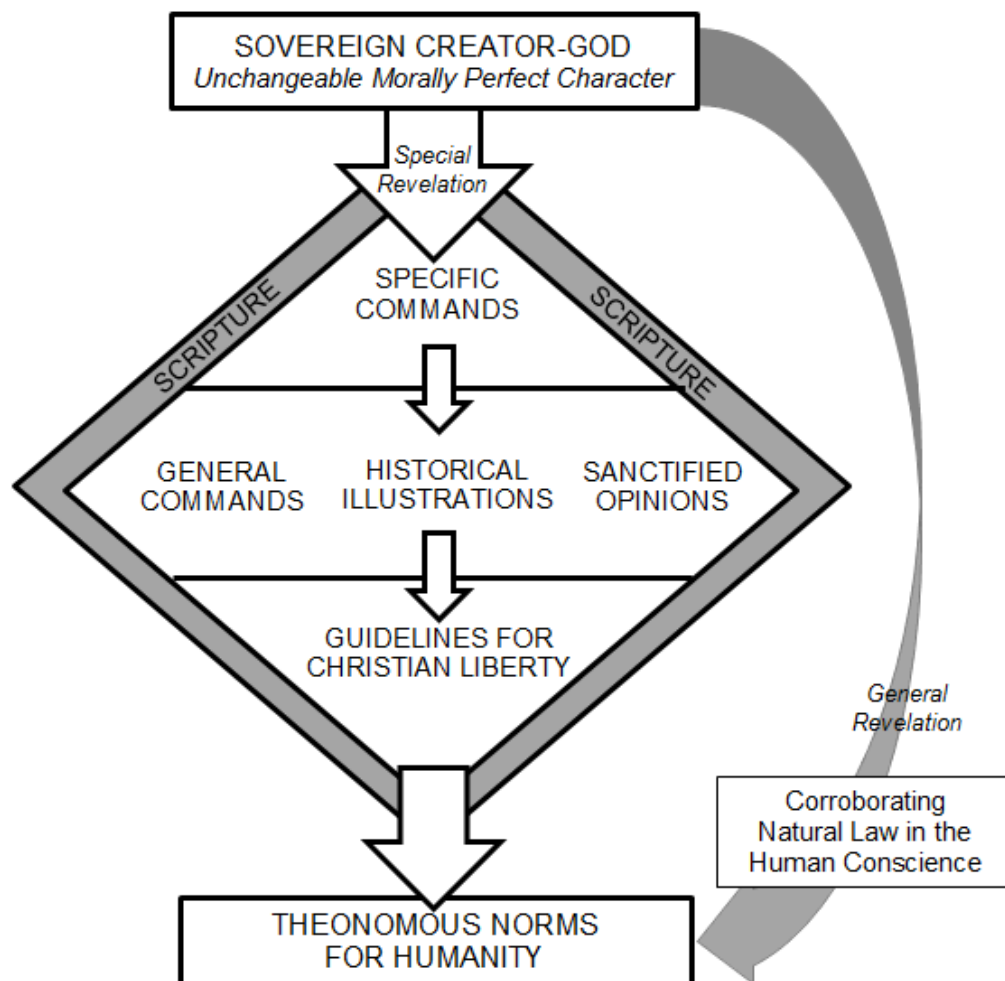


Figure 6.1 – Flowchart of moral principles from God to humanity

6.2.1 Specific Commands of God

Foundational moral principles are derived firstly from the specific commands or moral rules of God that are typically directed at specific acts and need little explanation, such as those in the Decalogue of the Mosaic Law. Murder is the ending of a human life with malice aforethought, and thus, to prove an infraction of the sixth commandment, one need only establish the two elements of causing death and malice. An added beauty of the Decalogue, according to Calvin, is that the commandments are in the form of synecdoche, a figure of speech in which the whole is indicated by a part, and thus, each command reveals broader moral attributes of God that are elaborated further throughout Scripture (De Bruyn, 2000:16). Although they are moral rules, they also inform moral principles (Nash, 1994:41). Thus, to murder is wrong, but the commandment also stimulates ethical consideration of hatred, violence, abortion, euthanasia and other topics stemming from the value of human life as something bearing the image of God. Although the Decalogue was revealed to Israel, the moral commands were universal in their intent as is evidenced by the way the Apostle Paul referenced them in writing to the church in Rome (Romans 12:20, 13:8-9). The New Testament repeats nine of the Ten Commandments and contains other specific moral commands prohibiting some acts and promoting others, such as those given by Paul, Peter, James, and John in their epistles. Compassion is not a specific action but a character quality, like love or faithfulness, which has broad application and can result in a myriad of actions. Thus, being compassionate would not fall under this realm of specific commands but is abundantly found under the next tier of consideration.

6.2.2 General commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions

Moral principles may be derived by the discerning student of the Bible in the general commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions found throughout Scripture. General commands set forth directives that are broad in that they apply to character qualities or categories of actions rather than to specific acts, and therefore leave room for a believer to ponder their application under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, biblical scholars, and spiritual mentors. The commands to love one another (John 13:34, 1 John 4:11) or to humble oneself (James 4:10) focus on attitudes and are therefore general. There are numerous

general commands in the Scriptures to be compassionate. In Luke 6:36, Jesus said “You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate” (2004). Although using the Greek word *oiktirmon*, which many translations render as “merciful,” the context indicates lending money to those who are so poor that they cannot repay you, more an act of compassion than of mercy. In his parallel gospel account, Matthew reported that Jesus commanded, “You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48), indicative of the fact that compassion and mercy are among God’s “brightest perfections” (Henry, 1991:1844). In Ephesians 4:32 (2004), Paul exhorted believers to “be kind and compassionate [*eusplanchnos*] to one another,” and in Colossians 3:12 (1995), as the very first in a long line of virtues, Paul told believers to “put on a heart of compassion [*oiktirmon splanchnon*].” Peter directed, “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate [*eusplanchnos*] and humble” (1996: 1 Peter 3:8). Other general commands to be compassionate are discussed at length in chapter 3. The difficulty with general commands, or commands directed at character qualities rather than specific actions, is that sinful humans can tend to ignore them due to their lack of specificity, or sincerely intend to implement such virtues later when they have the time, energy or resources to do so (Nash, 1994:41).

Historical illustrations are lessons learned from persons and groups in the Bible who obeyed or disobeyed the commands of God. Paul reminded the Corinthian church that, although they lived in different times and were not under the house rules of Israel, “these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come” (2001: 1 Corinthians 10:11). Historical illustrations can be paired with the general commands to help Christians form a better picture of what a virtue looks like. For instance, “flee youthful lusts” (1982: 2 Timothy 2:22) is given greater definition when considering how Joseph literally fled from the advances of Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:7-12). Even though Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, “You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate” (2004: Luke 6:36) is given greater clarity when Christians consider God’s directive for Israel to bring an extra tithe of its produce into the town squares at the end of every three years so that “the fatherless and the widow who are within your towns shall come and

eat and be filled, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands that you do” (2001: Deuteronomy 14:29). The divine prescription to show compassion in specific, periodic, material, abundant, and verifiable ways was never repeated in the New Testament or directed to the Church, but is an example of how the character quality of compassion should reach the streets in the mind of God, and how he thinks and acts toward the powerless and poor when he is governing a theocracy that he has created on the earth. The compassion of God the Father, and the compassion ministries of Jesus Christ, the Apostles, the early Church, and the Church down through the centuries are likewise discussed as historical illustrations of the moral principle of compassion in chapter 3.

Sanctified opinions are those expressed by biblical authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that affirm something as virtuous or good without necessarily issuing a command. James’ assessment that “religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world” is an example (2001: James 1:27). The ethical imperative stated by James, which in this writer’s experience has become the leading inspiration and theme verse for compassion ministries helping OVC in South Africa, is actually indirect. James was echoing Jesus’ teaching that religion is not a matter of hearing and knowing God’s Word, but a matter of selflessly doing the will of the Father, particularly when you are sacrificing to touch the lives of those who cannot do anything for you in return. Therefore, most of the moral principle of compassion is generated from this middle tier of consideration – from the general commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions found within Scripture. Compassion ministry principles were dealt with at length and summarised at the end of chapter 3.

6.3 The virtue of compassion is part of the theonomous norm

Compassion is a deep-seated compulsive response from within that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer such that he is constrained to take action on their behalf as if he was struggling to free himself. It is literally suffering with the sufferer. Because God and his Son, Jesus Christ, are repeatedly spoken of in Scripture as being moved with compassion for those who are suffering, broken,

and unable to remedy their miserable state, 1) the character quality of being compassionate and 2) the emotion-generated remedial action of compassion, exist as virtues. Because God commands humans to be compassionate and because humans experience this same character impulse and its consequent actions, compassion is a communicable attribute, one that mankind shares with God as a part of being created in his image. Throughout the Scripture, God commands his people to be godly and to be Christlike, qualities that necessarily involve compassion. Compassion is therefore a prescribed virtue for the Christian and is normative. On the contrary, purposefully avoiding objects of compassion and failing to be compassionate or to show compassion are sins (Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 10:31-32; James 2:14-17). Compassion ministry, which is voluntarily undertaking to perform a series of compassionate acts over time, is highly meritorious and greatly pleasing to the Lord, especially since it goes beyond the realm of an initial compulsive response and becomes a discipline of devotion and a labour of love. This kind of purposeful, long-term undertaking was what God wanted Israel to do for its widows, orphans, and the poor. Because both the Old and New Testaments underscore the virtue of showing compassion to orphans, an ongoing ministry to this demographic group is particularly favoured by the Lord.

6.4 The ethical duty of South African Christians to show compassion to OVC

The answer to the initial question of whether Christians *can* ethically engage in compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children is “yes.” But an additional ethical consideration is whether Christians *should* be involved in such ministry. Can one make a sound argument that a South African Christian who has never done a thing for any of the country’s four million orphans has been sinning by such an omission? One may argue, for instance, that every Israelite farmer was to give a triennial tithe to help the country’s orphans, that they were to leave extra crops for them to glean at harvest time, and that families were to invite orphans to join their feast times. However, that argument falls apart on close inspection. Those commands were directed toward farmers because food is a life necessity; Israelite wagon-makers, toolmakers, and tanners were not directed to give wagons, tools, tents, or portions of their income to orphans. It can also be argued that the purpose of a general command, such as “love thy neighbour,” is to

direct a God-fearing person to engage in loving actions and responses *when he encounters the neighbour* rather than compelling a person to search out his neighbours day and night, stay in their homes, and constantly try to demonstrate love to them. The mandate arises with the encounter, or with learning of a specific need that can be met by the God-fearing person. There are several examples in support of this view. Christ was certainly compassionate, but during his ministry he passed by many villages and towns in Judea, Samaria, and Galilee without entering them to show compassion. He showed compassion toward sufferers with whom he came in contact. James challenged his readers to show compassion to those who came into their meeting in shabby clothes and to brothers and sisters in need of food or clothes (James 2:1-17). There was no command to go out and find such people. Thus, there is no command to affirmatively seek out people to whom one can show compassion.

Nevertheless, one of the key principles articulated in chapter 3 above is that compassion requires presence and typically begins with seeing, encountering, interacting with, and even touching those who are suffering. As an extension of this principle, if a person “hears” about suffering, such as when the writer speaks in American churches about the plight of South Africa’s orphans, this is a diminished form of “seeing,” or a vicarious form of “presence,” which often elicits compassion in the hearers. Thus, the question then arises as to whether South African Christians have seen or encountered OVC such that they now have an affirmative ethical duty to be compassionate. Most Christians know of the orphan crisis through the media and have therefore “seen” the problem in a general sense. There are obviously no statistics about what number of South African Christians have experienced the orphan problem first-hand, or which of them, after seeing the need, are now involved in compassion solutions to the OVC crisis, but it seems safe to say that almost all African Christians, and a small percentage of Christians of European descent, have seen the need first-hand.

From a multitude of conversations on this topic, it is the writer’s view that there are many reasons why and how first-world European Christians avoid compassion to African OVC. Firstly, it is evident that some believers have become calloused due to lingering racism, believing that the races must be, or have always been, socially

separated and that the African problem is not the problem of the Afrikaner or of the British. In a related vein, some have become calloused simply due to classism, the distinction between social or economic strata, believing that this is the way the poor live and have always lived, and if they would work harder they could make their lives different; their situation is not anyone's fault or problem but their own. Those with a racist or classist mindset do not see one's biblical duty to his community and his neighbour as including all of proximate humanity, but only all of proximate commonality, only those nearby who look, and speak, and live like oneself. Some comfortable Christians have Africans living in grinding poverty on their land without electricity, water, or sewerage, and have no misgivings about it (Prinsloo, Interview 3).

Secondly, some Christians have moral prejudices due to sweeping generalisations that the Africans have brought this plague upon themselves, as though all Africans have been involved in illicit sexual practices. In fact, the writer has several African friends who are the Christian wives of unbelieving men and are always afraid of contracting diseases when their husbands return home. The HIV positive infants and children in the country, numbering almost one million, are certainly not morally responsible for the contraction of HIV, nor are many of their mothers who have been faithful to one partner. But dismissing the entire African population is a neat and tidy mental technique that fatuously frees one from having to consider one's own responsibility to help the innocents nearby.

Thirdly, many Christians with whom the writer has spoken are simply afraid to enter the African milieu. They carry ideas from the apartheid era that whites do not enter "those areas." They fear that they will be victims of crime or racial reprisals, or that they might contract HIV as though it was some airborne contagion like the flu. Jesus stated that when lawlessness increases, people's desire to express love grows cold (Matthew 24:12), but while the townships encircling the cities can be fearful places after dusk, Randy Finkbeiner of MCDC (2008) stated in an interview that the rural villages are far safer than the urban areas. From many personal visits, the writer has found that a white person entering the villages is very welcomed and honoured as someone who is coming to help.

Fourthly, some Christians are afraid of compassion, which shows that they understand what the word means. None of us want to suffer, and compassion means entering into places of pain and hurt and loss to suffer with someone; it is voluntarily choosing to afflict yourself emotionally (Nouwen, 1983:4). Christians have expressed to the writer that they will not come with him to an OVC care centre because they love children and would just sit down and weep for weeks; such Christians have “compassion intelligence,” and, knowing that compassion begins with seeing, they choose not to see. Others come and see and weep. Some who weep do not want to return and experience the oppression and sorrow over again.

Fifthly, some Christians feel concern but obviate their responsibility by externalising the remedy; they believe that the African community, all of the NGOs, and the new African government will take care of the orphan problem. The solution is institutional and governmental, not personal. While this may be somewhat true in urban areas, Gallagher (2006:1) mentioned five years ago that between all of the NGOs, “we are probably reaching 200,000 children in South Africa ... and just reaching that 200,000 is quite challenging.” In a land of one million double orphans, two million AIDS orphans, and four million total orphans, the go-gos, the NGOs, and the government are clearly not caring for all of the children such that no one else needs to get involved. Hands At Work has just opened a new branch near the South Africa-Swaziland border because so many children there are starving to death (Snyman, 2011: Interview 2). This means that no one is watching out for the orphans. There is plenty of room for others to get involved.

Sixthly, some Christians with whom the writer has spoken are simply overwhelmed by the need, and do not know what to do, or where to start, or how to find time to get involved, so they simply do nothing. This is an example of where sympathy and even empathy fall short of compassion, which is jumping to a response as if the pain were your own. Many first-world Christians are simply too caught up in their own busy lives with work, family, friends, sport, and holidays to be bothered by such a negative and sad topic. In some cases, these believers

are happy to “do their bit” and throw money at the problem, which is helpful from an NGO’s point of view, and makes the slight pull of compassion go away.

