CREATING AND NURTURING A CULTURE OF ADOPTION

AND ORPHAN CARE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH:

A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

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by

Randall Damon Burns

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APPROVAL SHEET

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Anthony Wayne Foster (Chair)

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To my beautiful wife, Delia, you are my gift from God.

And to our precious Sophia and Gloria, you are loved.

To God be the Glory.

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PREFACE

I would have never made it this far without the love and support of so many. When I began this journey nearly three years ago, I could not have imagined or known the ways in which I would be stretched, challenged, and developed. Through this journey, I have learned things about myself that I would have never likely known otherwise. I have learned that I have more weaknesses than I realized, but I have also learned that I have more strengths than I realized. Many times during this journey I have gone to the reservoirs of my strength only to find them empty, and in those moments I found the true source of all my strength.

To my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, I am nothing without you. You have taught me the meaning of your words to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:9). May I live my life in a manner worthy of your grace. You have surrounded me with so many of your people, through whom, you demonstrate your grace and love to me on a daily basis.

My wife, Delia, is one of those people with whom Jesus has surrounded me. She is a constant reminder of God's unconditional love. Without her continual love and support, I would have likely given up long ago. The Lord has also blessed us with three beautiful girls through the gift of adoption. Our journey in adoption began in June of 2006 when Elena Grace, Ellie, came into this world prematurely and battling polycystic kidney disease. She passed away before we finalized her adoption, but the few months we had her were a blessing. In God's grace, we brought Sophia Hope home from Guatemala in 2009. And in his mercy, he sent us Gloria Faith in 2014. Without them, my life would have had a much different focus. I am grateful that they call me, "Daddy." I am honored that I get to call them mine. The continuous love and prayers of my wife and daughters

has given me the courage to fight through my fears and doubts during the many twists and turns of academic pursuit.

My parents, too, have continued to love and support me throughout the years. Without them, I would not be here, both physically and academically. I was less than a stellar student as a youth. I had potential, but I lacked a desire for education. My parents encouraged me to do my best in school, and when the time came they pushed me to attend college. They sacrificed so that I could finish college. Years later when I returned to seminary, first to earn my M.Div. and now my Ed.D., they continued to support me.

It would be an act of great unkindness if I failed to mention Monticello Baptist Church. Although I was young and inexperienced, they willingly embraced me as their pastor over fourteen years ago. In spite of all my failings, they have loved me unconditionally. They made this research possible by granting me time to study and by paying my tuition. Yet, their greatest gift to me is their continual prayer support. I must also acknowledge the deacons at Monticello. They have been a faith band of brothers. They have helped me tremendously, not only in this pursuit, but in my service as a pastor. They have shouldered many burdens in order to allow me the freedom to pursue this study. I am humbled to serve alongside of them.

Last, but not least, I am grateful for the encouragement of my professors and classmates. My cohort has been a constant source of encouragement. I want to say a special thank you to Seth Stillman and Chris Sanchez, both of whom have continuously checked on my progress. I am especially grateful for my supervisor, Dr. Anthony Foster. I could not have accomplished this without his guidance and grace.

<div align="right">Randy Burns</div>

Morgantown, Kentucky

December 2015

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Compared to developing countries, the United States is still the land of plenty. The thought of orphans makes most Americans uncomfortable. Whether it is an embarrassment of riches or selfish consumerism that is to blame for that lack of comfort is debatable, but the fact that they are uncomfortable thinking about orphans is not. Diane Lynn Elliot, orphan care advocate, described the distancing that often occurs, "Except for the occasional late-night, fund-raising infomercial that invades our home with pictures of emaciated children with distended bellies, orphaned children seem somehow remote, in countries we never visit. We don't see them. We don't hear their cries."[1] Pastor and adoptive father, Tony Merida echoes a similar sentiment:

> I think of millions of orphans who live in some of the most unimaginable conditions. Abuse, neglect, disorders, abandonment, fear, doubts, grief, despair, illness, hopelessness, and emptiness are just a few common experiences of the world's orphans. I think about little Russian girls; each may never have a dad hold her hand as he takes her out for dinner and a movie, or later give her hand in marriage. I think about little Ugandan boys; each one may never have a dad to teach him how to drive, shoot a basketball, or hold a door for a lady. I can't think about the hands very long either. I want to change the channel.
>
> But we can't change the channel. This is a fallen world in which we live. We have an orphan crisis. And while we can't change the channel, we can change the picture.[2]

The orphan care movement is not merely a response to disturbing images and orphan horror stories. It is a response to something bigger than that. The driving force

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[1] Diane Lynn Elliot, *The Global Orphan Crisis* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2012), 21, Kindle.

[2] Tony Merida, foreword to *KnowOrphans*, by Rick Morton (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Press, 2014), loc. 113, Kindle. Kindle references using the abbreviation "loc." are for Kindle location numbers. Those Kindle references without this abbreviation are Kindle page numbers.

behind the movement is biblical and theological. These underpinnings will be addressed more fully in the precedent literature, but they must be noted. Co-founder of Together for Adoption and Director of Ministry Development for The ABBA Fund, Jason Kovacs, speaking of his personal experience within a local church that was active in adoption and orphan care, explained,

> It didn't matter who you asked in the church, adoptive family or not, they would tell you the same thing: We adopt and care for orphans because God adopted us in Christ when we were without hope and home. The gospel was the motivation for what God was doing and continues to do in that congregation.[3]

This line of reasoning is not unique to that church. Jedd Medefind, President of the Christian Alliance for Orphans, stated, "For the heart of the Christian story—the gospel—is how God sought us when we were destitute and alone. How he invites us to live as his daughters and sons. It is this matchless narrative that animates the Christian care for orphans."[4] Dan Cruver, co-founder and President of Together for Adoption, addresses this as well when he stated the ultimate purpose of Christians adopting is "so that within [those families], the world might witness a representation of God taking in and genuinely loving the helpless, the hopeless, and despised."[5] Rick Morton, professor and pastor, asserted, "Ultimately, differences in country and language are the result of the fall; and when we go beyond them in orphan care and adoption, we are testifying to the triumph of the gospel to shatter those distinctions."[6]

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[3]Jason Kovacs, "Adoption and Missional Living," in *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living through the Rediscovery of Abba Father*, ed. Dan Cruver (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2011), 83, Kindle.

[4]Jedd Medefind, *Becoming Home: Adoption, Foster Care, and Mentoring—Living Out God's Heart for Orphans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), loc. 291, Kindle.

[5]Dan Cruver, *Reclaiming Adoption: Missional Living through the Rediscovery of Abba Father* (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2011), 14, Kindle. Adoption is one form of orphan care. It is often addressed alone because of connection with the doctrine of adoption. The statements made about adopting would apply to caring for orphans in additional ways.

[6]Rick Morton, *KnowOrphans* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Press, 2014), loc. 444, Kindle.

This theological understanding of the gospel as adoption is not only the catalyst of the movement, but its sustaining force. Medefind explained, "Any other motivators like duty, guilt, and idealism can indeed move us. But they will not carry us the distance. . . . So if we are to go the distance, we must drink from a deeper source than guilt, duty, or idealism. We must draw from the wellspring of God's fathomless love."[7] Daniel J. Bennett, author and pastor, stated, "True compassion for the needy is always fueled by a passion for God to be worshipped among them."[8] Thus, the members of the orphan care movement view themselves as former spiritual orphans, adopted by God the Father though Jesus Christ. Their response to God's grace is to show that grace to others, so that other spiritual (and physical) orphans might experience it for themselves.

The understanding that human beings are made in God's image is also crucial to the movement. Johnny Carr, founder of Orphan Justice Ministries, pointed out, "To our God, taking care of the orphan isn't just a 'great idea.' It's critical. Why? Because every man, woman, boy and girl—including orphaned and vulnerable children—has been created in God's image and is precious to Him."[9] Tony Merida and Rick Morton concur. They listed four "biblical convictions" that should motivate believers to care for orphans. The first conviction is "God is concerned for all people made in his image."[10]

James 1:27 says, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit the orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."[11] These words provide a simple, action-oriented definition of faith.

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[7]Medefind, *Becoming Home*, locs. 303-12.

[8]Daniel J. Bennett*, A Passion for the Fatherless* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011), 43.

[9]Johnny Carr, *Orphan Justice* (Nashville: B& H Publishing Group, 2013), 16, Kindle.

[10]Tony Merida and Rick Morton, *Orphanology* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2011), loc. 803, Kindle.

[11]All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

Many evangelical Christians have been drawn into the orphan care movement through James's words. Although estimates vary, it is believed that there are more than 150 million orphans in the world today. However, a word of caution is offered. UNICEF and other organizations use the term orphan to refer to children who have lost one or both parents. Some of these orphans have families that care for them, others do not. Morton stated, "While many of these children meet the biblical definition of the kinds of vulnerable children the Bible calls orphans or fatherless, we can assume that some percentage of them do not."[12] While it may be difficult to know the exact number of children in crisis, it is clear that many are in need. Believers cannot stand by and do nothing. Morton said it well, "Bluntly, we have the means, the opportunity, and the call from God to ease the suffering of orphaned and vulnerable children around the world in Jesus' name."[13]

Many individuals, churches, and organizations have already begun working toward solutions. Some, in their zeal, have made missteps and have drawn criticism to the movement. Kathryn Joyce worries that the zeal of the evangelical orphan care movement will have "unintended consequences."[14] Morton acknowledges some errors on the part of the orphan care movement which he considers to be in its adolescence. He confessed,

> Like teenagers, we are learning more and more about ourselves, and we are learning more about God. We are discovering places where we miss the mark, errors in our perceptions of the world and ourselves. We are facing criticisms that cause us to review our convictions and actions. We are mature enough to be self-reflective and to respond to criticism with introspection and adjustment if needed. Whatever happens, dealing with criticism—though it may be uncomfortable—isn't unproductive.[15]

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[12]Morton, *KnowOrphans*, loc. 731.

[13]Ibid., locs. 484-85.

[14]Kathryn Joyce, "The Adoption Commandment," *Nation* 292, no. 19. (May 9, 2011): 11-17. In this article, she suggests the push for international adoptions among some in the orphan care movement may lead to the exploitation of the poor in developing nations.

[15]Morton, *KnowOrphans*, locs. 165-67.

Although there have been missteps along the way, the orphan care movement marches forward.[16] As Morton pointed out, the orphan care movement is growing. It is learning from its mistakes, even as it attempts to avoid making more. The fear of making a mistake is not permitted to derail the movement. The need is too great. Medefind offered words of comfort and caution, "I suspect God will find more to praise in those who stumble as they seek to do good than in those who do not act at all. . . Attempts to address deep human need are thick with hazards, so good intentions are not enough."[17]

Now, more than ever, the orphan care movement needs models to guide the way. Morton explained, "But there really is no template or preferred strategy for how to do it. The styles and forms churches have used are as varied as the communities of which they are a part."[18] Yet, Diane Lynn Elliot warned, "To make real inroads in the orphan crisis we need methods that can be copied and sustained over time."[19] The goal is not simply duplicating what someone else has done. It is, as Daniel J. Bennett stated, "to learn from the successes and failures of others."[20] Jedd Medefind urged, "The best Christian orphan care efforts are relentless in their commitment to both biblical principle and best practice models."[21]

There is a growing sense that churches need training to approach orphan care and adoption in the correct manner. Morton stated there "is the need for education and preparation for transnational orphan care and adoption."[22] Rising awareness of the plight

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[16]This matter will be discussed in greater detail in chap. 2.

[17]Medefind, *Becoming Home*, locs. 459-64.

[18]Morton, *KnowOrphans,* loc. 578.

[19]Elliot, *The Global Orphan Crisis,* 224.

[20]Bennett, *A Passion*, 182.

[21]Medefind, *Becoming Home,* loc. 368.

[22]Morton, *KnowOrphans*, loc. 227.

of orphans has many rushing to act. Those within the orphan care movement urge others to get involved with orphan care, but to do so for the right reasons and in the right ways. Bennett warned, "Some of you should not care for the orphan. Like the people of Israel, you will need to examine your heart to see if there are areas that God needs to refine before you engage in caring for the fatherless."[23]Medefind admonished, "Caring for orphans is not something to do halfway or on a whim. We must know that addressing serious needs—whether professionals or volunteers—demands serious study, preparation, and planning."[24]

The Barna Research Group has put out a series of books, entitled FRAMES, that examine current cultural trends from "a distinctly Christian point of view," in a "thoughtful and concise, data-driven and visually appealing" way.[25] Kinnamin and Stone stated, "In each Frame we couple new cultural analysis from our team at Barna with an essay from leading voices in the field."[26] In the FRAME volume on orphan care, Jedd Medefind reported, "According to our FRAMES research, nearly one-third of churches today actively encourage attendees to consider foster care and adoption."[27] That means that, roughly, two thirds of churches are probably not actively promoting orphan care in some form. The FRAMES report indicated that "73% of Americans believe it's a positive

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[23]Bennett, *A Passion*, 97-98.

[24]Medefind, *Becoming Home*, loc. 476.

[25]David Kinnaman and Roxanne Stone, "Why You Need Frames," in *Becoming Home: Adoption, Foster Care, and Mentoring—Living Out God's Heart for Orphans* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), loc. 48.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Medefind, *Becoming Home*, loc. 342. This research conducted by the Barna Group "included 1000 surveys conducted among a representative sample of adults over the age of eighteen living in the United States and its territories. This survey was conducted from July 29, 2013, through August 1, 2013. Additionally 1,005 phone interviews were conducted from June 25, 2013, through June 29, 2013, with a 96% incident rate and a 79% cooperation rate. The sampling error for both surveys is plus or minus 3 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level" (loc. 811-17). These questions focus on adoption and foster care in terms of practice (who is adopting/fostering), attitude (willingness to adopt/foster), and opinion concerning the church's role in caring for orphans.

thing for Christians to focus on adoption and foster care."[28] There is a growing sense of the need even within the culture surrounding the church, and it appears the world is waiting to see how believers will respond. In fact, the research suggested, "Most people—whether believers or not—would say Christians have a special responsibility to care for orphans."[29] While those numbers represent a blessing, "most active churchgoers say their church offers little help to adoptive families—or if their church does offer help, they don't know about it."[30]

The growing awareness of orphan need has created a growing sense of responsibility. However, responsibility without the proper resources to act leads to frustration. Churches need better means of equipping their congregation to help the orphan. Is there a way to both encourage and equip believers to effectively serve the orphan? What are the best practice models? What churches are blazing the trail that others may follow? This research will seek to identify the best practices in developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in local churches. It will focus on model churches that are leading in the fight for the fatherless.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine model churches in order to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in the local churches in America.[31]

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[28]Medefind, *Becoming Home,* loc. 86.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid., loc. 87.

[31]This study is part of a growing body of research at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the field of orphan care. See also: Eun-Sung Roh, "An Analysis of Adoption Ministry Programs for Adoptive Parents in Korean Churches" (Ed.D thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014). Emmanuella Nsang Nyam, "Essential Post-Adoption Services for the Local Church: A Multi-case Study" (Ed.D. thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015). Seth Alan Stillman, "Parental Practices of Discipline with Re-Adopted Children: A Mixed Methods Study" (Ed.D thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015). Matthew Scott Thompson, "Adoption Rates Among Evangelicals: A Mixed Methods Study" (Ed.D thesis, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015).

Research Questions

The main research question driving this research is: What are the key strategies model churches use to create and nurture a culture of orphan care? However, this question generates a series of sub-questions that undergird it. I have chosen to focus on these three sub-questions:

1. What drives those strategies?

2. How can other churches implement those strategies?

3. What considerations do other churches need to make before they attempt these kinds of strategies?

Delimitations of the Research

1. This research was delimited to evangelical churches actively involved in some aspect of orphan care.

2. This research was delimited to churches identified by an expert panel as churches that could serve as models in some aspect of orphan care.

3. This research was delimited to three. However, no fewer than five contacts were interviewed in each church.

4. This research was delimited to the specific organizational culture of the churches that participated in the case study.

Instrumentation

This research gathered data through semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals connected to each church's orphan care and/or adoption ministry. The interview protocol is in Appendix 5. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. In addition to the interview, resources suggested by the model church were analyzed. These resources included websites, sermons, and reading lists.

Terminology

The following terms and definitions are offered to clarify their uses in this study:

Double orphan. A double orphan is a child that has lost both of his or her parents.[32] The fact that a child is considered a double orphan does not mean an absence of family. Many double orphans are taken in and cared for by extended family (grandparents, uncles, aunts, etc.).

Fatherless. This term is often used in the place of orphan.[33] It can be understood literally, and thus, address a child whose father is gone, either through death, abandonment, or involuntary termination of parental rights. It can also be understood figuratively to speak of a child who has no family to care for him.

Horizontal adoption. This is an expression used within the orphan care movement to express the adoption of humans by humans.[34]

Key strategies. This term is used in this research to describe the most effective ways, means, patterns, practices a local church uses to conduct orphan care ministry. They are the best practices—those practices which are most God-honoring and effective in providing care to orphans.

Orphan. This term refers to children who have lost one or both of their parents.[35] In this research, the term will be used to describe children whose parent or parents have died, abandoned them, or who have had their parental rights forcibly terminated by the government.

Orphan care. This term is an umbrella term that captures all the aspects of caring for fatherless and vulnerable children. In broad terms, orphan care can be thought

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[32]Bergeron, *Journey to the Fatherless*, loc. 546.

[33]Bennett, *Passion for the Fatherless*, 19. He explains, in one example of many, "My compassion for orphans flow from the fact that I know God and know that he passionately cares for the fatherless" (ibid.).

[34]Cruver, *Reclaiming Adoption*, loc. 96.

[35]UNICEF, "Orphans," accessed March 2, 2015, http://www.unicef.org/media/media4527 9.html.

of as "acts of mercy."[36] Orphan care addresses poverty, education, human trafficking, and a host of other issues, including adoption and foster care.[37]

Orphan care ministry. Bennett stated, "An orphan care ministry can be defined as the spirit-empowered efforts of God's family to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the orphan."[38]

Single orphan. The term single orphan refers to children who have lost one parent.[39] The loss of one parent can place children in position to be exploited, especially if the lost parent was the sole provider.

Termination of parental rights (TPR). According to the Child Welfare Information Gateway, "Termination of parental rights ends the legal parent-child relationship."[40] This termination can be voluntary (where the biological parents place their children up for adoption), or involuntary (where parents are deemed unfit by the state and children are removed from their care).[41]

Vertical adoption. Vertical adoption is the term used to address the theological concept of God adopting believers.[42] Vertical adoption is said to be the driving force behind the orphan care movement.

Vulnerable children. Wess Stafford stated, "No matter what the ill of society, it tends to spiral downward and eventually land with its cruelest and most smothering impact on our littlest citizens. Small, weak, helpless, innocent, vulnerable, and trusting,

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[36]Morton and Merida, *Orphanology*, loc. 285.

[37]Carr, *Orphan Justice*. These categories are addressed in Carr's book.

[38]Bennett, *A Passion*, 14.

[39]Morton, *KnowOrphans*, loc. 729.

[40]Child Welfare Information Gateway, *Grounds for involuntary termination of parental rights* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2013), 1, PDF.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Cruver, *Reclaiming Adoption*, loc. 96.

they are the waiting victims for our simple neglect and most evil abuse."[43] In this sense, all children are vulnerable. However, the orphan care movement uses the term to include all children who are currently being exploited or who are in a position to be exploited.

Procedural Overview

This research was conducted in four phases. The first phase was the examination of the precedent literature to understand the nature of the orphan care movement. Literature was reviewed to identify the biblical, theological, and social underpinnings of the orphan care movement. The practices suggested in the literature were compared to determine similarity and differences.

The next phase was to develop an expert panel. These are individuals who are actively involved in the orphan care movement either as practitioners, authors, or public speakers. The panel was asked to identify five churches that can serve as models for some aspect of orphan care ministry. The identified churches served as a pool from which to select three cases to research.

The third phase included qualitative interviews with key personal. Following the interviews the material was coded, transcribed, and analyzed. A comparison between the church documents, media, and interviews will be conducted.

The final phase concluded with a cross-case analysis to determine the key strategies. Insights drawn from phase one and two were used to find comparisons and determine what, if any, key patterns emerged.

Research Assumptions

1. It was assumed that excellence in one area of orphan care, no matter how small, constitutes being a model church.

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[43]Wess Stafford, *Too Small to Ignore: Why the Least of These Matter* (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2007), 2.

2.   It was assumed that leaders within the local churches' orphan care ministry were instrumental in establishing the ministry.

3.   It was assumed that the recommended resources represent key influences on shaping the church's orphan care culture and ministry.

4.   It was assumed that when a model church publically discusses an individual's role in the development of their orphan care culture that it is acceptable to maintain their identity within this research.

CHAPTER 2

PRECEDENT LITERATURE

This chapter has four parts. In the first part, this chapter will examine the biblical and theological framework that drives the orphan care movement within conservative evangelical Christianity.[1] The second part will examine the scope of orphan care ministry. Part three will examine the church's mission and orphan care ministry. The fourth part will examine the nature of culture and key elements or strategies for developing orphan care ministries that can be adapted to develop a culture of orphan care within the local church. This chapter will conclude with a summary of the research hypothesis.

Biblical and Theological Framework

The literature of the orphan care movement is peppered with biblical and theological references. Understanding how the Bible and theology shapes the thought of those within the orphan care movement is crucial to understanding the movement itself. This section will examine some of the key passages used within the literature. Then it will examine the theological ideas that shape the rhetoric of the movement. Finally, it will examine some of the criticisms leveled at the orphan care movement by those from outside, and attempt to offer responses to these concerns.

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[1]The expression "orphan care movement" is meant to reduce wordiness, while providing a larger scope than the term "adoption movement" would provide. Orphan care includes adoption. Using the term "movement" is not meant to imply complete agreement among various proponents, but to express a general willingness, because of similar theological convictions and concerns, to work together to help the orphan. Many of the authors reviewed in this literature review are part of the Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO). The articles, "Core Principles" and "Statement of Faith," found at christianalliance fororphans.org, capture what is meant by the expression "conservative evangelical Christianity."

Biblical Framework

It would not be accurate to describe the biblical framework of the orphan care movement as monolithic, but there is much agreement and overlap. Although there are numerous themes that could be developed, this section will focus on three: God's concern for the orphan, God's expectation that his people be just, and an implication of the gospel.[2]

God's concern for the orphan. Rick Morton currently "serves as the Vice President of Engagement for Lifeline Children's Services, an international ministry dedicated to the fatherless."[3] Tony Merida "is the founding pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, N.C." and "Associate Professor of Preaching at Southeastern Baptist Seminary."[4] In their book, *Orphanology*, they argued that "God has a special concern for the fatherless" based on three premises: he gave laws to protect them (Deut 10:18), he promised to bless those who care for them (Deut 14:28-29), and he warns against abusing them (Deut 27:19; Exod 22:21-22; Zech 7:10; Pss 10:14, 16-18; 68:5-6, and 146:9).[5] Deuteronomy 27: 19 warns, "Cursed be anyone who perverts justice due the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow. And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'" Zechariah 7:10 says, "Do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart." The psalmist calls God "the helper of the fatherless" (Ps 10:14).

