

# Working With The Local Church

*Presenter*

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“The church is the largest single agent of care for children at risk in the world. When it works together in towns and villages across the world, the church – led by its master – is the single most powerful force for transformation in existence.” -- *Patrick MacDonald*

For whatever reason, (it’s a mystery!) God has chosen the church to be His instrument in redeeming His creation. -Ephesians 1:9-10 1:22-23 3:8-11  
Ignore the church...and risk missing God’s strategy for redeeming the world!

The whole of the Bible is the story of God’s mission... why and how lost humanity must and will be redeemed by a loving God. The rationale for Mission is found throughout the Bible.

**-The Mandate for Missions:** The whole Bible

**-The Message for Missions:** To spread the good news of Jesus Christ

**-The Model for Missions:** The incarnation.

**-The Power for Missions:** The Holy Spirit.

## **Why caring for children is the particular responsibility of the church**

- Poverty is most fundamentally a spiritual, rather than a physical or material problem
- Holistic development (by definition) responds to the needs of the “whole person”
- The work of holistic development has to do not only with meeting physical needs, but is part of the saving, redeeming and reconciling work that God wants done with *all* of His creation

It follows then that it is the church (Christians) – not governments, not communities, NGOs, UNICEF and others that has the true answer to poverty. Indeed, holistic child development is the particular challenge and opportunity for the church.

## **WHY SHOULD WE PARTNER WITH THE CHURCH?**

**1. BECAUSE ONLY THE CHURCH CAN PROMOTE TRUE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT** (Philippians 1:9-10)

**2. BECAUSE GOD HEARS THE CHILDREN CRYING AND HE EXPECTS US TO HEAR AS WELL** (Genesis 21:9-21)

**3. BECAUSE CHRISTIANS KNOW OF THE DIGNITY AND TRUE WORTH OF ALL GOD’S CHILDREN** (Gen 1:27; Psalms 8:3-6)

**4. BECAUSE PEOPLE RESPOND WHEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD CARE FOR CHILDREN** (I Kings 17:7-24)

**5. BECAUSE CHILDREN NEED “ACCEPTING LOVE” AND “TRANSFORMING LOVE”**

**Holistic child development is not holistic unless it addresses spiritual development as well. It is only the church which can respond to this important matter.**

### **Why does Compassion work exclusively through the Church?**

- The church is God’s ordained institution to bring about personal and social transformation.
- The Body of Christ has a mandate to reach out with love & compassion to the poor as we proclaim the Gospel.
- Working through the local church allows Compassion to be directly involved in the expansion of the Kingdom of God.
- Working through the local church allows Compassion’s ministry of child development to be a local initiative.
- The local church is a grass roots community institution that has great longevity and stability.
- The local church intimately knows its community and the realities it faces.
- The local church can foster trust and relationship.
- The local church provides a safe environment where nurture and ministry to children and their families can take place.
- The local church is much closer to the children of its community and therefore better able to teach us what the children need.

**Compassion’s development ministry consists of two major thrusts:**

1. The development of individual children (human development)
2. The development of local churches (institutional development)

Although our primary mission is child development, we cannot accomplish this without developing our partners – the local churches. The development of the local church is critical to the implementation of our mission... “Releasing children from poverty in Jesus name”.

Our goal is to empower and enable the church to take its rightful role in ministering to the needs of children and their families. This is what we mean by institutional development. We sit down with our church partners and we dream with them. We develop “big ideas” of holistic child development in the local context. Then we sit down again and plan together. These two basic concepts, dreaming together and planning together are critical to the development process. Then we strategize together. We plan and prepare budgets together. And we provide training on how to implement and evaluate programs for the greatest effectiveness. In time, we empower the local church to glean local resources from government or other Non-profit organizations. In this process, we are developing the local church in many areas and strengthening it as a local institution.

**In summary, Compassion’s investment in the local church includes:**

- Sharing vision for holistic child development
- Developing and nurturing the partnership
- Facilitating program design, program management, and program implementation
- Providing some of the resources needed (allowing for local initiative and creativity)
- Enhancing capacity through training, equipping, and coaching
- Providing ongoing motivation and feedback
- Maintaining accountability to agreements and standards of integrity
- Opening doors to other networks to enhance child development

Compassion views the local church as the most appropriate avenue for personal and social transformation based on biblical principles. The church has been entrusted with the great biblical mandate and Compassion feels compelled to partner with the local church to help fulfill that mandate through ministry to needy children.

Compassion provides vision, expertise and resources, but it is the local church that carries out the direct ministry to children and their families. Together we form a strong

partnership that releases children from their spiritual, economic, social and physical poverty and enables them to become responsible and fulfilled Christian adults.

### **Let's Be Realistic: COMMUNITIES DON'T DEVELOP...PEOPLE DEVELOP**

- A changed people will change their community!
- People change from the inside (heart)... not from handouts.
- Merely addressing the circumstances of poverty at the community level is not enough.
- While changed circumstances *sometimes* change people...changed people *always* change circumstances!

*“The most loving & strategic intervention that can be done for children is to bring them, through the local church’s ministry, to their heavenly father. When a child comprehends that God loves them their self-worth is improved and their ability to cope with life’s complex problems is enhanced.”*

### **To Summarize:**

1. Communities don't develop – people develop!
  - a. Changed people change communities
2. Child development is not holistic unless it addresses spiritual development.
3. The church is best equipped to do holistic child development
4. The church is God's chosen instrument
  - a. Ignore the church...and risk missing God's strategy

### **Three C's of Compassion's Ministry**

Christ-Centered ....Church-based....Child-focused

Join in the **strategic** fight against poverty ....Join Compassion!