

COMPASSION FOR ORPHANS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. [MISSION](#)
2. [VISION](#)
3. [AIMS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES](#)
4. [PHILOSOPHY](#)
5. [VALUES AND ETHICS](#)

July 2004

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit¹ orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself uncorrupted² from the world”

James 1:27 NKJV

¹ [visit and help and care for] Amplified New Testament

² Literally ‘unspotted’ in NKJV

[\[Return to Table of Contents\]](#)

1. MISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

“To help legally adoptable orphans¹, from countries who have ratified or acceded to the Hague Convention², be united with loving New Zealand families willing to raise, protect and nurture them – where the adoption is in the best interests of the child”

¹ For the purposes of this Mission Statement, the definition of ‘orphans’ includes children abandoned by their parents

² The 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption

[\[Return to Table of Contents\]](#)

2. VISION

VISION STATEMENT

“To follow God’s calling to reconcile people to God, through the Lord Jesus Christ³, and to care for orphans⁴”

³ *“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” 2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV*

⁴ *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself unspotted by the world” James 1:27 NKJV*

“... ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me’” Matthew 25:40 NKJV

[\[Return to Table of Contents\]](#)

3. AIMS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3.1 To Glorify God

As a Christian organisation our main aim is TO GLORIFY GOD by:

3.1.1 Reconciling people to God.

“Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation” 2 Corinthians 5:18 NKJV

When Jesus died on the cross for the sins of man he provided full atonement for all sin, and provided a way for anyone to reconcile their relationship with God, that way being repentance of sin and commitment to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour (this is ‘the Gospel’).

As part of our vision, ‘Compassion for Orphans’ accept the responsibility to fulfil a ministry of reconciliation. To accomplish this, ‘Compassion for Orphans’ will have a heart for service. Through our demonstrated love for others, we will witness in the community to the saving and healing love of Christ and be a challenge to others to come and follow Him. We believe our call to service is a serious one, and underpins the vision statement. As individuals within the organisation, and as an organisation, we will place ourselves last and be the servant of all.

To be effective in this aim, we recognise the need to be disciples (followers of the Lord Jesus Christ), which is more than simply being believers. We will seek God’s way and His truth and obey His word at all times including our responsibility to communicate the Gospel, to strive to be like the Lord Jesus Christ and not to hide our Christianity.

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.” John 15:7-8 NKJV

3.1.2 Caring for Orphans (without discrimination⁵) who have no future by helping to unite them with families who are willing to love them and provide them with a permanent family.

Recognising that:

⁵ Irrespective of the child’s or his or her parent’s or legal guardian’s race, colour, gender, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, social situation, physical features, culture, property, physical or mental health disorders, birth or other status.

- The best interests of the child and respect for their fundamental human rights, as recognised in international law, is the paramount consideration;
- Children have a need for affection and a right to security and continuing care;
- Children deserve to be raised in loving families with parents who protect and nurture them (US Presidential proclamation 5 November 2001);
- For the full harmonious development of his or her personality, the child should grow up in a family environment in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. (Preamble to 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child), and;
- Children have a right to life, survival and development. Development in terms of physical health, mental, emotional, cognitive, social and cultural development.

Our inspiration comes from Jesus' compassion for the disadvantaged.

James 1:27:

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself uncorrupted by the world”

and Matthew 25:31-46:

*“³¹ When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. ³³ And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. ³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me. ³⁷ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ³⁸ When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ³⁹ Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ ⁴⁰ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, **inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**’*

⁴¹ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ⁴² for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ⁴³ I was a

stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.'

⁴⁴ *“Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’* ⁴⁵ *Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’* ⁴⁶ *And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

3.1.3 Sensitivity to Adoptive Parents Needs

Empathising with and being sensitive towards the needs of adoptive parents and helping to provide the hope of a family. Providing them with:

- Respect;
- Understanding;
- Preparation and Education;
- On-going support, and;
- Caring for their safety at all times.

Whilst recognising at all times, and in all situations, that adoption is intended as a means to provide families for children rather than children for families.

3.1.4 Striving for excellence in systems, operations, procedures and communications and international best practise to ensure that the rights and best interests of the children are protected and fully respected.