One cannot properly assert that the Body of Christ in South Africa has sinned by rejecting compassion for OVC and is living in large-scale denial, although many in the field would like to allege such a thing. No doubt, this coldness and denial may be true of many individual Christians. Because of their increased exposure, however, South African Christians do have an elevated ethical obligation to learn more and to do something. It is this writer’s opinion that the first-world and European churches in South Africa that would be able to respond meaningfully have not yet had the matter sufficiently and clearly put before them such that they bear a grave responsibility before God to mobilise in compassion. Greater efforts need to be made by those involved in, and acquainted with, these ministries to expose South African Christians and churches to the OVC situation at present through sermons, workshops, exposure trips, and short-term service opportunities. This is how the writer became involved with OVC; when someone said “come and see.” As more documentation, pictures, videos, and first-hand experiences are given to the churches, the ethical imperative for Christians to get involved will strengthen. Christians will vicariously see and encounter the needs of the orphans, and the sentiment of compassion will doubtless be stirred in more hearts. Snyman (Interview 1) comments that churches often view his ideas as radical, but he adds that the younger generation of European South Africans is much more interested in the problem and in getting involved. Gillig (2011) concurred in her interview, stating that the greatest number of foster placements and adoptions of OVC that Oasis has arranged in the Johannesburg area are by young white couples, many taking in multiple children.

Thus, a general command such as “be compassionate as your Father in heaven is compassionate” (2004: Luke 6:36) directs a God-fearing person to engage in compassion *when he encounters the sufferer* rather than compelling a person to search out sufferers. Many South African Christians have avoided compassion for OVC by simply not being exposed to them, and they have no Scriptural duty to seek them out. But there is a great awareness of the OVC problem such that the ethical responsibility of the Church is increasing. As it increases and more

believers get involved in providing a remedy, one must consider *how* Christians should engage in this kind of ministry. There must be guidelines for ongoing ethical evaluation.

6.5 Caveats for the realm of Christian liberty

Since being compassionate, showing compassion, and being involved in compassion ministry to orphans are affirmed in Scripture, a Christian should move on to the third level of ethical consideration from the Scripture, which the writer will designate as guidelines for Christian liberty. One may have the freedom directly before God to do something, but he or she does not exist in a vacuum with God. One can gather an extremely strong ethical impetus to engage in compassion ministry to orphans based on moral principles in the Bible, but may he or she then do anything and everything to show compassion or are there further considerations? The doctrine of the unity or simplicity of God teaches us that he possesses all of his attributes fully at the same time and that each attribute balances and qualifies every other attribute (Grudem, 1994:178). Even so, although to a lesser degree, the godly Christian should seek to balance the exercise of compassion with other moral virtues such as wisdom, humility, integrity, discernment, adaptation, submission to authority, self-discipline, and patience. The writer will suggest that even when a Christian is not doing anything prohibited by Scripture, there are yet eight caveats, or cautions, having to do with one's conscience and with other people that need to be taken into account while engaging in compassion ministry.

6.5.1 The caveat of appearances

Under the first caveat of appearances, Christian OVC workers must remember that they are being watched by a world of both believers and unbelievers, and though they may be doing nothing wrong, they should try to avoid unnecessary damage to their Christian testimony by being careful of how their conduct, either individually or collectively, may appear to others. While this caveat should not create a crippling fear of man (Proverbs 29:25), it is meant to guard one's integrity from an attack that may destroy one's ministry (1 Timothy 3:7, Romans 14:16). In the context of compassion ministry, being alone with someone of the opposite gender, or delivering medications to needy people in places of ill repute can be

exceedingly dangerous. Shifting finances between accounts, borrowing funds from one project for another, comingling individual and organisational funds, or not being careful with figures in reports to financial partners, even if no theft, fraud, or impropriety is intended, is highly questionable and appears suspicious, and thus, Christian ethics would guide one to stay clear of such situations.

6.5.2 The caveat of brotherhood

Under the second caveat of brotherhood, Christians must not engage in an activity in the presence of another believer if that other person struggles with the activity as a possibly sinful practice and one's participation may cause them to sin by joining the activity in violation of their conscience. This may limit whether a Christian drinks alcohol in the presence of others, wears clothing that may cause others to lust or is otherwise considered immodest or improper in the culture, attends a ritual of a sangoma, buys meat at an Islamic butcher, or gets a body piercing (Romans 14:13, 20-21; I Corinthians 8:9-13, 10:23-24, 28-33). Some elements of African culture may seem backward or unenlightened, but Christians should never mock or ignore a standard that is more conservative than their own. Young female volunteers sometimes bristle at the requirement to wear a skirt when they enter the African villages, but this is the principle of honouring the conservative standards of others. Christians are not free to flaunt their liberty, but are to be servants to all men, and especially accommodating of weaker brothers.

6.5.3 The caveat of conscience

Under the third caveat of conscience, Christians may sin even if their action is not in breach of God's law if they are acting against their consciences. While one's conscience contains natural law, the innate moral code in set the heart of mankind since the fall (Romans 2:15), it also contains programming from parents, teachers, friends, and the media that may have nothing to do with God's moral character or will. As they grow up or come under sound biblical teaching, Christians may see that they need to begin the slow process of retraining their consciences to reflect God's will and values. Paul argues that faith is a place of confidence that one's action or attitude is within the will of God, and thus, if one doubts while engaging in the action, that action is not of faith and is therefore sinful. Paul's sanctified opinion was that a believer should always maintain a clear conscience (Acts

14:27; Romans 14:14, 22-23; I Corinthians 8:7, 10:25-27). Christians in compassion ministries must use great care to listen to the dictates of their consciences in the seemingly little but important matters of financial accountability, accurate and transparent reporting to financial partners, representations to the public in literature and on websites, and in interpersonal relationships with staff, OVC, and people in the community. When the principles of Scripture and conscience will slow things down, complicate processes, or even bring the ministry to a halt, there is great temptation to ignore Scriptural principles and the conscience and to be pragmatic instead.

6.5.4 The caveat of entanglement

Under the fourth caveat of entanglement, Christians must not flaunt their liberty by engaging in activities, which although not wrong to begin with, will eventually put them in bondage. (1 Corinthians 6:12, Galatians 5:13, I Peter 2:16-17). Some things are lawful but over the long term can limit freedom or can be used for wrong purposes. When millions of dollars in PEPFAR grants became available, it was interesting to see how many suddenly became interested in compassion ministry to OVC (Prinsloo, Interview 3). Many who grasped for the money found that they could have a job, better and more regular food, a nicer office, better vehicles, or a finer way of life, but are now facing the dilemma of having to sustain a much-expanded and unnecessary ministry infrastructure because of the deceitfulness of riches, which invariably require more riches. Some ministries are beholden to key donors who are not Christian, operate on a different ethical paradigm, and at times control the way things are done and compromise the privacy of OVC.

6.5.5 The caveat of authorities

Under the fifth caveat of authorities, Christians may have their liberty curtailed by governing authorities, whether they are in civic government, business, educational institutions, medical institutions, the church, or family structures (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 2:13-17). It is easy in a land where corruption and ineptitude is rife, and where suffering is so immense and intense, to become jaded and cynical and to thereby justify bypassing or disobeying regulations and laws in order to get medical supplies, property, or approval for

projects, or to silently condone those who do. Compassion ministry to children can push Christians to the outermost bounds of ethical and emotional restraint as they witness healthcare workers, social workers, or law enforcement officials refuse to do anything about rape, abduction, abuse, and even murder. Such officials have seen so much suffering and death that they seem to have become totally desensitised to the urgency or tragedy of a new case. Gillig (Interview 1) reported that her Christian organisation at one time cared for Anele (named changed) who was the last surviving child of five. Anele's mother had killed her four siblings before they reached school age, had served her prison sentence, and was being released. The news that social workers were coming to return Anele to her mother's custody outraged the staff, and they thought of spiriting her off to some secret location, but in the end, they knew they had to obey the governing authorities. In those real life situations, Christians are pushed to choose what they will do with the conflicting absolutes of obedience to authority and the preservation of life. In the writer's observation, the more theologically grounded the organisation's leadership and the more they rest in God's sovereignty, the more they favour the unqualified absolutist ethical position, refuse to disobey authority, and grieve deeply over the child who has suffered or will suffer (Geisler, 1989:86-87; Gillig, Interview 1). Other organisations follow the graded absolutist ethical position and choose to follow "God over government" and "mercy over veracity" by disobeying authority for the sake of the child's greater good (Geisler, 1989:121). This not only wrests control from the capable hands of a sovereign God and takes the responsibility for another's sin, but violates human law, violates the consciences of those involved, may cause a weaker brother to stumble, and if word reaches the streets, damage the Christian reputation of the organisation. Thus, four of the above five caveats restraining Christian liberty have been ignored.

6.5.6 The caveat of motivation

Under the sixth caveat of motivation, Christians may have the liberty to engage in a practice but must be motivated chiefly for the glory of God, and not the elevation of self (1 Corinthians 4:5; Philippians 2:3-4; Hebrew 4:12-13). While it sounds exceedingly strange to commit one's life to service to the poor and suffering for

selfish reasons, Christians can engage in ministry for the praise, recognition, or acceptance of others, to receive awards or honorary doctorates, to write books and become famous for compassion, or to avoid rejection and embarrassment. Having noted that this is a possibility, the writer believes that very few of the people he has watched in compassion ministry over the past five years have shown signs of this wrong motivation. Most of God's servants ministering to OVC for any length of time demonstrate a genuine love for God, a love for people, and a desire to wisely, capably, and faithfully minister to the physical and spiritual needs of the orphans and vulnerable children they are able to reach. Still, if one does the work well, the temptations of fame as one travels and does fundraising in other countries can strike later in the ministry.

6.5.7 The caveat of adaptation

Under the seventh caveat of adaptation, there is within Scripture an ethical principle of adapting to a targeted individual or culture in order to reach them with truth and love. Discussed at length in chapter 4, God was the ultimate example of willing submission and personal inconvenience to reach fallen humanity by coming in the likeness of sinful human flesh (Romans 8:3, Philippians 2:5-7). Paul mirrored this principle in presenting Jesus as the Messiah of the Old Testament to the Jews but presenting Jesus as the resurrected Son of a transcendent God to the Greeks (Acts 17:1-4, 22-31). Christians may be free to engage in compassion ministry to OVC, but are they studying the African milieu and shaping their practical ideas by blending biblical truth with harmonious cultural ideas to create a sustainable and reproducible long-term solution? Or do they approach the problem as trying to save the Africans from themselves by creating a European way of life for the children using a model that is adapted to the volunteers' standard of living and value system? A wealthy Christian moved by compassion may have the liberty to drive his 2011 BMW 535i into a poor village, get out in an Armani suit, and randomly pass out R100 notes to OVC, but is that adaptive or wise? Compassion ministry to OVC in the African milieu requires the careful and prolonged consideration of the ethics of adaptive ministry springing from the incarnational ministry model used by Jesus Christ and the Apostle Paul. But most first-world missionaries have historically ignored such principles, and turned

Christian ministries into vestiges of anti-African colonialism. Still, the strength of the adaptive argument is reduced somewhat when one considers the “inside the walls” models of the urban areas because the children are from squatter camps, not from noble and preservation-worthy cultures.

6.5.8 The caveat of wisdom

Under the eighth caveat of wisdom, Christians may have their liberty curtailed by the demands of effectiveness in ministry; that is, they need to avoid the many bad ways to carry out a good idea. Love must abound together with discernment; believers must test and approve the things that are excellent, staying pure and blameless (Philippians 1:9-10). The errors that first-world compassion volunteers make when they fail to understand the African worldview, fail to appreciate African cultural differences, or fail to grasp the true causes and cures of poverty were discussed at length in chapter 4. When first-world Christians feel compassion, and when they learn that the Creator is the originator and the first and best expression of this moral virtue, and has commanded compassion throughout the Scriptures, the forward energy to make radical sacrifices and remedy the suffering of OVC is very strong. Like storm water, if those forces are not bounded and slowed and directed, they can do enormous damage and at times leave behind more damage than before the compassion ministry was undertaken. Compassion is gut-wrenching, but very few “gut reactions” in life are the right thing to do. Christians need to pursue ministry effectiveness, which is a combination of faithfulness to biblical principles and wise stewardship of God given resources, that is, striving to achieve maximum lasting and profitable change in doing the work of the Lord while using the least amount of time, money, and energy. Organisations should ask volunteers to prepare for the enormous cultural differences they may face through advanced reading and then through briefing when they arrive. One can only think through so many issues in advance, but after a decade of experiences, ideas need to be shared. There is nothing wrong with paying a poor Christian woman a salary to work at an OVC care centre, but is it wise? African Christian churches have the liberty to create an OVC care centre, but how should they share the burden and decision-making between these churches? All of these decisions call for wisdom. The leadership of OVC

ministries must meet with each other and compare and contrast effective ministry ideas from each other. This has been done in the secular realm, but rarely by Christian OVC care organisations, and according to Gillig (Interview 1), much more needs to be done.

6.6 Ethical operation of Christian compassion ministries for OVC

The most basic form of Christian compassion ministry to OVC takes place when a Christian woman (or family) takes an orphan or a vulnerable child into her home in an informal foster care arrangement, loves the child, meets its needs, brings him or her up in the training and instruction of the Lord, and reveals Christ to the child on a long-term basis. This is the three-fold cord of gospel ministry in its most basic and natural form. The South African government recognises that this informal foster care model is the primary way that OVC will survive in the current HIV/AIDS crisis, and therefore provides small monthly child care grants and foster care grants for anyone caring for OVC.

From this basic beginning, one can expand and develop very elaborate models of Christian care. The strength of Christian OVC care organisations inside the walls is that they each provide homes for OVC headed by Christian parents. Organisations outside the walls cannot find enough Christian households in the African community, and therefore, they show the love and truth of Christ through Christian care centres that help both the OVC as well as their caregivers. Beyond the Christian compassion ministries reviewed in this study, there are many secular compassion ministries in South Africa run and staffed by Christians, although their ability to openly and verbally communicate Christ and Bible truth to OVC is limited (McKibbin, Interview 1). Those Christians are to be commended for their compassion and service even though they cannot enter into the fully orbed gospel ministry the way Jesus did and the way that Christians in the current faith-based organisations can.

Although Christian organisations will provide many of the same basic services that secular OVC-care organisations do, the motivations, ethics, programme-focus, and long-term goals of Christian compassion ministries should be distinctively different than, and superior to, their secular counterparts. Basic services, as well

as those distinctive to Christian ministries, must be provided to OVC and will be dealt with below.

6.6.1 Christian compassion ministries must meet the critical needs of OVC

As was stated in chapter 5, secular organisations involved in compassion ministry to OVC believe that the three most critical needs of children that organisations must seek to meet are food/water security, health/safety security, and primary education (Snyman, Interview 1; Prinsloo, Interview 3). The first and second elements are necessary for the preservation of life since many OVC in the rural areas as well as the townships are dying of disease and malnutrition, and the third is considered essential to enhancing life and ending ignorance and the perpetual crime, poverty, and hopelessness that come with it. All three are considered basic human rights and are, therefore, entitled to the protection and security that governments and social structures can provide (UDHR, 1948:33, UNHR, 1995:153). Most Christian organisations involved with compassion ministry to OVC believe, from a biblical perspective, that spiritual discipleship is also a critical need of children and should be dealt with above, or at a minimum on par with, their educational needs, because “what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (2001: Matthew 16:26).