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[2]Although the orphan is often listed among others in need, the scope of this research does not permit me to explore beyond the orphan. Richard D. Patterson demonstrates that there was a consistent linking of the widow, the orphan, and the poor. See. Richard D. Patterson, "The Widow, the Orphan, and the Poor in the Old Testament and the Extra-Biblical Literature," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 130, no. 519 (July 1973): 223-34. Daniel J. Bennett describes four "disenfranchised" groups: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the alien. See Daniel J. Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic & Professional, 2011), 39-55.

[3]Rick Morton, "Meet Rick," accessed March 4, 2015, http://www.rickmorton online.com/meet-rick/. When he and Tony Merida co-wrote *Orphanology*, Morton was serving as a professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky.

[4]Tony Merida, "Bio," accessed March 4, 2015, http://tonymerida.net/bio/.

[5]Tony Merida and Rick Morton, *Orphanology: Awakening a Gospel-Centered Adoption and Orphan Care* (Birmingham, AL: New Hope Publishers, 2011), locs. 870-900.

Daniel J. Bennett, senior pastor of Bethany Community Church, also noted this "special" compassion.[6] He also offered several Bible references: Exodus 22:21-27; Psalms 10:17-18, 68:5, 72:12-15, 113:5-7, 146:9; Hosea 14:3b; Deuteronomy 10:18-19, 24:17-19, 27:19a; Proverbs 23:10-11, and Malachi 3:5.[7] He argued, "It is impossible to give these texts a fair reading without coming to the conclusion that God has a special care for those who are the neediest in a society."[8] This "special" compassion is demonstrated in his Bible references. Hosea reminds, "In you the orphan finds mercy" (Hos 14:3b). Malachi reminds his readers that God's judgment will fall on those who oppress the helpless which includes orphans. He states, "Then I [the LORD] will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts" (Mal 3:5). Psalm 146:9 says, "The LORD watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin."

Johnny Carr has served as a full-time minister and spent six years as the first National Director of Church Partnerships at Bethany Christian Services, "the largest adoption and orphan care agency in the United States," before founding Orphan Justice Ministries.[9] He explained, "Throughout the Old Testament, 'orphans' and 'the fatherless' are mentioned forty-one times. In the Old Testament law, many specific guidelines are given for interaction with orphans. As you read the following verses, look at God's

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[6]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless,* 44.

[7]Ibid., 44-47.

[8]Ibid., 45-46.

[9]Orphan Justice Ministries, "Johnny Carr," accessed March 4, 2015, http://orphanjustice.com/johnny-carr/.

heart."[10] He then listed Deuteronomy 10:18, 24:17, 19; Psalms 10:17-18, 68:5; Isaiah 1:15, 17; and Malachi 3:5.[11] Deuteronomy 24:17-19 says, "You shall not pervert the justice to the sojourner or the fatherless, or take a widow's garment in pledge . . . when you reap you harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back and get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands." While Isaiah 1:17 urges, "Learn to do good, seek justice; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause."

These authors are representative of orphan care movement. Although their lists vary, there is substantial overlap. For example, Deuteronomy 10:18 reads, "He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing." This verse appears on all three lists above. In this passage God is displayed as judicious protector of "fatherless and widow."

Psalm 10:17-18 says, "O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more." In the Lord, the fatherless will find justice.

Psalm 68:5 declares, "Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation." This title given to God in the Scriptures shapes the thinking of those within the orphan care movement.

These verses give a clear picture of God's concern for the orphan. He unashamedly champions the cause of the orphan and other disenfranchised groups. This

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[10]Johnny Carr, *Orphan Justice: How to Care for Orphans beyond Adopting* (Nashville: B & H Books, 2013), 15, Kindle.

[11]Carr, *Orphan Justice*, 15-17.

pattern is consistent in both the Old Testament, as demonstrated above, and the New

Testament, as will be demonstrated in the sections to follow. God's concern for the

orphan is something he expects his people to share.

God's expectation that his people be just toward the orphan.   Merida and

Morton expressed the conviction, "God commands his people share his concerns for the

fatherless."[12] They supported their conviction with several verses of Scripture: Isaiah

1:17-18, Deuteronomy 24:17-18, Psalm 82:3-4, Proverbs 31:9, and James 1:27.

Reflecting on Malachi 3:5, Carr stated,

> Stop and consider this: Just like the children of Israel, we, as God's people, will be
> judged for withholding justice from the oppressed and orphan. If we have the means
> and the capability to care for the orphaned and vulnerable children, yet fail to do so,
> we are in direct disobedience to God.[13]

Psalm 82:3-4 demands, "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain

the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them

from the hand of the wicked." Proverbs 31:9 urges, "Open your mouth, judge righteously,

defend the rights of the poor and needy." In these verses, God commands his people to be

active in defending the orphan from abuse and injustice and to actively pursue their good.

James 1:27 explains, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the

Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself

unstained from the world." In his commentary on James, Douglas J. Moo stated,

> "Looking after widows and orphans" picks up a frequent OT refrain. In the ancient
> world, with an absence of money-making possibilities for women and any kind of
> social welfare, widows and orphans were helpless to provide for themselves. . . .
> One test of pure religion, therefore, is the degree to which we extend aid to the
> "helpless" in our world—whether they be widows and orphans, immigrants trying to
> adjust to a new life, impoverished third-world dwellers, the handicapped, or the
> homeless.[14]

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[12]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology,* loc. 908.

[13]Carr, *Orphan Justice*, 17.

[14]Douglas J. Moo, *The Letter of James,* Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids:

Scholar Peter H. Davids stated the first element of piety James identifies is to care for the widow and orphan.[15] He commented, "That this act of helping orphans and widows was commanded in the OT and early church is clear (Is. 1:10–17; Dt. 14:29; 24:17–22; Je. 5:28; Ez. 22:7; Zech 7:10; Sir 4:10; Job 29:16; Acts 6:1–6; 1 Tim 5:3–16)."[16] Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell stated, "Orphans and widows, lacking fathers and husbands, respectively, formed two paradigms of the needy and dispossessed in patriarchal societies. The OT consistently refers to God's concern for this group, as seen especially in Deut 10: 18; 24: 19; Ps 146:9; Jer 7:6; and Zech 7:10. God often promises to judge his people based on how well they care for the husbandless and fatherless."[17]

Considering interpretations like those above, it is not surprising that James 1:27 has been instrumental in moving many towards an orphan care mindset. In describing the process of Bible study that brought him to the conclusion that he had to be more actively involved in caring for the orphan, Carr recalled, "Verses about orphans that I had never noticed jumped off the page, and the one that stuck out the most was James 1:27."[18] Lawrence Bergeron, leader of A Child's Hope International, explained that James 1:27 means "that we are to look after, care for, and go visit and help the orphan."[19] Concerning James 1:27, Merida commented, "A couple of years ago, this Scripture had a profound impact on the church where I was preaching. I simply read, explained, and

William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 97, Logos Software.

[15]Peter H. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1982), 104, Logos Software.

[16]Davids, *The Epistle of James*, 104.

[17]Craig L. Blomberg and Mariam J. Kamell, *James*, Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament, vol. 16 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), locs. 2183-86, Kindle.

[18]Carr, *Orphan Justice*, 11.

[19]Lawrence E. Bergeron, *Journey to the Fatherless* (Bloomington, IN: WestBow Press, 2012), 70.

applied this verse."[20] He went on to address the impact this sermon had: a new ministry aimed at offering financial assistance to adoptive parents, seeing families within the church develop a heart for orphan care and adoption, and the naming of his son, James.[21] Randy Stinson explained, "James (1:27) makes clear that one of the evidences of our faith is how we respond to the 'affliction' of widows and orphans . . . it's a central part of the Christian life."[22]

Bennett pointed to another crucial passage, Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan.[23] He recounted, "The lawyer asserts that love of God and love of neighbor are essential for the one who would claim eternal life. Jesus concurs."[24] He then offered three key truths from this passage: "(1) love of God and love of neighbor are essential characteristics of one who has eternal life; (2) we must have an unlimited concept of who our neighbor is; and (3) compassion compels us to action."[25] Reflecting on these truths, Bennett stated, "As we saw earlier, God has a special concern for the . . . orphan. This means that we as believers should have a love for our neighbor the orphan that compels us to action."[26] It is clear that those within the orphan care movement are compelled by God's concern for the orphan and his expectations that his people be just. It is also equally clear that they recognize orphan care to be a logical implication of the gospel.

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[20]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 926.

[21]Ibid., loc. 939.

[22]Randy Stinson, "Don't You Already Have Kids? Adding to Your Existing Family through Adoption," in *A Guide to Adoption & Orphan Care*, ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2012), 35.

[23]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 50-51.

[24]Ibid., 50.

[25]Ibid., 51. Although these points are not presented as a direct quotation in his work, Bennett attributes them to Mark Young, president of Denver Theological Seminary.

[26]Ibid.

An implication of the gospel. Orphan care is an implication of the gospel because the gospel is a type of orphan care. As Russell Moore, the president of the Ethics and Religious Liberties Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, explained, "The gospel of adoption challenges us, first of all, to recognize ourselves as spiritual orphans."[27] Moore aptly described this state:

> You see, that's the whole story of redemption. The universe was meant to be a home—where the image-bearers of God rule and serve under their Father. It was all to be ours. The primeval insurrection in the garden, though, turned the universe into an orphanage—the heirs were gone, done in by their appetites. A serpent now holds the cosmos in captivity, driving along the deposed rulers as his slaves. The whole universe is now an orphanage.[28]

God, in his mercy, sent his Son to redeem spiritual orphans. As Paul states, "For through him [Jesus] we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:18-19). Jesus brings us into the household of God. Bennett stated, "Ephesians reveals that we were dead in our sins and living wasted, futile lives (2:1-3; 4:17-18). In order to rescue us from this state in which we found ourselves, God adopted us."[29] To understand adoption better, and by extension orphan care, as an implication of the gospel, one must understand the doctrine of adoption as presented by those within the orphan care movement.

Theological Framework

The theological framework of the orphan care movement is deeply connected to its biblical framework. The Scriptures inform and shape its theological convictions,

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[27]Russell D. Moore, "Abba Changes Everything," in *A Guide to Adoption & Orphan Care,* ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2012), 11. The doctrine of adoption will be addressed in detail in the "Theological Framework" section.

[28]Russell D. Moore, *Adopted for Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2009), 45.

[29]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 58. See also Eph. 1:3-11, and 2:18-19.

and in a similar way, the movement's theology drives its interpretation of Scripture. This section will examine some popular theological works, as they address the doctrine of adoption, before turning its attention to the writings of the orphan care movement.

Popular theological works. Wayne Grudem defined the doctrine of adoption as "an act of God whereby he makes us members of his family."[30] He elaborated,

> John mentions adoption at the beginning of his gospel, where he says, "But to all who receive him, who believe in his name, he gave the power to become children of God" (John 1:12). By contrast, those who do not believe in Christ are not the children of God or adopted into his family, but are "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3) and "sons of disobedience" (Eph 2:2; 5:6). Although those Jews who rejected Christ tried to claim that God was their father (John 8:41), Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me. . . . You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires" (John 8:42-44).[31]

> Millard Erickson stated,

> Adoption involves a change of both status and condition. In the formal sense, adoption is a declarative matter, an alteration of our legal status. We become God's children. This is an objective fact. In addition, however, is the actual experience of being favored by God. We enjoy what is designated the spirit of sonship. . . . Through adoption we are restored to the relationship with God that humans once had but lost. . . . But God in adopting us restores us to the relationship with him for which we were originally intended.[32]

J. I. Packer argued, "Our first point about adoption is that it is *the highest privilege that the gospel offers*: higher even than justification. . . . In adoption, God takes us into his family and fellowship—he establishes us as his children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of this relationship."[33] J. Todd Billings contended, "The image of adoption is key for Paul in speaking about the life of salvation in Christ, as well as the new identity that we enter into in Christ."[34] Billings again asserted, "In

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[30]Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 736.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 975.

[33]J. I. Packer, *Knowing God*, 20th anniv. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 206-7.

[34]J. Todd Billings, *Union with Christ* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2011), 16.

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adoption, our central cultural ideal of being a self-made person is put on the cross. But in adoption, we also enter into the playful, joyous world *of living as children of a gracious Father, as persons united to Christ and empowered by the Spirit.*"[35]

These theological writings address the doctrine of adoption without referencing the orphan care movement. They address a biblical truth—believers are adopted into the family of Christ. These authors may be sympathetic with or active in the orphan care movement, but they are not writing from that perspective. They are attempting to explain the biblical witness concerning the doctrine of adoption. Those within the orphan care movement seem equally concerned with explaining the doctrine of adoption and applying it.

Writings within the orphan care movement. The doctrine of adoption is a key metaphor within the orphan care movement. Russell Moore said, "When someone learns that I'm going to speak at their church about adoption, typically the first question is, 'So will you be talking about the doctrine of adoption or, you know, real adoption? That's a hard question, because I cannot address one without addressing the other."[36] Later he, restated it a different way when he said, "Adoption is, on one hand, gospel. Our identity and inheritance are grounded in our adoption in Christ. Adoption is also mission. In this, our adoption spurs us to join Christ in advocating for the poor, the marginalized, the abandoned, and the fatherless."[37]

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[35]Billings, *Union with Christ,* 25. Emphasis in the original.

[36]Moore, *"Abba Changes Everything*," 10.

[37]Ibid., 11.

Bennett expressed it more directly, "This chapter, 'A Theology of Adoption,' is first about *your* adoption—if you are a believer—and then about the implications of that reality for your care of orphans. Or relationship with God, restored through spiritual adoption, shapes our theology of earthly orphan care."[38] In their chapter "How Is God's Adoption of Us Similar to Our Adoption of Children?" Merida and Morton explained,

> Our prayer as we begin this journey together is for you to experience 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." And if you are a Christian already, please consider afresh God the Father's personal, particular, and persevering love for you, His adopted child. May your consideration of this love God gives create in you a desire to reflect His love to orphans.[39]

Dan Cruver, co-founder of Together for Adoption, stated,

> The word *adoption* is rooted in an ancient Greco-Roman legal practice, and until Paul everyone understood it as referring to human adoption, what we might call *horizontal* adoption. But Paul gave the concept a theological underpinning by grounding it in *vertical* adoption—God's adoption of sinners. . . if we learn to first think vertically about adoption, and only then horizontally, we will enjoy deeper communion with the triune God and experience greater missional engagement with the pain and suffering of this world.[40]

Jedd Medefind, president of the Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO), articulated, "Most breathtaking of all, this is not only the orphan's story. It is ours as well. For the heart of the Christian story—the gospel—is how he sought us when we were destitute and alone. How he invites us to live as his daughters and sons. It is this matchless narrative that animates the Christian to care for orphans, to love as he first loved us."[41]

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[38]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 67. Emphasis in original.

[39]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 295.

[40]Dan Cruver, *Reclaiming Adoption* (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2011), 7, Kindle.

[41]Jedd Medefind, *Becoming Home* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 41-42, Kindle.

When the biblical and theological frameworks are combined, the movement has a compelling mandate that shapes and fuels their mission. But are they right? Some would doubt their interpretation.

Criticisms Addressed

David M. Smolin believes that "the movement's Biblical exegesis is flawed."[42] He argued, "The primary purpose of this essay is to demonstrate that the scriptural and theological analysis undergirding the evangelical adoption and orphan care movement is seriously erroneous. Further, these errors produce practices that are sinful and exploitative."[43] Smolin denied the centrality of the adoption metaphor arguing that "its centrality is belied by the absence of any such references in the rest of the Bible. Instead, natural parenthood and marriage are the primary Biblical analogies for the relationship between God and his people. Indeed, there is no Old Testament or Jewish law authorizing adoption, and the word 'adoption' does not appear in the gospels, making adoption a quite secondary metaphor."[44]

Smolin made some valid points. As Jedd Medefind stated, "Smolin's attack is theologically substantive and offers numerous criticism that this growing movement would do well to apply with diligent self-scrutiny."[45] Medefind acknowledged, "As Smolin points out, Scripture's use of the word 'adoption' is sparse, as are its examples of earthly adoption."[46] Smolin rightly argued, "Paul's limited references to 'adoption' or

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[42]David M. Smolin, "Abstract of Orphan and Adoption, Parents and the Poor, Exploitation and Rescue: A Scriptural Critique of the Evangelical Christian Adoption and Orphan Care Ministries," *Journal of Christian Legal Thought* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 6, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.togetherfor adoption.org/wp-content/media/Journal_of_Christian_Legal_Thought-Topic_Adoption.pdf.

[43]Smolin, "Scriptural Critique," 6.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Jedd Medefind, "In Defense of the Christian Orphan Care Movement," *Journal of Christian Legal Thought* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 9, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.togetherforadoption.org /wp-content/media/Journal_of_Christian_Legal_Thought-Topic_Adoption.pdf.

[46]Ibid.

'sonship' has nothing to do with the adoption of vulnerable children."[47] He is also correct in saying that the biblical metaphor of adoption in the New Testament does not demand the adoption of vulnerable children.

However, God commands his people both in the Old and New Testament to care for the vulnerable. Although he may not agree with the way in which the orphan care movement approaches the task, Smolin agreed that it is biblical to care for the fatherless. He pointed out, "The Biblical call to assist orphans is primarily in the context of assisting widows and orphans—better translated 'fatherless'—as a unit."[48] Today, even as in time past, the widow and the orphan are not always a unit, and orphan care advocates should be diligent in assisting families to stay together whenever it is in the best interest of the child. Yet, there are many children in this world who need a family to love and protect them.

In the contemporary context, adoption has become one of the primary means of caring for vulnerable children. Although the Scripture does not command believers to adopt, they should still pursue adoption. God has adopted the believer into his family (see Eph 1:5). Therefore, adoption is one way in which believers can obey Paul's command to imitate God (see Eph 5:1). The metaphor is appropriate, even if it is not decisive.

Dan Cruver stated, "Smolin's work on the importance of inheritance for our understanding of adoption is well-researched, insightful and edifying. But the theology of adoptions which Smolin has constructed is too sociologically and culturally determined because it neglects the redemptive-historical reading of Scripture in general and of adoption in particular."[49] Cruver explained, "Redemptive-historical interpretation

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[47]Smolin, "Scriptural Critique," 6.

[48]Smolin, "Scriptural Critique," 6.

[49]Dan Cruver, "The First Steps in the Way Forward: A Response to David M. Smolin's 'Of Orphans and Adoption,' *Journal of Christian Legal Thought* 2, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 11, accessed November 1, 2013, http://www.togetherforadoption.org/wp-content/media/Journal_of_Christian_Legal_ Thought-Topic_Adoption.pdf.

recognizes that the metanarrative (i.e., overarching story) of God's redemptive activity within history . . . must inform our interpretation of every part of Scripture."[50] Jedd Medefind agreed. He stated, "As Smolin's analysis hammers home, the word 'adoption' is used rarely throughout the Bible. What the article misses, however, is that the story of adoption is written on virtually its every page. The heart of Scripture, the gospel, is the sweeping narrative of the God who . . . pays an unimaginable price so that we by rights can become His children (John 1:12)."[51]

Smolin contended further, "It is not merely a matter of doing the right thing for the wrong reason, but quite often that of doing the wrong thing for the wrong reason. Instead of looking for vulnerable adults and children to assist together within families and communities, the movement is looking for 'orphans' to save apart from their parents, extended family, and community."[52] Is Smolin's analysis of the movement accurate? Consider these three "Core Principles" from the Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO):

God's Heart and Ours. God is vested, deeply and personally, in the plight of the orphan—and all those who are destitute and defenseless (Deut 10:18; Ps 10:14; Ps 68:5-6; Isa 58:5-12). He calls His people to join Him in this, sharing his passion for orphans and bringing to each child the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed (Isa 1:17; Jas 1:27; Matt 25:40).

Priority of Family. God created the family as the ideal environment for every child, and the best outcome for an orphan is to know the love of a permanent family. Given the vast and complex needs facing orphans worldwide, this is not always possible. However, priority should always be placed on family-based solutions, and any long-term care should be as *permanent, nurturing* and *close to family* as is feasible for the particular situation.

Family Preservation. Whenever possible, children classified as "orphans" that have one surviving parent or other relatives should be helped to remain with family members. Efforts that enable families to stay together and prevent children from

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[50]Cruver, "The First Steps," 11.

[51]Medefind, "In Defense," 10.

[52]Smolin, "Scriptural Critiques," 8.

ending up in orphanages or on the streets are a vital part of response to the global orphan crisis.[53]

These principles give a sense of a wider understanding of orphan care than Smolin suggested. Cruver suggested Smolin's analysis suffers from a lack of attention to the "redemptive-historical reading of adoption."[54] Cruver concluded, "Smolin misrepresents the *hands* of the Christian adoption/orphan care movement because he misrepresents the *heart* of its theology."[55]

Morton acknowledged that every movement experiences criticism as it grows.[56] While Morton considered some of the criticism unfounded, he acknowledged some of it is "entirely fair."[57] In the rush to motivate individuals to action, the orphan care movement has often undermined its own efforts. Stinson stated, "Adoption and its centrality to the gospel has made it a growing movement in the church. Just like other movements, the church not only needs to pursue it, but make sure it is examining the movement to ensure it is rightly positioned to offer correctives and solutions for problems that will naturally occur."[58]

Scope of Orphan Care

This section will seek to answer some questions concerning the scope of orphan care. What is orphan care? What all is involved in the care of orphans? Finally, how do adoption and orphan care fit together?

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[53]Christian Alliance for Orphans, "Core Principles," accessed November 2, 2013, http://christianalliancefororphans.org/ about/core-principles. The bold headings are in the original document.

[54]Cruver, "The First Steps," 13.

[55]Ibid. Emphasis in original.

[56]Morton, *KnowOrphans*, loc. 1299.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Randy Stinson, "Disrupted Adoptions: A New Challenge for the Church," in *A Guide to Adoption & Orphan Care*, ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2012), 75.

What Is Orphan Care?