3.2 To only intermediate intercountry adoptions from countries who have ratified or acceded to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and governed by the Adoption (Intercountry) Act 1997.

3.3 To scrupulously apply International Standards in the Best Interests of the Child

Ensuring that internationally accepted standards and procedures for intercountry adoption as outlined in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation on respect to Intercountry Adoption have been scrupulously applied and particularly that the best interests of the child, and with respect for his or her fundamental human rights, are the paramount consideration. Recognising that:

- Every effort should be made that children be brought up by their biological family;
 - If this is not possible that a suitable family be found in his/her birth country, and;
 - If the above are not possible intercountry adoption, conducted in the appropriate manner, offers an alternative opportunity for a healthy, supportive life and a future for a child as opposed to life in an institution in his/her birth country.
- 3.4 Encouraging countries that have not done so to become parties to International Conventions.
- 3.5 To challenge all costs in the intercountry adoption process (requiring all costs to be justified in nature and amount), so that
- the likelihood of affordability by New Zealand families is increased, and;
 - to ensure that all payments are properly accounted for, so that there is no improper financial or other gain to any party (Article 35 1989 United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child).
- 3.6 To promote and to assist with a better environment so that biological families are able to raise their children.
- 3.7 To foster excellent working relationships with all parties involved in the adoption process.

4. PHILOSOPHY

- 4.1 The international community's primary objective should be to assist birth parents to keep and bring up their children or for this to occur within their extended family (provided this is in the best interests of the child).

The following parable type story is a simple illustration of this.

'Once upon a time, in a little village, a woman was standing on a riverbank, when to her surprise she saw a baby in a basket floating towards her. Quickly she waded out into the river and lifted the precious baby to safety. She took the baby home and lovingly cared for the precious little one. No one came to look for a lost baby and so after a time she gave the baby to another family in the village who had so wanted to care for this precious little one. The following day she was at the river again and on this day she saw two baskets with babies in them floating down the river. Once again she waded into the river and rescued the babies, then families from her village cared for the precious little ones as no one came looking for lost babies.

This same thing went on day after day. The whole village became involved with the rescuing of the babies. They had a great system worked out – one person was taking the babies out of the water – another was drying them and dressing them warmly – another person was taking them up to the village – on and on it went. In the little village there were hundreds of babies being rescued and cared for. All of the village folk were involved and life revolved around the babies in the baskets that kept coming down the river.

One day a visitor came to the village and saw all that was going on. The people of the village had become very concerned, "How can we keep rescuing the babies – we haven't any more room for more babies." The people were distraught as they considered their options. "But we can't just leave the babies in the river!" they cried to the visitor. "The babies just keep on coming down the river and if we don't take them out them what will become of these precious children! They deserve to know they are safe and loved, that they are special, and that being in a family is a good place to grow up! Then maybe, when they grow up they will want their children to know the same things. They won't put their babies in the river."

The visitor replied, "Why not go and find the people who are putting their babies in the river and help them."

- 4.2 The best interests of the child and respect for their fundamental human rights, as recognised in international law, must be the paramount consideration.
- Children deserve to be raised in loving families with parents who protect and nurture them¹;

¹ George W Bush – Presidential proclamation 5 Nov 2001

- For the full and harmonious development of a child's personality, the child should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding², and;
- Children wherever possible should stay in their own culture and live with their biological parents and extended family members as it provides continuity of the child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, cultural and linguistic background.

4.3 Adoption can offer a permanent and appropriate family to a child who is definitively deprived of his or her family environment or whose best interests requires a change of environment (ISS - International Social Service Organisation).

- It must always be recognised that adoption is a measure for the protection of the child and that adoption is intended as a means to provide families for children rather than children for families.
- Every effort needs to be made for the child to be adopted in the child's birth country.
- If the above is not possible, intercountry adoption conducted in the appropriate manner offers an alternative opportunity for a healthy, supportive life and a future for a child as opposed to life in an institution in his or her birth country.
- Once the decision has been made by the appropriate authorities that the child is adoptable then adoption procedures should commence, and be completed, without delay. Stability, continuity and permanency of relationships promote a child's growth and development. The period of childhood and adolescence being of utmost importance for the development of a child's personality, all procedures must be completed and decisions taken without any unnecessary delay as the child need the opportunities to establish lifetime relationships with caring adult models.
- Intercountry adoption must ensure the child concerned enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoptions.