6.6.1.1 Providing food and water security

Compassion motivated both God the Father and Jesus to ensure the provision of food for hungry people (Deuteronomy 14:28-29, Matthew 15:32-38). All ten Christian OVC ministries studied ensured the daily provision of food to children. Nine of the ten provide food directly to children on a daily basis; Hands At Work supports community-based organisations (CBOs) that provide daily food but is not directly involved with preparing and serving food to OVC. An effort is made to provide food that is filling and nutritionally balanced, typically pap or rice, a meat or protein, and a vegetable like cabbage or beet root (Prinsloo, Interview 3). The writer has shared many such meals with the children and care workers. All rural care centres, as well as Bethesda and The Pines (two inside the walls organisations that have more land), have gardening projects to supplement store-bought foods with vegetables and fruit. Involving OVC in the gardening projects

also teaches the children vital gardening skills that many will use for a lifetime. Beyond the children who are fed each day in homes or care centres, rural organisations like MDCDC, Sun City, and Morning Star provide food parcels for children out of walking range of their centres. These parcels are stocked with about R250 worth of basic supplies designed to feed one person for a month. Providing parcels is not an imperative, but if sufferers have walked a long way to seek help, and the NGO has the funds in its budget, it tries to provide these parcels. As far as providing water, Hands At Work has sunk several boreholes for its affiliated CBOs where public water has been unavailable or unreliable, and Ubuhle's school has its own borehole and septic system (Snyman, Interview 2; Prinsloo, Interview 3). The other eight ministries have access to reliable public water. Sun City and many of the Hands-affiliated care centres still use long-drops instead of water-tank toilets, but efforts are being made to improve those facilities.

6.6.1.2 Providing health and safety security

Just as the Good Samaritan was moved with compassion to get the traveller out of harm's way and to a place of healing and safety, all ten ministries studied try to ensure the health and safety of the OVC in their care. But there is a key difference on this issue between OVC care ministries inside and outside of the walls. Inside the walls, there is enormous personal safety, where the children are on a secure property surrounded by a wall or electric game farm fence, and are kept in the care of Christian parents who are being monitored for their behaviour and performance. The statistical probability of rape, molestation, theft, or abuse is, therefore, miniscule. Outside the walls there is a much greater risk of these horrors taking place, especially if the children are in child-headed households. Those involved with OVC ministry for a long time comment that when a child has no adult visibly checking on them, they are in the greatest danger. Once an adult begins visiting their dwelling once or twice a week, the trouble with thieves, molesters, and squatters in the area seems to subside (Snyman, Interview 2; Prinsloo, Interview 3; McKibbin, Interview 1). This is not always the case since the writer has met with several OVC who were raped or molested while regularly attending a care centre and being visited periodically by care workers. Hunziker of Hands At Work (Interview 1) commented that the care workers who make home

visits must be trained in what is proper personal safety because many of them were raised in the same terrible conditions OVC are currently faced with and don't see the environments as problematic. In one instance, a care worker thought it was an acceptable arrangement for three sisters to barricade the door from inside a closet and sleep on a urine-soaked mattress every night to avoid molestation by males in the household. Care workers and children living with AIDS sufferers also need training in health and hygiene to gain the proper respect for disease and to be freed from harmful taboos and unnecessary worries about HIV/AIDS. Mwende, of Hands At Work, had to demonstrate to a family and several care workers how to bathe an AIDS patient who was near death, showing them the materials and methods they should use without fear (Mwende, Interview 1). Finkbeiner (Interview 1) of MCDC suggests that the chances of rape, molestation, theft, and abuse are less in the rural areas since there are few walls, things are more visible, and people generally watch out for each other. Thus, care worker visits to OVC homes combined with teaching the children about sexual advances, interaction with strangers, how to recognise dangerous situations, and the need to report instances of abuse are a good and sufficient safeguard if children live outside the walls (Mahlangu, Interview 1).

Still, many of the children are too young, naïve, or afraid to show disrespect to an adult to avoid abuse. Many desperate girls regularly give themselves to truckers and travellers alongside the roads in exchange for food (Mwende, Interview 1). Those working outside the walls confess that "there is only so much you can do," and they wrestle with the ethics of what *can* be done versus what *should* be done (Prinsloo, Interview 3). There is only so much money to go around; organisations simply cannot buy land, build modest homes, erect perimeter walls, and find Christian house-parents for every orphan or vulnerable child in the country. When Wilkinson proposed such a grand scheme in Swaziland, he was met with great opposition from the king and the community. What is communicated is the politically incorrect message that one is trying to save the children from their own debauched culture. But elements within the culture are staggeringly immoral, and South Africa's social workers often face the agony of returning a child to a household that is toxic to the child's best interests simply because the household is where their relatives live, or nothing else is available (Gillig, Interview 1).

The value each compassion ministry places on the personal home safety of OVC is one of the deciding factors of whether to bring OVC behind the walls; the other reasons are greater psycho-social support, greater spiritual input from Christian families, and a higher standard of living. There is no biblical imperative to bring orphans into believing homes, but it is best if possible. Job took in an orphan and reared him (Job 31:18), but James extolled the practice of “visiting” orphans, meaning looking after them and exercising oversight, as opposed to taking them home (Vines, 1996:662). Gillig (Interview 1) points out that God’s heart is to place the lonely in families (Psalm 68:6). Yes, children can be ministered to physically and spiritually at a care centre, but they need believing families to pursue the adoption option or at least foster care. The greater the value placed on eliminating safety risks for OVC, the more money will be raised and spent to ensure that safety. Bethesda Outreach and The Pines are in more rural areas and have chosen to somewhat isolate and protect several dozen children from the African communities in Hammanskraal and Welkom at a greater cost per child. Acres, Oasis, and Lambano are in suburban Johannesburg and indisputably need the safety of their surrounding walls. The five ministries outside the walls reach far more children but leave them in their homes in the community and count on care worker visits and OVC safety education to stave off rape, molestation, and abuse. If the ministries outside the walls chose to build clustered homes and erect a perimeter fence, they would have to raise more funds or care for fewer OVC.

6.6.1.3 Providing educational security

Although a lack of education is never cited in the Bible as a basis for showing compassion, the consensus in the modern world is that education is necessary to prepare children for a sustainable and productive life as adults, rather than repeating the terrible cycle of poverty. The culture in Bible times encouraged fathers to mentor their sons in their trade, the exception being when a child was enrolled in a school for specialised training. In the last 150 years, the Western world has shifted to the model of generalised universal public education, but the persistent problem in poor and dysfunctional communities is the drop-out rate among teens and among OVC who are in difficult situations and not being

properly supervised. All ten of the Christian organisations studied provide educational security for OVC. In four of the ministries outside the walls, care workers continually monitor the attendance of OVC in a local government school, help them with homework after school at the care centres, and make sure that they are not missing classes due to needs or demands at home. Ubuhle is the only organisation studied outside the walls that provides a Christian school for its children; Christian education is its chief ministry, and the provision of food, water, and healthcare are incidental to that central purpose. Prinsloo (Interview 1) acknowledges that a school is more expensive to run than an OVC care centre, and qualified teachers must be found, but such a school does not have the orphan stigma attached to it, provides comprehensive academic and Christian training rather than trying to supplement a poor education with an after-care programme, and it dominates most of the child's day instead of providing a few hours in the afternoon. Inside the walls, Bethesda runs its own Christian school on location. Oasis ensures the enrolment of its OVC in the nearby Christian school run by the church that started Oasis. Acres of Love and The Pines provide the option of Christian schooling for some of their children if funds and transportation are available, but otherwise secure public education. Lambano children attend an area public school and have a retired teacher help the children with homework in the afternoon. The importance of Christian education as part of the greater mission of gospel ministry will be discussed further below.

6.6.1.4 Providing spiritual discipleship

What makes Christian compassion ministry to OVC different from similar secular charitable efforts? They all provide food and water security, health and safety security to one extent or another, and educational security. The distinguishing characteristic of Christian compassion ministries to OVC should be that they reflect the three-fold gospel ministry model of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Church in reaching these precious and suffering children with 1) the gospel message that saves them, 2) the Bible's ethical teachings that can transform their lives, and 3) tangible acts of compassion that will keep them in good health. What secular organisations provide is, therefore, but one-third of what Christian organisations should be providing. But according to Prinsloo (2006), this most

important two-thirds is also the hardest. The spiritual is overshadowed by the demands of the physical, and rather than every Christian seeing himself or herself as a discipler, spiritual ministry is viewed as something left to specialists who are not around. One of the most difficult things for Christian OVC ministries to do well and consistently is to present God's transformational truth to children, yet the gospel message is critical for it alone is the tool God uses to bring someone to spiritual life and begin a personal transformation process from the inside out. In chapter 5 above, spiritual discipleship was not included as a "critical" need of orphans because in the compassion industry, it is viewed as an extra. Unfortunately, many Christian compassion ministries have also bought into this thinking and left spiritual discipleship, something Jesus commissioned every believer to be involved with, as an extra and something they aspire to do if they can find a trained volunteer to do it.

Based on the study of the ten organisations in this thesis, there are four venues in which spiritual truth is typically communicated to South African OVC by Christians on a regular basis: care centres, local churches, foster homes, and Christian schools. In the writer's estimation, these are mentioned in the order of increasing potential effectiveness in communicating the gospel and the ethical teachings of Scripture to OVC (see figure 6.2 below). The spiritual effectiveness at any of the four venues, of course, depends upon the calling, vision, training, and energy of the adult believers working at those venues, but generally, in terms of time and intensity of interaction on spiritual issues, the four are placed in this order.

6.6.1.4.1 Spiritual discipleship in OVC care centres

The first and most marginally effective venues for spiritual discipleship are the OVC care centres used by organisations working outside the walls. The time and energy of the staff are taken up with food preparation, supervision, troubleshooting, crisis-management, and providing a forum for passive activities in which the children entertain each other. If there is any energy left over, the ladies may organise several games or activities. The highest functioning care centres provide help with homework and provide perhaps three Bible lessons per week (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Occasionally one will find someone like sister Deborah at Sun City who knows her Bible well and can teach the children, but in most

cases, the care workers have little knowledge of the Bible and, in the more rural areas, are often illiterate. Hands At Work makes much of its mobilising local churches to create CBOs to care for the orphans, but the writer has experience with the dear but theologically shallow churches in the townships and villages, and has helped to train their pastors who normally have less than six months of Bible training and are rightfully starving for help. If the pastors are in this condition, at what Bible knowledge level must the people in their flock be? When asked what Bible training Hands At Work has provided for its affiliated CBO care workers, the answer is “none,” and when asked what amount of spiritual truth is being taught at the care centres, the answer is that Hands leaves that up to the churches but really needs to provide training for the care workers in the future so that these care centres can become “life centres” (Mwende, Interview 1). At some facilities, ladies are brought in from the community to teach African dance classes and music, but workers at only one Hands-affiliated CBO mentioned getting a pastor to come in on occasion to speak with the children. The writer has provided visual materials for Bible stories to Christian OVC care organisations, and provided training in how to use them, only to find them unused in successive visits over a period of years.

There is, therefore, a crying need for volunteers with biblical and theological knowledge to provide training and materials to care workers so that they can begin to meaningfully communicate God’s truth to these little ones in the care centres. Teams can come in to present such truth to the children in holiday Bible clubs, but even with translation, there is a cultural, language, and often an amazement barrier when little African children are listening to first-world whites talk about God. The most effective way for these little ones to hear God’s truth is in their own language, with their own frame of reference, and from people that they know and trust. Many volunteer teams want to come and work with the orphans, but the truth is that the orphans are being cared for; what is needed is someone to come and work with their disciplers so that they, in turn, are equipped to communicate God’s Word to the children.

6.6.1.4.2 Spiritual discipleship in local churches

The one organization that exists in every poor village in South Africa, the places where no one else will go, is the local church. Mission organisations and churches have been involved in church-planting for 150 years. In the settings in which OVC care ministries outside the walls work, the problem is that most African churches have drifted from the gospel and correct exposition of the Scriptures because the pastoral training schools are slipshod, because pastors never had any training at all, or because they have followed the ways of pious power showmanship or syncretism. In many cases, pastoral leaders in the village churches are unprepared, real truth-teaching is not being done, and the people are struggling spiritually. Pastors have adults and children in their churches die that they did not know were sick, many pastors stay away from those with HIV, and many refuse to help children because that is women's work (Snyman, Interview 2). In many villages, pastors are focused on power, positions, and connections, wear power suits and "longboat" shoes, and are focused on protecting their ecclesiastical kingdoms (Hunziker, Interview 1). A large part of the answer to the orphan crisis in South Africa is simply remedial pastoral training for African pastors. The writer and his church-planting team have been involved with this on a small and personal level and found African pastors to be eager and overjoyed to learn God's Word in a fuller way. Larger pastors' conferences, such as the writer has been involved with in Uganda and Zambia, can also be held to provide study Bibles to pastors and training in Bible exposition on a basic and practical level, but the greater profit is when mentors walk with pastors through their villages and talk about how the Bible applies to real life situations.

The pastors whose churches minister to the OVC in eight of the ten organisations studied have completed formal theological education at a Bible college or seminary. They know what God's Word says about orphans and are happy to help. These area churches provide perhaps two or three Bible lessons each week to OVC if they have a children's church, a Sunday school, or a weekend youth programme. Because the purpose of these churches is to communicate spiritual truth, these two or three truth encounters are fairly intensive, sound, and practical. God's Ark Assembly, which has operated in the same building as the Sun City

Care Centre, has not had the freedom to run a youth programme due to the stigma of children coming to the property, due to OVC almost always being on the property, and due to a shebeen being run across the street during evenings and weekends. Thus, there is only one Sunday morning church meeting in which the children are mixed in with the adults and have no programme of their own. Hands At Work hopes that the children connected with its affiliated CBOs attend the churches helping the CBOs, but does collect data on such attendance.

Organisations inside the walls take their children to local churches. Bethesda children attend Bible-teaching African churches in Hammanskraal with their house parents. Acres, Oasis, Lambano, and The Pines children attend European-style churches with ethnically blended congregations and separate programmes and activities for children.

6.6.1.4.3 Spiritual discipleship in foster homes

Outside the walls, most OVC care centres do not keep data on whether the foster parents of their OVC are professing Christians (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Inside the walls, where Christian adults are employed to serve as foster parents, where the adult-child ratio is much lower, and where relationships are much closer, there is enormous potential for communicating the gospel and biblical truth to OVC in an effective and repeated manner. But as anyone who grew up in a Christian home can testify, effective parental discipleship depends on the spiritual discipline and relational style of the parents in the home. All of the five organisations studied within the walls reported that their caregiving families had prayer at the beginning of the day and at meal times, and had some sort of devotional Bible time in the evenings. At Bethesda, in particular, several of the fathers are graduates of Christ Seminary in Polokwane, and for the writer to see their relationship and interaction with their natural and foster children was pure joy. Gillig (Interview 1) is correct in asserting that the ideal is to destroy orphanhood through adoption and permanent belonging, placing OVC into high functioning Christian families, both black and white, both local and abroad. Foster care may be next best thing to full adoption, but long-term relationships within Christian “forever families,” like those provided at Bethesda, Acres, Lambano, and The Pines, are extremely beneficial in stabilising OVC from the trauma of orphanhood. Even if the organisation closes

operations in the future, those Christian foster parents will be found somewhere and will be considered as “home” to the children they have cared for.

6.6.1.4.4 Spiritual discipleship in Christian schools

Christian schools have the greatest potential for effectiveness since they have the longest and most intensive time influencing the minds and hearts of OVC of any of the venues. The only two Christian schools provided by the organisations studied were Bethesda’s Jabulane Christian School, which is inside the walls, and the Ubuhle School, which is outside the walls. Oasis ensures the attendance of its children at the nearby Christian school. Acres, Morning Star, and The Pines prefer to provide Christian schooling for their children if sponsors are available.

The Ubuhle School is new, one of the first Christian schools being run in a rural area, and varies from the other models outside the walls. Prinsloo, who started MCDC and had a large part in the development of Sun City, believes that while those Christian organisations provided for what are considered the critical needs of OVC, the solid spiritual element was missing or insufficiently developed, something that bothered her but which she had the time to do little about. After 13 years ministering to OVC and reflecting on the strengths and weaknesses of what she had done, Prinsloo took up the new challenge of starting a Christian school for rural farm children near Bronkhorstspuit who would not otherwise attend a school. “As a Christian you want to do things well with the children God has given you, and at Ubuhle we are able to do just that” (Prinsloo, Interview 3). The school intensifies everything that a Christian OVC care centre does, bringing the children under its care for eight hours a day and providing multiple meals, but it also affords qualified Christian teachers, and a curriculum that not only teaches the Bible but teaches maths, sciences, literature, and history from a distinctly Christian worldview (ACE, 2011:1). Education is a basic human right that was denied to most Africans under the old Bantu educational system, a wrong that will have lingering effects for decades, but one of the chief ways to battle poverty, increase productivity, and build a stabilising middle class in South Africa is to provide a quality education to children (White, 2011:1). But education that is combined with biblical truth and a biblical worldview will arm children with a better view of God, self, others, creation, work, money and power, thus providing a

better mindset to resist the sinful, lustful habits that are ruining the lives of their peers and to pursue a life of discipline, learning, purpose, and holiness, which normally lead to better health, liveable wealth, and a more fulfilling life.