Defining the term *orphan care* can be a difficult task. Rick Morton stated,

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), there are estimated to be between 143 and 210 million orphans worldwide, though this number is uncertain. While this estimate is staggering, it likely fails to give a full picture of the scope of the problem. You see, UNICEF only includes children who have lost one or both parents to death in its calculation of the worldwide orphan population. While this approach to defining who is an orphan isn't really wrong, it does fail to account for many of the children that are truly fatherless. . . .UNICEF does not take into account the numerous orphaned children whose living parents have abandoned them to institutions or life on the street. These children are no less orphans in a practical sense than those who have experienced the death of a parent. . . . estimates also do not reflect sold or trafficked children who are living in slavery or orphans living in those countries . . . that fail to report orphan statistics.[59]

Johnny Carr expressed it in a similar way. He stated, "For the purposes of this book, we will refer to the UNICEF estimate of 153 million children who are *orphaned* and *vulnerable*. Some of these children need adoptive families. Others need support so their families can keep them out of an orphanage. All of these children have physical, emotional, and/or spiritual needs. They face a host of challenges."[60] He also stated, " In situations where parents show that they are consistently irresponsible and unfit to provide care, the judge will likely sever parental rights. . . these children are now legally orphaned.[61] Lawrence Bergeron spoke of the "growing and tragic crisis of vulnerable children. These are the fatherless, the orphaned, those in foster care as well as those who may have a nuclear family but who suffer from malnutrition, lack of basic medical care, disease and the deadly effects of dirty water."[62]

The struggle is to find a word that represents all that those within the orphan care movement mean when they speak of the orphan. It is no wonder Morton stated, "We

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[59]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 647.

[60]Carr, *Orphan Justice*, 14. Carr explains, "It is important to note that while most of us think of an orphan as a child who has lost both parents, these children are actually called 'double orphans.' Children with only one living parent are called 'single orphans'" (ibid., 13).

[61]Ibid., 116-17.

[62]Bergeron, *Journey to the Fatherless*, loc. 401.

need a better, multifaceted definition [of the word orphan] that takes into account all these statuses of vulnerability." Orphan care then becomes a term referring to a wide array of ministry to vulnerable children who may or may not be orphans in a technical sense.

What All Is Involved in the
Care of the Orphan?

The organization World Orphan suggested a "continuum of care."[63] This continuum is a set of strategies that equip churches and mission agencies to partner with indigenous churches to care for orphans and vulnerable children. The continuum covers six strategies: orphan prevention and delay, child placement, residential care, transition care, child self-sustainability, and missionary. Orphan prevention and delay involves assisting families to overcome the financial and medical strains that might rupture their families thus creating orphans.[64] Child placement involves developing faith-based foster care and adoption for children in need of temporary and/or permanent care.[65] Residential care centers around "family-style homes for children" located on church grounds.[66] Transitional care involves assisting foster children who are aging-out of the system by providing them with shelter and training.[67] Child self-sustainability involves aiding these children to develop the skills necessary for bettering their lives and communities—these include higher education, trade schools, job placement, and microfinance.[68] Finally,

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[63]World Orphans, "Continuum of Care," accessed November 2, 2013, http://www.christianallianceforororphans.org /resource/continuum-of-care-by-world-orphans/. This PDF offers a snapshot of their strategy.

[64]World Orphans, *Continuum of Care* (Castle Rock, CO: World Orphans, n.d.), 4, PDF, accessed March 4, 2015, http://www.worldorphans.org/our-solution.php.

[65]Ibid., 5.

[66]Ibid.

[67]World Orphans, *Continuum of Care,* 6.

[68]Ibid.

churches are encouraged to mentor young adults to become pastors, missionaries, and advocates.[69]

Johnny Carr suggested a similar scope of orphan care ministry. He addressed human trafficking, HIV/AIDs, orphanages, poverty, foster care, and racism as areas connected to the care of orphans.[70] Merida and Morton pointed out that orphan care "is not simply an adoption issue."[71] While orphan ministry means promoting adoption, it also involves participating in institutional care, combating slavery and human trafficking, and engaging in transracial ministry.[72]

According to Wess Stafford, President and CEO of Compassion International, "Fully half of the world, and especially the developing world, are children and teenagers."[73] He argued, "No matter what the ill of society, it tends to spiral downward and eventually land with its cruelest and most smothering impact on our littlest citizens. Small, weak, helpless, innocent, vulnerable, and trusting, they are waiting victims for our simple neglect and most evil abuse."[74] Children, particularly vulnerable children, stand in great need. If, for lack of a better term, one uses the term *orphan* to refer to all vulnerable children, then it is easy to see why the term *orphan care* is used as an umbrella for a wide array of activity.

Orphan care ministries can be broken into three major categories: global orphan care, adoption, and foster care.[75] Global orphan care can deal with several of the

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[69]Ibid., 7.

[70]Carr, *Orphan Justice,* TOC.

[71] Merida and Morton, *Orphanology,* loc. 683.

[72]Ibid.*,* locs. 686-761, Kindle.

[73]Wess Stafford, *Too Small to Ignore* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2007), 6.

[74]Ibid., 2.

[75]Jason Webber, *Launching an Orphan Care Ministry in Your Church* (Little Rock: FamilyLife Publishing, 2006).

categories mentioned early: institutional care, transitional housing, job training for those aging-out of care, microfinance, etc. Adoption ministries within a church can help prospective adoptive parents by educating them on the realities of adoption, by providing financial assistance, and by developing a support network. Foster care ministries can provide help for potential foster parents through education, partnership, and support.

How Do Adoption and Orphan
Care Fit Together?

From a theological standpoint, adoption is a motivation for orphan care. Russell Moore explained, "Our adoption [in Christ] spurs us to join Christ in advocating for the poor, the marginalized, the abandoned and the fatherless."[76] Jeremy Haskins stated, "In an adoption culture, everyone has been transformed by the act of adoption and this naturally leads to a desire to rid the world of orphans, both physically and spiritually."[77] Jason Kovaks stated, "In other words, the gospel was increasingly affecting every part of their lives for the glory of God's grace in our fallen world, and it was impacting how they addressed the global orphan crisis. Undergirding this emphasis was a broad theological understanding of vertical adoption."[78]

From a practical standpoint, adoption is a strategy within the larger framework of orphan care. In other words, adoption is one way to care for orphans. Merida and Morton explained, "While we may believe adoption is a practice that is both theologically desirable in its display of the gospel and practically beneficial as it brings children into a family for love and support, we must concede that adoption is not the only answer for the

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[76]Moore, *"Abba Changes Everything,"* 10.

[77]Jeremy Haskins, "From Church Pews to Church Plants," in *A Guide Adoption & Orphan Care*, ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2012), 59.

[78]Jason Kovacks, "Adoption and Missional Living," in *Reclaiming Adoption*, ed. Dan Cruver (Adelphi, MD: Cruciform Press, 2011), 86, Kindle.

church as it ignores our ultimate responsibility to care for all orphans."[79] Bennett stated, "Adoption is a crucial part of a church's orphan ministry and the part of the orphan ministry that most people will notice and think about."[80]

The relationship between adoption and orphan care, therefore, depends upon what the speaker means when they are addressing the concept of adoption. If they are speaking of the biblical metaphor of a believer's adoption by God, then it is the theological motivation for orphan care. If they are speaking about humans adopting other humans, then they are talking about an aspect of orphan care.

<center>**Mission and Orphan Care**</center>

As it will be demonstrated below, orphan care advocates believe that orphan care is a fulfillment of the church's mission. This section will examine the mission of the church. It will also examine the role of orphan care in fulfilling that mission.

Mission of the Church

What is the mission of the church? John Frame stated that the mission of the church is "to keep all of God's commandments. But two of these stand out as fundamental. The first is called the *cultural mandate*, the second the *Great Commission*."[81] The cultural mandate is based on God's command in Genesis 1:28, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on earth."[82] The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:18-20, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me. Go

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[79] Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 686.

[80] Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 195.

[81] John M. Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2013), loc. 26480, Kindle. Emphasis in original.

[82] Frame, *Systematic Theology*, loc. 26480.

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therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you to the end of the age."[83] While considering which commandment to give priority, Frame stated, "The Great Commission is the application of the cultural mandate to a fallen human race."[84] His concluded, "But the overall goal has to be mission. Everything we do in the church has to be planned with the gospel as the center."[85]

Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert suggested answering the mission question depends largely upon what one means by the term mission. They stated,

> One could make a case that *glorifying God and enjoying him forever* is the mission of the church, because that is our chief end as redeemed believers. Someone else might argue that *loving God and loving our neighbors* is the best description of our mission, because these are the greatest commandments. And someone else might borrow from the nineteenth-century hymn and argue that *trust and obey* is the essence of our mission, because that is the great call of the gospel message. In one sense we would be foolish to argue with any of these answers. If mission is simply a synonym for living a faithful Christian life, then there are dozens of ways to answer the question. . . . But isn't it wise to aim for a more precise definition of such a common word?[86]

They concluded that mission is best understood as the "specific task or purpose the church is *sent into the world to accomplish*."[87] They further stated, "In short, we will argue that the mission of the church is summarized in the Great Commission passages . . .

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[83]Ibid., loc. 26511.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Ibid., loc. 26555.

[86]Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Mission of the Church?* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 17. Emphasis in the original.

[87]DeYoung and Gilbert, *What Is the Mission*, 20.

We believe the church is sent into the world to witness to Jesus by proclaiming the gospel and making disciples of all nations. This is our task. This is our unique and central calling."[88]

While others might be willing to broaden the definition of mission, [89] there is a fair amount of consensus among conservative evangelicals that mission of the church is best defined by the Great Commission. Mark Dever stated, "The proclamation of the gospel . . . is central to fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20). And it is central to fulfilling the great commandments (Mark 12:29-31; cf. Gal 6:2). For the Christian these commandments must lie at the heart of any cultural mandate (Gen 1:28)."[90] Dever also stated that Christ "gave the church a unique institutional mandate to preach, display, model, and express the good news of Jesus Christ. And in obedience to that institutional mandate, Christian congregations have both the liberty and the responsibility to take prudent initiatives in advocating mercy or justice in our community as opportunities arise, perhaps collectively in the name of the church and certainly as individuals in the name of Christ."[91]

Those within the orphan care movement, generally, agree that the mission of the church is defined by the Great Commission. They also argue that orphan care is

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[88]Ibid., 26. According to DeYoung and Gilbert, the Great Commission passages are Matt 28:16-20; Mark 13:10, 14:9; Luke 24:44-49; and Acts 1:8.

[89]See David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (MaryKnoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), and Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010).

[90]Mark Dever, *The Church: The Gospel Made Visible* (Nashville: B & H Publishing Group, 2012), 83.

[91]Ibid, 80.

obedience to the Great Commission. This section will now examine the role of orphan care in fulfilling the Great Commission.

Role of Orphan Care in Fulfilling
the Great Commission

Russell Moore stated,

The gospel of Jesus Christ means our families and churches ought to be at the forefront of the adoption of orphans close to home and around the world. As we become more attuned to the gospel, we'll have more of a burden for orphans. As we become more adoption-friendly, we'll better understand the gospel. . . . Adoption is about an entire culture within our churches, a culture that sees adoption as part of our Great Commission mandate and as a sign of the gospel itself.[92]

Jason Kovaks explained, "Adoption actually rests at the very heart of the history of redemption. Biblically and historically it is the foundation and goal for the mission of the church to the world."[93] Merida and Morton suggested that a church's orphan care ministry vision should be "articulated . . . to do with the Great Commission and the Great Commandment expressed in the New Testament. Orphan care is a part (not the whole) of this vision of making disciples of all the nations and loving our neighbor as ourselves."[94]

Cruver stated, "The soul of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment leans into difficult people and their complexities. It's to be the essence of who we are as Christians. In fact, unity of mind and generosity of spirit in the midst of diversity is the distinguishing mark of true Christian community."[95] Bennett said, "Missions and orphan care ministries must clearly proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. . .

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[92] Moore, *Adopting for Life*, 18-19.

[93] Kovaks, "Missional Living," 84.

[94] Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 1246.

[95] Cruver, *Reclaiming Adoption*, 28.

If the gospel is dislodged from the center of your ministry, you have failed in your goal to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all people."[96]

Those within the orphan care movement do not understand orphan care to be in competition with the Great Commission. Orphan care is seen as the natural outworking of the Great Commission. The proclamation of the gospel is central to their work. By getting involved with the orphan, believers are displaying the gospel in their actions, even as they proclaim it with their mouths. Churches involved in orphan care tend to have a culture shaped by the Great Commission.

Culture

This section will examine the nature of culture and how to understand it. It will also examine key strategies drawn from orphan care ministries and resources to determine which, if any, of them can be used to develop a culture of orphan care.

What Is Culture?

While the term culture can be used to discuss a wide range of issues, this section will focus on theory of organizational culture and apply it to the local church. John W. Creswell, professor of educational psychology at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, stated culture is "something researchers attribute to a group when looking for patterns of its social world. . . . It consists of what people do (behaviors), what they say (language), the potential tension between what they do and ought to do, and what they make and use, such as artifacts (Spradley, 1980)."[97] Edgar Schein, the Slone Fellows Professor of Management Emeritus and senior lecturer at the MIT Sloan School of

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[96]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 91. Although Bennett is not addressing the Great Commission in this quote, he is addressing the mission of the church. Orphan care is about more than simply providing food, clothes, and shelter to needing children. It, also, includes helping them meet their greatest need—the salvation of their soul.

[97]John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*, 3rd ed. (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 95.

Management, suggested culture is "defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems."[98] He also stated, "In another sense, culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual."[99]

Aubrey Malphurs, founder of the consulting firm the Malphurs Group, explained, "I define the church's congregational culture as the unique expression of the interactions of the church's shared beliefs and its values, which explains its behavior in general and display its unique identity in particular."[100] In an effort to simplify the abstract concept of culture, Malphurs used the image of an apple—"the Cultural Apple."[101] Malphurs suggested that culture, like an apple, has three layers: the skin, the flesh, and the core.[102] The skin represents outward behaviors, the flesh represents values, and the core represents beliefs and assumptions.[103] Malphurs concluded, "These three elements of organizational culture—beliefs, values, and their expression—work together to display the church's unique identity."[104]

Schein suggested the key to understanding the inner workings of a group "requires a 'cultural perspective,' learning to see the world through 'cultural lenses,' becoming competent in 'cultural analysis' by which I mean being able to perceive and

[98]Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership,* 4th ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010), loc. 588, Kindle.

[99]Ibid., loc.509.

[100]Aubrey Malphurs, *Look before You Lead: How to Discern and Shape Your Church Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2013), loc. 272, Kindle.

[101]Ibid., loc. 288.

[102]Ibid., locs. 297-318.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid., loc. 318.

decipher the cultural forces that operate in groups, organizations, and occupations."[105] Schein suggested that culture can be examined on three levels: artifacts, espoused beliefs and values, and basic underlying assumptions. Malphurs concurred with Schein; he stated "To truly analyze and understand a congregation's culture, we must differentiate between these three critical layers, while discerning how they relate and contribute to one another."[106]

Schein's term "artifacts" includes all the "visible products of the group."[107] This is what Malphurs terms the "skin" or "first layer" of the cultural apple.[108] He stated, "This unique expression [of shared beliefs and values] is the church's behavior that a visitor might observe on a typical Sunday. The church's culture is behavior express."[109] Malphurs suggested the church's culture "consists of its overt behavior and artifacts (the results of behavior)."[110] Malphurs offered some examples of things that can be observed:

> Neighborhood/community, demographics, language, facilities, parking, grounds, signage, attendants, vehicles, clothing, friendliness, emotions, security, manner of address, technology, communication, ordinances, symbols, worship, disciple-making ministries, outreach ministries, missions, the Scriptures, discipline, visible behavior, vision, values, atmosphere, ceremonies, women, myths and stories, visitors, pastor, staff, doctrinal beliefs, leadership development, and finances.[111]

Schein stated the espoused beliefs and values of the group include the "ideals, goals, values, aspirations, ideologies, and rationalizations."[112] This is what Malphurs referred to as the "flesh" or "second layer" of the cultural apple. He stated, "Churches are

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[105]Schein, *Organizational Culture*, loc. 484.

[106]Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, loc. 286.

[107]Schein, *Organizational Culture*, loc. 681.

[108] Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, loc. 294.

[109]Ibid., loc. 374.

[110]Ibid., loc. 397.

[111]Ibid., loc. 413-84.

[112]Schein, *Organizational Culture*, loc. 681.

behavior-expressed but values-driven. The inward values drive and explain the church's outward behavior. These values explain why the church does what it does at the first behavioral level and why it doesn't do what it should do. When a church culture acts on its beliefs, they become its actual values."[113] These beliefs include the doctrinal statements of the organization, but "also other fundamental aspects of the church's life."[114] Malphurs referred to these beliefs as assumptions "because they are taken for granted as well as shared by the majority of the congregation."[115]

Schein's term "basic assumptions" deals with the "unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values" that "determine behavior, perception, thought, and feeling."[116] Malphurs described this as the "core" or "third level" of the cultural apple. He stated, "As you work your way into the apple's core, the third and most fundamental level, you find the shared beliefs on which the church's culture is based."[117]

Schein and Malphurs helped give categories to the abstract ideas that make up culture. If Malphurs' definition of culture was adapted and applied to the orphan care movement, it would help to shed light on what an orphan care culture is. To paraphrase Malphurs, culture is the unique expression of the interactions of the movement's shared beliefs and its values, which explains its behavior in general and display its unique identity in particular.[118] To put it another way, if one examines the literature, sermons, speeches, etc., of the orphan care movement, one can discern the underlying values (beliefs in action), and core beliefs.

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[113]Malphurs, *Look before You Lead,* loc. 304.

[114]Ibid., loc. 314.

[115]Ibid., loc. 318.

[116]Schein, *Organizational Culture*, loc. 681.

[117]Malphurs, *Look before You Lead*, loc. 310.

[118]Ibid., loc. 272.

Those within the orphan care movement are not afraid to speak of an orphan care or adoption culture. Haskin stated, "Our desire is to cultivate a culture driven by the truth of our adoption in Christ. A culture of adoption when cultivated by the constant and consistent preaching of the gospel not only leads to church unity but to a greater fervency to rescue children from around the world who need adopting."[119] He went on to state, "In adoption culture, everyone has been transformed by the act of adoption and this naturally leads to a desire to rid the world of orphans, both physically and spiritually."[120]

Others also use the language of culture to describe the orphan care movement. Moore stated, "Adoption is about an entire culture within our churches, a culture that sees adoption as part of our Great Commission mandate and as a sign of the gospel itself."[121] Again he said, "A culture of adoption, orphan care, and ministry to mothers in distress announces what the kingdom of God looks like and to whom it belongs."[122] Kovaks stated, "Do not simply adopt orphan care as one ministry among many in the church. . . Create a culture that deeply values the fatherless because God does. An orphan-valuing culture will have a radical impact on the way a church conducts its orphan and adoption ministry both inside and outside the walls."[123]Although Bennett does not use the term culture, he described it. He stated, "Caring for orphans is not just for the super-spiritual or those weird adoption advocates in the church. As we have already seen, orphan ministry is God's call on all believers."[124] Merida and Morton stated, "We believe the goal is to

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[119]Haskins, "From Church Pews," 59.

[120]Haskins, "From Church Pews," 59.

[121]Moore, *Adopting for Life*, 19.

[122]Russell D. Moore, "Orphan Care Isn't Charity," in *A Guide for Adoption & Orphan Care*, ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2012), 81.

[123]Kovaks, "Missional Living," 87.

[124]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless,* 64.

develop a culture of orphan care—a church where the spirit of God's heart for the fatherless permeates the church with unmistakable power and clarity."[125]

Strategies for Implementing
a Culture of Orphan Care

The orphan care movement sees itself as a culture, or at least, as a culture builder. They are connected by a common theology, language, and commitment to vulnerable children. The biblical metaphor of adoption is deeply woven into the fabric of their culture—coloring and shaping the understanding. Their desire to be faithful to the gospel and to care for the orphan unites them in purpose. It also drives them to see others adopt this culture of orphan care.

Merida and Morton described what a church embracing the culture of orphan care will look like:

> Similarly, a church with an orphan care culture will have ministries, teams, printed materials, media, common language, Bible studies, and regular discussion on the topic. They will pray about orphan care in public and private, develop fellowship groups to discuss it, and host events to bring awareness about it. They will celebrate with couples that adopt. They will support the orphan ministries with passion. The church will have *an aroma of Christ's love for the fatherless.*[126]

But how do they get there? Although there may be several ways to answer this question, this section will focus on three: teaching, leading, and providing opportunities to engage. These three reoccur throughout the orphan care literature.

Teaching. Haskins stated, "You must be intentional and specific. People have to be taught how our adoption in Christ changes the way we think about our fellowship with the single mom sitting next to us on Sunday whose rowdy kids continue to distract

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[125]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 1113.

[126]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 1118.

us from worship."[127] He also stated, "By cultivating an adoption culture, through connecting the dots for people, they realize that no matter who, they have a responsibility to care for orphans physically and spiritually in some way. In an adoption culture, this reality is constantly pressed upon us."[128]

Kovaks explained, "Teach, train, and speak about the connection between our mission to the world and adoption. Merida and Morton stated, "The first place to begin with promoting a biblical view of adoption and orphan care is by addressing the matter with clear and compelling biblical instruction."[129] Bennett said it well, "The goal is that through the study . . . you will have a great sense of how God may be calling you and your church to use your unique gifts to meet these needs."[130]

Leading. Leadership is crucial. Schein suggested, "When we are influential in shaping the behavior and values of others, we think of that as "leadership" and are creating the conditions for new cultural formation . . . . In a sense, culture is ultimately created, embedded, evolved, and ultimately manipulated by leaders."[131] Weber encouraged church members seeking to start an orphan care ministry to get leadership involved. He explained, "It is important to have someone in leadership who understands your vision and who can provide feedback as you navigate through the process at your church."[132]

Merida and Morton offered the leader a strategy for leading: lead with the Word, lead by example, and lead with a simple plan. They offered a six-point plan:

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[127]Haskins, "From Church Pews," 60.

[128]Ibid., 61.

[129]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 1118.

[130]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless*, 14.

[131]Schein, *Organizational Culture*, loc. 325.

[132]Weber, *Orphans Ministry*, 6.

aligning with the church's overall vision and values, developing ministries that put feet to the vision, equipping people through training, reflecting values in the budget, evaluating and celebrating regularly, and influencing the influencers within the church.[133] Kimber Graves stated, "Undoubtedly, this begins with church leadership, as pastors, staff, elders and deacons set the tone. The congregation will embrace God's heart for the fatherless and the biblical mandate to care for the orphan as leaders communicate this message verbally and through personal life examples."[134]

Providing opportunities to engage. Moore explained, "In saying that orphan care is missional, I do not mean that every Christian is called to adopt or foster a child. But every Christian is called to care for orphans. As with every aspect of Christ's mission, a diversity of gifts abound."[135] Bennett concluded, "That does not mean everyone reading this should adopt or work at an orphanage. It means that I hope every person will become a passionate advocate for the fatherless in whatever way God calls them."[136] Graves wrote, "Establishing an adoption culture starts with intentional leaders who offer various opportunities for engagement in the orphan care movement."[137] Merida and Morton offered a list of practical ways to be involved in orphan care: an adoption fund, partnering with local foster care, partnering with an overseas orphanage, adopting an international orphanage that is not open to adoption, and combating human trafficking.[138]

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[133]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, locs. 1237-1322.

[134]Kimber Graves, "Orphan Care Ministry: Becoming an Adoption-friendly Church," in *A Guide to Adoption and Orphan Care*, ed. Russell D. Moore (Louisville: SBTS Press, 2009), 65.