4.4 There must be no improper financial gains or profit making in intercountry adoption.

² United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

Unfortunately, in many cases intercountry adoption has involved profit making to the extent that children are treated as commodities. Abuses in the process have involved child trafficking, abduction, child abuse, criminal networks, agencies and intermediaries charging exorbitant fees. ‘Compassion for Orphans’ is completely opposed to any and all corrupt practices.

4.5 Encouragement and support for adoptive parents who have a special calling – sharing a loving home with children in need, offering them hope for a brighter future¹.

Adoptive parents have a huge role to play in ensuring that intercountry adoption is a good option for children who otherwise would face their early years in an institution. The presidential proclamation referred to in the footnote refers to the adoptive parents as “quiet heroes as they make considerable sacrifices and receive the countless blessings of parenthood that come from providing a child with the chance of a lifetime – an upbringing in a happy and healthy home”.

¹ George W Bush – Presidential proclamation 5 Nov 2001

[\[Return to Table of Contents\]](#)

5. VALUES AND ETHICS

Compassion for Orphans is a Christian non-profit charitable organisation. As a Christian organisation our values are taken from the Bible.

For 'Compassion for Orphans', the key Bible reference is James 1:27

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself uncorrupted from the world”

An important part of the verse above is “to keep oneself uncorrupted from the world”.

Corruption causes countries and their societies to enter into moral and economic decay and is one of the major causes that leads countries into poverty, resulting in children abandoned by families. Other reasons why there are orphans and orphanages include:

- war;
- natural disasters;
- ethnic conflicts;
- extreme poverty, and;
- cultural reasons. Examples include:
 - in some countries women are unable to marry if they have children out of wedlock by another man;
 - government policy as to family size (e.g. China), and;
 - parental rights terminated because of abuse or neglect, economic change and corruption.

Under no circumstances will 'Compassion for Orphans' tolerate any bribery or corruption. No payments will be made to any party unless they are expressly authorised, and are completely transparent to governments on both sides (Under no circumstances will payments be made to any government employee for their personal gain). Some people may attempt to justify bribery as 'expediency fees' in the same manner as paying for an express service (with a courier company for example). Any express service will be genuine and will be accompanied by a genuine receipt. Where bribery is considered a way of life in the adopting country and adoptions are not

possible without paying bribes, 'Compassion for Orphans' will refuse to work in that country.

Some examples of corrupt practices and abuses (Source: UNICEF-*innocenti* digest) include:

- The abduction of children;
- Identifying vulnerable expectant mothers and inciting them to give up their newborn baby;
- Falsely informing a mother that her baby was still born or died shortly after birth;
- Payment for a child either directly to the family, the director or staff of an institution, or sometimes to the institution itself;
- Offering women financial incentives to conceive a child specifically for adoption overseas;
- Deliberately providing misleading information to the birth parents on the consequences of adoption, e.g. assuring them they will be able to stay in contact with their child;
- Falsifying documentation, e.g. birth certificates, consent of birth parents, etc.;
- Corruption of officials, judges in order to get a favourable decision, e.g. judges may accept false documents purporting to contain the consent of birth parents, and;
- Seriously ill children e.g. HIV/Aids presented as healthy to prospective adoptive parents who would not have been prepared for the caring requirements.

Situations can also arise where some institutions that receive payments for foreign adoptions have few incentives to look for domestic solutions for the children as they have more to gain from foreign ones. They may also make only half-hearted efforts to find the child's biological family or neglect to ascertain whether the child had been placed in institutional care temporarily because of an emergency situation. It has been reported that it is rare for Romanians to adopt infants, because such children are reserved for foreign adoptions. The data for the first 10 months of 2000 showed that the average age of a child in a domestic placement was approximately three years old while the average age of a child placed through an intercountry adoption for the same time period was approximately 10 months. (USAID Report – January 2001) At the other extreme some institutional workers resist foreign adoption in that the taking of children out of the orphanage may threaten their positions.