But as with every “better” way to take care of OVC, “better” normally requires more money. Schools require greater funding than care centres due to larger facilities, curriculum and teaching materials, and teacher salaries. Organisations like Bethesda, Ubuhle, and Oasis strongly and openly advocate making strong Christian disciples of the OVC and believe that Christian education is necessity to achieving that purpose. They therefore undertake to raise funds toward than end.

6.6.1.4.5 The cumulative effect of multiple discipleship venues

Bethesda and Oasis provide Christian foster parents, a Christian school, and facilitate attendance at a good local church, and thus, both of them reach a possible +20 on the writer’s discipleship scale (Figure 6.2), the highest level of the organisations inside the walls. To the extent Acres, Lambano, and The Pines can provide Christian schooling, they also achieve a +20 for those children. Ubuhle is both a school and church, and thus, reaches a possible +13 on the discipleship scale, the highest level of the organisations outside the walls.

VENUE <i>Time/Intensity</i> <i>Discipleship Factor</i>	OUTSIDE THE WALLS					INSIDE THE WALLS				
	Hands	MCDC	Sun City	Ubuhle	Morning Star	Bethesda	Acres	Oasis	Lambano	The Pines
Christian schools <i>35 hours/week (intensive)</i> +10				10		10		10		
Christian foster homes <i>50 hours/week (moderate)</i> +7						7	7	7	7	7
Local churches <i>3 hours/week (intensive)</i> +3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Christian OVC Care Centres <i>20 hours/week (mild)</i> +3	3	3	3		3					
TOTALS	6	6	6	13	6	20	10	20	10	10

Figure 6.2 Discipleship scale for Christian OVC care

The most common arrangement for Christian OVC care organisations reaches a possible +6 on the scale if the care centre and church are high functioning and

actually teaching the children God's Word. If the foster parent is a committed Christian, a child could reach +9 on the scale.

While the writer's scale (Figure 6.2) is not scientific and the numbers for each level may be somewhat arbitrary, the scale is helpful for considering what level of spiritual input there is in the lives of OVC. Christians have these little ones in their care as a stewardship from God. What does God require of believing adults who have children in their care, whether those adults are parents, teachers, or caregivers? What would God like to see in these OVC when Christians finish caring for them at the end of their teen years? It is wisest to begin with the end in mind, and OVC care organisations would do well to look beyond the next day or the next fiscal month, to look up at the horizon, to look at the finished product they want to release from their care centre. There are several outcome objectives that organisations seem to have in caring for OVC. Its objective might be:

- Helping OVC survive physically, finish school, and be looked after until adulthood.
- Helping OVC thrive physically and psycho-socially, become achievers in their studies, have a good self-image, and have a job skill or readiness for higher education so that they can become productive and well-adjusted members of society.
- Helping OVC thrive physically and psycho-socially, become achievers in their studies, have a job skill or readiness for higher education, and come to know God and his Word so that they can become fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who serve others as godly spouses, godly parents, godly church members, godly employees, and godly citizens.

Any one of the three objectives is a moral good since it improves the natural condition of OVC, but only Christian OVC care organisations can move orphan care to the third level, and only if that organisation keeps the objective in mind and works diligently toward it. If the first and second outcome objectives are sufficient, then there is no need for Christian OVC care, and Christian workers should merely seek to help OVC within secular organisations. But while the first and second outcome objectives are morally good, they are also ethically insufficient from a biblical standpoint. The Bible readies people for a life filled with purpose

and for a death emptied of fear. Life and death are transformed through the salvation provided by grace through faith in Christ alone. To help someone muddle through time and be totally unready for eternity is an ethical tragedy.

All ten of the Christian organisations studied openly profess to be Christian, and state in their materials that part of their work is to help meet the spiritual needs of their children in addition to the other needs. But the sad fact, in most care centres outside the walls, is that spiritual discipleship is an afterthought or a luxury that can only take place if outside specialists offer their time, and few pastors have the burden to do this (Mahlangu, Interview 1). Most Christian organisations fall back to the default (level 1) outcome objective: helping OVC survive physically, finish school, and be looked after until adulthood. Some OVC continue to attend the care centres into their 20s because they have no place to go and nothing to do, or they leave the care centres when they follow a path of immoral conduct that begins a new life for them (Adams, Interview 1). Several care centres report that they care for the babies of the teenage girls who were at their care centre (Gillig, Interview 1; Mahlangu, Interview 1; Adams, Interview 1). Inside the walls, the likelihood of discipleship is better due to Christian house parents, churches with programmes that are designed for children, and possible Christian schooling.

6.6.2 Christian compassion ministries must meet essential needs of OVC

Beyond these basic critical needs, Christians involved in compassion ministry aspire to meet two additional essential needs of OVC, namely psycho-social support and job skills training (Mwende, Interview 1). The writer has found that those involved in OVC compassion ministry outside the walls do not like to talk about these areas because they haven't done very well in carrying them out. Rather, they focus on their hopes and plans for the future, and what they intend to do. This is largely due to the fact that most of the care workers and staff at the care centres are uneducated and do not have the knowledge, wisdom, or expertise to handle counselling, skills training, or discipleship. They can prepare food, keep things tidy, supervise the children, and run some activities, but they struggle with teaching content. OVC compassion ministry inside the walls seem to do better in meeting these needs due to using more urbanised and educated staff.

6.6.2.1 Providing psycho-social support

Jesus had compassion on the widow of Nain whose son had died (Luke 7:11-17) and encouraged her not to weep. Extreme suffering can lead to extreme sorrow and brokenness. Despite the resiliency of children in coping with sorrow and stress, the hurts suffered by OVC go deeper than many realise and sometimes create what is called “symptoms of orphanhood and abandonment” (Gillig, Interview 1). This can manifest itself in myriad ways, often in physical aggression or sexual promiscuity in the teen years. In one case, if you scratched a little boy’s head, he would immediately fall into an unconscious asleep and couldn’t be roused (Gillig, Interview 1). Consumed with providing the critical needs of food, water, health, safety, and educational assistance to OVC, compassion ministries struggle with the funding or personnel to do much else. Dinhira (Interview 1) readily admits that Hands At Work needs to “go deeper” by training local CBO care workers in counselling. The “Walking With Wounded Children” approach to child counselling and mentoring developed by Petra College for Children’s Ministry in Masoyi has been studied by Hands and will be rolled out in 2012. As it is, most of the Hands-affiliated CBOs, as well as most other orphan care centres outside the walls, provide social interaction by having a venue where the children can meet, by organising games, songs, craft activities, dance classes, and sports, and by having playground equipment installed. Most work with sponsors to organise an end-of-year Christmas party.

Some of the leading women at the centre spend time with the teens after school and on weekends to talk about struggles and to dream and plan for the future. Helping the teens with school work has psychological benefits in that it creates hope of attending varsity and getting a good job. The writer met with a bright young man named Lucky several times in KwaMhlanga; he was 21 years old and had attended his matric year of high school three years in a row because no possibilities of attending varsity had yet surfaced. The exception outside the walls is the new Ubuhle School where the bulk of the day is spent with children in a highly interactive setting. There are also structured games and activities to discern where psycho-social problems may lie. School continues until after 15:00, and even then most of the children stay after school for several hours waiting their

turn for a ride home. It is in these times that many free discussions take place (Ntuli, Interview 1).

One of the great advantages of organisations “within the walls” is that there is a much greater amount of personal time for Christian caregivers to interact with the children on psycho-social issues. There are no care centres with 90 children; the children return to a home of 6-8 children after school, are helped with their homework, and play around the home in the presence of a parent who is monitoring the quality of their behaviour and interactions with others (Gillig, Interview 1). Unless there are school activities, evenings are spent with parents who are equipped in the Christian worldview to help children understand that suffering comes from sin, that there is a sovereign and loving God overseeing their lives, and that he has a plan and purpose for them as individuals that they must discover (Mixon, Interview 1). They are also committed to demonstrating selfless love to the children through words, touch, and kindness. These all go a long way

6.6.2.2 Providing job skills training

Like education, job skills training is not mentioned as a focus of compassion in the Scripture. However, Israel was to refrain from fully harvesting fields so that orphans, widows and foreigners could glean the leftovers (Greer, 2009:64; Deut. 24:19-22). Thus, it is intimated that children had to learn harvesting skills and a diligent work ethic. Here again there is a large distinction between OVC care ministries inside the walls and outside the walls. Outside the walls, the main skill the writer has seen children develop at the OVC care centres is gardening, which is more of a survival skill than a job skill. MCDRC, with a grant from a financial partner, installed a number of personal computers with basic software to teach the children computer skills. Sun City was given sewing machines and began to make school uniforms, which not only generated income for the centre but taught some of the teens a job skill. Thembaletu, a secular OVC ministry in Shongwe Mission, used its donated computers and printers to begin a “Youth In Action” newspaper for their community that promoted AIDS awareness. Its music and drama team did AIDS awareness presentations at area high schools and helped dispel the crippling superstition about HIV in the community. The centre also had

a store selling paintings, blown glass, homemade paper, leather products, and other crafts made by the young adults on the premises. The writer helped the young men develop skills with a donated band saw, and the writer's wife trained the young ladies in quilting skills. Thembaletu received PEPFAR funding, and many of the capital investments for these projects came as a result. Most OVC care centres are doing little in the way of job skills development, but the full picture of what could be done hasn't developed because the OVC in most of these places are too young, and the teens seem to be seeking help elsewhere if they want a job skill.

Inside the walls, there is a similar issue of the OVC being predominantly younger, and therefore, job skills training is not a critical issue. The focus is predominantly on preparing children to enter tertiary education after they have matriculated (Mixon, Interview 1). When two teen boys at Bethesda didn't want to attend a university, the organisation worked with its affiliated churches in Hammanskraal to find a welder who would apprentice them. When the need arises, the ministries must respond, even if it is not a full scale job skills programme.

6.7 Greater expenditures for greater benefits

Ten OVC care ministries have been the subject of this study; five that have been termed "outside the walls" because OVC live in an unprotected environment out in the villages with a foster caregiver and come to care centres run by Christian organisations, and five that have been termed "inside the walls" because OVC live in a protected environment behind a property's perimeter wall or fence with Christian foster parents in a foster home funded and supplied by a Christian organisation. The four distinctive benefits that the "inside the walls" model provides are greater personal security, greater psycho-social support, greater spiritual discipleship, and a higher standard of living.

In studying the models, one immediately notes that there is a struggle between quantity and quality; as a rule, the higher the quantity of children reached in a given period of time, the fewer the services that can be provided to each child. Put another way, should R1 million be spread among 100 children or 1000 children? To come up with a solution, one must query what the foundational "critical" needs of OVC are, as superior to the "essential" needs, as superior to the

“preferable” needs (figure 6.3). Snyman, of Hands At Work, which works only with the poorest of the poor, would ridicule the luxury offered to OVC at Acres of Love, and would say that those same funds could rather have saved the lives of thousands of children still starving out in the villages of KwaZulu-Natal and Mpumalanga than providing a posh lifestyle to 350 OVC in Johannesburg’s northern suburbs.

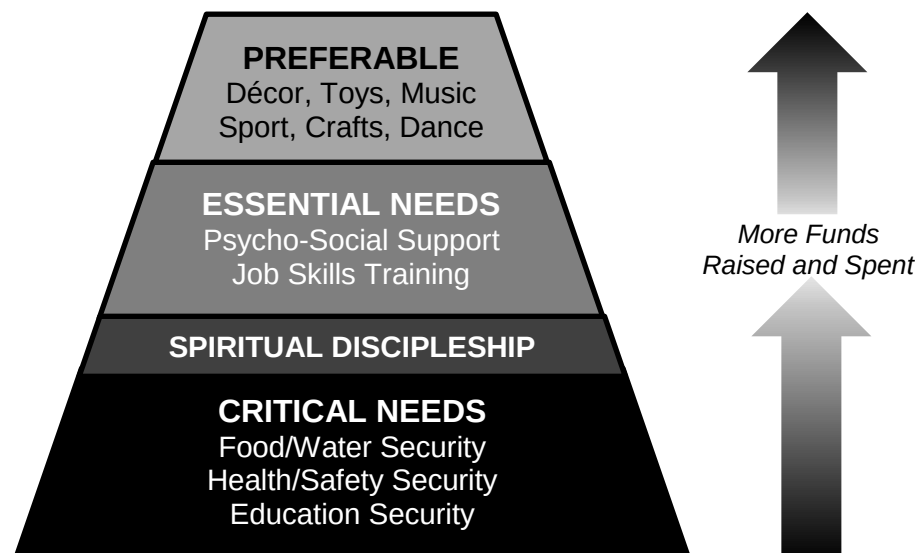


Figure 6.3 OVC needs from the critical foundation to the preferable

The ethical question arises as to whether the Body of Christ should spend all of its money on the foundational critical needs of all of South Africa’s OVC, just keeping them alive, before moving on to the essential needs, before again moving on to the preferables of upmarket décor, toys, music and dance lessons, sports and crafts. There are several answers to that question. Firstly, it is simply impossible to coordinate the efforts and giving of the entire Body of Christ, both foreign and domestic, in this regard. Further, the founders of each organisation have, and should have, the liberty to determine their own purpose, mission, vision, and values in how they go about showing compassion to OVC, and once set, it is almost impossible to change the compassion DNA of an organisation without killing it. Additionally, each believer should operate in his or her own sphere of life and show compassion to those whom they encounter with whatever God has given them. This is abundantly supported by the New Testament historical narratives in the Gospels and Acts; some believers cared for the sick while the Apostles had the extra ability to heal the sick; some supported Jesus’s ministry

with their wealth while others had little to give. One does what he can with what he has and in a way that is familiar to his context. In other realms of Christian ministry, such as churches, Bible colleges, mission boards, and other non-profit organisations, there are varying levels of wealth and expenditure based on the communities they are from. The difficulty comes where the luxury is so great that it causes scandal, consternation in people's hearts about the way money is being used.

Acres of Love has received abundant sponsorship from large, wealthy churches in California, and is using the funding to purchase home after home in Johannesburg's suburbs because all youth centres around the city are far over maximum capacity. This is compassionate and meritorious. They set the standard of living at or just a little below the founders' standard of living, and that of its California sponsors, because that is the life they know. They also want their children to receive a reasonably good education and therefore the houses are in good school districts, which makes home prices higher. Acres would battle to purchase and maintain a cluster of six shacks or RDP homes in formal settlement of Diepsloot that would be at the standard of living the babies were from. Acres could do it, but would feel it was providing the same sad life as the child would have had, not a better life. It is not within the scope of this thesis to deal with the ethics of whether richer is better, and Christians involved with OVC care argue extensively over this issue. Acres puts a strong value on greater personal security, greater psycho-social support, greater spiritual discipleship, and a higher standard of living, but in some cases, it has walked the fine line between extra and extravagance.

Likewise, Hands At Work would battle to build a fine cluster home facility for OVC on the edge of Masoyi, although their staff live in this kind of setting on land that was donated to the organisation. Hands is considered a best practice model because it uses ideas rather than money to drive OVC care ministry. It gets poor people to use what they have. If the Hands model were implemented in the Johannesburg suburbs, its personnel would try to convince every Christian household in every church in Gauteng to take at least one or two OVC into their home for foster care, to pool their groceries, and to build a small building on

nearby open land as the feeding location for those ten households. The latter part of the plan would not be well received, because the model is designed for the context in which it originated, the poor villages.