[135]Moore, *"Orphan Care,"* 79.

[136]Bennett, *A Passion for the Fatherless,* 26.

[137]Graves, "Orphan Care Ministry," 65.

[138]Merida and Morton, *Orphanology*, loc. 1250.

While theological engagement is seen as a necessary starting point, it certainly is not where members of the orphan care movement want believers to end. The goal of orphan care movement is to drastically reduce the number of vulnerable children in the world. The only way for this to be accomplished is to mobilize the church for orphan care. Weber offered a list of strategies that can be incorporated into orphan care ministries. He argued, "These strategies can be categorized into five modes: (1) prayer, (2) physical needs, (3) financial assistance, (4) education, awareness, and recruitment, and (5) support ministry."[139]

Summary

This chapter has examined the biblical and theological framework of the orphan care movement, the scope of orphan care, the relationship of orphan care and the mission of the church, and the concept of orphan care culture. This research is an attempt to demonstrate the desire within the orphan care movement to build a culture in which every active church member is involved in some form of orphan care. There is little research into developing a culture of adoption and orphan care within a local church. Even the main textbooks of this movement, cited throughout this chapter, only hint at how the work of creating such a culture could or should be done. This research will seek to identify those key strategies that model churches use to develop and sustain a culture of adoption and orphan care.

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[139]Weber, *Orphans Ministry*, 5.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a description of the methods and procedures used for this research study, which examined model churches in order to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in the local church. This chapter includes a synopsis of the research questions, design overview, population, sample, delimitations, limitations of generalizations, instrumentation, and research procedures.

Research Question Synopsis

The purpose of this study was to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in local churches in the United States. The main research question driving this research is: What are the key strategies model churches use to create and nurture a culture of orphan care? However, this question generates a series of sub-questions that undergird it. I have chosen to focus on these three sub-questions:

1. What drives those strategies?

2. How can other churches implement those strategies?

3. What considerations do other churches need to make before they attempt these kinds of strategies?

Design Overview

This research is best described as a multiple case study with content analysis. Gall, Gall, and Borg stated, "Researchers conduct case studies in order to describe,

explain, or evaluate particular social phenomena."[1] Schreiber and Asner-Self explained, "Case studies are used when a program, organization, or individual is studied in depth for a specific period of time. The case study is very useful when a given situation or context is not understood well or there are changes over time."[2] Case study was chosen to gain better understanding of orphan care culture. This study aimed at identifying and describing key strategies used by model churches in developing and sustaining an orphan care culture within the local church.

This research was conducted in four phases. The first phase was the examination of the precedent literature to understand the nature of the orphan care movement. Literature was reviewed to identify the biblical, theological, and social underpinnings of the orphan care movement. The practices suggested in the literature were compared to determine similarity and differences.

The next phase was to develop an expert panel. The individuals were selected because they are actively involved in the orphan care movement either as practitioners, authors, or public speakers. A list of thirty-nine candidates was collected from the precedent literature authors, the speakers list at CAFO,[3] and other organizations. Candidates were sent an email inviting them to participate on the panel (see Appendix 3). Those who responded were sent a thank you email. Those who did not respond within one week were invited a second time. If they responded to the second message, they were sent a thank-you message. At the end of the third week, the panel was closed. Out of the thirty-nine candidates, six accepted the invitation to participate, seven declined, and twenty-six did not respond.

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[1]Joyce P. Gall, M. D. Gall, and Walter R. Borg, *Applying Educational Research: A Practical Guide,* 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1999), 289.

[2]James Schreiber, and Kimberly Asner-Self, *Educational Research* (Danvers, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 203.

[3]Christian Alliance for Orphans, "Speaker Bureau," accessed May 25, 2015, https://cafo.org/resources/speakers/.

The panel was asked to identify five churches that could serve as models for some aspect of orphan care ministry and that they were reasonably confident would participate in this research. In addition to identifying the churches, the expert panel members were asked to provide the name of a contact person within the model church, their contact information, and the field in which the church could serve as a model.

The expert panel recommended thirty-four churches and organizations. Organizations were not considered for this study. The twenty-nine identified churches served as a pool from which to select three to five cases to research. Church response determined the number of cases. Churches that appeared on lists from multiple experts were given priority. Two churches fit this criterion. However, only one of them responded to the invitation to participate. Some of the recommendations were incomplete, i.e., the church name was given, but contact information was not included. In such cases, I searched the internet for church information. Priority was given to churches with contact information, and emails were sent to individuals who would serve as the primary contact point within the church. Over a dozen churches were contacted in the first two weeks of June 2015. Two of them responded before the end of June. One responded in early July.

In preparation for the third phase, an interview protocol was developed for qualitative interviews with key personal. The protocol was submitted to the ethics committee for approval. After approval, key personnel in selected churches were contacted to determine their willingness to participate (see appendix 6). Primary contacts were tasked with recruiting volunteers to interview (i.e., pastor, staff, adoptive families, workers in the church's orphan care ministry, etc.). Volunteers were sent a letter of invitation by email by the primary contact (see appendix 7). Although multiple options were given, all interviews took place on a one-to-one basis over the telephone. Following the interviews, the material was coded, transcribed, and analyzed. In addition to recruiting potential interviewees, primary contacts were asked to identify and provide

additional resources such as sermons, websites, documents, etc., that their organization used to develop and promote an orphan care culture. Where available, a comparison between the church documents, media, and interviews was conducted.

In the final phase, qualitative content analysis was performed on all material to determine what themes and patterns emerged. Using the strategies identified in the precedent literature, the transcripts were analyzed for themes and patterns. Three strategies had been identified: teaching, leading, and providing opportunities to engage in orphan care. These three strategies served as broad categories for identifying themes. For example, there were several sub-themes to emerge under the concept teaching. The list of sub-themes included: communication, awareness, Bible study, sermons, talking to others about orphan care, etc. In addition to those strategies already identified in the precedent literature, I examined the interviews for emerging themes and patterns. For example, several interviewees mentioned support groups, group meetings, sharing with those who are serving in similar ways, etc.

Interview transcripts were uploaded and analyzed in QSR International's© NVivo 10© software package for Windows©. Initially, each transcript was coded by question. The interview protocol contained twelve questions broken down into three categories. The answer to each question was then analyzed to determine which themes and patterns emerged. After the individual questions were analyzed, they were compared to the other questions within their categories. For example, question 1 was in a category with questions 2 and 3. The answers to these questions would be examined in light of each other to determine the overall themes and patterns that emerged within the category. Following the analysis within each category, I analyzed the responses from individuals within the same church to determine which themes emerged.

This research concluded with a cross-case analysis to determine what key strategies emerged. After completing an analysis of the individual churches, I compared

the major themes that emerged within each category within each church. Insights drawn from the first three phases were used to find comparisons and determine what, if any, key strategies emerged.

Population

For the purpose of this study, the population was evangelical churches that had been identified by an expert panel as being potential models of some aspect of orphan care.

Sample

Merriam explained, "Purposive sampling is based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most."[4] In order to select a sample from which the most can be learned, I recruited an expert panel. The sample was drawn from a list of churches generated by that expert panel. The experts were asked to identify five churches they felt were models in some aspect of orphan care. Twenty-nine churches were suggested. Thirteen of those churches had complete contact information. Each of these churches was sent an invitation. Three churches agreed to participate. Those churches are: Green Acres Baptist Church, in Tyler, Texas; Living Hope Church in Marysville, Ohio; and The Summit Church, in Durham, North Carolina. All three churches are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). This was not a research criterion.

Delimitations

1. This research was delimited to evangelical churches actively involved in some aspect of orphan care.

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[4]Sharan B. Merriam, *Case Study Research in Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1988), 48.

2. This research was delimited to churches identified by an expert panel as churches that could serve as models in some aspect of orphan care.

3. This research was delimited to three. However, no fewer than five contacts were interviewed in each church.

4. This research was delimited to the specific organizational culture of the churches that participated in the case study.

Limitations of Generalizations

1. Since the research was focused on local church culture, this research will not be generalizable to para-church organizations, ministries, or government agencies.

2. Since all the churches selected for this research were evangelical, this research will not be generalizable to non-evangelical churches.

3. Since all the churches selected for this study were in the United States, this research will not be generalizable to churches outside of the United States.

4. Since this research focuses on a small sample of three churches in unique contexts, this research will not be generalizable to different contexts.

Instrumentation

This research gathered data through semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals connected to each church's orphan care and/or adoption ministry. The interview protocol is in appendix 5. These interviews were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed. In addition to the interview, resources suggested by the model church were analyzed. These resources included websites, sermons, and reading lists.

Research Procedures

1. After completing the literature review, I developed an interview protocol and a dissertation study participation form.

2. I identified experts in the field of adoption and orphan care from the literature, the internet, and the recommendations from faculty and ministry colleagues.

3. I submitted the interview protocol and dissertation study participation form for approval with Research Ethics Committee.

4. After the Committee granted approval, I contacted the list of experts via email in order to solicit their personal recommendations of churches that are models of some aspect of orphan care.

5.   I compiled a list of churches based on the recommendation of the expert panel.

6.   After the list was compiled, I contacted key personnel from selected churches to determine their willingness to participate.

7.   Priority was given to churches that appeared on more than one expert's list. Two fit that criterion. Only one of those churches agreed to participate. Every recommendation that contained contact information was invited via email to participate. Those that responded within the given time frame were included in the study. Three churches responded.

8.   When the key contact affirmed willingness to participate, I emailed interview protocol and a link to the participation form to them, and solicited their help in arranging an opportunity to interview members of their church. Any individual that they felt was qualified to address their church's orphan care culture, was interviewed, as long as they were over 18 years of age. Key contacts that secured between 5 and 12 interviewees were offered a $25 gift card of their choosing.

9.   Once participants had completed the online form, I contacted them to schedule the interview. All the interviews were done over the phone. Interviewees were offered a $10 gift card of their choosing.

10. I gathered the recommended resources from participating churches when possible: sermons, podcasts, websites, documents, resource lists, etc.

11. I sent a thank-you letter and gift cards to the interviewees at the conclusion of the research.

12. I categorized, analyzed, and reported the findings of data collected.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

As was made clear in the literature review, there is a need for churches to establish orphan care cultures. What was less clear, however, is how churches are to establish those cultures. This study aimed at identifying the key strategies to developing and sustaining a culture of orphan care in the local church. Using an interview protocol that I created, I was able to get an inside glimpse of the orphan care cultures of participating churches. This study was qualitative in nature and used purposeful sampling and semi-structured interviews to gather data. Other materials, recommended by participating churches, were examined as well.

Compilation Protocols

The data for this study was collected through personal interviews that I conducted with individuals connected to the particular churches. Participants were required to complete a Dissertation Participation Form (see Appendix 4). After completing the form, arrangements were made to complete the interview. These interviews used an Interview Protocol created by the researcher (see Appendix 5).

The interviews were completed over the phone, and digitally recorded. The first interview was recorded using Audacity® sound editing software. The remaining interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and uploaded into Audacity®. Three of the 16 interviews were damaged during the recording process. Two of them were recovered using Audacity®. The sound quality on the third was inaudible. The audio files were then transcribed using Microsoft Word© software.

Transcripts were uploaded into NVivo 10© which is a qualitative analysis software. I analyzed the transcripts creating *nodes* within the software.[1] These nodes permit a researcher to retrieve concepts, themes, and patterns easily from the transcript. The software also permits the researcher to perform queries to determine how frequently a word was used, to look for similar words, and more. The interview consisted of twelve questions divided into three categories. The questions were analyzed individually and across categories.

Table 1. Categories and interview questions

Categories	Question
Establishment of Orphan Care Culture	1. In your opinion, what does it mean to have an orphan care culture?
	2. What do you believe prompted your church to focus on orphan care/adoption?
	3. What do you believe prompted you to embrace the church's culture of orphan care/adoption?
Methodology	4. What approaches or strategies have had the greatest impact in developing the culture of orphan care and or adoption in your church?
	5. Imagine God led you to join another church. This new church does not have a culture of orphan care/adoption. How would you go about seeing an orphan care culture birthed in that church?
	6. What advice would you give an enthusiastic orphan care proponent who was in a church that had not yet caught the vision for orphan care ministry?
	7. What has been the greatest challenge your church has faced in building an orphan care culture?
	8. What pitfalls would you warn other churches of when it comes to establishing an orphan care culture?
	9. Is there anything about developing a culture of orphan care which you have not yet mentioned, that you feel is important for people to hear?
Sustaining Orphan Care Culture	10. What approaches or strategies have had the greatest impact on sustaining the culture of orphan care and or adoption in your church?
	11. In your opinion, what has been key to maintaining the orphan care culture in your church?
	12. Are there any additional insights you would like to share concerning sustaining a culture of orphan care with a local church?

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[1] A node is the software's term for codes.

Findings and Displays

In this section, I will offer an analysis of three churches, Green Acres Baptist Church, Living Hope Church, and the Summit Church. These churches will be presented with contextual information including geographic location, expressed beliefs and values, and their involvement with orphan care.

Green Acres Baptist Church

Green Acres is located in Tyler, Texas. It is a mega-church with over 16,000 members.[2] According to their website, "Green Acres Baptist Church exists to: Exalt God's greatness, Evangelize God's world, Equip God's people and Express God's love- through Jesus Christ our Lord."[3] The church has been actively engaged in developing an orphan care culture since January 4th, 2009 when they launched their orphan care ministry campaign, Hope for 100.[4] It was a campaign to "find 100 families who would adopt or foster a child needing a home."[5] Their goal was to have those 100 families within five years; they reached their goal in less than two.

The key contact was part of the initial meetings for Hope for 100. He issued an email to those within the Hope for 100 ministry. There were two women, three men. Of the five people who responded, three were current members. Two, a husband and wife, had been members of the church, but had moved out of state. Since they were familiar with the church's culture and had stayed in contact with families within the orphan care ministry, I interviewed them. Table 2 demonstrates everyone's experience in orphan care.

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[2]Green Acres Baptist Church, "David Dykes: About," accessed October 5, 2015, http://www. gabc.org/pastor.

[3]Green Acres Baptist Church, "About: Mission Statement," accessed October 5, 2015, http://www.gabc.org/about.

[4]Hope for 100, "History," accessed October 5, 2015, http://hopefor100.org/?page_id=24. Hope for 100 is the website for Green Acres' orphan care ministry.

[5]Ibid.

Table 2: Length and type of involvement in orphan care

Codes	Length of Involvement in Orphan Care	Type(s) of Involvement in Orphan Care
GA-1	6-10 years	Staff, Adoptive Parent
GA-2	3-5 years	Adoptive Parent, Committee
GA-3	11-15 years	Member, Adoptive Parent
GA-4	11-15 years	Member, Adoptive Parent
GA-5	6-10 years	Staff, Adoptive Parent, Volunteer

What prompted the shift towards developing an orphan care culture? The interviews shed much light on that question. The interview protocol had three sections: the first addressed the establishment of the orphan care culture, the second addressed the methods used to develop an orphan care culture, and the third section addressed sustaining that culture.

Category 1: Establishment of
Orphan Care/Adoption Culture

This section looks at the first three questions of the interview protocol. The first question aimed at understanding what the participants and by extension their church meant when they spoke about orphan care culture. The term culture is a nebulous term that can be difficult to define. Question 2 sought to understand what drove the church to pursue an orphan care culture. Question 3 sought to understand what drove the interviewee to adopt the church's new culture.

Question 1. Interviewees were asked what having an orphan care culture meant to them. Their answers were varied, but there were some common threads. In the precedent literature, it was clear that the orphan care movement had a clear biblical and theological underpinning. Obedience to the Scripture is a prime motivator for many orphan care proponents. That reality was affirmed while speaking to the interviewees. Four out of the five referenced the influence of the Word. GA-5 said, "It means that the

church is taking seriously the commands in Scripture, in James 1:27, that pure religion is to care for the orphans and widows and strangers." GA-2 stated, "It's our job to help take care of those who don't have parents. It specifically states that in the Word." In his explanation, GA-1 reasoned, "Well, the Bible states the church is to care for orphans and widows in their distress. We are just trying to be obedient to the Word of the Lord in doing that." When asked his opinion, GA-4 stated, "I would definitely say the congregation is on that would be going above and beyond what Jesus Christ has told us what to do."

While obedience to the demands of Scripture appeared to be a prime descriptor for what an orphan care culture is, it was not the only suggestion. The other descriptors fell into a wider theme: compassionate activity. For these interviewees, it was compassionate activity specifically aimed at orphans and those who would care for them. GA-2 called for "Open arms of the church to those who are orphans, and not necessarily just adoption, but foster care, sponsorship, for anything a person can do, for advocacy, anything the church can do to help the orphan population around the world." Concerning the call to care for the orphan, GA-5 opined, "They are committed to make it happen, and [to have] a physical expression of that in ways that people in the church can recognize and get involved with." Specifically addressing the culture at Green Acres, GA-3 stated, "They wanted to help adoptive parents to be able to adopt and be able to go through the process as painlessly as possible, so to speak."

A primary theme reflected in the answers to this question was the theme of obedience to the Word. Another theme was compassionate activity which could be seen as an extension of personal involvement. A final theme that emerged was the need to provide opportunities for service. These answers described a culture informed by the biblical mandate to care for the orphan in which people are given opportunity to display compassionate activity on behalf of the orphan and their caregivers.

Question 2. Participants were asked why they thought the church embraced an orphan care culture. Three themes stood out in this question: the role of an individual, the role of pastoral leadership, and the general climate of the church.

On the Hope for 100 website, two people, Rocky and Carrie Gill, were credited with prompting this change within the congregation.[6] Rocky was mentioned by name twice during the interview, referenced twice without name, and alluded to once. Four out of the five interviewees addressed his involvement in some way. GA-2 captured the sentiment well, "But it all stems from a person whom God laid on their heart to bring it to the church." This theme highlighted the importance of individuals responding to God's call on their lives. It also suggested the power of one's personal testimony. Rocky Gill recognized God calling him, calling his church to do something more for orphans. What did he do? GA-1 recounted, "But he literally sat on that idea, that feeling for about three years just praying about it not knowing what to do." When the church "created a new ministry position . . . helping people create and start new ministries," he approached that minister.

They went to the pastor. Pastoral leadership was the second theme to emerge from these interviews. GA-5 stated, "The pastor was incredibly supportive, and said he would get behind it in every way. The pastor actually preached a sermon on how the church . . . really had no focus or had no visible presence doing anything for the orphan." He also recounted, "He said he would give us an 'A' for what we were doing for the widow, but would give ourselves an 'F' in what we were doing for orphans." Three out of the five interviewees addressed the pastor's supportive response.

The third theme related to the overall climate of the church. GA-2 described what I mean by climate when she explained, "And there are so many people who are

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[6]Hope For 100, "History."

adopted or foster children or who are or were in the process of adopting or would open their mind and heart to adopting that it really caught on quickly." Or as GA-3 stated, "There were several families at the time that were wanting to adopt, and they just weren't sure how to go about it."

Three primary themes dominated these responses: the role of the individual, pastoral leadership, and the overall climate of the church. Both the leadership and individual church members were essential to creating a climate conducive to embracing an orphan care culture. Whereas this question focused on why the church embraced an orphan care culture, the next question focused on the participants' reasons for embracing the church's decision.

Question 3. Question 3 prompted the interviewees to recount why they felt it important to embrace an orphan care culture. The answers to this question did not fall as neatly into larger categories, but two categories stood out: an invitation to join and personal openness to the concept.

Reflecting again on the power of an individual, GA-5 stated, "I guess I wouldn't have got involved if [Rocky] hadn't put the call out there." GA-3 recalled, "A friend of mine started working at Children's Hope International. She invited me to an interest meeting. I told my husband let's go check this out, and we did. [We were] a little apprehensive at first . . . but by the time we left we were very excited." Her husband, GA-4 added, "She said, 'Why don't you guys come and check it out.' And basically by the end of the evening I was ready to . . . actually we did sign up, and said, 'I'm sold. Let's do it.'" Whether it is called an invitation or a challenge, whether it's personal or private, there is power in presenting people with the opportunity to experience it for themselves.

What makes the invitation so powerful? This is where the other voices came in and themes emerge. For some it was a sense of calling. As GA-2 expressed with these words, "I think that it started as God planted a seed in my heart as a teenager. . . .[My

husband and I] have just both had a heart, for a long time, for adopting a child." For others, personal experience prompted them to respond. GA-1 said, "I'm actually an adoptive dad. I have always had a heart for that because my family has been blessed through it." Some people were just open to it. GA-5 explained, "It struck me as something I wanted to be involved with. I didn't think at the time that we would adopt ourselves, but I certainly was open to it." GA-4 confessed, "We couldn't have kids biologically, so I had always told her, 'We can always adopt.' I don't think she took me seriously, you know, that I was serious about doing it."

These responses suggested it was important to provide opportunity through personal invitation. General invitations were seen as helpful as well. The perception was that people want to be included and invitations help them to feel like they could be involved. If an individual has no personal interest, it is unlikely that an invitation will have an impact. So, it might help to cultivate a climate where people are open to embracing the invitation to care for orphans.

Summary. This category described a culture in which people informed by the biblical mandate to care for the orphan were given opportunities to display compassionate activity on behalf of the orphan and their caregivers. It appeared that both the leadership and the individual church member were essential to leading others to adopt an orphan care culture. It seemed that it was also helpful to cultivate a climate where people are open to embracing the invitations. This section has examined the category of establishing an orphan care culture. The next section looked more closely at the methods they used to get there.

Category 2: Methodology

This section looked at questions 4 through 9 of the interview protocol. Questions 4, 5, and 6 examined the various approaches or strategies used to develop an

orphan care culture. Question 7 looked at the challenges churches face in the processes of adopting an orphan care culture. Question 8 looked at the pitfalls other churches should avoid. Finally, question 9 asked for additional insight into the process.

Question 4. Interviewees were asked to identify the strategies that have had the greatest impact on developing an orphan care culture. In the initial analysis, the themes planning and support groups seemed to compete for the role of most important strategy, but after additional consideration it appeared that they are really one theme: develop support structures. This one theme drew in some of the lesser themes as well: support of leader, prayer, training, providing resources, events, and communication.

Culture by nature is wide and all-encompassing. A church can have an orphan focus without having an orphan culture, but the reverse cannot be said. Respondent GA-1 captured the scope of the task with these words, "We had these different teams that were out there, and so we kind of covered all the different aspects of where families would be and what they would need." They were trying to anticipate the needs, so that they were met before the need arose.

Part of their strategy to build support structures appeared to be the development of networks. Over the nearly nine months of planning that went on behind the scene, prior to the launch of Hope for 100, teams were being built. GA-3 stated, "Those people brought in the knowledge . . . to put this into place, and by using the strategies they came with, they were able to . . . contribute to the whole picture." Interviewee GA-4 explained, "I know it has to do with the people they had in place to start the program. To start, not only did they have people who that had actually adopted . . . the people they had in place could make it happen."

