

**The Bible Church of Little Rock**  
**Orphans Ministry Preliminary Overview – Version 3**  
**Elder Meeting - June 17, 2003**

## **Introduction**

In recent years certain members/deacons of BCLR have developed personal convictions toward the needs of orphans and, Lord willing, desire to personally adopt a child or children into their home. In recent months as these individuals have become more knowledgeable of the needs, the convictions of these individuals have expanded to include the desire for churches, including BCLR, to be actively involved in an orphan's ministry.

These individuals have committed themselves to research the feasibility, resources available, and resources necessary for developing an orphans ministry at BCLR. It is the hope of these individuals that this ministry will develop awareness, compassion and conviction to minister to orphans as much as they would widows, the homeless or any other needy group.

This overview seeks to generally describe the initial thoughts and objectives associated with this idea.

## **Objectives**

### ***Primary Objective***

It is the objective of this initiative to minister to and meet the needs of orphans by developing an outreach through BCLR.

It is recommended that the ministry start small but include steps to accommodate an expanded vision. Following are three suggested phases that are foreseen at this point with possible practical applications. It would be recommended that subsequent phases not be pursued until prior phases are well-established. Further, the phases are expected to be cumulative, not transitional or substitutional.

### **Phase One - Awareness**

#### *Description*

Develop awareness among members and visitors of the existence and needs of orphans and the call to minister to them.

- Bulletin board with orphan statistics, country information and description of needs. Information on particular orphanages in particular countries would be collected with a standard statistical and informational format to be rotated on a periodic basis such as every 60 days.
- Periodic bulletin panel, BCLR member news and prayer needs. (See Example)
- Teaching/Sermon(s) on orphans and God's perspective. Perhaps an introductory sermon followed by teaching class

#### *Timing*

This phase could begin within 60 days and would be expected to continue as a basic component of the ministry.

### *Resources*

The first resource sought is simply the endorsement and support of the BCLR elders to commit to a specific orphan's ministry.

It is anticipated that this phase of the ministry would require little to no financial resources and minimal commitment from two individuals and no more than \$500. Bryan Richardson is prepared to be responsible for initiating and developing the ministry and garnering assistance early on from other interested members. It is anticipated that additional interested members will surface to assist in some of the administration and projects.

## **Phase Two - Outreach**

### *Description*

Develop practical and meaningful opportunities for members of BCLR to personally and collectively minister to orphans. This phase could be broken into two components, domestic and international.

### **Domestic**

- Possible alignment with crisis pregnancy center.

### **International**

- Partner with a BCLR missionary or other reputable ministry for the purpose of BCLR, as a church body, adopting one or more orphanages to which to minister.
- Provide clothing, food, OTC medicines and hygiene supplies through coordinated donations.
- Solicit donations of these supplies from manufacturers.
- Investigate short-term ministry teams to deliver materials, conduct VBS, and work projects.
- Possible alignment with local adoption agency for referrals.

### *Timing*

This phase would be expected to begin in some form in 6-12 months from the beginning of the ministry.

### *Resources*

The second phase of the ministry would require significantly more financial and human commitment, but is anticipated not to be required for six to twelve months. Further, it is expected that the ministry funding would be analyzed and allocated through normal budgeting processes.

Since it is difficult to estimate costs in this early stage, it is suggested that BCLR allocate a prudent amount in the first year and manage the ministry within the budget, and then re-assess the ministry opportunities in the second year.

With regard to human resources, it has been suggested that the Orphan's Ministry could be embraced by a care group, much like the current BCLR missionaries. However, it is anticipated that the orphan's ministry would have more activity and greater responsibility.

Another option regarding human resources would be the formation of a ministry team much like that of the Janitorial ministry, children's worship, etc.

## **Phase Three - Adoption**

### *Description*

It is anticipated that a natural outflow of phases one and two will be an increased desire among BCLR families to adopt orphans into their homes. Consequently, once phases one and two are well-established, it would be prudent of BCLR to develop practical means to encourage, guide, and support BCLR families who have developed a ministry conviction to adopt a child.