The spokesmen for all of the ministries studied, of course, say that they want to achieve quality in addition to quantity, and they highlight what needs their ministry is meeting. When you press them about reaching more OVC, the typical response is “if the funds become available.” When offered the hypothetical of having R20 million per year, how many would they try to reach, they will often shy away and comment that they don’t want to get too big (Prinsloo, Interview 3). MCDC and Morning Star have each run four or five centres that cared for almost 500 OVC at a time; those are the largest Christian efforts this writer has seen. Hands At Work coordinates care for 9000 OVC, but it is actually coordinating the efforts of CBOs and not working directly with OVC.

Can all of the OVC in South Africa be reached and helped? The question almost always brings emotion because the answer seems to be ‘No.’ South Africa has seen a strong and somewhat concerted effort over the past ten years by the government and myriad NGOs, both secular and faith-based, supported by enormous funding from abroad, but a significant percentage of funding is coming to an end and the orphan numbers continue to rise. What can Christians do? Given that children are very receptive to spiritual things, it can be argued that one of the greatest stewardships of the Body of Christ in the next decade is to reach the 40 million orphans of sub-Saharan Africa with the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the ethical truths that transform, and with tangible acts of compassion that enable OVC to survive and thrive. Christians can do what Jesus did. He did the will of the Father by 1) getting out of his comfort zone, traveling, and beholding the needs first-hand, 2) meeting the needs nearby by engaging in gospel ministry to the extent he was able (noting that he didn’t heal or preach to everyone, just those He came in contact with, those whom the Father put in His way), 3) mentor others and send them out to do the same.

6.8 Christian compassion and incarnational ministry

Chapter 4 dealt at length with the ethics of adaptive ministry, arguing that when first world Christian volunteers enter the third-world African milieu to care for OVC,

they must take great care to follow the biblical paradigm of listening, learning, and adapting to the non-sinful elements of their host culture. They must understand that the African worldview and its consequent impact on relationships and social order are vastly different to their own. They must also appreciate that the core cultural values in the African milieu are, on many topics, diametrically opposed to their own.

The ten ministries studied in chapter 5 revealed several key principles impacting this ethical responsibility of incarnational ministry. Firstly, in every single organisation, those inside the walls and outside the walls, the caregivers in the homes of OVC are Africans. There are no white adults working as primary caregivers; African OVC should be cared for by African go-gos, mothers, and fathers. This is testimony against the desire of so many overseas volunteers who want to come to South Africa so that they can take care of the orphans. They really should not do so. It is also testimony to the fact that, no matter how incarnational a first world white may be, he or she will always be markedly different from an African peer. Care workers who work at care centres outside the walls are also Africans and speak the local language; many short-term volunteers at the care centres are white, cannot speak the local language, and can help only limited ways. Secondly, in all of the homes, Zulu or a common African language is spoken. For a few years at Oasis, this was not the case, but on reflection about the indigenous and incarnational principles, they changed to an African language policy. Very few whites, particularly those in charitable work, have mastered an African language such that they can blend in to the culture in the full incarnational sense. Thirdly, the five ministries outside the walls were started using an “African Mother Theresa” and the organisational skills of a first-world white South African. With the value of ubuntu, African women know how to care for their community’s children but most need organisational and financial help to do it in a way that is beyond the walls of their own homes. The writer knows of no organisations outside the walls that have been started and manned as a totally white initiative. Inside the walls, virtually all of the organisations were begun by whites without an African Mother Theresa. Acres, Oasis and Lambano are all in the urban areas, and all that was needed was to contact the provincial Department of Social Development to have their facilities inspected and personnel checked, and once

approved, to begin receiving children. There were no African social structures to work through in urban areas, as is done in the villages. Bethesda and The Pines, because they are not in urban areas, did far more consulting with the African community and African churches before beginning their operations, but there was no small African ministry on the ground that they were called in to support and develop. Fourthly, organisations behind the walls typically move OVC into finer surroundings than they are from. They are demanding reverse incarnation, that the children become like their culture, but it must be noted that 1) many Africans in the new South Africa live in the same and far better surroundings nearby, and that 2) the culture in the township or informal settlement from which the child came is not unique or preservable African culture, and thus not a culture to which anyone should adapt (Gillig, Interview 1).

First world whites, serving as volunteers or paid staff, are found in the offices and upper echelons of these organisations. They are there to raise funds domestically and abroad, handle reporting and correspondence, manage purchases and distribution of food, goods, and medical supplies, develop media, troubleshoot, coordinate staff assignments, and provide expertise and training for the organisation's care workers and foster caregivers. However, these believers have been moved by compassion for this work, and are not aloof from the homes, care centres, or the dusty streets where OVC ministry is happening. They visit often, especially when acclimating short-term volunteers to the African village milieu. Very few whites do frontline ministry in the villages for very long; South African whites often last longer than foreign whites because they are more familiar with what they are getting into. The writer has witnessed three foreign couples who made an effort to move in among the African population in KwaMhlanga. They all lived very simply in proper houses with indoor plumbing and electricity, but had very poor furniture and basic crockery and cutlery, which they had bought used at a local store. The ladies always wore dresses, and one even had her hair braided with African locks. They were well read on cultural differences and were committed to give ideas instead of money to those who asked. They did a good job trying to identify with the culture and said that they were in KwaMhlanga for the long term, but lasted two to three years and then went home. Thus, incarnational ministry is crucial for frontline work such as for new and properly

prepared cross-cultural missionaries doing evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and church-planting. But there are few first world whites engaged in compassion ministry to OVC who are involved with, or need to be involved with, frontline work. Their role over the past decade has been primarily supportive. If additional work is done in the future by first world white Christian leaders to strengthen the gospel and doctrinal orientation of African churches and African CBO workers, then more incarnational ministry will be needed.

6.9 Summary and Conclusion

Christians must never be satisfied with thinking that the compulsive gut response of compassion is right or God-honouring because it feels right. Emotions and conduct must be evaluated against a moral norm, which for Christians is the unchangeable moral character of God as revealed in the Scriptures and also confirmed by the conscience. As one searches the Scriptures, one finds an abundance of moral principles in the general commands, historical illustrations and sanctified opinions of the Old and New Testaments affirming and instructing God's people to demonstrate compassion to those who are suffering, specifically to orphans. Compassion is therefore part of the affirmative theonomous moral norm for Christian behaviour. The ethical duty to show compassion arises when one encounters a sufferer who cannot remedy his own condition. Hearing or learning of such sufferers is a vicarious form of encountering them. South Africans who live within close proximity of OVC, and have also heard of their plight through the media, have an elevated but not yet a grave ethical obligation to seek out more information about the crisis and to play a part in the remedy. More work to inform South African churches of the HIV/AIDS crisis and consequent OVC suffering and deaths needs to be done before one can charge the local Body of Christ with an ethical imperative to act, or be judged for a failure to act, with compassion.

Although believers have the liberty and obligation from Scripture to act with concerted compassion toward OVC, they must use caution when doing so to avoid any appearance of impropriety, avoid offending people around them unnecessarily, avoid affronting their own consciences, avoid harmful

entanglements, obey authorities, keep pure motivations, adapt to those to whom they minister, and use great wisdom.

It is clear that Christian compassion ministries must meet the critical needs of OVC, which are food and water security, health and safety security, educational security, and spiritual discipleship. The distinctive of Christian compassion ministry to OVC is this fourth element, which many professing Christian organisations are neglecting or leaving to the occasional visiting specialist. Children can receive spiritual discipleship through OVC care centres, their local churches, Christian foster homes, through Christian schools, or a combination of the four. A Christian school is singularly the most effective way to present the gospel, the ethical teachings of Scripture, and the other academic subjects from a Christian worldview on an ongoing basis five days a week. Outside the walls, it replaces a care centre but is more expensive. With or without a school, Christian OVC care organisations need to determine the outcome objectives for an OVC completing his or her years at the care centre, include strong spiritual development, and then begin working toward that end to not only prepare the child for life but for eternity. Compassion ministries also need to improve their ability to provide meaningful psycho-social support for OVC in their care, and job skills training for the teens.

As far as choosing a preferable model, much depends on what one is trying to accomplish. If one is trying to reach orphans and vulnerable children and keep them from perishing from disease and hunger, then the writer believes that Hands At Work is by far the best model, has been highlighted as such by USAID, and is the model to which others are slowly moving, especially as outside funding declines in future years. If one is committed to their eternal as well temporal well-being, then the writer believes that Ubuhle is the best model outside the walls, and Oasis is the best inside the walls both for its spiritual emphasis as well as its commitment to handle far more children over the long run through adoption outplacement into Christian homes, a goal that is ethically superior to a life in a more institutional environment.

Although there is meaningful debate about quantity versus quality of care for OVC, the most important and biblical principle is to work with the OVC in one's

immediate area with the funds God has placed in one's hands. Simplicity is to be encouraged as well as harmony with one's own context and culture. The less expensive the culture, the farther the money will go.

The personnel of Christian OVC care ministries who interact with the children on a regular basis are virtually all African believers speaking an African language, and thus, incarnational ministry for first world whites is not a huge issue. But in the event that first world white volunteers involved in Christian OVC ministry cross into the third world African milieu for prolonged periods, they must be prepared to think and act with an intelligent sensitivity to the African worldview, African traditional religion and its syncretised forms, and African relational and value systems.

A great deal of information has been covered in this multi-disciplinary approach to an increasingly important social and ethical issue. That material will be summarised, conclusions drawn, and suggestions for further study made in the final chapter.

CHAPTER 7

Summary, research findings, and recommendations for further study

7.1 Summary

The purpose of this thesis is to conduct an ethical evaluation of compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in South Africa's current AIDS crisis from a biblical and practical perspective, specifically envisioning first-world Christian volunteers entering the African, and often third-world, milieu in order to engage in such ministry. The study has been multi-disciplinary, exploring concepts in theology, ethics, missiology, sociology, and cultural anthropology that are necessarily integrated with cross-cultural ministry that begins in the heart of God and reaches little children in the dusty African villages and townships of our land.

The proposal for this research was presented in **Chapter 1**. It began by rehearsing foundational information about the nature and spread of HIV and AIDS over its 28-year history, its particularly forceful impact on sub-Saharan Africa, and its most intense devastation on the populations of South Africa and its neighbours. Statistics regarding HIV infection rates, the number of AIDS-related deaths in various demographic groups, and the number of children made orphans and vulnerable as a result of the pandemic were reviewed, as well as at-risk behaviours in South African society contributing to the rapid spread of the disease. The problem statement of the study was then addressed and the central theoretical argument, aims, and objectives of the study were set forth. A two-pronged research methodology was chosen involving both comparative literary analysis and empirical research of ten ministries involved with OVC care.

Chapter 2 of the thesis involved a review of the orphan crisis in South Africa generated by the AIDS pandemic. The findings revealed that, given the high adult mortality rates due largely to AIDS-related complications, almost 3,500 children in South Africa are newly orphaned each week, over 20 each hour. Although data collection is difficult, and information gathering is hindered by the legal privacy rights of those with HIV/AIDS, it is estimated that South Africa has 1 million double orphans, 2 million AIDS orphans, and 4 million total orphans, almost 1 in 4 of

South Africa's minors. In addition to those, millions of other children have been made vulnerable by the epidemic. The terms "orphan" and "OVC" were discussed, as well as the blur of distinctions between them in the field. In some poor areas of South Africa, almost every child may be considered "OVC," but those who work with the children simply call them "the children."

Given the high adult mortality rates leaving behind thousands of OVC without adult care, supervision, or income, South Africa is facing a situation unprecedented in modern times where so many children are living with parents who are sick and dying, living with HIV infection themselves, and living without parents. Risks specific to vulnerable children living with AIDS were discussed, such as the danger of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, the danger of poor health and death if the child cannot access ART, the risks of cooking, leading a household, and missing school due to caring for sick parents or caregivers, the risk of psycho-social trauma due to being surrounded by sickness and death, being branded and rejected by the community due to AIDS-related stigma, and the risk of being molested or abused because they are not being guarded by a strong caregiver. The additional risks, once the parent or caregiver has died, were also discussed. There are increased psycho-social problems due to death, fear, loneliness, stigma and rejection. An orphan also faces material problems with the loss of the household breadwinner, such as the risk of hunger, malnutrition, and illness, the loss of personal property and land due to theft by unscrupulous neighbours, the loss of protection against exploitation and abuse, and the loss of continuing education. In some areas, there are an increasing number of child-headed households and orphan-headed households struggling to get by, but the research on exactly how many is sparse and conflicting.

The chapter then addressed the responses to the growing needs of OVC in the country. Unfortunately, the AIDS epidemic began its hasty spread through South Africa during the 1990s, just as the country was focused upon the major social, political, economic, and cultural changes from the Apartheid Era to the new South Africa. Fortunately, a framework for public action was progressively put in place in the years following the Mbeki presidency, and the foundational state documents, as well as those of the UN ratified by South Africa concerning the care of OVC,

were reviewed. The consensus was that the approaching OVC tsunami could only be handled through a network of coordinated and well-funded governmental, corporate, and private efforts. Billions of rands in foreign and domestic funds are spent every year to treat and prevent HIV and to care for the increasing numbers of OVC. The most foundational help from the South African government comes in the form of the childcare and foster care grants that allegedly reach more than 1 million OVC (noting that there are four million orphans and as many as another eight million vulnerable children). There is also enormous financial support from foreign governments, foundations, businesses, and individuals channelled through a host of NGOs coordinating care for OVC on the ground in South Africa.

The findings also revealed that informal fostering within the extended family or by neighbours in the African community is the most common safety net for OVC, and thus, the collective focus of government and NGOs has been to support that model rather than funding an expensive Western institutional response. Christians and faith-based organisations were some of the first to step in and provide support for OVC caregivers both in the urban and rural contexts, but there has been no coordinated Christian response, and it has been difficult for compassion workers to get institutional churches involved.

Having laid the groundwork of the AIDS pandemic, the OVC crisis in South Africa, the basic framework for a public response, and the need for a greater Christian response, **Chapter 3** began the process of ethical inquiry into OVC compassion ministry by going back to the Bible. Initially, based on a study of the Hebrew and Greek words for compassion in the Scripture, compassion was defined as a compulsive response of the inner self that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer who is unable to remedy his condition that one is constrained to take action on his behalf as if one was struggling to free himself. It was significant to note that the English language does not have a verb for compassion as the biblical languages do, and hence one often loses the significance that compassion is a sentiment that compels action. One cannot feel compassion and then walk away. Compassion is directed not merely at sufferers, but at sufferers who are without strength or hope to remedy their own miserable condition.

The theocentric origin of compassion was then examined, since Jahweh is repeatedly described in Scripture as being full of compassion. Even though God's people, Israel, often rebelled against God, he would not forsake them, but after chastening and even crushing them, he would have compassion on them. In fact, it can be argued that the central theme of the Bible is God's compassion on fallen and suffering mankind and his cursed dominion by providing a Saviour, a salvation, a consequent re-creation of redeemed individuals, and a confident eschatological expectation of the end of suffering and the restoration of the entire creation.

It was then argued that mankind shares the communicable moral attribute of compassion with God as part of the *imago Dei*, and although that image has been tarnished and at times distorted, it has not been destroyed. The Scripture depicts compassion as a virtue from the early writings of Job and Moses, and while it is common to man, it should especially be reflected in the hearts and lives of God's restored image-bearers. The fundamental ethical command of Scripture is to be like God, which necessarily involves being compassionate. When the Mosaic Law was given, Israel was commanded to exercise compassion toward the orphan, widow, foreigner and the poor. Specific commands were given requiring the Hebrews to help these disadvantaged people in specific ways. Because, among other things, Israel failed to follow God's compassion commands and allowed oppression and injustice, they were judged, and among the commands to repent were exhortations to resume compassionate behaviour.

