

### ***Briefly.....***

Our mission statement is:

**“To impact the outcome for abandoned children, and to raise the status of the orphan in the eyes of the Church and the world, to a level consistent with biblical principles.”**

Our goal is to accomplish this through facilitating relationships between churches and orphanages. Typically, this involves a church in North America providing resources to a church overseas, that then ministers directly to orphaned children, forming long-term relationships that will endure through the time when the child leaves the orphanage, and attempts to find his or her way in the world.

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### ***In more depth....***

A thorough study of church history reveals a pattern of disturbing trends that have resulted in the gradual abdication of the *responsibility* for taking care of the disadvantaged in society. Most of that responsibility has fallen to the state, humanitarian agencies, and parachurch ministries.

It is not our goal to build Restoring Hope into yet another parachurch ministry. We do believe that God uses parachurch groups to extend His kingdom. However, while the existence of parachurches was born out of the need to support the local church, many have grown over time to become vehicles that simply do the work that the church was created to do.

There are many churches that respond with massive generosity to meet material needs within their own communities, and overseas. In most cases, these responses take the form of ‘project-type’ activities of the nature typically employed by humanitarian and parachurch organizations. This approach can be highly effective when responding to natural disasters, conflicts, and other urgent crises. Unfortunately, effective ministry to orphans does not fit the ‘project’ model.

Orphans that are hungry can be fed ‘project-style’, those that are cold can be clothed in the same manner, but when the food and clothing projects are finished, the children are still orphans, still without the special protection afforded by the parent/child bond, and still vulnerable to every kind of exploitation imaginable.

The ideal solution to their dilemma would be that all orphans be adopted by loving families. Sadly, while this will be the outcome for some, the commercial greed of opportunists will prevent the vast majority from finding families. For these children, our best response is to develop relationships that, while falling far short of the bond of parenthood, would at least be based on the biblical standard of care that the Word instructs us to provide to the fatherless.

Ministering to orphans is not about projects - it is about relationships. It is not difficult to see why churches in the ‘affluent west’ feel disconnected from children languishing in institutions. Most of us, with the exception of some more senior members of our community, understandably regard orphanages as a ‘foreign’ or ‘historical’ issue.

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What is more surprising, is that in many cultures where large numbers of children are institutionalized, orphans have been so marginalized that the local church is not aware of their needs, and certainly not equipped to respond. For example, teaching Russian churches about the number and plight of the orphans right there in their own community usually provokes the same reaction as teaching this material in a North American church..... "How terrible.... we had no idea."

A large part of our work is education – alerting the Christian community to the real needs of the world's ever-increasing orphan population.

When the Holy Spirit motivates individuals and churches to respond to those needs, we are ready to help by facilitating relationships that enable local churches anywhere to change the outcome for children that the world has thrown away.