Many abuses and practices in intercountry adoption often happen in war or post war situations.

Children in war situations often get separated from their parents and some time (usually at least 2 years) should be allowed to pass to allow for possible reunification with surviving family members. Often a country's judicial system may no longer be operational and therefore proper processes cannot be followed.

'Compassion for Orphans' believe that even though we, or people adopting a child, play only a small part in world events, we should make a stand and try and reverse the trend.

'Compassion for Orphans' will advise prospective adoptive parents that they should resolve before they travel not to be involved in corruption or bribery in any form no matter how desperate or costly to them a situation may appear. Our advice is to walk away in every case. To succumb to bribery or corruption would be feeding one of the very things that causes orphans to end up in orphanages and would run the risk of adoptions being adversely affected. When irregularities are uncovered this often results in countries putting a moratorium on intercountry adoptions (which can result in more children being kept in institutional care).

As an example, a situation was reported a few years ago that highlighted the potential of intercountry adoptions being adversely affected by abusive practices in intercountry adoption where several US adoptive parents were unable to take their "adopted" children into the US. It was reported that entry visas were refused to 11 Cambodian infants, adopted by American parents, because investigations had revealed the babies had been bought or stolen from their parents. It was revealed that US investigators had found evidence of networks procuring babies, for prospective parents from the West, that involved criminal and unethical elements paying money to obtain children via baby selling businesses involving trickery and theft. It was also stated that human rights workers had confirmed cases of Cambodian facilitators visiting poor mothers in the countryside and offering them as little as US\$30 for their newborn babies, who were then placed in an 'orphanage'.

'Compassion for Orphans' advice to prospective adoptive parents should they encounter corruption or bribery in any form will be to report it to 'Compassion for Orphans' for further action as appropriate or necessary

It may take a little longer to process a particular adoption but those concerned will have played their part to help prevent the abduction, the sale of, or traffic in children and therefore change the world in which we live.

In the longer term it is highly likely that an adopted child will want to discover his or her birth parents. If it transpires that the child was not properly put up for adoption, there may be serious implications for the relationships between the adoptive parents and the adopted child. Also, in some cases, where illegal procedures have taken

place, knowledge about a child's background and medical history are lost forever. Research by the International Social Service has shown that many adopted children need to know as much as possible about their real identity in order to build balanced personalities.

Our experience has been that there are people overseas who have a genuine interest in the welfare of the children. These are the people we want to build relationships with.

Some of the moral issues or anti-intercountry adoption views that people may encounter or be challenged on include:

- “That you are robbing a country of its children and the children of their culture and language”;
- “That you have bought a baby”;
- “That it is better to leave a child to be brought up in its own race and culture even if it means a lifetime in an institution”;
- “That adopting a child is putting a band-aid on and ignoring the real problem which is helping a country out of poverty”, and;
- “That trans-racial adoption can result in a child with a confused identity and racism can result.”

Provided every effort that has been made to find a family for a child in his or her own country has failed, and the child faces a bleak future of life in an institution, common sense would suggest that a child (no matter what race or culture) is better off being brought up in a loving family environment in a country such as New Zealand.

The procedures found in the 1993 Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in respect of Intercountry Adoption (e.g. birth parents counselled, possibility of the child being adopted in their own country has been considered), have evolved as a result of the aforementioned issues and, if followed, should allow all concerned to have peace of mind that it is a truly abandoned child that is being adopted.

This explains why ‘Compassion for Orphans’ will only intermediate intercountry adoptions from countries who have ratified or acceded to the 1993 Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Intercountry Adoption and governed by the Adoption (Intercountry) Act 1997.

However, it should be recognised that the fact that a country has agreed to international standards and processes is no guarantee that there will not be people

who seek to circumvent the processes. It is important therefore that all involved (e.g. government officials, agencies, adoptive parents, etc) adhere scrupulously to internationally accepted standards.
