

The Need of Ministry to Children in Crisis

*“Pure and lasting religion in the sight of God our Father means that **we must care for orphans . . . in their troubles . . .**” (James 1:27 nlt).*

There are **1.8 billion children** worldwide between **ages four and fourteen** who are underprivileged and considered children at risk (children in crisis). This is referred to as the 4/14 window.

A. Why should we minister to children in crisis? Four main reasons:

1. Children are a *receptive* people group

People tend to be receptive when their lives are **disrupted**. Children in crisis respond to love and compassionate care from God's people.

2. Children are an *unwanted* people group

- a) At least **100 million** underprivileged children worldwide are believed to live (at least part of the time) and/or work unsupervised on the streets. These are referred to as **street children**.
- b) There are at least **18 million street children** in **India** and 40 million **street children** in Latin America.
- c) There are 163 million orphans worldwide.

3. Children are a *suffering* people group

- a) **25,000** children under five die every day from **preventable diseases and starvation**.
- b) 1,500,000 children are currently infected with **AIDS**.
- c) Over 500,000 children go blind every year, mostly as a result of Vitamin A deficiency.
- d) There is an estimated **13 million AIDS orphans in Africa** (south of the Sahara).

4. Children are an *exploited* people group

- a) It is estimated that 200 million children are currently involved in abusive child labor.
- b) At least **10 million** children currently suffer from the oppression of forced prostitution and another one million children join this industry every year.
- c) The lives of many children are filled with pain. In India's silk industry girls as young as 5 yrs. old are to be found working 7 am to 9 pm as bonded laborers.

B. Why should evangelicals care about ministry to children? There are several reasons we as evangelicals should act:

1. God's Mandate

"Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." (Mark 9:37, nasb)

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"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20, nasb)

The Great Commission includes the children of the world!

2. The number of children in the world is reason enough to make us concerned.

- a) There are **100 million street children** worldwide.
- b) There are **159 million orphans** worldwide.
- c) **50%** of the world's population is under age 15.
- d) 78% of these children are being raised in **non-Christian homes**.
- e) **1.8 billion children** are at risk worldwide.

3. Ministry to children today effects tomorrow

What if we would have reached the 4/14 window just 10 years ago?

- a) Those "unreached" children would now be 14 to 24 years of age.
- b) Many would be in local churches
- c) Economies, of course, would have improved for the families and countries.

4. Children can be gateways to their people.

Ministries to children help solidify and unite families and churches and provide a strong foundation for church growth and outreach.

C. Seven basic requirements for becoming a worker among children in crisis?

1. Be evangelistic with full faith in Christ and His Word (the Bible).
2. Motivation to reach children with the **gospel** and compassionate care
3. Have a home church and be involved
4. Servant spirit
5. Team spirit
6. Responsible/Faithful
7. Experience and knowledge of evangelism and discipleship and willing to learn.

D. Nine opportunities (of many) for evangelism, discipleship, and development of children worldwide:

1. Children in crisis workers/missionaries
2. Teachers and teacher trainers
3. Camp coordinators
4. Street children workers
5. Vocational teachers
6. Health care workers
7. Orphanage workers
8. Day care center workers
9. Advocates for needy children

E. Effective ways to reach children in crisis:

1. **Church planting** among the poor
2. Day Care Ministry Centers
3. Ministry **to children on the street**
4. Street Ministry Centers (Drop-in Centers)
5. **Good News Bible Clubs**
6. **Camps** for children in crisis
7. Long-term care of children (homes for orphans, foster care, and adoption)
8. Evangelism (Christmas) parties

F. Let's review a few statistics:

1. There are at least **100 million children** worldwide who are believed to live at least part of the time on the streets.
2. In Africa, south of the Sahara **13 million children** under 15 yr. old have been orphaned by AIDS.
3. There are **163 million orphans** worldwide.
4. **Twenty-five thousand children** under five die every day from preventable diseases and malnutrition.
5. At least **10 million children** currently suffer the oppression of forced prostitution.

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Recommended Agencies Working with Children in Crisis

Child Evangelism Fellowship

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