Not only did they develop a network of teams, they also developed community networks to support the families embracing this calling. GA-1 indicated that they developed groups to help people with pre-adoption needs, post-adoption needs, financial

issues, and international adoption. In her interview GA-2 implied Green Acres successfully developed an orphan care culture because it had two things: a great team of adoptive families who were willing to share their struggles and a ministry to those "who have already adopted or are fostering." Respondent GA-5 described the ministry, Forever Families, "where once you have adopted you can join a post-adoption support group where you can come together, adoptive families come together, and do things together. . . . there really is a lot of support structures in place to help people both before, as well as, after they adopt."

The orphan care culture appeared to be further strengthened by the spiritual support it received. GA-1 stated, "We had a prayer team that everything we did was bathed in prayer." He said, they even had an "advertising team where we could effectively get the word out about what we were doing and why it was important." According to GA-5, the pastor was another "crucial" support. Events like Orphan Sunday kept the cause of the orphan before the church. In addition, the church encouraged those who would like to, to attend the CAFO Orphan Care Summit annually. This question highlighted the need to develop detailed support structures that cover every facet of orphan care in which a church might be involved.

Developing support structures was a main theme. The minor themes were connected to the theme of developing support structures. Support from the leadership created a reinforcement of commitment. Prayer sought divine support. Training, events, and resources were all classified as organizational support structures. These support structures were nurtured through communication. In this question, participants explained the strategies the church used to establish an orphan care culture. In the next question, they described which strategies they would use.

Question 5. In a what-if scenario, interviewees were asked to describe what they would do if they had to start an orphan care culture within a new local church. This

question was designed to force the participant to move from thinking about how it was done in the church to thinking about how they would do it. Things assumed when answering question 4 were hopefully examined in a different light when answering this question.

While the pastor's support was identified as "crucial" in question 4, it was given greater emphasis in this question. In four out of five of the interviews, the participants stated they would start with the pastor. GA-5 stated, "I would definitely ask to meet with the pastor, the senior pastor. I think it is important to work with the church leadership, and not try and do something on your own, like off to the side." GA-2 suggested, "Have the pastors and the leadership of the church involved and on board first." Interviewee GA-1 warned, "It's key, that the lead pastor, the senior pastor, set the vision for it within the church. I think once that happens, then it becomes organic within the church."

Although playing a smaller part in the answer to this question, the theme of developing support structures was still present. It was visible in the call to develop teams and relational networks. Although she did not use the term team, GA-2 suggested forming a committee to "drive the vision for the church." GA-4 stated, "If you have a core group of people that have a passion, like other people have for missions. Get that base of solid [people]." It was a call for structural support from the organizational standpoint. There was also a call for relational support. GA-5 opined, "I'd like to see if I could get other like minded people who would want to join and work together with me in coming up with different ways and avenues of service for people to get involved." GA-2 stated, "I would like a support group for adoptive families, if there are any, because I think that the passion for adoption, it grows from a person especially who has been involved in that area." Relationships appeared important because they help spread a passion for orphan care.

In addition to support networks people needed opportunities to see, share, and serve. As GA-5 suggested, "It can be everything from bring an emphasis on orphans once a year to the church, like an Orphan Sunday program, or go on mission trips, having an outlet for orphan care involved in the various mission trips that the church is involved in." GA-2 urged, "Have those families share their stories, who would like to, and have a forum available." Giving people opportunities made sense when the pastor was casting a vision and the church had structures in place. The next question, once again, forced the interviewee to reframe their answers. There were three main themes in these answers. The first theme was the importance of pastoral support. The second theme was developing support structures. The final theme was providing opportunities for engagement. This question addressed the participants' approach to building an orphan care culture, and in the next question they advised someone else on how to build that culture.

Question 6. This question challenged the participants to give advice to a friend who wants to start an orphan care culture in their church. The most significant theme in the question was to talk to others about it. The interviewees encouraged their friends to talk to others, to talk to God, and to talk to the pastor. GA-1 explained, "Begin to talk with other like-minded people. . . .You're talking to people, telling your story. Helping people understand the biblical mandate to care for children that need a home or a foster family." GA-4 stated, "I would try to get other people onboard in the church to make it a mission—make it a ministry in itself." Participant GA-2 explained, "They can always start with people who already have a passion--try to find one family that shares your vision."

Three of the participants suggested going to other families within the church. There were two suggestions to pray. GA-2 cautioned that prayer would be the first thing they did. GA-1 stated, "The first and most important thing we did was to just pray, pray,

pray. Really seek the Lord's face in this." One person suggested talking to the pastor. GA-2 suggested, "You could ask the pastor if you could take a couple of minutes one Sunday or Wednesday and just share your heart. I just think sharing your raw heart calling with your church family is the place to begin."

Another significant theme was to seek training. Interviewee GA-5 said, "I would really encourage them to go to Summit [CAFO]. . . . They tap into different ministries that have resource packs, DVDs, and things like that [which] will assist churches in building up their own orphan care programs." GA-1 suggested, "There are some great resources out there. . . . *If You Were Mine* conference that we used, kind of, as our launching component here." GA-2 concluded, "I think education, there are lots and lots of resources out there for educating the church." The key in this theme was to educate oneself, in order to educate others.

The major theme in these answers was to talk to others. It could take the form of engaging others in conversation about orphan care or sharing one's story. It could take the form of engaging a pastor in dialogue about orphan care, so that he will open doors of engagement in the future. It is often overlooked, but prayer is talking to God. These conversations were about connecting with God and others in order to care for the orphan. This question concluded the look at strategies. The next question looked at challenges a church may face on the road to an orphan care culture.

Question 7. This question asked participants to identify the greatest challenges they have faced in establishing an orphan care culture. The majority of participants struggled with identifying challenges and would only offer them tentatively, taking the time to explain that it was not a challenge for their church. They could, however, see how the things they mentioned might be a problem in another church. For this question, the challenges were identified as themes and displayed in table 3.

The interviewees suggested these as possible challenges to the development of an adoption or orphan care culture: keeping the why of orphan care fresh in their minds, developing an effective post-adoption care ministry, finances, racism, competition from other ministries within a church, and a lack of pastoral support. Although this list was not exhaustive, it is insightful.

Table 3: The greatest challenges

Participant	Challenges
GA-1	"Being consistent with our message of why we do this."
GA-2	"The greatest challenge has been creating that after-adoption care ministry."
GA-3	"Definitely one challenge is being able to have the resources that you need to be able to afford it."
GA-4	"I don't know . . . Maybe some people even though they're Christian might be opposed to a bi-racial family . . . . I don't think Green Acres would say that."
GA-5	"If there was anything was a challenge it would be that our church is so large that there are so many things that compete for people's time and attention, you know, really wonderful ministries that occupy people's time." "I imagine it would be completely different if you tried to start an orphan culture in a church where the pastor or leadership didn't want involved or wanted you to do it kind of on your own."

Question 8. This question asked interviewees to identify any pitfalls that other churches should avoid. Respondents were either quick to answer or slow to respond. For some interviewees, it seemed the nobility of the cause should banish any difficulty, but others recognized the difficulty that often accompanies emotionally charged ministries. Each pitfall was given a theme within this case. The themes were compared with the other cases in the cross-case analysis. Several of the pitfalls involved planning. The interviewees encouraged churches to plan God-sized stuff, so that God will be glorified. They warned that churches needed to plan wisely. As churches plan they need to make

sure they have everything the families will need, to make sure that the resources they

gather are aboveboard, and that people understand all the steps to move forward in the

process. Finally, make sure that the churches continue to care for the families even after

the children come home. Their responses were recorded in table 4.

Table 4: Pitfalls

Participant	Pitfalls
GA-1	"First of all I think churches think too small, they're too cautious. Make it a God-sized task, so God gets the credit for it. If we manage it in earthly terms or human terms, I think we miss out on some of God's greatest blessings. Make it big; make it God-sized, and that way God gets the credit for it. And when that happens, it just continues to explode. I would also say plan it out well." "If you don't have your plan in place, if you don't have the right people there, or the right goals or vision, then you can get sidetracked and very distracted, down in the weeds, so to speak. Be very cautious in how you launch it; be ready for it whenever you do launch it."
GA-2	"Make sure they present the entire package. Don't leave something out. That means make sure you have someone in place to help with educating families about finances and how they can fund an adoption. Make sure you have several local adoption and foster care agencies ready to assist and answer questions. Make sure that you have that whole team, because it does . . . a family a disservice because it doesn't help because the process is so complicated."
GA-3	"In establishing an orphan care culture you want to make sure everything is genuine and it's all on the level. And everybody knows what to expect, and how things will go."
GA-4	"I would hope the church would be supportive, and be there. I would hate for the church to come and say, 'Oh yes, we are going to support you,' and then after the adoption just kind of drop off and you never hear from them again."
GA-5	"People can get in to it for the wrong reasons." "People can try to build a ministry without really the Lord's direction or without really seeking God. . . . If you really want to make a difference . . . orphan care really needs to be birthed in prayer, and really trying to seek God's heart for the orphan, and not just trying to launch something or do some work because you feel like there is a need or an opportunity or something like that."

Table 5: Additional advice for developing an orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
GA-1	"When you start bringing in kids that are from hard places, that have special needs, that are international students from different cultures and backgrounds, it will cause a culture shift in your church. But what it has done for our church is that is has given our church a greater world vision and a world view, a biblical world view. Which I think is great. But I think your church has to be ready for that, at least the staff, the leaders need to be ready for that because it affects children's ministry, it affects adult ministry, youth ministry, all that." "People were thinking that we were raising money to pay for their adoptions, and that wasn't the case at all. So just managing those expectations would be very, very important."
GA-2	"It is extremely rewarding. It's God's work, but also the families need support as well." "There are children, especially internationally, children with special physical and cognitive needs that are available for adoption much more in the past where more healthy children were available. Just having that understanding and the resources available there to show them where to go, the right agencies, and make sure they do the homework on the agency that they provide. . . . You just have to make sure to check your resources before offering them." "Paint the whole picture. It is a wonderful thing; it's a needed thing . . . the church needs to make other opportunities, not just adoption, available through orphan care ministries. . . . It's a full-faceted ministry not just for families looking to adopt or who have adopted."
GA-3	"I think that that developing a culture is definitely an important part of orphan care, and showing them the right steps and direction to go in."
GA-4	"I don't' think so. I believe we've covered it."
GA-5	"Nah, I think I have said everything."

Question 9. This question encouraged interviewees to share additional

insights. The table that follows contains their responses. Although two respondents did

not have any additional material to add, the other three offered multiple points to

consider. To summarize: expect a change of culture, manage expectations, realize joy that

comes from participating in orphan care does not necessarily remove the difficulties,

support those families with well-proven resources, "paint the whole picture" of orphan

care, the needs are greater than adoption and foster care, and finally, remember it is a good thing when done correctly.

Summary. This section examined the development of an orphan care culture within Green Acres Baptist Church. The interviewees highlighted the importance of developing support structures, both organizationally and relationally. They pointed out the role of the pastor and prayer. Another important strategy was to talk about orphan care to others. There might be some challenges and pitfalls to avoid, so churches must carefully plan and research in order to accomplish a transition towards an orphan care culture. The next section addressed sustaining that culture.

Category 3: Sustaining Orphan Care/Adoption Culture

Once a church has built an orphan care culture, how does it maintain that culture? What strategies are the most effective in nurturing that culture? These were the questions at the heart of this section.

Question 10. To answer this question, the interviewees had to explain what strategies and approaches they have used to maintain the orphan care culture they had established in their churches. Based on responses to previous questions, it was no surprise that support networks cropped up again as a theme. The expression "support network" is used here as an umbrella term describing all the various ways in which support is provided in and through the church. There was spiritual support, as GA-4 explained, "I think it is the power of prayer." In addition to that, he mentioned human resources. He stated, "I think it's the mass numbers that they have—a bigger group to pull from." GA-3 also mentioned people as a sustaining force. She responded, "I think there is a really good support group of people who have really been a strong center of this group, and I know that they have been very present with those people who have adopted and brought

in orphans into their homes and their families. So, I think having a strong support group is a huge plus." Human resources were acknowledged by GA-2 as well. She stated, "I think the people who maintain passion for the ministry, and bringing in fresh, new people, even someone who could keep all their other resources up to date."

Two other themes emerged upon analysis: visibility and opportunity. GA-5 stated, "I would say Orphan Sunday is a big one. Every first Sunday in November we celebrate Orphan Sunday in our church, and give the whole service to that. And I think that is a big thing. And, too, encouraging people to go to Summit is also something. And then, periodically we recognize families that have adopted and have them stand up and pray for them." Again, the key was keeping people aware of what was happening and why the church was doing it. The theme of opportunity was connected to visibility because it is what is often seen. GA-1 stated, "Continuing to develop new ideas and opportunities. When we first started this, we focused a lot on adoption and foster care. Over the course of time we realized that we sort of saturated the market . . . So we began praying about other opportunities for ministry." In addition, he explained, "We're now helping and working with other churches to help them create a culture within their church. We've got about twenty-three churches that we are working with on different levels to do something in their church."

Question 11. This question adjusted the focus slightly from examining specific strategies to identifying more general principles. The similarity in questions created a similarity in themes. Interviewee GA-1 explained, "Trying new things. Keeping the ministry in front of the church in creative ways. Supporting families that have gone through adoption or foster care. I think that those are some of the key ways. I think it's just trying new stuff. It's not the same thing over and over. We're engaging people in different ways and on different levels." Participant GA-2 concurred, "Just keep it in the front of everyone's mind. I think it is important to sustaining that ministry." GA-5 stated,

"Also just having the support of the senior pastor. Also just having a visual in front of the church. We have a house, a graphic, a house that we built made of bricks of different families that have adopted. So there's that visual that people continue to see every Sunday. Every time another family adopts we add them onto the visual." Another way they kept it visual was to host an Orphan Sunday. Two of the participants suggested it was key to maintaining the culture of orphan care. People who were passionate about orphan care kept it visible in the church as well. GA-2 stated, "I think it comes down to people who are listening to God's calling in their life and who are passionate about orphan care ministry and keeping it going."

Training also kept the culture fresh in mind, Participant GA-3 explained:

I know that within Green Acres they have times where they will just have different sessions or weekends where they just invite adoptive families and kids to just come together, and be able to offer either just some family time or not classes *per se*, but just those times where people can learn maybe some different approaches of parenting or being able to reach out to those kids to help them feel that they have a place, and that they are safe and secure. So, I know that's something that Green Acres is really good about is just trying to keep this ministry thriving and growing, and along with doing that helping those families feel that support through the different times of year that they offer these particular times for families.

Table 6. Additional advice for sustaining orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
GA-1	"Don't think small, but do something, because it's mandated in the Word of God."
GA-2	"I don't think so."
GA-3	"Continuing to have that support for those adoptive kids and their families. . . . to give them that security and helping them to know that they are needed and there is a vital part for them . . . within this ministry."
GA-4	"I think more churches should try to cultivate it. . . [because] there is a need out there."
GA-5	"One thing we've done as a church is we hosted a regional gathering of all the churches in our city and in our district . . . So we can talk together from time to time, and learn from one another."

Table 7. Summary of Green Acres Baptist Church's themes

Categories	Themes
Establishment of Orphan Care Culture	1. This category describes a culture informed by the biblical mandate to care for the orphan in which people are given opportunity to display compassionate activity on behalf of the orphan and their caregivers.
	2. Both leadership and the individual church member are essential to leading others to adopt an orphan care culture.
	3. It is also helpful to cultivate a climate where people are open to embracing the invitations.
Methodology	4. The main theme was developing support structures. This one theme drew in some of the lesser themes as well: support of leader, prayer, training, providing resources, events, and communication.
	5. Three main themes emerged: pastoral support, developing structure, and providing opportunities.
	6. The most significant theme in the question is to talk to others. The interviewees encouraged their friends to talk to others, to talk to God, and to talk to the pastor.
	7. Challenges: keeping the why of orphan care fresh in their minds, developing an effective post-adoption care ministry, finances, racism, competition from other ministries within a church, and a lack of pastoral support.
	8. Pitfalls: plan God-sized stuff, so that God will be glorified, plan wisely, as you are planning make sure you have everything the families will need, make sure that the resources you gather are aboveboard and that people understand all the steps to move forward in the process, and finally, make sure that you continue to care for the families even after the children come home.
	9. Advice: Expect a change of culture, manage expectations, realize joy that comes from participating in orphan care does not necessarily remove the difficulties, support those families with well-proven resources, "paint the whole picture" of orphan care, the needs are greater than adoption and foster care, and finally, remember it is a good thing when done correctly.
Sustaining Orphan Care Culture	10. Three themes stood out: support structures, visibility, and opportunity.
	11. Visibility and opportunity emerge as leading themes.
	12. Insights: urge engagement.

Question 12. This final question looked for additional advice concerning sustaining an orphan care culture. Interviewees were given the opportunity to share any insights from the depths of their experience that they thought would be invaluable. Their

insights were recorded in table 6 on page 70. With these parting words, the interviewees sought to call others to action. One pointed out the mandate to care for the orphan. One drove home the importance of maintaining support structures. Another expressed his longing to see more churches cultivate an orphan care culture. The last interviewee suggested developing a larger network with neighboring churches.

Summary. The image of Green Acres that emerges from this examination of interviews is extremely enlightening. It appeared from the interviews and the supporting materials that this church has worked diligently to develop and sustain a culture of orphan care. A summary of Green Acres themes is recorded in table 7 on page 71.

Living Hope Church

Living Hope Church is located in Marysville, Ohio. It officially launched in April 2009 and has grown to an average weekly attendance of over four hundred people.[7] Jeremy Westbrooks is the senior pastor.[8] According to LH-4, the key contact for Living Hope, the press toward an orphan care culture was led by the pastor. She explained:

> It started from our pastor and his wife having a heart and understanding God's heart, and not just wanting to preach about it, but to respond to James 1:27 and, you know, remaining persistent. He had spoken with another family in their church. We were not even members of the church at that time. I was just an advocate, and speaking, doing community work and support. We met in their home, the six of us, and talked about what orphan care looks like, and what it meant to us and why it was a passion of mine and my husband's and how we could help their church. Again, I wasn't even a part of their church at the time. I helped their church begin an orphan care ministry. Their heart and their love, their heart not only for orphan care, but for the Word and living that out in the community won my husband and I over. We not only helped establish an orphan care ministry there, but now we call it home.

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[7]Living Hope Church, "Our Story," accessed October 6, 2015, http://www.livinghopemarys ville.com/ourstory.

[8]Ibid.

In this sample, there were four women and one man. LH-2 and LH-3 were husband and wife. They were interviewed separately. The interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed after the interview. Table 8 demonstrates the length of time each person has been involved in orphan care and the types of involvement they have had.

Table 8: Length and type of involvement in orphan care

Codes	Length of Involvement in Orphan Care	Type(s) of Involvement in Orphan Care
LH-1	6-10 years	Member, Volunteer
LH-2	16-20 years	Foster, Adoptive Parent, Speaker
LH-3	16-20 years	Foster, Adoptive Parent
LH-4	11-15 years	Ministry Leader, Adoptive Parent,
LH-5	1-2 years	Staff, Volunteer

The interview protocol had three sections: the first addressed the establishment of the orphan care culture, the second addressed the methods used to develop an orphan care culture, and the third section addressed sustaining that culture.

Category 1: Establishment of
Orphan Care/Adoption Culture

This section looks at the first three questions of the interview protocol. The term culture is used in different ways by different people. The first question aimed at understanding what the participants and by extension their church meant when they speak about orphan care culture. Question 2 sought to understand why the church began to pursue an orphan care culture. Question 3 sought to understand why the interviewee embraced the church's new culture.

Question 1. Interviewees were asked what having an orphan care culture meant to them. In the precedent literature, it became clear that many orphan care proponents were driven by clear biblical and theological motivations. While not strongly

identified in this particular question, it was apparent in each interview that these commitments were present. Two out of the five participants directly referenced their theological understandings. Participant LH-4 stated, "To have an orphan care culture means to, first and foremost, understand what God's heart is, and what the very nature of the gospel and wisdom are, and living out . . . the gospel in the community in your church, and being aware, not only aware, but actively aware of the need around [you]." LH-5 stated, "I think it means to embrace James 1:27 where it says, 'True and faultless religion is to look after the orphan and the widow.'"

Participants suggested that it is not enough for the church to agree and teach that the Bible says believers should care for orphans. The church should also have structures in place that will enable the membership to obey those commands. LH-5 stated, "I think that [it means] to be active to look out for and take care of those who are fostering and adopting. To challenge the people around you to be involved and do something and be active in it as well." LH-3 argued, "They provide resources, organization, and facilities that promote activities that revolve around orphans, adoption, and orphan care." Interviewee LH-2 explained that a church with an orphan care culture is "one that is both open and supportive of adoption, the adoption process, and foster care, and the adopted children and the foster children that are brought into the church, and then also supportive of those families." LH-1 stated, "Adoption is obviously a huge part of orphan care for us. We have families who have financial resources, who, their role in orphan care is funding adoptions. And then, we have foster parents for kids who are, you know, not necessarily, permanently orphans, but at the moment they don't have parental figures in their lives. So that's another big piece to it."

Themes emerged as one reflected upon the content. LH-4 and LH-5 expressed the matter from a theological standpoint. One might conclude that orphan care is first a response to God, and not the needs of the orphan. In fact, that was what both suggested.

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An additional theme emerged: support structures. This theme did not undermine the call to obey God's Word, but flowed from it. While not directly stated by all in their answers to this question, all of the interviewees reference obedience to God at some point during the interview. The participants seemed to indicate that churches who take the command to care for the orphan seriously need to be intentional about establishing support structures. Additionally, it was suggested that churches need to equip their membership for the work of orphan care, and then provide opportunities to engage. The themes were: obedience to the Word, developing support structures, and providing opportunities to engage.

Question 2. Participants were asked why they thought the church embraced an orphan care culture. One element reoccurred throughout the response to this question: people. What led Living Hope to embrace an orphan care culture? It was people—people who were responding to the Word of God and to the needs of the orphan. More specifically, it was people who were personally, passionately engaged or interested in orphan care in some way.

LH-2 stated, "It's a newer church. . . . And I think it's just a congregation of people that helped start it in the church." LH-4 explained, "It started from our pastor and his wife having a heart and understanding God's heart, and not just wanting to preach about it, but to respond to James 1:27." LH-5 recalled, "We had several families who really, they have a heart for orphan care, a heart for adoption, a heart for foster care. I think just them being kind of close and understanding God's call their life; they just wanted to share that with others. When you have that passion about something you just want to share it with others. And when they had that passion, that passion just spilled over to others in our church." LH-3 explained, "I suppose it comes from the members themselves being actively involved individually." LH-1 stated, "I think they got together and realized there were a lot of inquiries about adoption and orphan care, that there was a

real need there for families who just didn't know anybody else who had been involved in adoption, foster care, etc. And so, they were really think they were probably the driving forces there."