The compassion ministry of Jesus was then examined at length in the Gospels. Jesus was clear from the beginning that the heart of his mission was to be and to bring the gospel, the good news of salvation. But the heart of his mission was only a part of his mission; he would also be heavily involved with works of compassion. The relationship between compassion and gospel ministry was then explored. It was demonstrated that Jesus' compassionate ministry of good news had three major components: 1) preaching the gospel message of his coming, his person, the Kingdom of God, and the salvation connected with faith in him, 2) teaching with authority his commands, which affirmed the Law and the prophets but extended ethical obligations far beyond them for those who followed God, and

3) acts of compassion that involved physical healing, feeding, delivering, and resurrecting. The graphic is repeated here for emphasis.

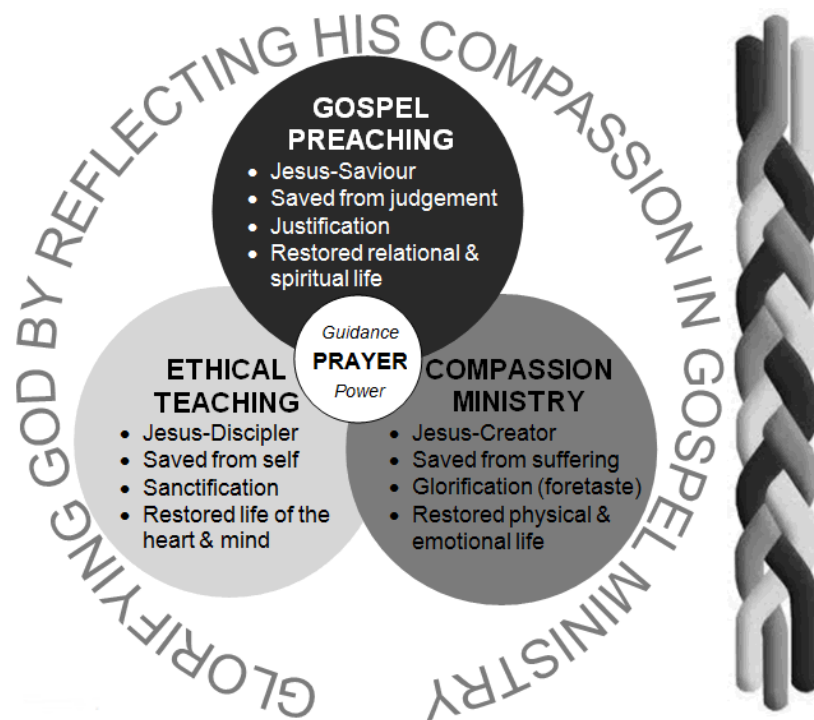


Figure 7.1 The Three-Fold Cord of Gospel Ministry

The three forms of ministry are depicted as a three-fold cord because they are intertwined with each other and are hard to separate, just as Jesus was unpredictable in which of the three he would engage in first or second or third when he entered a town. All three components glorify God by reflecting his compassion to a fallen, broken, and suffering humanity, and the three components also reflect the three stages of salvation; justification, sanctification, and glorification. Thus, compassion is not just a ministry to physical needs, but is a whole ministry of good news for the whole person. While acts of compassion to a sufferer's physical needs are an independent good, they also provide a relational basis for sharing the gospel for one's spiritual needs, but the two are not always mentioned together in the Gospels.

The errors of the social gospel and dominion theology were then briefly discussed since each movement tried to fundamentally redefine sin as suffering and salvation as alleviating suffering and eradicating poverty, thus reducing God's redemptive work to merely changing the social order of earth into the harmony of

heaven, creating a sort of Christian ethics-based utopia devoid of personal regeneration. The liberal theological position of social gospel advocates denied the tenets of orthodoxy, and their teachings deleted the true gospel message from gospel ministry, leaving only ethical teachings and compassion ministry. The backlash against this modernism of the late 1800s was fundamentalism, which divided from, and tried to distance itself from, any schools, churches, movements, or ideas connected with liberalism. As a result, Bible-preaching churches like those of Spurgeon, which had been heavily involved in compassion ministry, did what has been termed the Great Reversal and deleted compassion endeavours from the three-fold cord of gospel ministry, leaving only the gospel message and ethical teachings. To regain the biblical balance, arguments were then submitted in favour of maintaining in a harmonious unity the elements of the three-fold cord of gospel ministry, while emphasizing the importance of the gospel message, as was done by Jesus, the Apostles, the early church, and the revived, Bible-preaching churches of more recent centuries.

Next, the attention was turned to the twelve instances in which compassion was specifically mentioned in the Gospel records of Jesus' ministry. The Greek word for compassion, *splanchnizomai*, is used nine times in reference to Jesus' activities, and three times in Jesus' teaching; the word was not used to describe anyone else, so it has Messianic significance. Jesus had compassion on the leper, coming near to him, suffering with him, and then overcoming social taboos and touching him. Jesus had compassion on the widow of Nain, entering into her grief for her deceased son, then overcoming social taboos by touching the bier and resurrecting the young man. Jesus had compassion on the demonised boy, disregarding those arguing about causes and remedies, challenging his father spiritually to be part of the solution rather than remaining passive, challenging the disciples' lack of faith to be involved in compassion ministry, and then healing the boy. Jesus had compassion on the two blind men, not allowing busyness and popularity to lift him above caring for the suffering, forcing the men to muster themselves and yell to be heard, involving the men in targeting their greatest need, and giving them sight but nothing else even though they were poor beggars. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes, responding to God's leading rather than to the overwhelming needs, even though he and his disciples were

tired. He taught, healed and fed, challenging others to be a part of the solution, and caring about something as mundane as food even though the people had brought their situation on themselves. Jesus taught the parables of the Good Samaritan, the Prodigal Son, and the Compassionate King to highlight the ethical prescription of showing compassion across cultural boundaries and even to those who were undeserving. Jesus also warned that compassion would be a basis of commendation or condemnation at the final judgement. Finally, and most importantly, Jesus displayed the ultimate act of compassion in laying down his life for the sake of sinful, fallen, broken, and alienated humanity. The early church continued Jesus' pattern of the three-fold cord of gospel ministry and the Apostles gave numerous instructions in the epistles to be compassionate in very tangible ways.

Lastly, the attention of the chapter was drawn to the biblical admonitions to engage in compassion ministry specifically to orphans. The provisions of the Mosaic Law regarding the fatherless were reviewed, as well as passages in the poetical books and the prophets emphasizing that God so identified himself with orphans and the poor that helping or offending them was helping or offending him. James provided God's people with what is probably the single greatest verse supporting compassion ministry to OVC in noting that caring for orphans was pure and undefiled religion before God. At the end of the chapter, the writer endeavoured to carve out from the narrative five biblical principles that create the ethical basis for compassion ministry, another thirty principles for compassion ministry gained from the ministry and teachings of Jesus, eight principles for compassion ministry gained from the early church, and six principles regarding ministry to orphans gained from the Scriptures. Thus, chapter 3 was about developing a Bible-based theology of compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children, which is essential before one responds to the powerful compulsion of compassion and charges off, in some cases, to do more harm than good.

If Chapter 3 propelled Christians forward to service, then the lengthy **Chapter 4** slowed them down with cautions and added boundaries of wisdom to their work. Chapter 4 dealt with the ethics of adaptive ministry, encouraging first-world

Christian volunteers to learn and change before entering the third-world African milieu. While African go-gos and families, many of whom are professing Christians, are the primary caregivers for OVC across the country, their primary support comes from myriad NGOs that are often organised, staffed, and funded by white first-world volunteers from the cultural West, whether they are from South Africa's cities and suburbs, or from Europe or America. Compassion is a powerful emotion that often moves one to radical sacrifice and extravagance where there is no consideration of self. But compassion needs wisdom, discernment, and discretion gained from Scripture and from Christians working in the field help to create ethical riverbanks so that compassion's energy is not wasted or channelled in a way that harms individuals or the communities in which they are found. This chapter explored a number of ethical principles regarding adaptive ministry, contextualising God's truth, understanding African worldviews, giving weight to cultural differences, and working wisely with the poor.

The first consideration was the ethics of adaptive ministry. One of the chief ethical imperatives for first-world Christians engaging in compassion ministry to orphans and vulnerable children in the African context is to adapt one's person and one's message to the culture in which the children live. The former is often referred to as "incarnational ministry" and the latter as "contextualisation." Jesus was the prototype of incarnational ministry. He emptied himself and left his comfort zone to be incarnated as a poor Jewish human being from a poor town. He had to learn human words and culture, and had to fully enter the joys and miseries of the human experience, yet without sin. Because Christ laid aside his rights and took on the form of a servant in order to reach a culturally different target audience, it seems that any attempt at Christlike behaviour in fulfilling a similar mission will involve incarnational adaptation. The Apostle Paul followed this cue of Christlikeness when adapting to his host culture for the sake of the gospel. He humbly sacrificed his comfort, denied the superiority of his own culture, and chose to get close to his target audience, to dialogue with them, and learn what elements of the culture he could mimic and what toxic elements, for moral purity's sake, he would avoid.

It was noted that few short-term Christian volunteers have the time or insight to adapt themselves to African traditional culture. Even long-term volunteers seldom do; they do not live in the villages, and travel in and out of them in a protective cultural bubble. Those who intend to get involved in grass-roots OVC ministry need to be prepared through advance reading, and guided progressive exposure to the culture. Morphing into a host culture enables one to identify with the struggles, boredom, stresses, frustrations, and other physical, mental, and emotional difficulties of their host culture. He or she also earns respect, credibility, the right to be heard, and the right to communicate on a deeper level because they have loved their neighbours and shared life together.

Next, it was submitted that contextualising God's truth is also critical to communicate as accurately as possible an idea from the mind of God to the mind of a human being. This involves a great deal more than a common language; idioms, contexts, motivations, social structures, taboos, worldview, and the silent language of culture all affect speaking and understanding. The gospel and ethical truths conveyed in a Western conceptual way may be totally misunderstood or just blindly accepted alongside pagan ideas. A Christian must assign control to Scripture, but use local parables, metaphors, and stories to enhance its meaning. Compromise of God's truth by twisting it to blend with cultural ideas, such as Jesus being the greatest sangoma, leads to syncretism and must be avoided.

The chapter also included a brief analysis of African traditional religions, and specifically, the Niger-Congo African worldview, which is the dominant view of life, deity, reality, and relationships with which the first-world Christian volunteer will come in contact when entering South Africa's villages to work with OVC. Although monotheistic, the tradition sees all of life in a structured hierarchy of life-forces. At the top is God, the First Cause or Creator, who is believed to be distant, aloof, and unconcerned with mankind and is, therefore, of little direct consequence to everyday religion. Below God is the realm of the spirits and the ancestors who are believed to influence events here, for good or bad, on an ongoing basis. They are the primary focus of religious observance and rituals, and not a Creator God. Below the spirit world, but very much integrated with it, is the material world, the

realm of human beings, animals, plants, and the inanimate elements of the creation.

Ancestral spirits are believed to be around and among the living, as extended family in the spiritual realm, watching and being cheered or made angry by human actions, intervening in people's lives to cause either blessing or misfortune, and thus, holding influence over them. Many Africans within this worldview believe that illness and disease do not come from germs, viruses, or bacteria, but from spiritual or social imbalances. For more than a decade, this misinformation prevented the truth from getting out in the villages about HIV and AIDS; people were not even allowed to speak of it lest the ancestors hear and strike them with it. Religion, morality, and social structures are all driven by this relational understanding of life. Sangomas and inyangas are the intermediaries between humans and the living dead and make a steady livelihood by divining the causes of evil and invoking blessings for life's common events.

The interrelated concepts of life-force and limited good were discussed. Every spirit and every person has a vital force, and these forces are arranged in hierarchical social structure from God at the top on down to the youngest child. Powerful people, or those destined to be powerful, have greater life-force than common people do. Each creature must keep to his or her place and exercise influence on the other levels only in a proper way, normally by appealing to the next level up. No man would ever presume to communicate directly with an ancestor or God; intermediaries must always be used. It is believed that there is only a limited amount of life-force in the cosmos to which a person is entitled. There is no surplus life-force, and although a person can and should work steadily through life to gain more, if one seems to suddenly get more, he has likely done so through witchcraft and must be punished. Under this worldview, everyone is continually compared with everyone else, either higher or lower, which can bring a communal paralysis and stifle entrepreneurship. They are very impressed with power; they love powerful leaders who also care for their people in the spirit of *ubuntu*.

The African concept of *ubuntu*, which carries with it the idea of humaneness and relational kindness, was discussed. The Niger-Congo African worldview

emphasises the importance of community and creates collectivist cultures that stress cooperation more important than competition, and people-orientation over task-orientation. Perhaps the result of living in a world of scarce resources, *ubuntu* holds that society must be run for the sake of all; cooperation, sharing and charity are indispensable. Volunteers from first-world cultures where everything is provided often fail to appreciate the importance and beauty of *ubuntu*, which has been the core cultural value that has most contributed to the survival of four million orphans in South Africa.

The entire moral/ethical system of this worldview is largely based on relationships. It deletes the first great command in favour of the second. God has not revealed his moral character or given any objective standard of righteousness. Sins are relational offenses that only work upward or with peers; that is, a person can offend his superior, but a person of higher status can rarely commit an offence against someone of lower degree. Thus, if one can steal from his neighbour, that is not wrong, but if the owner finds out who it is, then the thief has done wrong. In Western thinking, sin is unconditional and guilt is internal; in African thinking, sin is conditional and guilt is external and relational.

Next the resiliency of the Niger-Congo African worldview was discussed. There is a three-way struggle in the present South African culture between African traditionalism, Western Christianity, and secular materialism, but the traditional worldview contains a deep ontology and cosmogony going back three millennia that has never been overcome. Beginning in the 15th century, Africans were faced with fighting colonial armies on the one hand, and being pressed with European religion on the other. Missionaries often saw no value in the African culture and so tried to erase it. They communicated a simple formulaic gospel followed by a long list of ethical behavioural commands that modified African behaviour somewhat, but failed to capture the mind and heart of the culture. Africans responded by adopting a two-tiered religion with Christian terms and practices on the surface but deeply embedded African traditional beliefs and rituals under the surface. The syncretised Christian and African traditional religions became legitimised and institutionalised in the indigenous Pentecostal-style churches, known as the African independent churches, begun in the 20th century by African

leaders. The Zion Christian Churches are classic modern examples of this syncretism.

It was suggested that a truly Christlike person should enter the African milieu listening, learning, adapting, and guarding against an attitude of superiority, paternalism, or cultural imperialism. He or she must recognise key cultural differences, and separate the elements in the African worldview that, from a biblical perspective, 1) are in harmony with God's truth, 2) are extra-biblical and benign to God's truth, and 3) are unbiblical and opposed to God's truth. He or she must celebrate the similarities between the Niger-Congo worldview and the biblical worldview, but not be afraid to confront toxic culture with moral truth given by a God who is very near, has given his moral standard, is watching, and will one day judge unforgiven men by their deeds. The gospel message must also be communicated in a complete and extended story rather than in a formula or isolated fragments.

The chapter continued by providing a comparison between African and Western cultures, beginning with a consideration of how young African business professionals were blending their traditional cultures and Western business cultures together in the South African marketplace. Four elements of cultural differences were then examined using the studies of Hofstede and Hall: high-context v. low-context, high power-distance v. low-power distance, individualism v. collectivism, and uncertainty tolerance v. uncertainty avoidance. In evaluating these differences, one could readily note that, aside from worldview and religious differences, African traditional cultures and Western cultures are diametrically opposed in all four areas, and thus, great caution must be used when these cultures cross.