- Direct members to reputable sources for practical guidance. (Family Life is developing material and programs to assist families and churches in this area)
- Utilize the experience of others to develop a guide to the process.
- Investigate the need for a Christian world view-based support group of adoption families.
- Leverage relationship with adopted orphanage to facilitate and streamline the adoption process.
- Explore options for providing financial assistance through church budget, direct donations, and matching funds from foundations dedicated to this type of ministry.
- Investigate the possibility of establishing a legal foundation dedicated to receiving donations for the purpose of providing financial assistance to adopting families.

It is also an objective of this initiative to explore opportunities to make the adoption process as economical, process efficient, and inviting as possible while minimizing the current process burdens.

It is **NOT** an objective of this ministry for BCLR to act as its own adoption agency, or to directly advise infertile couples in the area of family planning or medical issues beyond normal counseling parameters.

### *Timing*

Phase three would be contingent upon the success of phases one and two. It is anticipated that phase three would require 6-12 months of development and would not be viable for implementation for at least 18 months following the beginning of phase one.

### *Resources*

Effective administration of phases one, two and three will likely require at least a part-time staff person or dedicated volunteer and a considerably larger budget which is difficult to estimate at this time. However, as previously mentioned, it is assumed that funds will be limited and therefore recommended that the ministry be managed within an available budget.

## **Secondary Objective**

A secondary objective of the BCLR orphan's ministry would be to partner with Family Life to develop an orphan's ministry model that is effective and easily transferable to other like-minded church organizations. It is suggested that BCLR offer itself as a "test case" for material and program development.

## **Strategy**

The general strategy contemplated at this time is for BCLR to leverage its existing contacts and relationships in certain countries for the purpose of establishing a direct alliance with and ministry to reputable orphanages. Through this direct alliance, it is anticipated that effective and efficient relationships and processes could be developed resulting in prudent and efficient ministry and potentially a less burdensome adoption process.

Examples of potential alliances include:  
Albania – Slavic Gospel Association – Rob Provost  
Russia – Slavic Gospel Association – Bob Provost  
Mexico – Independent Mission – Jose & Jan Solis  
China – Food for the Hungry – Kirk & Jennifer Parette  
Ghana – Rafiki Foundation – Sam Tressler

## Outside Resources

The very early inquiries of resources for this initiative have resulted in the following:

### *Bethlehem Baptist Church – Minneapolis, MN*

This church purportedly has an active orphan's ministry in place and could presumably offer guidance in establishing such a ministry at BCLR.

### *Family Life – Little Rock, AR*

This organization is beginning to develop an orphan / adoption component to their ministry. Potential for partnerships could exist here.

### *Brenham's First Baptist Church – Brenham, TX*

This church began implementing an orphan's ministry early this year as a result of the burden of one family. They currently have a bulletin board, have conducted two mission trips, and continue to develop their program.

### *Shaohannah's Hope – McClean, VA*

A new ministry sponsored by Stephen Curtis Chapman established for the purpose of assisting churches in the effort of implementing adoption ministries and providing matching funds. However, this ministry is just forming and appears to have developed very little at this time.

## Counseling

It has been suggested that there is a great shortage of biblical counseling training in the areas of pre and post adoption. Regardless of a BCLR orphan's ministry, it may be worthwhile for BCLR to be prepared to offer counseling on this subject. It would be all the more worthwhile with consideration to an orphan's ministry that will likely generate more adoptions.

## Next Steps:

1. Endorsement from Elders
2. Gather statistics and information on specific countries, orphanages and children.
3. Develop informational channels: bulletin board, bulletin insert
4. Target a specific orphanage and begin relationship development
5. Engage interested adoption couples: Quo, Games, Fontenoy, Gerke, Sims, Warren
6. Continue relationship building with outside resources.
7. ?

## Document Author / Sponsor

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