What prompted the church to embrace an orphan care culture? Their answers suggest it was a pastor who wanted to practice what he preached, a couple of adoptive families who were sharing their lives with the congregation, and a congregation seeing a need and responding.

Question 3. Question 3 prompted the interviewees to recount why they felt it important to embrace an orphan care culture. Although the elements of their individual stories are different, their answers had something in common. They all embraced the churches culture of orphan care because they had all had some personal involvement. That involvement fueled their desire.

LH-1 explained, "I had a personal history with foster care. My sister ended up having to permanently surrender her rights to all six of her kids, and there was some foster care involvement there and some adoption involved. That kind of gave me a pretty big heart for the foster care system. . . . So I kind of had orphans on my heart. So when the church said, 'We have this support group. It meets every month.' I thought that sounded really wonderful." Interviewee LH-5 recalled, "As a kid, when I was in fourth grade, I went up and told my pastor that I was called to missions and that I was going to be living in Ethiopia one day. I pictured working with orphans as part of that. God has given me a huge heart for it, and to find a group, just a group of people so willing to follow the Lord in this specific area."

LH-4 recounted, "Myself, I personally, I grew up, part of my life, in foster care system, and then I was orphaned. One of those kind of stories you hear of abuse and neglect, and at some point, after losing both of my parents, and pretty much left and found by the authorities I was taken into foster care and became a ward of state, that

ignited that piece of my heart. I moved, eventually, to a Christian home, and who not only loved, offered their love and adoption to my heart, but I experienced God's healing and redemption." LH-2 stated, "We already did foster care when we began at the church."

It is worth noting that two out of five individuals mentioned the sense of calling. While all of the interviewees may have experienced a sense of calling, not all of them addressed it.

Summary. Questions 1 through 3 sought understanding into the expression orphan care culture. What does a church mean when they use that terminology? What does it look like? The participants' answers to question 1 suggested that at the heart of an orphan care culture there is a commitment to obeying God's Word and a commitment to develop support structures to help believers care for the orphan. Question 2 highlighted the people that drove that change: the pastor, ministry leadership, adoptive and foster families—passionate, engaged people who are serving the orphan. Since question 2 highlighted the role of people in the church's embrace of orphan care culture, it should not be a surprise that the answers to question 3 highlighted personal involvement. The next section dissects the methodology the churched used to go about embracing an orphan care culture.

Category 2: Methodology

This section looked at questions 4 through 9 of the interview protocol. Questions 4 through 6 focused on the actual strategies that were used or that the participants would use if they were building an orphan care culture from the ground up. Question 7 looked at the challenges churches face in the processes of adopting an orphan care culture. Question 8 looked at the pitfalls other churches should avoid. Finally, question 9 asked for additional insight into the process.

Question 4. Interviewees were asked to identify the strategies that have had the greatest impact on developing an orphan care culture. Several themes emerged. Some of them could be grouped under the heading support networks. Support networks can be organizational, like providing resources and instruction, or can be relational in nature, like a support group or ministry.

LH-5 stated, "I think probably just regularly meeting has really helped. Just kind of being that solid group, that solid foundation. People know that the third Monday of every month we are going to meet." Concerning the orphan care support group, LH-1 stated, "But then again, I think, just have people who have been through it, who were passionate, that are super-welcoming makes a big difference. It's a very relaxed, casual environment. Everybody gets to share an update every month if they want to—whether they are in the process of adopting or doing anything along those lines." LH-2 explained, "And then having, we actually have a support group. Well, it's not just for support. It's an orphan care ministry group." LH-4 suggested, "Stay very close and stay in life together, the good, the tough, the mountain, the valley." LH-3 stated, "Linking individuals from around the church to the community like from child services and to other child based organizations. They are going to come in to educate and be involved in planning and that sort of thing."

LH-4 suggested, "The number one thing we could ever do is pray, actually is prayer. It's cleaving to God to come and come and use us as his voice and a vessel, but to remind us we are never Holy Spirit." She adds, "You're entering into a realm of warfare because you are battling for the soul and the heart and the life of a child who's been adopted. Just stay a prayer, stay present. I guess our number one strategy is just praying the Word over us and really just being there for one another." LH-5 concurred, "We are going to pray for each other, we are going to lift each other up."

LH-5 reported, "Our pastor is very much behind this, and his wife, and they both have a very big heart for orphan care ministry." LH-2 added, "I think having a pastor's support and participation." LH-1 suggested, "I think taking the time to personally reach out to people, and get lunch with them. I get to know who they are and what they are interested in, and then inviting them has been really key." LH-4 stated, "We always wanted to make the entire body, the entire church to feel apart, not just the ones who felt a calling right away to adopt or foster or you know…we let them see opportunities of how they can be a part. So I'm very deliberate to show them all the different areas [of orphan care]."

So again, the largest strategy was developing support structures, particularly the relational components. Community outreach was considered a support structure on the organizational side of things. The theme of prayer could also be seen as a relational support network. Where the pastor was mentioned, I considered it a theme synonymous with leadership; but, in these examples, it can also be seen as relational support. The last example could have been coded as providing opportunities to be engaged, but here providing opportunities also served as a relational support structure.

Question 5. In a what-if scenario, interviewees were asked to describe what they would do if they had to start an orphan care culture within a new local church. This question moved the interviewee to articulate their approach. Their answers presented a glimpse into their thinking.

The main theme in this question was developing support structures. As these answers illustrated, the individual would be wise to develop relationships through which to share their passion. LH-4 stated, "I would begin sharing the story of what God is doing, and let them see what they could be a part of, what they would have the opportunity to." LH-5 said, "So probably, what I would do is try to offer an event or a speaker just to make everyone there at the church aware of the need, aware of God's call

on our lives to take care of the orphan and the widow." LH-1 suggested, "Start with things like Orphan Sunday. . . . It's one Sunday a year they have this big push to have you show these videos that are already made, they are very brief, and you can talk to your church, then about here are these different ways that you can be caring and praying for orphans." It appears the initial step in developing support structures was to get a feel for the people.

LH-5 stated, "I would then, hopefully, have a core group of leaders that would be willing to lead a group like this to walk with others and support them and to pray with them through the process of adoption or foster care." LH-3 explained, "Then, I would try to poll to see if there are any others who might be of like-minded interest." LH-1 stated, "I might try to get in the little church bulletin that one Sunday after church, we have a thirty minute coffee [and] snack kind of meeting for people to come to if they have any interest in adoption or foster care, and talk about the possibility of forming a group that could meet once a month to pray together or to do outreach or to just to be there to support each other." Their perception is that once a person has discovered a potential network, they can begin building that connection.

As these responses urged, one should not neglect or bypass the leadership. LH-4 explained, "Always ask the pastor, and it doesn't always happen right away, but I just ask can I sit down and share my story." LH-3 concurred, "I would approach staff, or special staff, to see how open they are to starting something like that. Ask them to look in to it." Even minor themes can be important. LH-4 explained, "Personally just saturate it in prayer. And try to see God and not to get ahead him. That's something that we often do because our passion is so alive, we get ahead of God. I am not the Holy Spirit; I am a vessel. I would just saturate it in prayer." The themes in this response were: develop relational support structures, speak to the leadership, and prayer.

Question 6. This question challenged the participants to give advice to a friend who wanted to start an orphan care culture in their church. Again the answers pressed toward building support structures. The call to pray sought divine support in the midst of this situation. LH-4 stated, "And I just tell them don't give up, don't quit. Be a voice. But just have people begin to pray. I think, far too often, we get ahead of ourselves, and get frustrated when things don't happen. We say well, we prayed, and we just can't pray again. Build a team and pray, if you have to. Pray, every time you pray."

These responses were also about support structures. They viewed the response of leadership as crucial to success, and suggested that without the support of leadership many other support networks would not have connected. LH-5 said she would have them "meet with the pastor, share their heart and vision." She added, "Ask the pastor for permission, as much as you can, to try and get those who are walking through the adoption or foster care process or any kind of orphan care work, to get in front of the church, to share their story, and to kind of cast that vision for the church."

The theme in these responses was building relational structural support. LH-5 explained, "I would encourage them maybe to find a couple of other people who have a heart and who have the same heart for orphan care. And start meeting regular basis." LH-1 stated, "Maybe find a couple of partners that they could team up with to make some of those things happen." LH-4 explained, "Be willing to take the small steps, before taking the big steps. If God tells you to share with that person, share with that person."

These responses suggested building networks with other churches while building support structures within the church. These networks could function as surrogate support structures. LH-2 stated, "So far, when we have run into that, we have invited them to attend our meetings and stuff just to get ideas." In a similar vein, LH-1 encouraged, "In the meantime, if there is a church within 20 minutes or so where they can travel once a month or a couple times a month, however often they meet to participate in

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orphan care ministry. That way they can stay in their church advocating there, but also gain some experience while having some support."

Again, it appears that the main theme was about developing support structures. When one considered the scenario at hand, it should not be a surprise. They are, after all, speaking to someone who has no other support structure. These methods demonstrated appropriate ways to develop support structures.

Table 9: The greatest challenges

Participant	Challenges
LH-1	"It's the kind of ministry where it is super-hard . . . to get the kind of volunteer time we would need to be able to do the activities that we are very enthusiastic about doing."
LH-2	"I think it has to be a culture that starts from the top down. And I think it has to be a culture that truly is a Bible-believing church."
LH-3	"It seems like it is easier for people to get involved who are already involved . . . The trouble with that is after adoption, how do you keep them actively involved in orphan care ministry?"
LH-4	"Letting them see where they can serve, because God does require a response from each of us as his children. But it looks different for each of us." "Money, if you want to use that word is the hang-up." "The biggest struggle might be post-placement, the post-adoption. . . . Just helping enlighten people to look beyond behavior and look at the child and looking at what God can do with grace and love." "Honestly another part has to be the wait."
LH-5	"The greatest challenge, honestly, would be the busy schedules of the people involved in the ministry." "That and maybe just working on getting everybody in front of the church."

Question 7. This question looked at the greatest challenges facing the church as it endeavored to build an orphan care culture. This group did not struggle to identify challenges. They were supportive of their church, but most of them had years of experience in orphan care ministry and were readily familiar with different challenges.

The interviewees suggested these as possible challenges to the development of an adoption or orphan care culture: getting and keep volunteers due to busy schedules, insufficient biblical culture, overly-narrow definitions of orphan care, failure to recognize the difficulties that orphaned and foster children experience, finances, the waiting, and getting people in the church to recognize these families and their needs. Their responses are recorded in table 9 on page 82.

Table 10: Pitfalls

Participant	Pitfalls
LH-1	"You want to be enthusiastic about different orphan care opportunities, but at the same time you don't want somebody to downplay . . . Because the start of every orphan care ministry opportunity is a kid who has been orphaned in some way. And that's hard. . . . And there is no evading to have that trauma."
LH-2	"I think it needs to be a culture that is open to whole orphan care, from foster care to adoption to international adoption."
LH-3	"Don't let yourself get over zealous—it can be kind of a slow process at times. Take it from me, it's a slow process."
LH-4	"You're a vessel, you're a voice, but your prayer is that they only hear the voice of God." "Start small, do that small thing well." "Don't let it drop. Don't let this passion ignite and everybody rally around it, and then the first 'no' comes or the first child gets sent back to a bad situation and you don't understand, and you let it just fall away. . . . but we shouldn't forget that God is still God."
LH-5	"I would, from a ministry perspective . . . be open and to be willing to work with families and kids that are coming from difficult situations, that there will be challenges and there will be things that you face with the kids." "Oftentimes when Christ is truly at the center of the ministry then he is getting the glory and not us. So just a pitfall to remind churches of is to keep that focus on Christ."

Question 8. This question asked interviewees to identify any pitfalls that other churches should avoid. Each pitfall was given a theme within this case. Those themes are recorded in table 10. Their responses were: do not downplay the difficulties that

accompany orphan care, do not define orphan care too narrowly, do not get impatient

because orphan care is a slow process, do not play God, start small but with excellence,

keep your passion from burning out, be open to the challenging kids coming into the

church, and is done, do it all for the glory of Christ.

Table 11: Additional advice for developing an orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
LH-1	"You don't realize how many needs it will meet in your church until you have one, and families start telling you—here are all of these things I have been struggling with, but I haven't had anyone to walk along of me with this particular issue."
LH-2	"I believe it has to be something you are in for the long haul. I don't think it is something that you can preach on, get a few people to do it, and then let go—then those people are left treading water without support. I think it's got to be something that people see as a long term, permanent ministry."
LH-3	I don't think so.
LH-4	"It's a mandate, but God gave us an invitation to respond as his child should do. We have got to step up; we have got to do better in this area. We have got to build relationships with our county's children services . . . and we [have] got to find a way to love them even when we don't agree with them. . . . We can offer humble suggestions when we're asked, but we have got to know our place. . . . They need prayer, they need support, and they need loved on. Pray for them."
LH-5	"Keeping Christ at the center of the ministry. Being aware that this is a very sensitive ministry, there is a lot of hurt, on the parent's side and on the child's side, and knowing that it is nothing that Christ can't heal. But he's overcome, and that healing does happen. A word of wisdom is that just because a family has adopted and they may have finished that adoption process journey—they still need support in bringing the child home and just remembering to pray for and walk through that process with a family after the adoption is finalized."

Question 9. This question encouraged interviewees to share additional insights

concerning the development of an orphan care culture. The Living Hope group had a lot

of insight to share. For example, one urged others to recognize that moving toward this

culture will meet needs not yet seen. Orphan care ministry cannot be seen as a project;

churches have to take the long view. Orphan care is a mandate not an option. Make connections with local child welfare agencies and begin praying for them. Never let Christ slip from his rightful place in the orphan care ministry. They suggested that the families involved in these ministries desperately need support and love, even after they have brought the children into their homes. Their responses are recorded in Table 11 on page 84.

Summary. This section examined the strategies, challenges, and pitfalls that accompany establishing an orphan care culture. The participants highlighted the importance of support structures. However, Living Hope seemed to focus more on the relational support structures. Also, they mentioned the importance of prayer and of having a biblical, theological understanding of orphan care. Orphan care is accompanied by challenges that should be taken seriously. The next section examined sustaining a culture of orphan care.

Category 3: Sustaining Orphan Care/Adoption Culture

The questions in this category sought to understand the practices behind sustaining an orphan care culture. Once a church has built an orphan care culture, how does it maintain that culture? What strategies are the most effective in nurturing that culture? The answers to these questions were at the heart of this category.

Question 10. To answer this question, the interviewees had to explain what strategies and approaches they have used to maintain the orphan care culture they have established in their churches. There were several strategies mentioned in this category. Most of them were subsets of the theme developing relational support structures. In a situation where multiple people played a role in creating an orphan care culture, it is not

difficult to understand why the theme developing relational support structures continued to appear multiple times.

Maybe LH-4 had the best summary of strategies, "The greatest strategies are prayer, the Word, building relationships, make it personal, so they know we are in this for the long haul." Building relationships appeared to be an important strategy in developing the orphan care culture at Living Hope. LH-4 continued, "Establish mentors for one another. That's one thing we do is team up one family that is starting on adoption and relationships often start with that, but just team them up with another family that has just walked that same road—to take time, to grow, to pray, to train up, answering the tedious questions about paperwork. And we do this a shield, just trying to match people up. You know, connecting them, beginning people in those special relationships, mentoring them, and making it personal. Opportunities to connect appear to be another strategy. LF-5 said, "One thing we did was a fund raiser event. . . . I thought it was a really awesome event for the church to be able to be involved, besides just maybe praying for, but financially being able to give, and in a fun way."

LH-2 suggested it might be two-fold: it's "part of the congregation that we started with already had that as the heart of ministry. And then, I think it's coming from pulpit, as far as, that this is biblical, and that this is what we are asked to do." Her words here, point to motive: "Whether you bring an orphan into your home or you support families that have orphans; it is what we are asked to do." There is something to her observation. Pastoral leadership has a part to play in the process. LH-4 warned, "don't try to bypass your pastor or leadership either. You're never going to win points and you're never going to win trust or be shown any respect, if you try to go outside of the lines with that. Show them that you respect them, and abide by what you have to do." LH-3 also mentioned the role of leadership. He stated, "Get leadership that is passionate . . . and just

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lives it." He was referring to leaders in the orphan care ministry, but his words could apply to pastoral leadership as well.

Additional strategies were suggested. LH-1attributed their culture to the monthly support group meetings, the ministry leadership, and follow up. Concerning follow up, she stated, "We follow up with people. We check on them. There is a genuine care, it's not like somebody's making a five-minute phone call and then doesn't intend to follow up again at all."

Again the majority of these strategies can be described as developing relational structural support. Their answers suggested prayer, preaching, and leading are all relational in nature, but the interest cannot just come from the pulpit. It has to come from the congregations. The members have to make the connection between God's commands and their lives, as well as to connect to others.

Question 11. This question adjusted the focus slightly from examining specific strategies to identifying more general principles. LH-2 stated, "It continues from the pulpit . . . families continue to reach out to each other. It continues to grow, continues to encourage others to do it." This insight recognizes that all the key people have to maintain their focus if they are to maintain the culture of orphan care. LH-3 appeared to be thinking along similar lines when he stated, "The key is to get people who are vested in it and passionate about the topic, and who are just like sharing it as part of their life and not just a responsibility."

LH-4 explained, "It's pretty much what it has been: praying together, doing life together, and continuing to share the testimonies of our hearts. I'll say that as a group and as a ministry, and all around we can do that through social media, through the church. I would be at fault if I did not say; one of them has been our pastor." LH-5 said, "I think the key is two things: keeping focus on Christ and his word, and then second key is having the ministry in front of the congregation as much as possible, like those

victories or even the hard things. Just surround those people who are walking through the process in prayer and be that support for them."

Again, the role of the pastor came to light. It appeared that the pastor shaped the culture by his preaching. At the same time, individuals within the congregations helped to shape the culture by obeying the Word and drawing others into the orphan care culture. Another important theme that turned up again was visibility. It was suggested that the orphan's plight and the churches responsibility should be continually set before the congregation.

Table 12. Additional advice for sustaining orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
LH-1	None
LH-2	None
LH-3	None
LH-4	"No matter the difficult road to achieve what is on your heart there is joy, and don't lose sight of that joy, because the joy comes from being his and actually, being obedient in what he's asked you to do. No matter if there is a huge outpouring of grace on these programs, whatever, or ministries, or there is only one child that finds a placement or you would come to know churches or one person or one life, that you get to plant a seed, recognize, realize just don't lose sight of the joy. Because everyone matters."
LH-5	"You don't have to be in the adoption or foster care process in order to pray for someone and truly encourage them and walk alongside of them during the process. I would encourage, as much as you could, to get as many people as possible to be involved with the ministry. Whether it's a have to say, "Hey, let's do a fund raiser," or "Hey, let's get together to pray for this family," or "Hey, let's just shower them with blessing and gifts for their new child." It's just to have it in front of as many people as possible in order to catch that vision, to have as many people onboard."

Table 13. Summary of Living Hope Church's themes

Categories	Themes
Establishment of Orphan Care Culture	1. Obedience to the Word, developing support structures, and providing opportunities to engage.
	2. People who are personally, passionately engaged or interested in orphan care in some way.
	3. They all embraced the church's culture of orphan care because they had all had some personal involvement.
Methodology	4. Major: develop relational support structures; minor: prayer, leadership, and provide opportunities to engage
	5. Developing relational support structures, speak to the leadership, and prayer.
	6. Developing relational support structures, leadership, networking, and prayer.
	7. Challenges: finding volunteers, insufficient biblical culture, overly-narrow definitions of orphan care, failure to recognize difficulties faced by the orphans/foster kids, finances, the waiting, and getting the church to recognize and care for these families.
	8. Pitfalls: downplaying the difficulties of orphan care, focusing too narrowly on one aspect of orphan care, impatience, playing God, beginning something without careful planning and care, burnout, unwillingness to serve troubled children, and self-promotion.
	9. Advice: Starting an orphan care culture may meet needs not yet seen, churches have to be in it for the long haul, orphan care is a biblical mandate, connect to local agencies to support and encourage them, keep Christ at the center of the ministry, and plan for long term, sustained care for these families.
Sustaining Orphan Care Culture	10. Maintaining support structures, prayer, preaching, and personal involvement.
	11. Pastoral leadership, congregational involvement, developing relational support structures, prayer, and visibility.
	12. Insights: A person's joy should be in the knowledge that they belong to Jesus and support those families who are caring for orphans.

Question 12. This final question examined additional advice concerning sustaining an orphan care culture. Interviewees were given the opportunity to share from the depths of their experience any insights they thought would be invaluable. With these parting words, the interviewees sought to comfort and encourage those who are working in orphan care. One comforted with the reminder "joy comes from being [Jesus'], and

actually, being obedient in what he's asked you to do." The encouraged with the reminder, "You don't have to be in the adoption or foster care process in order to prayer for someone and truly encourage them and walk along side of them during the process." Their responses are recorded in table 12 on page 88.

Summary. The image of Living Hope that emerged from this examination of interviews was very informative. It appeared from the interviews and the supporting materials that this church has worked diligently to develop and sustain a culture of orphan care. The themes are recorded in table 13 on page 89.

The Summit Church

The Summit Church is a multi-site church with eight campuses throughout the Raleigh-Durham area of North Carolina. The church was founded in 1961 as Homestead Heights Baptist Church.[9] After J. D. Greer was called as pastor in December 2001, the church "relaunched" as The Summit Church.[10] The Summit Church has nearly 5,700 members and an average weekly attendance of almost 8,000.[11] Their mission statement is: "Love God, Love Each Other, Love the World."[12] Orphans are one of the five groups on which Summit Church intentionally focuses. They consider compassionate service part of their DNA.[13]

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[9]The Summit Church, "Welcome: History," accessed October 6, 2015, http://www.summitrdu. com/about/welcome/history/.

[10]The Summit Church, "Welcome: History." A relaunched church is one that had been previously established under one name and identity, but moves to establish a new identity and focus, and as part of that process, usually changes its name.

[11]The Summit Church, "Annual Report:2014," accessed October 6, 2015, http://www.summit rdu/2014annualreport/.

[12]The Summit Church, "Welcome: What We Believe." Accessed October 7, 2015, http://www. summitrdu.com/about/welcome/what-we-believe/.

[13]The Summit Church, "Local Outreach: DNA, Loving our Neighbor Means Knowing Our Neighbor," accessed October 7, 2015, http://www.summitrdu/connect/local-outreach/dna/.