As a final realm of consideration, Chapter 4 examined the biblical view of the nature and causes of poverty and offered wisdom to know how to properly address it. A World Bank study of poverty found that, although the poor mentioned in passing having a lack of material things, they described their difficulty primarily as psychological and social. Poverty is the frustrating inability to make choices that will change one's future. Helping the poor in the wrong way can hurt. Simply giving money to the poor for food can help alleviate their hunger

but may also increase all of the negative mental and emotional thinking that makes them poor. Recent Christian writers have emphasised that poverty is fundamentally a relational problem. It is a matter of the breakdown of the four key relationships beginning at the fall: with God, with self, with others, and with the creation. Further, when millions of sinful people come together, the culture and systems they create will reflect their collective fallenness, brokenness, and poverty. As time has gone by, people have become materially poor because of their own conduct, because of the natural environment, because of the oppression of other fallen people, because of the broken systems in which they live, or because of any combination of the four factors.

Eight principles were highlighted for Christians to remember when trying to alleviate poverty. Firstly, Christians must come to the biblical conclusion that poverty itself is not morally wrong; Jesus and many others were poor. Secondly, they also need to confess that they themselves are broken and poor, and that their own material goods may be giving them an over-inflated view of themselves or a god-complex. Thirdly, Christians who want to help also need to spend time conversing with the poor to learn, and then to help them realise that God is at work in their lives, and has already given them things with which they can start to make a difference. Fourthly, throwing money at something is rarely the right thing but gives exhilaration to the giver. Fifthly, if poverty is due to a failure in the four foundational relationships, then poverty-alleviation should also be multi-faceted and holistic as well, recognising that people do not just need to be given money or material resources, but need fundamental spiritual, psychological, social and stewardship remedies, a transformation from the inside out that takes time and that only God can do. Sixthly, it is impossible to properly heal any of the broken relationships or to heal man's grinding poverty without dealing with his spiritual poverty first. Being reconciled to God, and making peace with Him through Christ, is the first step toward healing the other relationships. Seventh, it is impossible to eradicate poverty by having broken humans modify broken systems, whether one chooses capitalism, state socialism, or communism, or one form of government over another; Christians must do the hard work of focusing on one human at a time. Eighth, not all poverty is created equal; the approach one takes for emergency relief to stop the bleeding in a crisis is different from rehabilitation to

get someone back to their pre-crisis condition, which is again different from development, a joint and multifaceted process moving them on to a better life. Each successive level requires far more involvement and planning by the poor themselves. In a few situations, OVC are in crisis, but in most cases in South Africa, homes in which they are located are in the rehabilitation or development phases. Chapter 4 was concluded with the story of Wilkinson's effort to help OVC in Swaziland by creating a massive children's village. Because he failed to take the time to learn and honour the culture, his plans failed. It was suggested that others helping OVC on a much smaller scale must be wiser and do better.

Having generated an ethical forward motion for Christians to engage in compassion ministry to OVC in Chapter 3, and then having bounded and steadied that ethical surge with cautions about how first-world Christians should interact with African worldviews, African culture, and poverty in Chapter 4, **Chapter 5** shifted the focus away from comparative literary analyses to an empirical investigation of ten Christian OVC care ministries operating in Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and the Free State. An appreciative inquiry approach was taken to identify the best in each organisation's structure, methodology, and impact, and to highlight what is being done in the field of Christian compassion ministry to OVC with the hope that these functions will be continued by those involved and replicated by other similarly situated ministries. The literature and websites of each organisation were reviewed, and lengthy informal interviews were conducted.

It was observed that all ten ministries were begun by people or organisations that were moved with compassion for orphans and vulnerable children. Their burdens built a "compassion DNA" into each organisation, and many have continued to operate in this very difficult field for more than a decade. All reported that they have learned and changed much from their early days. All OVC-care organisations, whether Christian or secular, meet the three most critical needs of OVC, which are food and water security, education security, and health and safety security. Beyond these critical needs, most OVC-care organisations try to meet the other essential needs of psycho-social support and job-skills development as the children get older. Christian organisations also try to provide spiritual

discipleship at the care centres, in the foster homes, through local churches, and through Christian schooling.

The ten ministries studied were divided into two broad categories of OVC care. In the first model, referred to as “outside the walls,” OVC are left in their African home environment and provided with care in a “come and go” fashion, caregivers “coming” to visit them in their homes, and OVC “going” to local care centres that provide food, healthcare, supplemental educational assistance, and other services. This model is used typically in the rural setting, the cost per child is much lower, and care can therefore be provided to a larger number of children, but the ability of the NGO’s to protect or influence the children in their school and home environment is small.

In the second model, referred to as “inside the walls,” OVC are cared for in a residential arrangement, typically on a property with a protective perimeter such as a wall or electric fence. This model is most often used in the urban/suburban setting where accommodations are first-world, the cost per child is high, and a half dozen children are cared for in each home in a comprehensive, protective, and holistic way. The NGOs function in *parens patriae* fashion, having legal custody of the children, and are charged by the government with protecting and acting in the best interests of the child. In a vast majority of cases, the children are not really from a traditional African culture, but more from the horrid life in the townships and informal settlements around the cities, and are typically abused or abandoned rather than being orphaned.

A case by case evaluation of the ten OVC care ministries was then presented, beginning with the five working outside the walls. Hands At Work, located in eastern Mpumalanga, is committed to working with the poorest of the poor, and has been cited as a “best practice” model for helping local churches in a village unite and form a community based organisation around a “Mother Theresa” who is already caring for OVC but would do more if assisted. The careful seven-step process Hands uses when entering a new community to find this “Mother Theresa” and the local “Man of Peace,” who will get others on board with the plan, was reviewed. Hands provides no funding to the CBO for more than a year to force the people to use their own resources and build local ownership. After the

trial period, Hands will supplement local initiatives with funding from foreign partners. The model is both sustainable and reproducible in the African culture, is community based, builds on the notion of *ubuntu*, and is currently coordinating care for 9,000 OVC in 63 communities in eight countries.

Mukhanyo Community Development Centre (MCDC) was reviewed next. It ran a network of five church-based OVC care centres in Mpumalanga, which cared for close to 500 children. MCDC used the “come and go” model of care, with OVC coming to the centres at break and after school, and care workers visiting the homes of OVC to ensure their health, safety, and continuing education. After-school programs included food, sports, arts, activities, homework assistance, and the occasional Bible lesson. They also provided food parcels to OVC too far away from the centre to walk. The churches who ran these centres struggled to run their own programmes given the constant presence of children, and unlike the Hands centres, paid their staff, had outside funding from the beginning, and thus, developed a full reliance on that funding. MCDC ceased operation as a parent organisation due to financial problems in 2010, but the centres have formed independent NGOs, secured their own funding, and continued to operate.

Emthonjeni Wokuphila Community Development Centre (Sun City) was also examined. It runs the Sun City Care Centre that formerly belonged to MCDC and currently provides care for 75 children. Although its operations have continued, due to financial restraints, staff members now have to serve on a volunteer basis, and the entire organisation is run by local African Christians. The host church has now involved other churches in the project, and has bought its own property elsewhere giving both the centre and the church more freedom. Hence, Sun City is moving closer to the Hands model due to financial pressures, but is still reliant on outside funding rather than local contributions.

Ubuhle Care and Development Centre (Ubuhle) was the youngest organisation examined, having begun as a Christian school out in the farm areas of Bronkhorstspuit in 2010. Using ACE curriculum, Ubuhle provides education from a Christian worldview for its 100 students, age 2 through Grade 5, who are picked up and dropped off every day. The school is expanding rapidly and provides all of the same services as an OVC care centre but avoids the “orphan stigma,” and

obviously provides far more spiritual discipleship for its children, albeit at a greater cost than a care centre.

The last OVC care organisation outside the walls that was reviewed was Morning Star Children's Centre, which operates four care facilities specifically for HIV positive children, almost 500 in number, around the town of Welkom in the Free State. Like Sun City, the centres provide after-school food, activities, homework assistance, and daily Bible lessons, but also provide medications for OVC and their caregivers. They are also involved in food parcel distribution.

The considerations of Chapter 5 then turned to organisations working "inside the walls," beginning with a brief consideration of the Children's Act and its amendments, which govern the conduct of these organisations. It was learned that most Christian OVC-care organisations have chosen to be what the statute calls "Children and Youth Care Centres" (CYCCs) because under that designation foster parents are employees, and the organisations have custody of the OVC. In cluster foster care schemes, foster parents have custody and, if offended, can leave with their OVC. All of the five "inside the walls" models rely heavily on local and foreign charitable contributions.

Bethesda Outreach (Bethesda) was the first CYCC considered. Having a distinctly Christian discipleship mission, it provides Christian foster homes and a Christian school for more than 30 children on its property, and is looking to expand to handle 60 children. Foster families attend local African churches in nearby Hammanskraal. The school runs through Grade 7 at which time children will enter local high schools. Bethesda avoids taking in HIV positive children due to limited medical staff, and its goal with each child is to release a disciple of Jesus Christ with the education, decision-making, and life skills necessary to succeed in the first-world South Africa of tomorrow, and the character and heart to impact whatever culture he or she is in for the Kingdom of God. Its expenses per child are higher than any other OVC-care organisation studied, but it receives government subsidy from the Gauteng DSD.

Acres of Love (Acres) was also evaluated, and it was learned that, as a CYCC, Acres has a network of twenty fine suburban Christian foster homes around Johannesburg caring for over 150 abused and abandoned children (and orphans

occasionally). A high standard of living and unmatched care has been the distinguishing characteristic of Acres over its 13 years of ministry. The organisation has the greatest fiscal strength and professionalism of any OVC-care organisation in the country. There are Christian parents and staff in each home, the children attend good local schools or Christian schools, and attend local churches. Acres calls their homes “forever homes,” intending to create a safe home environment for the children through their teen years. The drawback is that Acres does not focus on the adoption option, and although it tries to reunite OVC with their families, their families greatly prefer for their children to stay at Acres and achieve a better life; almost half of the children have family who visit on weekends.

Oasis Haven (Oasis) was also considered. Begun by a church, which is itself exceptional, this CYCC keeps its children in one of two Christian foster-care homes, but focuses half of its time on placing orphans into Christian adoptive families, because an institution can never really create a “forever home.” Oasis believes that families, not NGOs, are the answer to the orphan problem, and therefore it serves as a stabilising waiting room for the children for whom it cares. Thus, it prefers to take in immediately adoptable children under age 10. Oasis also limits public access to its children, avoiding signs and using child models in its materials. The church that started Oasis, and its Christian school, are located a short walking distance from the homes and provide a strong Christian community for the children.

Lambano Sanctuary (Lambano) was also studied as an organisation focused on the care of HIV positive babies referred by Johannesburg-area hospitals. With medications, those babies have grown up and gone to school and thus, Lambano functions like Acres and Oasis providing four Christian foster homes, located close to each other, for about 30 children. The children attend areas schools and churches. Although it also uses the term “forever homes,” Lambano also focuses on placing healthier children with other Christian foster families as well as for adoption, locally and overseas. Lambano also provides a 12-bed hospice and step-down facility providing short-term care by qualified nurses for babies who are very sick.

Lastly, The Pines was examined as a CYCC in the Welkom area, near Morning Star but using the “inside the walls” model of OVC care. Given its property and buildings by Harmony Gold Mines, The Pines provides four Christian foster families that care for 30 OVC, preferably those who are HIV negative, and is strongly committed to Christian discipleship. Children attend school on the premises or at a nearby Christian school, and attend area churches. Like Bethesda, there are income-generating projects and gardens on the property to build skills and help defer costs.

Chapter 5 concluded by briefly comparing and contrasting the structures and methodologies of the ten OVC care ministries. Each was started and has been maintained by Christians who are deeply motivated by compassion for orphans and vulnerable children in the current AIDS crisis in South Africa. As Christians, their response was not just sentimental or practical, but also biblical since their core motivation was to obey and glorify God by caring for widows and the fatherless. Each founder emphasised the importance of Scripture in formulating their motivation, the importance of prayer in formulating their vision, and the importance of doing a great deal of learning before settling upon a model and putting plans into action. Each organisation has an overtly Christian stance in the community. Lambano and Morning Star single out HIV positive children as the focus of their ministry due to the fact that few other OVC ministries are properly equipped from a medical standpoint to care for the special needs of this subgroup.

While all of these compassion ministries provide food and water security, health and safety security, educational security, and limited amounts of spiritual and psycho-social ministry to OVC, there is a rather clean division between OVC care ministries “outside the walls,” which provide for these critical and essential needs, and OVC care ministries “inside the walls,” which require more money but typically go beyond basic needs to afford the children greater Christian discipleship, greater personal safety, greater psycho-social support, a better quality of life. All of the caregivers and a vast majority of the care workers in all ten organisations are African Christians. Virtually no first-world Christian volunteers enter the African cultural milieu to stay, but normally are involved in organisation, fund-raising, reporting, and personnel training and management. Morning Star and

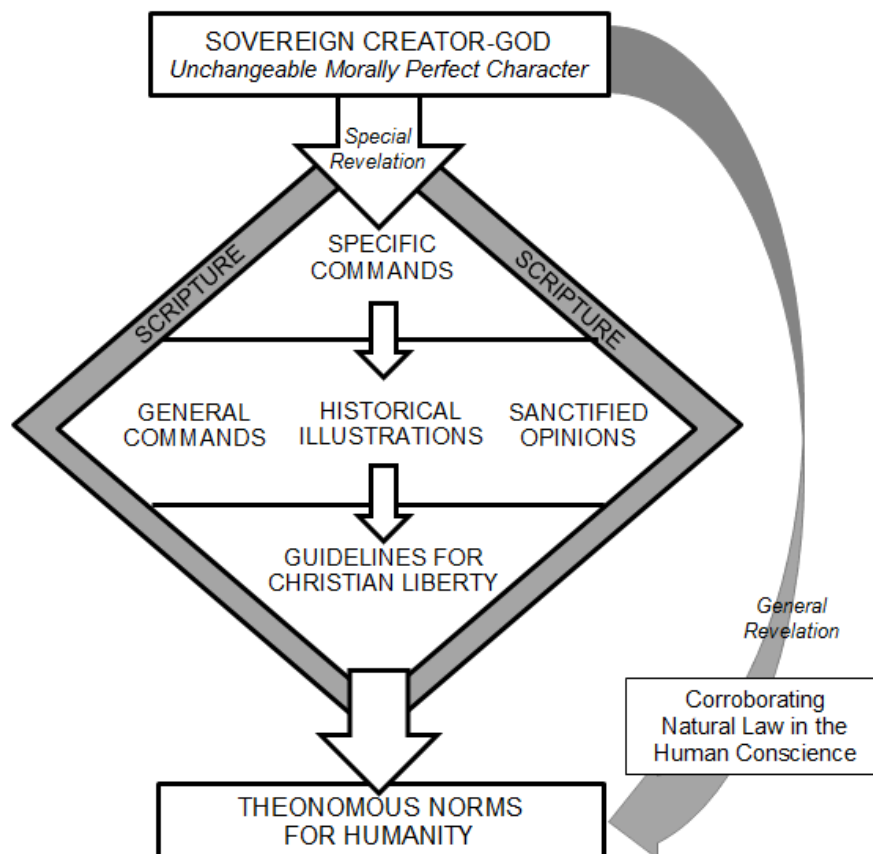
The Pines, both in Welkom, are looking for successors to lead their organisations, but if the compassion DNA of the founder is lost, the organisation, like MCDC, will eventually close down. A summary list of fifteen things that are working in Christian OVC care ministries, nine things that are not working, and three things that are of debatable benefit were included at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 6 threaded together the considerations of the previous five chapters, and began by suggesting a two-fold method of inquiry; first that one should seek to determine *if* Christians can ethically engage in such compassion ministry to OVC at all, and if so, then one must then consider *how* Christians should engage in this kind of ministry.

It was submitted that when making an ethical evaluation of ideas or behaviours, one must compare the idea or action to a standard or norm, and therefore, the first step in ethical inquiry is to settle upon that norm. Since Christians believe that morality originates and extends from the immutable and perfect character of God who has revealed himself and his will in the compilation of special revelation known as the Bible, they should reject the shifting norms offered by the world in favour of the objective theonomous moral norm found within Scripture. The conscience is a second witness to god's moral principles. As a Christian's mind is renewed and reprogrammed by the Word of God, his or her conscience will corroborate the moral principles of Scripture, but the conscience is unreliable as a solitary moral guide in life.