Table 14. Length and type of involvement in orphan care

Codes	Length of Involvement in Orphan Care	Type(s) of Involvement in Orphan Care
SC-1	3-5 years	Staff, Volunteer Training
SC-2	3-5 years	Foster, Adoptive Parent, Ministry Leader
SC-3	6-10 years	Pastor/Elder
SC-4	6-10 years	Pastor/Elder
SC-5	1-2 years	Servant Leader (Deacon), Foster Parent
SC-6	1-2 years	Staff, Foster Parent

In this sample, there were four men and two women. Participant SC-5 and SC-6 were married to each other. They were interviewed at the same time, but responded to the questions individually. The interviews were recorded digitally and transcribed after the interview. Participant SC-3's interview was recorded, but the file was damaged and could not be recovered. I took detailed notes during the interview. These notes were used in place of a transcript. While they did not capture everything he said, they accurately reflect his words.

Category 1: Establishment of Orphan Care/Adoption Culture

This section looked at the first three questions of the interview protocol. Churches, like people, use the term culture in different ways. The participants' responses to questions 1 through 3, aided in understanding what they understood culture to be. The first question aimed at understanding what the participants and by extension their church meant when they spoke about orphan care culture. Question 2 sought to understand what drove the church to pursue an orphan care culture. Question 3 sought to understand what drove the interviewee to adopt the church's new culture.

Question 1. Interviewees were asked what having an orphan care culture meant to them. Two themes emerged together: awareness and providing opportunities to

engage. Also present was the theological knowledge underpinning the orphan care culture. Support was presented as a theme also.

Participant SC-2 stated, "Orphan care ministry brings it to the forefront of everyone's thoughts. . . . It creates an atmosphere of people who want to help. It helps plug them into different places to learn more about orphan care ministry and to plug them into places so that they can actually do hands on orphan care ministry." SC-3 explained, "[It's one] that openly promotes orphan care. One that is involved, whether it is international adoption, foster care, or getting involved in financially supporting and prayerfully supporting. [They are] helping people get in touch with someone involved in orphan care ministry." He went on to say that its leaders should make it something that is openly discussed and that becomes a popular topic. SC-4 stated, "Orphan care culture is everything to raising awareness, praying for . . . or actually engaging in orphan care or fostering. So that it is happening on a consistent level across the board at our church."

But the awareness mentioned was more than just awareness of need. As SC-1 pointed out, "I think in part in means awareness. Awareness of both our theological or eternal position in terms of our spiritual adoption and our status as orphan in some ways—an awareness of who we really are, and then also awareness of the physical state of many of the fatherless kids both in our community and around the world. . . . Not just awareness that there are a bunch of fatherless kids, but that there is a sense of calling to biblical hospitality for kids who are fatherless." LC-5 explained, "Our motivation for orphan care, is really centered around the idea that what we have received from Christ, and his love for us, and, our extension of that is to want to share a similar love with others. So, I guess, identify the need of those children without clear parenting role models is kind of a natural extension."

It appeared that making people aware of the needs and providing them with opportunities to serve, created a need for support. As SC-1 explained, "It's kind of more

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of a community celebration and not just theirs on their own; we rally around them. I would say that, and it's a sense of action, a sense of calling." LC-6 said, "I think knowledge about it and support from within the church is one of the big things for orphan care culture." SC-5 stated, "I feel to some extent there is a push to also be there to support the families who are fostering or adopting, as well. . . . not just from the families that are directly taking on additional children into their family, but from others who are kind of supporting that."

The main theme was awareness. This awareness was two-fold: being aware of one's spiritual adoption and being aware of the needs of orphans and those caring for them. It was an awareness that not only presented opportunities to engage, but was also aware that members who engaged in those opportunities needed support.

Question 2. This question focused on understanding the reason the church decided to embrace an orphan care culture. In this case, two things appeared to define the change: a theological commitment to live out the gospel and a meeting with city officials to see how that could be done best.

Participant SC-1 stated, "The first one was we took time really searching certain Scriptures saying who is it that God has commanded his church to have a special focused on or that should take special care of. And there were certain groups of people that are usually marginalized or disadvantaged in some way . . . That is part of who God was, who he is, who he defined himself to be. So for us, we felt that had to be an important part of who we are as a body so we could demonstrate something about him." SC-5 described, "What prompted our church was a hard look at how does the gospel or where does the gospel or where should it be clearly displayed in our own community. And then, kind of making efforts to direct our attention to that." SC-2 stated, "It stems from the Bible when we take care of whom God would." SC-4 explained:

It's a biblical command, a biblical focus, and we have lots orphans and unwed mothers in the city. So we wanted to be a church that is known for our care for the helpless. So we believe that adoption and orphan care clearly mirrors God's adoption of us into his kingdom, so we want to, therefore, radically care for orphans. And, kind of, in our capacity for sharing and demonstrating the gospel, we just kind of tried to see that as the lens in why we do what we're doing. And as we've done that, our eyes have been opened to more and more physical and spiritual needs in our church and community in and around the world. So for us our theology is driving us to be involved in orphan care, and not necessarily the biological reasons for…oh you can't have children, or they feel bad that the little kid is on the street.

The cause of this change was prompted by focusing on the Scripture, and asking how to apply that within the community. SC-1 stated, "About 10 years ago now, [we sat] down with the leaders in our city . . . trying to figure out . . . what were some of the hurting points or guiding points of the city and how could the church serve in those areas? . . . Our local government actually identified one of our five big areas that they needed help in, and it worked that serving city lined up with a biblical mandate for church because it would have its own trajectory." SC-2 explained, "In the past ten years, our church has been very involved in the community, in our city, and looking at ways that we can be intentional about serving those in our city, and then our state, our country, and around the world." SC-4 said, "Our church has gotten really serious and focused about it. I would say 2010 was, probably, a strategic time for our church, not that we weren't doing it before hand, but more of a recognized, concentrated effort." Participant SC-5 stated, "About five years ago, it was kind of clearly thought through the ways our church could display the gospel to our community around us. So we identified five at-risk groups. If I recall correctly, it was actually, specifically sitting down with the mayor, the leadership of Durham, and asking what are the five areas that are most needed for assistance and help, and it was the homeless, the orphan, the unwed-mother, the high school dropout, and the prisoner."

Two minor themes bear mention. The first is preaching. SC-4 mentioned that the gospel emphasis kept "coming up in sermons." The second is missions. SC-3 stated

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the church is actively involved in missions and that exposure may have made people more aware of the needs at home.

Four out of the six interviewees expressed the role of Scripture. They used terms like theology, the Bible, the gospel, a biblical command, and the Scriptures. They expressed theological concepts like spiritual adoption. Four of them referenced the focus on community. These two emphases combine in what can be called *gospel intentionality*.

Question 3. Question 3 prompted the interviewees to recount why they felt it important to embrace an orphan care culture. In this section, the participants reflected on what led them to embrace orphan care culture. Three themes emerged from these answers: personal conviction, teaching, and a personal connection. Four of the six pointed to personal conviction. Three out of the six referenced the influence of teaching on their decision. Three referenced a personal connection that moved them toward considering fostering or adopting. SC-5 did not respond to this question.

The theme of personal conviction was expressed by four of the participants. I noted that SC-3 was moved to adopt because he felt burdened. SC-2 and her spouse were contemplating foster care or adoption before the church began emphasizing it. She stated, "God just laid it on our hearts. I don't know, I guess four years after, maybe five years after we were married, to start that process, and we felt very led to foster. And we started taking classes, and not long after that was when our church hopped onboard." SC-1 explained, "I was part of the original conversation in 2004-2005, and it was a personal conviction. For me, I was one of a small group of people that was . . .pushing our congregation to move in that direction." SC-6 explained that she had had that desire since she was younger. She stated, "As I got older, I wanted to be able to keep the kids together that had lost their parents, I guess. Just the idea of taking care of what he has given and letting them keep each other. So that was the start of it, and we started thinking about adoption at that point."

Teaching also appeared to play an important role in helping people embrace a culture of orphan care. SC-4 recounted, "In 2010, we had consecutive weeks of, I don't know what we called it, but basic orphan care sermons and weekends that we took a hard look at the Scriptures. We studied Ruth 2, James 1, Romans 8, and we really began to just study the Scripture in our small groups and began to pray how we as a church could get involved. And, out of that, we had orphan care meetings."[14] It bears mentioning that in addition to the teaching at his church, SC-4 also referenced Moore's *Adopted for Life* and Merida's and Morton's *Orphanology*. SC-2 stated, "One of our pastors who had adopted himself, preached a sermon that prompted a lot, he was just asking questions about what could they do to better serve the fatherless, and . . . our ministry exploded after that one message. SC-6 stated that about the time she began seriously considering fostering that, "Our church just started talking about it more, and studying it more, and getting it more into people's minds."

Some of the interviewees embraced the culture because they had personal connection to others involved in orphan care. SC-6 recalled, "I worked with someone who was fostering. . . .And I got to see her go through this process, and learn about it, and learn about the need, and to see, I guess, to see up close." Participant SC-4 explained, "My wife and I, we attended in 2010, we heard this sermon and we were at that meeting, really confronted with these are real people who really did adopt and their reasons for adopting were very compelling to us. And we just started asking the question: Why not us?" SC-1 stated, "I had a couple of close friends through the church who adopted, they adopted internationally, and watching these stories personally drew me into being more personally passionate about it. Then the more involved with people involved with the foster care system, the more that opened my heart to passionate about foster care, and the

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[14]The links to the sermons he references are available at http://www.summitrdu.com/connect/orphancare/resources.

reconciliation of broken families really." The themes here were: personal conviction, teaching, and personal connections with those who are involved in foster care.

Summary. It was clear from these three questions that the interviewees perceived that the teaching of the church had a clear impact on shaping the culture. Awareness was the main theme for question 1. These themes were connected to awareness: providing opportunities to engage and encouraging support. In question 2, the themes of Scripture and community merged into the theme of gospel intentionality. Question 3 examined the influences of personal conviction, teaching, and personal connections.

Category 2: Methodology

This section looked at the questions 4 through 9 of the interview protocol. Questions 4, 5, and 6 examined the various approaches or strategies used to develop an orphan care culture. Question 7 described challenges churches face in the processes of adopting an orphan care culture. Question 8 warned of pitfalls other churches should avoid. Finally, question 9 provided the interviewees with an opportunity to share additional insights.

Question 4. Interviewees were asked to identify the strategies that have had the greatest impact on developing an orphan care culture. The overarching theme in this section was talking about orphan care. The theme was divided into three sub-themes: formal theological teaching, informal practical teaching, and sharing personal stories. Two other themes were present. One was personal connection with others already involved in orphan care. The second theme was the development of organizational support structures.

Capturing all that is suggested in the theme talking about orphan care, SC-3 stated, "Communication is number one." They communicated it theologically. Participant

SC-1 stated, "The thing is casting the vision, lifting your congregation's eyes to see the world, and the kingdom of God also. We did that through church sermons, church videos." Interviewee SC-2 explained, "I think the greatest impact has been the sermons on loving the fatherless, and hearing our pastors." SC-5 said, "I'm sure to some extent direct preaching from the pulpit, and talking about what sort of a natural extension of the heart that is set on the gospel. What are the natural ways that we see that expressed in the Scripture?" Participant SC-4 stated:

> Studying the doctrine adoption and the ministry to the fatherless in the Bible. So I think, kind of portraying the serious burden, and that is kind of our strategy—"Hey, those of us who are adopted let's keep talking about our story, and at the same time keeping the biblical command to take care of the orphan and widows in front of our congregation. Just again, being a real life illustration of the gospel. We've been adopted into God's family, and adoption obviously gives us a clear picture of what that looks like. How God transforms spiritual orphans into family members. How he begins to change our name, our identity.

In addition to sound biblical teaching, they taught on practical matters related to orphan care. SC-3 pointed out that there has to be an on-going process to let "people know that the ministry exists," and where they can find resources. Also, the communication of personal stories was important. SC-2 stated, "Hearing our stories and being able to ask questions . . . . so they can see that it's not this crazy, far-fetched idea. It's something that you can do, too, and hearing from others who have, kind of, gone before us." SC-4 explained, "We use the word testimony, the testimony of adoptive parents—just sharing their story of adoption with their friends and their small group at our church. It just kind of catches fire."

SC-1 noted that it is import to clearly define the steps. He concluded, "It might be hard to foster, hard to adopt, but it shouldn't be hard to take the next step." People need the basic organizational support structures like knowing where to get forms, resources, find a mentor, and connect to others. Another theme is personal connection. People who do orphan care need those who do not do orphan care, and vice-versa. SC-6

stated, "I think for me personally, it was people getting involved, and then talking about it." SC-5 argued, "The most impactful strategy or approach, if you could call it that, would be, it is actually hearing from and seeing others that are working through the process themselves. Somebody along the line gets the ball rolling, they sort of step out, and respond, and we sort of have the benefit of seeing others."

The key strategy in this section was communication—communication of biblical truth, communication of practical matters, and the communication of personal stories. Another important strategy was personal connection. The strategy of developing organizational support structures was mentioned also.

Question 5. Interviewees were asked to describe what they would do if they had to start an orphan care culture within a new local church. This question was designed to force the participant to shift from thinking about how it was done in their church to thinking about how they would do it. Leadership support, developing support structures, talking about it, teaching, and leading by example were the themes that emerged from these responses.

Participant SC-4 addressed pastor leadership in two ways. In one scenario, he said, "I would talk to the pastor about, as we figure out how to wrap our minds around what is the church, how do we be the church in our city." In the second scenario, he imagined what he would do as the new pastor, "I would raise the awareness to the leadership and say, 'This is something we have to be engaged.' How we go about it might be a different question, but we need at least to be engaged in this." Interviewee SC-3 warned that it has to have "pulpit support." SC-1 stated, "I would certainly advocate for the leadership to cast the vision for why it is important to do. It has to be backed by the leadership." Teaching was also suggested. Participant SC-1 explained, "I would start by getting whoever I could together to study God's heart, what God actually says about being a Father. I would just start with that and give the Word of God and the Spirit of

God a chance to build in people's heart that this is something that we do." SC-2 suggested arranging a "mini-conference" with a guest speaker, breakout sessions, and a Q&A session for anyone interested in checking it out.

Recognizing that the support structures would not be in place, SC-4 suggested developing them; he stated, "Resourcing our people, advocating for the fatherless, so whether that's through a small group ministry or weekend videos or websites, blog posts, social media, just kind of equipping our people to be knowledgeable of opportunities to be engaged." SC-5 suggested being an example, but warned, "We would have the example in place, but I would imagine it would require some actual speech. You know, kind of share the gospel overtly in that context: 'We are doing this not just because it is a good thing to do, but because it is the kind of thing we are lead to do. It is a natural extension of the love that has been shown to us.'" SC-6 stated, "I was thinking advocate, open our lives, and openly show why we are doing it." SC-2 concluded, "Just to open up the dialog, you know, start conversations. I feel that once you meet somebody who has done this, whether it's been adopted or fostered or fostered to adopt, I feel that it really opens up doors."

This question provided insight into the participants' preferred strategies. There are several themes, but they are all connected. They suggested that one cannot bypass leadership and succeed. People need support structures like resources, books, and sermons, but they also need resources like people who have been through the process already and can help guide them through it. They also demonstrated the necessity of advocacy. In this question, the participants gave advice to themselves. In the next question, they gave advice to others.

Question 6. This question challenged the participants to give advice to a friend who wants to start an orphan care culture in their church. There were several themes in this section. The interviewees called for the development of relational support structures

like sharing one's story, raising awareness, building support groups, and developing networks. They also mentioned pastoral leadership, prayer, and service.

An individual cannot have a culture. They can be in one, live in one, or share one, but they cannot have their own culture. Most, if not all, orphan care advocates know this fact to be true. It is one of the reasons they advocate for developing relational support structures. One aspect of building relational support structures is advocacy. SC-2 suggested, "Keep having conversations about it." SC-4 stated, "It's patiently advocating for orphans in the city or globally. Just raising awareness." SC-3 concluded, "If they knew how important it was—might light the fire." In addition to talk, there needs to be support groups and people to whom one can turn. SC-2 stated, "Continue to meet together with other men and women in the church to support one another." SC-1 said, "Don't be afraid to put yourself out there, trusting the Holy Spirit will lead you to the right people." Participant SC-4 suggested, "Start with a small circle of friends . . . communicate with the congregation. To kind of pursue that and not give up. Or I would suggest even networking with other churches."

Three participants issued a call to approach the pastor and seek his support. SC-2 stated, "Keep having conversations with those in leadership." SC-1 encouraged them to get the "permission of the pastor." SC-6 also suggested working with the pastoral leadership. Prayer was also a theme. Two participants said they would urge the individual to pray. SC-2 stated, "I would just keep praying, and keep persevering in that aspect." She mentioned prayer four times during the course of answering this question. SC-1 explained, "I would definitely pray. I know that sounds like a pat answer, but it's the Holy Spirit's role to convict, and far too often we try to take that role. I would encourage people not to take that role." SC-1 suggested, "Do a book study. I would start there, and let God use that to convict and call people from the church."

The interviewees suggested the lack of vision in a church does not remove the personal responsibility to obey God. SC-2 stated, "It is something God has commanded us to do: to take care of the orphans and the widows. And we're not supposed to sit by and wait for someone else to do it. Why wait for somebody else to do it? God has planted us to do it, whether it's go out and adopt a child or give money to somebody who's adopting a child." SC-5 explained, "It is hard to convince people to jump into something that you are not active in yourself. It's purely hypothetical, but encourage that enthusiastic person to jump on board and figure out a way that makes sense where they are . . . find some way to be involved so that other people have a place to clearly see where they can also jump in." And SC-6 suggested, "I would say is--we were thinking about adoption, my [husband] and I have been married going on 10 years now, and we had been thinking about adoption from the beginning and didn't start this process until 8 years later. So one of the things is--don't get discouraged if you don't see something right away because sometimes it is a long process. Let them become involved where they are."

Several themes stood out in this section. There was a call for developing relational support structures like sharing one's story, raising awareness, building support groups, and developing networks. They also mentioned pastoral leadership, prayer, and service. Having explained what to do to establish a culture, the participants shared the challenges that one might face in building that culture.

Question 7. This question examines the challenges churches face while establishing an orphan care culture. The Summit church has a unique challenge in that it has eight campuses. It has to coordinate its efforts on the local campuses, as well as, within the larger context of the whole church. In this question, challenges were coded as themes. Although the challenges were coded as individual themes, some of them can be grouped together under the term *size*. Five of the six interviewees referenced size in some

way. Training, volunteer recruitment, and embracing our identity in Christ are also

challenges. Their responses are recorded in table 15.

Table 15. The greatest challenges

Participant	Challenges
SC-1	"The question is how do you disciple [young professionals] to be ready to obey the call?" "I think we have seen people called so quickly that the ministry grew very fast, so logistics and support was a challenge."
SC-2	"I feel like that has been something of a challenge for all of us is that when we do get together, it's usually big groups. We don't have as much in common with the person sitting next to us because they might have adopted internationally, they might have adopted from foster care." "It's hard to get leaders to step up because we're all overwhelmed with raising the children that we've adopted."
SC-3	Keeping up with growth. People get hurt when they can't get help when they need it.
SM-4	"I would probably say just competing ministries the board. Different passions."
SC-5	"I could say to some extent [it's] probably just fear of the unknown. . . . Not really understanding or knowing what the impact that being involved can have." "I would imagine that is also a fairly great challenge that we all have to overcome our own hesitation of accepting the gospel in all areas of our life. And accepting who God is, so that we get to know who God is, grabbing hold of that truth. . . . And that is being involved in some way ministering to those who are down and out. And so, orphans are a very clear place where we can love God's people."
SC-6	"I would say that one of the greatest challenges that our church has in doing anything is size. . . . it tends to [be] 'oh, somebody else will do it.' Or you don't see the other people because there is so many people. I think size makes it harder."

Question 8. This question challenged the participants to give advice to a friend

who wants to start an orphan care culture in their church. The questions aimed at

identifying things that could disrupt the establishment of an orphan care culture within a

church. Each item identified as a pitfall was coded as a theme.

Table 16. Pitfalls

Participant	Pitfalls
SC-1	"It's easy to be so focus on funneling people through the process, and to forget to care for them when there is actually brought a kid home with acute trauma from a difficult place. . . . That family has then got to parent that kid with much different circumstances. We forget orphan care doesn't end when the child has been adopted." "I think if all we do is adopt internationally, and we ignore all the fatherless kids in our city, then we really haven't done the full picture. We haven't really been fully obedient to what God has called his church to be in their local context."
SC-2	"That is another concern I would have is making sure that these, these people who are excited and want to learn more about orphan care ministry, not falling through the cracks." "It's a big step to take, and not everybody is called to adopt or foster. Everybody is called to do something, but they might not all be called to bring that child into their home, and knowing what's right for their family."
SC-3	There is an assumption from the body if we take a step of obedience, the pastoral team will be there every step of the way. Unrealistic expectations. You have got to train good volunteer staff that will lead, mentor people along. Communication. Make things clear up front.
SC-4	"Over promising and under delivering the amount of care they can provide before, during, and after the adoption process." "[Do] not be afraid to network, to research, to partner with other people, with other churches that might be further along in this area." "A common pitfall is to have unrealistic goals . . . You don't want to say, "Hey, we're going to wipe out all the orphans in the city." That may not be realistic. At the same time, you don't want to limit the people who are hearing the challenge to be involved." "I would say, too, a pitfall is to kind of avoid the romanticized idea of adoption. . . . These are human beings with a lot of baggage . . . Be sensitive to that and not undersell the difficulty of adoption and orphan care or foster care to our people. It's almost that bait-and-switch tactic."
SC-5	"It's a real fine line, I think, between trying to establish . . . orphan care culture and trying to guilt trip an orphan culture." "[I] keep coming back to the understanding, a true understanding of the gospel, being in a relationship with God. If those things are not foundational, then orphan care ministry is going to be a frustrating, futile process that people really don't understand even why they are doing it. I think it is just going to lead to a break down."
SC-6	"It's knowing where to get help when you need it and not trying to figure out yourself.

There were several pitfalls to consider. The church should not get so focused on "funneling people through the process" that they forget to care for those who have "completed" the process. It is not right to focus only on international adoption; churches must have to have a bigger vision. The church should not let excited, interested people fall through the cracks. Although everyone is called to do something on behalf of the orphan, this does not mean everyone must adopt or foster. Pastors and staff cannot be there every step of the way. Volunteers must be trained. To manage expectations, make things clear from the beginning, and be honest about the level of care that can be provided throughout the adoption journey. Do not set goals too high or too low. Be up front with people about the difficulties of adoption. Do not use guilt as a motivator. Help people to understand who they are in Christ and how that impacts what they are doing. Their responses are recorded in table 16 on page 104.

Question 9. This question encouraged interviewees to share additional insights. The distinct pieces of advice were coded as themes. Several pieces of advice were given consider. Many great partnerships are available. Connect people together who are going through the same orphan care journey. Adoption can promote diversity. Provide resources and a clear action plan. Develop a network of individuals to assist families throughout the process. We all have different goals and responsibilities, but everyone should be doing something for orphans. Their insights are recorded in table 17 on page 106.