It was proposed that the moral principles that create the basis for theonomous norms are derived from three levels of consideration as one studies a particular attribute or action in the Bible. These levels were designated as 1) specific commands, 2) general commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions, and 3) guidelines for Christian liberty. Specific commands or moral rules of God are typically directed at specific acts and need little explanation, such as those in the Decalogue of the Mosaic Law. If there are no specific commands, one moves on to the second level of consideration. General commands set forth directives that are broad in that they apply to character qualities or categories of actions rather than to specific acts, and therefore leave room for a believer to ponder their application under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, biblical scholars, and spiritual

mentors. This is where the imperative for compassion is found because it is a commanded character quality (Luke 6:36). Historical illustrations are lessons learned from persons and groups in the Bible who obeyed or disobeyed the commands of God. Historical illustrations can be paired with the general commands to help Christians form a better picture of what a virtue looks like, such as the many places in Scripture, and especially in the life of Christ, where compassion was carried out in tangible ways. Sanctified opinions are those expressed by biblical authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that affirm something as virtuous or good without necessarily issuing a command, such as when James gave his assessment about pure and undefiled religion being demonstrated in caring for orphans. Therefore, most of the moral principle of compassion is generated from this middle tier of consideration – from the general commands, historical illustrations, and sanctified opinions found within Scripture. The diagram from Chapter 6 is repeated here for emphasis.



It was concluded, based on the superabundance of Scripture cited in Chapter 3, that compassion is a virtue, is one of the communicable attributes that mankind

shares with God, and is commanded. Compassion is therefore a prescribed virtue for the Christian and is normative. On the contrary, purposefully avoiding objects of compassion and failing to be compassionate or to show compassion are sins. Compassion ministry, which is voluntarily undertaking to perform a series of compassionate acts over time, is highly meritorious and greatly pleasing to the Lord. This kind of purposeful, long-term undertaking was what God wanted Israel to do for its widows, orphans, and the poor. Because both the Old and New Testaments underscore the virtue of showing compassion to orphans, an ongoing ministry to this demographic group is particularly favoured by the Lord.

The ethical duty of South African Christians to show compassion to OVC was then addressed. It was suggested that there is no duty in Scripture to go out and search for people to whom one can show compassion, but that God-fearing people engage in compassionate actions and responses when they encounter the neighbour. The mandate arises with the encounter, or with learning of a specific need that can be met by the God-fearing person. But then the question was raised as to whether, through media, friends, colleagues and personal experiences, South African Christians have “encountered” the OVC problem sufficiently to give rise to an ethical duty to act. Six reasons were offered as to why and how first-world South African Christians avoid compassion to African OVC: 1) lingering racism or classicism, 2) moral prejudices due to sweeping generalisations about immoral behaviour in the African community, 3) fears of entering African residential areas as a minority, 4) fear of suffering and sorrow at beholding the horrid situation in which so many children live, 5) externalising the remedy by believing that the African community, all of the NGOs, and the new African government will take care of the orphan problem, and 6) being so overwhelmed by the need and so busy with life that one just cannot see where to start. It was submitted that, because of their increased exposure, South African Christians do have an elevated ethical obligation to learn more and to do something, but that until the plight of OVC is sufficiently and clearly put before the churches, believers do not yet bear a “grave responsibility” before God to mobilise in compassion.

Christians, thus, enjoy the freedom to engage in compassion ministry to OVC, but it was suggested that such freedom has eight further parameters in the form of caveats or warnings from the Word of God about how the ministries should be carried out. Specific examples of how these warnings play out in OVC care ministry were provided. The first caveat of appearances admonishes believers to avoid unnecessary damage to their Christian testimony by being careful how their conduct, either individually or collectively, may appear to others. The second caveat of brotherhood warns Christians to not engage in an activity in the presence of another believer if that other person struggles with the activity as a possibly sinful practice and one's participation may cause them to sin by joining the activity in violation of their conscience. The third caveat of conscience provides that Christians may sin even if their action is not in breach of God's law if they are acting against their consciences. The fourth caveat of entanglements warns Christians not to flaunt their liberty by engaging in activities, which although not wrong to begin with, will eventually put them in bondage. The fifth caveat of authority stipulates that Christians may have their liberty curtailed by governing authorities, whether they are in civic government, business, educational institutions, medical institutions, the church, or family structures. The sixth caveat of motivation provides that Christians may have the liberty to engage in a practice but must be motivated chiefly for the glory of God, and not the elevation of self. The seventh warning stipulates that there is an ethical principle in Scripture of adapting to a targeted individual or culture in order to reach them with truth and love. The eighth caveat of wisdom states that Christians may have their liberty curtailed by the demands of effectiveness in ministry; that is, they need to avoid the many bad ways to carry out a good idea. Love must abound together with discernment, and believers must test and approve the things that are excellent, staying pure and blameless

Next, the focus of the chapter turned to the ethical duties of Christian compassion ministries operating for the benefit of OVC. Although Christian organisations will provide many of the same basic services that secular OVC-care organisations do, the motivations, ethics, programme-focus, and long-term goals of Christian compassion ministries should be distinctively different than, and superior to, their secular counterparts. It was concluded that all Christian OVC care ministries

should meet the critical needs of OVC. Food and water security are provided by everyone. Health and safety security was discussed at greater length because of the ethical issue of what is sufficient protection. Inside the walls, there is enormous personal safety, where the children are on a secure property surrounded by a wall or electric game farm fence, and are kept in the care of Christian parents who are being monitored for their behaviour and performance. The statistical probability of rape, molestation, theft, or abuse is, therefore, miniscule. Outside the walls there is a much greater risk of these horrors taking place, especially if the children are in child-headed households. Those involved with OVC ministry for a long time comment that once an adult care worker begins visiting their dwelling once or twice a week, the trouble with thieves, molesters, and squatters in the area seems to subside. Much depends on the value each ministry places on personal home safety as to whether they will seek and spend the funds to provide such protection. All ten organisations also meet the need of educational security for OVC; Ubuhle actually is a school, and three other organisations inside the walls provide their own schooling. Again, the quality of education depends upon whether the organisation will seek and spend the funds for better schooling.

The writer suggested moving spiritual discipleship component of ministry up into the “critical needs area.” It was argued that the distinguishing characteristic of Christian compassion ministries to OVC should be that they reflect the three-fold gospel ministry model of Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Church in reaching these precious and suffering children with 1) the gospel message that saves them, 2) the Bible’s ethical teachings that can transform their lives, and 3) tangible acts of compassion that will keep them in good health. What secular organisations provide is, therefore, but one-third of what Christian organisations should be providing. Spiritual truth is typically communicated to OVC on a regular basis in four venues: care centres, local churches, foster homes, and Christian schools. Each of the four venues was examined in terms of time and intensity of interaction on spiritual issues with OVC, and it was argued that Christian schools are the most effective in overall spiritual discipleship, foster homes were second, and local churches and OVC care centres were typically the least effective. In terms of their cumulative effect, Ubuhle provided the greatest spiritual impact of

organisations outside the walls, and Bethesda and Oasis provided the greatest inside the walls. As with so many areas of care, the level of spiritual discipleship depends on the funds, and whether one raises the funds depends upon the values of those running the organisation. It was suggested that the outcome objective for the OVC of some Christian organisations is simply for the OVC to survive physically, finish school, and be looked after until adulthood. This is unacceptable for a Christian ministry to children. Other Christian organisations push harder to help OVC thrive physically and psycho-socially, become achievers in their studies, have a good self-image, and have a job skill or readiness for higher education so that they can become productive and well-adjusted members of society. Although admirable, this is also insufficient for a Christian ministry to children. But there are few Christian organisations who are striving to help OVC thrive physically and psycho-socially, become achievers in their studies, have a job skill or readiness for higher education, and come to know God and his Word so that they can become fully devoted disciples of Jesus Christ who serve others as godly spouses, godly parents, godly church members, godly employees, and godly citizens. The sad fact, in most care centres outside the walls, is that spiritual discipleship is an afterthought or a luxury that can only take place if outside specialists offer their time, and few pastors have the burden to do this.

Beyond these basic critical needs, Christians involved in compassion ministry aspire to meet two additional essential needs of OVC, namely psycho-social support and job skills training, and the performance of the ten organisations in these areas were reviewed. Both areas seem to come in on the same level as spiritual discipleship – it can only take place if outside specialists volunteer their time.

Next, the ethical question regarding expenditures per child was discussed; that is whether the Body of Christ should spend all of its money on the foundational critical needs of all of South Africa's OVC, just keeping them alive, before moving on to the essential needs, and before again moving on to the preferables of upmarket décor, toys, music and dance lessons, sports and crafts. The interrelated answers are that one cannot coordinate the entire Body of Christ in South Africa in such a way, the organisations' founders have the liberty to

determine the purpose, mission, vision, and values in how they go about showing compassion to OVC, and each believer should operate in his or her own sphere of life and show compassion to those whom they encounter with whatever God has given them.

The question was posited: Can all of the OVC in South Africa be reached and helped? The answer seems to be ‘No,’ but South African Christians can do what Jesus did. He did the will of the Father by 1) getting out of his comfort zone, traveling, and beholding the needs first-hand, 2) meeting the needs of those he encountered, and 3) mentoring others to send them out to do the same.

The final issue in Chapter 6 concerned incarnational ministry. The principle of humble learning and yieldedness so as to adapt oneself and one’s message to a host culture was considered at length in Chapter 4, but the study of the ten ministries revealed several key principles impacting incarnational ministry. Firstly, in every organisation, those inside the walls and outside the walls, the caregivers in the homes of OVC are Africans. There are no white adults working as primary caregivers. Further, care workers who work at care centres outside the walls are also Africans and speak the local language. Secondly, in all of the homes, Zulu or a common African language is spoken. For a white to do proper incarnational ministry, he or she would have to do language learning, which would take years. Thirdly, the five ministries outside the walls were started using an African “Mother Theresa” and the organisational skills of a first-world white South African. With the value of *ubuntu*, African women know how to care for their community’s children but most need organisational and financial help to do it in a way that is beyond the walls of their own homes. Fourthly, organisations inside the walls are often involved in reverse incarnation, bringing OVC up to the lifestyle of the founders. However, it was noted that there are other Africans living in similar surroundings nearby, and the townships from which the OVC have come are not indigenous cultures that society should seek to preserve.

First-world whites, serving as volunteers or paid staff, are found in the offices and upper echelons of OVC care organisations. They are there to raise funds domestically and abroad, handle reporting and correspondence, manage purchases and distribution of food, goods, and medical supplies, develop media,

troubleshoot, coordinate staff assignments, perform special construction tasks, and provide expertise and training for the organisation's care workers and foster caregivers. They are not there to "be with the orphans," but are more properly there to support those African Christians who are caring for the children.

7.2 Research findings

In summary, the findings of this study are:

- That the AIDS pandemic has brought about the AIDS-related deaths of millions of adults in South Africa over the past 20 years, leaving in their wake thousands of new orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) each week.
- That OVC are living with AIDS in their households, have contracted HIV themselves, or have suffered the loss of a parent or guardian figure due to the pandemic. They are at risk of starvation, malnutrition, loss of property, loss of education, psycho-social trauma, molestation, abandonment, and abuse.
- That the South African government and both Christian and secular NGO's, reinforced by a vast network of donors and foreign governments, are providing support to the informal network of foster care go-gos and families across the nation, and providing direct care where no adults are available, but the efforts are reaching just over 1 in 10 OVC. Much more needs to be done, especially at the current time when funding is dropping.
- That compassion may be defined from Scripture as a compulsive response of the inner self that so pulls one into identification with a sufferer who is unable to remedy his condition that one is constrained to take action on his behalf as if one was struggling to free himself.
- That, as a moral virtue, compassion originates in the heart of God and is reflected in his actions and his commands for mankind, commands which include the care of orphans. Thus, compassion is a prescriptive component of a theonomous norm for Christian behaviour.
- That Jesus displayed compassion magnificently in his actions, his teachings, and his substitutionary death for mankind. His three-fold cord of gospel ministry, involving the gospel message, ethical teachings, and acts of compassion, was followed by the Apostles, the early church, and the

revived Church down through the centuries.

- That Christians who feel the desire to engage in compassion ministry but were afraid to do so, thinking it was the social gospel or thinking that the Church was never given such a mandate, are free to switch back the Great Reversal of the early 1900s and again pursue a balanced three-fold cord of gospel ministry touching orphans and vulnerable children with the gospel that will save them, ethical truths that will guide them, and deeds of compassion that will meet their physical and emotional needs.
- That, when entering an unfamiliar culture, there is an ethical duty arising from the ministry of Christ, to adapt oneself and one's message to the host culture, and therefore, Christians entering the traditional African milieu in South Africa need to be aware of the Niger-Congo African worldview, the differences between African culture and their own, and the causes and cures for poverty from the biblical perspective.
- That first-world volunteers typically do not enter the third-world African village milieu to reside there, and thus, true incarnational ministry when helping OVC is seldom necessary. African believers are the caregivers and care workers in virtually all Christian OVC care organisations, and first-world volunteers serve in more of a supportive organisational capacity.
- That Christians have been involved in compassion ministry to OVC in South Africa for more than a decade following different models and using different approaches, and that the above findings validate and commend their work of compassion as godly, Christlike, and obedient to the Word.
- That Christian OVC care models may be divided into two distinct approaches, the most common being "outside the walls," where OVC are left in their African home environment and have their needs met through local care centres, and also "inside the walls," where OVC are cared for by Christian foster parents in an enclosed residential environment, most typically in a suburban area.
- That Christian OVC care organisations must provide for the critical needs of OVC, which are food/water security, educational security, health and safety security, and Christian discipleship. Beyond that, they should endeavour to meet other important needs of OVC such as psycho-social

support and job skills development.

- That the duty of compassion arises with an encounter, and while South African churches have an elevated ethical duty to learn more and to get involved in Christian OVC care ministry, more needs to be done to inform the churches before the duty rises to the point of an ethical imperative.

7.3 Recommendations for further study

The writer was first made aware of the orphan problem in South Africa by visiting Thembaletu in the Shongwe Mission area, east of Nelspruit. That organisation provides for the needs of 4,000 orphan-led households. In the rural areas, some have told the writer that as high as 60% of OVC households have no adult. Still, there is great disagreement, conflicting estimates, and no comprehensive research concerning the number of orphan-headed households in South Africa. The ethical imperative rises to mobilize more people faster if research can confirm that there are an abundance of children without adult care.

Beyond the orphan-headed household numbers, more research, and funding for research, is necessary to study the South African HIV and AIDS epidemic as a whole. The General Household Survey and the work of STATSSA have been monumental, but far more gathering and collating of statistics needs to be done to serve as the basis for ethical evaluations of human behaviours and shifts in those behaviours. It is understood and appreciated that one's HIV status is a privacy right, but when the social fabric and future economic well-being of the country is at risk, the State may consider the national interest as paramount and require reporting and disclosure of HIV status, at least for the deceased and for new births.

Christian schools are a newer institution in South Africa, and better Christian curricula are being developed for South African schools. A long-term study on the comparative effects of public, private, and Christian schooling on OVC that are in the care of Christian organisations would be helpful to better assess whether extra funds should be sought and spent for such an education.

Adoption has become highly streamlined and easy to do in much of the cultural West, but in South Africa this is not so. Even experts on adoption cannot answer

many questions regarding the role of various government agencies, court processes, and international placement. Foreign adoption agencies report that the near standstill in adoptions out of South Africa is due to problems within this country. Research on the Christian ethics of the adoption option in South Africa might prove helpful for proposing amendments to the legal or practical processes within South Africa, and serve to create an information disseminating body on the availability of this option.

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