Summary. This section focused on methodology. Interviewees described the strategies their churches employed in developing an orphan care culture. The strategies revealed in this section deal with communication—specifically teaching and sharing testimonies, the development of support structures, leadership support, personal

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connection, prayer, and providing opportunities to serve. Challenges and pitfalls were

discussed, and addition advice for developing an orphan care culture was given.

Table 17. Additional advice for developing an orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
SC-1	"There are so many great partnerships that are out there. There are several other churches we've worked with that are passionate about orphan care. And if we try to do anything, we get together and coordinate and share resources."
SC-2	"Connect people that are going down the same road that you are in orphan care ministry. . . . I think that is one of the most important pieces. It's like that is what makes people feel so connected to one another, because they can share some reason or story, and can offer a lot of encouragement and support to each other because they understand where they are coming from. And, you know, you're not walking the road alone.
SC-3	One thing our church's diversity, as churches get better at communicating the gospel . . . Adoption can promote diversity, combat racism. Almost accidentally.
SC-4	"To build this culture there needs to be provided resources. There has to be clear action steps, plans for families who want to get involved, definitely a network of people who can walk along side of each family individually."
SC-5	"[It's] understanding that we can all be of a support to a ministry without necessarily being that active front person. In other words, we foster, but we really need to have the support of other people who don't foster. . . . be willing to offer different levels of assistance depending on where God has put us and where he has placed us."
SC-6	"Also, it's knowing where to get help when you need it and not trying to figure out yourself."

**Category 3: Sustaining Orphan
Care/Adoption Culture**

This category focused on the strategies used to maintain an orphan care

culture. Questions 10 through 12 examined how the church went about sustaining the

orphan care culture it had developed.

Question 10. To answer this question, the interviewees had to explain what strategies and approaches they have used to maintain the orphan care culture established in their churches. Once again, support structures were a major theme. These structures were discussed at both the organizational and relational level. The organizational structural supports addressed leadership development and resources. The relational support structures focused on support groups and mentors.

Participant SC-6 stated, "I think we've had the support systems pop up. With our pastors having emailed out to see how they can support you, having outside people who aren't fostering or adopting offer help to the ones who are in that way. It helps sustain; you don't get as burnt out." SC-5 recounted, "We started a mentoring program. So somebody who is interested in fostering or interesting in adopting we paired them up with somebody who has already done that. That mentor couple or mentor family will walk the path for the entire part of the process. . . . I think it has been really helpful in sustaining that culture between times where we talk about the ministry." SC-2 explained, "I'd say the group gatherings . . . I feel that has had the biggest impact because after we leave those meetings we are so encouraged by just hearing other stories, and the road that they have traveled, and seeing what God is doing in their lives and their stories of orphan care." SC-4 stated, "I would say, that to sustain it, you have to have people who have been through that can encourage people along the way, encourage them not to give up, encourage them not to stop, and really help them along the way."

On the organizational side, there was leadership development. SC-1 explained, "One thing has been really, really critical to keep sustaining the culture is identifying: we call them champions. They're essentially a ministry leader, a volunteer, who will champion a ministry at the campus. . . . They are keeping awareness up and the ideas out there." It is important to have someone promoting awareness because as SC-3 said, "You have got to make it available and accessible." SC-5 stated, "Put it out there, here is the

availability, here are the places you can be involved, and continuing that process ongoing."

Underpinning all of these support structures was the key idea of developing a gospel-centered identity. SC-4 recounted, "[We] begin to put it into the DNA of our church. This is who we are as Christians. This is not some ministry objective. It's who we are and what we do. We are introducing the fatherless to our Father, heavenly Father. . . . It really comes down to a proper understanding of the gospel." So the themes for this question were: developing support structures and developing a gospel-centered identity.

Question 11. This question adjusted the focus slightly from examining specific strategies to identifying more general principles. The themes that emerge from these resources were: people, leadership, and the gospel. As SC-1 explained, "If I could narrow it down to one single thing—the biggest key would be people who feel personally called by God to serve our church in leading this orphan care ministry." SC-4 concurred, "The key to maintain an orphan care culture is those who have adopted. More than anything else, the families who have then bought in . . . I think the families who have already done it are keeping it going."

SC-4 stated, "The leadership of the church just continuously reminding people of our call to be engaged." SC-2 also identified leadership, she stated, "I think what has been key is our leadership's involvement. . . . what is coming from the pulpit. I feel like it's the key to what's maintained the orphan care ministry at our church." The aim was to, in the words of SC-3, "Get it in front of people."

The last theme was a focus on the gospel. SC-6 put it succinctly, "Keeping the gospel central." SC-5 elaborated, "I'm just going to go back and say the gospel. And I know, again I sound like a broken record. I'm pretty sure if at any point we lost sight of why we were doing this to begin with, which was as an outflow of the love that has been given to us, it would revert back to being a mere responsibility, kind of a guilt trip effort.

It would be a kind of outward motivation instead of an internal motivation. I would say the key to maintaining it is going be a continued, central focus on the gospel."

Themes continued to reemerge. It appeared that people played an important role in shifting cultures. Leadership also appeared to have a vital role in culture formation. There is always something behind culture—deeply held beliefs that often go unnoticed and unexamined. The call to let the culture be shaped by the gospel was an important one. The last question focused on advice for maintaining an orphan care culture.

Table 18. Additional advice for sustaining orphan care culture

Participant	Advice
SC-1	I think definitely prayer. That needs to be something we definitely make sure it's part of all of our meetings. We pray over all our church, for parents, but also to the Adopting one, that he promises to be a father to the fatherless, to care for, and that he would direct us in the right way. We need to continuing to keep the biblical vision in front of the church. We need to keep talking to the church all the time. We need to keep saying look this is why this is important. Help them to grasp the mission and the why, more than the need. So prayer and recasting the vision are the big ones.
SC-2	The only other thing I would mention is offering resources to the community. Not just talking about orphan care ministry and taking care of those children, who are without moms or dads, but showing them the practical steps of how you can do it. And bringing those steps to them, so whether that be a social worker from DHS coming to talk or a spokesperson from an adoption agency just coming to talk, giving them flyers with websites on it or frequently asked questions, that kind of thing. I think that would be very helpful in sustaining it.
SC-3	If it doesn't start from the top it will die on its feet.
SC-4	Nah, I don't think so.
SC-5	Nah. Yeah, I don't think we do.
SC-6	No answer.

Question 12. This final question looked for additional advice concerning sustaining an orphan care culture. Interviewees were given the opportunity to share any

Table 19. Summary of the Summit Church's themes

Categories	Themes
Establishment of Orphan Care Culture	1. Awareness, providing opportunity for engagement, support
	2. Gospel intentionality, preaching, and missions.
	3. Personal conviction, teaching, and personal connections.
Methodology	4. Major: Talking about orphan care: formal theological teaching, informal practical teaching, and sharing personal testimonies; minor: personal connection and developing organizational support structures.
	5. Leadership support, developing support structures, talking about it, teaching, and leading by example.
	6. Developing relational support structures, pastoral leadership, prayer, and service.
	7. Challenges: Size, training, volunteer recruitment, and embracing our identity in Christ.
	8. Pitfalls: Do not get so focused on "funneling people through the process" that you forget to care for those who have "completed" the process. It's not right to only focus on international adoption. Churches have to have a bigger vision. Do not let excited, interested people fall through the cracks. Although everyone is called to do something on behalf of the orphan, does not mean everyone must adopt or foster. Pastors and staff cannot be there every step of the way. You have to train volunteers. Make things clear up front to manage expectations. Be honest about the level of care you can provide throughout the adoption journey. Do not set your goals too high or too low. Be up front with people about the difficulties of adoption. Do not use guilt as a motivator. Help people to understand who they are in Christ and how that impacts what they are doing.
	9. Advice: There are a lot of great partnerships available. Connect people that are going through the same orphan care journey. Adoption can promote diversity. Provide resources and a clear action plan. Develop a network of individuals to assist families throughout the process. We all have different goals and responsibilities, but everyone should be doing something for orphans.
Sustaining Orphan Care Culture	10. Maintaining support structures: leadership development, resources, support groups, and mentors.
	11. People, leadership, and the gospel.
	12. Insights: Prayer, keep the biblical vision in front of people, offer resources to the community, and leadership.

insights from the depths of their experience that they thought would be invaluable. Often through last words, people express their most important message. Some of the interviewees felt they had covered everything they wanted to say. Others took the opportunity to drive home important themes. They encouraged people to pray. They suggested that the leadership should keep the biblical vision before the people. They stressed the need to provide resources and clear, easy-to-follow action plans. Leadership was, once again identified as a crucial element. Their responses are recorded in table 18 on page 109.

Summary. The image of the Summit Church that emerges from this examination of interviews is very informative. The interviews and supporting materials suggested that the orphan care culture was birthed at the Summit Church out of the church's pursuit of gospel intentionality. Throughout the interviews, many participants described the church's desire to apply the gospel in its community. A summary of Summit's themes is recorded in table 19 on page 110.

Cross-Case Analysis

In this section, I examined the ways in which these churches approached the development and maintenance of orphan care culture in a similar fashion. The goal of this research was to identify key strategies in developing and sustaining an orphan care culture. Three churches were examined to identify their strategies. Even when they used the same strategies, there were often nuances to their applications.

The Summit Church appeared to have a more gospel-centered intentionality. It was as if they said, "Start with the gospel, connect people to Christ, and the culture will develop." Living Hope Church appeared to be more relationally intentional. It was as if they said, "Start with relationships, connect people, and orphan care culture will develop." Green Acres Baptist Church seemed more programmatically intentional. It

was as if they were saying, "Start with this plan, connect people to their interests, and the orphan care culture will develop." None of this is to say that any of them neglected the other aspects. The gospel, relationships, and programs were important at each church. However, these distinctions should to be noted.

These churches live and serve in diverse contexts, so if strategies appear in multiple churches, it may indicate that those strategies could be considered by other congregations as useful for building and sustaining an orphan care culture. It may be applied in different ways in different contexts or may have a different emphasis within their contexts. This analysis focused on the summaries presented at the end of each case. In the literature review, I suggested three strategies that would be used within these churches. They were teaching, leading, and providing opportunities to engage in orphan care. These did appear to be key strategies for the churches, but as I analyzed the interviews another strategy emerged: developing support structures. This section will explore how these four strategies are utilized by these churches. Although the categories are distinct, there is an occasional overlap in them.

Teaching

Teaching was an essential element in each church. Teaching flowed through many channels in each setting. There was communication from the leadership in formal and informal ways. The focus of teaching was diverse: biblical, theological, practical, informational, motivational, and relational. Each church practiced multiple levels of training: they trained leaders, volunteers, mentors, adoptive parents, foster parents, etc. They taught people what to expect, how to file out paper work, where to get the paperwork, how to parent adoptive and foster children. The teaching was intentional. It drove awareness and visibility, informed people of the needs and their responsibilities, and it challenged people to get involved. Communication also ran in the other direction. Lay people were teaching their pastors. Passionate advocates where raising the alarm and

telling their stories. Individuals were engaging others to come and be a part. These conversations moved into developing support structures.

Developing Support Structures

As leaders and lay people began to have these conversations concerning orphan care, they grew not only in their awareness of the orphan's need, but their lack of resources. They sensed the call to do something for the orphan and to call others to respond to that need, but they were not always sure of the best ways to do that. Support structures can be divided into two overarching categories: organizational and relational.

Organizational support structures are those that are presented by the organization to the individual. It did not matter which emphasis a church had, they all recognized the need for these structures. They provided training for mentors, staff, leaders, volunteers, etc. They trained them in pre-adoptive services, parenting, and post-adoptive care. They taught them to think broadly about orphan care. They made action plans, provided counseling, and collected resources. Among those resources were people.

Relational support structures are those that are presented through relationship with another individual. These churches found that the families embarking on these orphan care journeys need social and emotional support. Often in the early stages, they discovered that people were less reluctant to get involved if someone would agree to go through the journey with them. The movement toward an orphan care culture appeared to happen along the road of relationships. Repeatedly throughout the interviews, the importance of personal connections and experience was highlighted by various participants. Many became engaged in orphan care because they saw others engaged, and thought they could do it, too. These interactions were often fueled by the challenge from leadership.

Leadership

Within this category, it is necessary to mark two types of leadership. In the cases of the Summit Church and Living Hope, the move toward an orphan care culture was spearheaded by the leadership. The leaders perceived through the study of Scripture and other things that the Lord was calling the church to act. At Green Acres, the call to action first came through an individual member. Their pastor was supportive when the need was brought to his attention, but he did not get things started. Many of the participants from each church voiced the importance of the senior pastor's or leadership's support. In many cases, it appeared that if the pastor or leaders had not started it or gotten behind it when it started, the culture would not have developed. Equally clear in these interviews was the potential of the passionate advocate. Both types of leadership appeared to be important.

Two additional elements to consider in this topic are the leadership of God and how he wants leaders to lead. Throughout this study, one of the things that reoccurred often, but was so subtle it was almost missed, was the leadership of God. Many participants mentioned feeling a sense of calling, or God placing the seed in their heart, or the Lord saying something in his Word or through the pastor. Although not formally addressed, the leadership of God is essential to developing an orphan care culture. If it is essential, how does he want to lead his people? While it might seem tired or cliché, the answer was suggested throughout this study: through the proclamation of his Word, through prayer, and through his people. Leaders who want to follow the Lord will have to provide opportunities for others to engage in orphan care.

Providing Opportunities to
Engage in Orphan Care

Experience appeared to be a vital piece of developing an orphan care culture. People needed to hear from the pulpit and other places about the needs of orphans and the Christian's call to care for the fatherless. They needed the opportunity to see real live

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families living out orphan care. They needed to know about all the ways in which one can engage and care for the orphan. They needed to be invited to seminars, conferences, and Q & A sessions. They needed to sit down to eat with a family who is doing foster care or who has adopted. They needed to learn that they do not have to adopt or foster in order to care for the orphan.

There are numerous avenues in which to care for the orphan. Churches and their membership can partner with agencies like Compassion International or WorldVision to sponsor a child. They can fill a shoebox at Christmas or buy presents for families listed on a local Angel Tree. They can volunteer in local elementary schools in after school programs. They can adopt an orphanage in a country from which the children cannot be adopted and offer love and support. They can start transitional support groups for children aging out of foster care. Many interviewees suggested the opportunities are countless, and it is incumbent upon the leadership to make the church aware of these opportunities and make it accessible to them. Ease of access may be as necessary as awareness of opportunity—maybe more necessary.

Summary

No church can, or should, do everything, but every church can do something. These cases demonstrated patterns that can be adapted and imitated. The overarching strategies are simple: teach, support, lead, and provide opportunities.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to utilize qualitative case studies to examine model churches to identify the best practices in developing and sustaining orphan care cultures within the local church. This study focused on three model cases: Green Acres Baptist Church, Living Hope Church, and the Summit Church. I began by reviewing the precedent literature as it related to the biblical and theological framework of the orphan care movement. My literature review also included a brief description of the scope of orphan care, the relationship of orphan care and the mission of the church, and the concept of orphan care culture. After receiving recommendations from a panel of experts, I selected churches to interview. Next, I conducted a qualitative study, which included identifying and interviewing members of those perspective churches. Following the interviews, I analyzed the transcripts. The conclusions drawn from this analysis are presented below, including research implications and applications along with suggestions for further research.

Research Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research was to examine model churches in order to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of orphan care in the local church. The following question guided my research: What are the key strategies model churches use to create and nurture a culture of orphan care? However, this question generated three sub-questions that undergird it. They are as follows:

1. What drives those strategies?

2. How can other churches implement those strategies?

3. What considerations do other churches need to make before they attempt these kinds of strategies?

Research Implications

In light of the precedent literature review and the cross-case analysis, it appeared the key strategies model churches used in developing and sustaining an orphan care culture were: teaching, developing support structures, leadership, and providing opportunities to engage in orphan care. These strategies suggested several implications.

If teaching was a key strategy, and it appeared it is, then leadership would do well to develop a plan for teaching the congregation about orphan care. The participants' responses suggested a need for systematic, on-going instruction of the biblical and theological truths about God's concern for orphans and his commands to care for them. In addition, leadership could teach the church the various ways in which individuals can serve the orphan at home and in other places. As several participants pointed out, orphan care is often difficult, and the church should be honest in discussing those difficulties when preparing people to engage in orphan care.

Some of the interviewees suggested that developing organizational and relational support structures were another key strategy. There was a perception that people were hesitant to get involved in orphan care because they did not know what steps to take or how to begin the process. Organizational support structures, like providing a resource library with books, articles, and videos, appeared to help people feel less hesitant.

Relational support structures seemed important, too. It appeared that people were more likely to embrace an orphan care culture when they had relationships with someone who was involved in orphan care. It seemed that those who were personally and

passionately engaged in orphan care were often key to influencing others to engage in orphan care. Orphan care is relational by nature and should not be treated like a project. Orphans are people, and their needs do not go away. Developing support groups and identifying mentors appeared to help communicate the church's love and support throughout the process.

Leadership seemed to be another key strategy. Based on the literature review and participants' responses, it would be hard to overstate the importance of leadership in the development of an orphan care culture. Within these churches, the pastor and staff had the primary role of leading and teaching. The culture seemingly was shaped by the leadership's teaching and focus.

Finally, it appeared to be important to provide opportunities to engage in orphan care. Many of the participants expressed that their personal involvement with orphan care influenced their decision to embrace their churches' orphan care culture. This truth suggested that experience is influential. Again, many of the participants suggested thinking beyond just adoption and foster care. Numerous ways a church could engage in orphan care were mentioned. For example, it was suggested that individuals could help provide financing for adoptions, they could babysit for a foster family, they could provide meals for families that have just brought a child home, they could fill a shoebox with Christmas gifts, they could sponsor a child, they could mentor a child whose parents are in jail, etc. Having examined the possible implications, I will examine potential applications.

Research Application

Throughout this study, I examined the strategies that three model churches used to develop and sustain a culture of orphan care. Following the research design, I collected and analyzed data and interpreted the findings. I analyzed data in light of the precedent literature and a cross comparison of cases. In light of the findings and research

implications above, I suggest three possible applications.

First, this research applies to pastors and leaders in local churches desiring to develop an orphan care culture within their church. These leaders have been tasked with leading God's people to follow his heart. Although the mandate to care for orphans is found in numerous places in the Scripture, it is not always easily discernible the ways in which a local congregation should serve. Also, leaders may not always be aware of the best strategies to use or how to use the existing strategies to their fullest potential. This research can provide such leaders with a first-hand account of the similar experiences of other churches that may serve as a guide.

A good starting point might be to host an Orphan Sunday. CAFO sets aside the second Sunday in November as Orphan Sunday. They produce resources that can be used within a local congregation to raise awareness of the needs. A pastor or leader could develop a series of sermons about God's concern for the orphan or the church's responsibility to care for the fatherless. Following the series of sermons, an event or meeting, could then provide the interested with opportunities to know how to take the next step. Good leadership empowers people to serve.

Second, this research applies to the advocate in the pew. Many individuals within the church have a burden for orphan care. They are often practicing orphan care on their own without any support from the local congregation. They are often unaware of others within their local church that may have similar passions. Those outside of official leadership positions often fear they have nothing to offer. This research can help them to recognize ways in which they can engage others in serving the orphan.

A good place to begin would be to speak to the pastor or other leadership. Advocates could share their story and passion with the church's leadership, and ask to begin a small group that would focus on orphan care. If given the opportunity to address the whole congregation, either through sharing their testimony or putting something in

the newsletter or bulletin, advocates could invite others to join them. Advocates could help the church develop a resource library for families considering adoption and foster care. God could use a small group of passionate orphan care advocates to build an orphan care ministry within the church.

Third, this research applies to churches that are doing orphan care ministry, but have not yet been able to build an orphan care culture. Churches may have individuals or small groups engaged in serving the orphan, but the congregation as a whole is not onboard. They may have the passion to serve the orphan, but lack the strategic know-how to fully engage. This research can present them with strategies that enrich their efforts.

A good place to begin would be to increase visibility of the orphan care ministry from both the pulpit and the pew. A church that is struggling to transition from an orphan care ministry to an orphan care culture might do well to ask a few questions: How involved is the pastor? Does he speak about it often? Have the ministry workers been trying to engage other people in the church? Is the church as a whole involved in celebrating victories within the ministry and mourning the losses?

Another step would be to evaluate the organizational structures. Is it easy for people to get involved? Is there a clear action plan that lays out the steps a family needs to take in order to move toward adoption and/or foster care? Do they have resources available? It might be helpful to evaluate relational structures as well. Are there people who can explain how to fill out the paperwork? Does the church have families who could be trained to mentor new foster or adoptive families? Are there support networks or groups that can be turned to for guidance, direction, and emotional support?

A church may find it helpful to articulate its reasons for being involved in orphan care and the goals that it hopes to accomplish through its involvement. It might also prove helpful to find multiple ways to connect the rest of the congregation to the work of the orphan care ministry: participation in toy drives during the holidays, back-to-

school events that collect resources for needy children, offering parenting classes to at-risk families, running after-school programs, developing mentor relationships with at-risk children, etc. There are numerous opportunities within most communities to engage in caring for the fatherless.

Research Limitations

I noted in chapter three that this research would be delimited to evangelical churches and would not be generalizable to non-evangelicals. All of the participating churches self-identify as Southern Baptist. Although many of the strategies discovered are general principles, the application might look different in a non-Southern Baptist context.

The three churches had similarities, but there were differences, too. Each church had a unique focus or approach to developing an orphan care culture. This research is limited in providing a thorough framework of how to develop an orphan care ministry in one's local church.

This research included two mega-churches, one of which was a multi-site campus. The third church was comparatively smaller than the other two with only around 500 in attendance; but when compared to the majority of churches in North America, it is still considered a large church. As such, the sample does not reflect smaller churches with less than 150 in attendance. The experience of developing an orphan care culture in a smaller church might look different.

This research should not be interpreted as an argument for one specific approach to developing an orphan care culture over another. While the principles discussed in this research are general in nature, their specific applications would look different in different contexts.

<center>**Evaluation of Research Design**</center>

This study was conducted using a fully qualitative design and examined the key strategies used by model churches to sustain and nurture a culture of orphan care. Study participants were located utilizing purposeful sampling and interviewed using an interview protocol that I developed.

Strengths

This study had three strengths that are worth noting. First, the qualitative research method provides for a richness of data collection not available in other methods. The interview protocol allowed for a natural, but focused conversation to occur with study participants. The semi-structured interview gave both the participant and me the opportunity to ask clarifying questions. This method also provided me with the opportunity to consider other resources that were recommended by study participants.

A second strength in this study is the diversity of the cases. The cases were selected upon the recommendations of a panel of experts. Although the churches shared a common denomination (SBC), they were very different, and their selection for this study was not based on that criterion. The churches were different geographically. One was in Ohio, one in Texas, and one in North Carolina. They were different sizes. Green Acres had 16,000 members, Summit had around 6,000, and Living Hope had less than 500. Summit was a multi-site church. Living Hope was a church plant, and Green Acres was a long-established congregation. They approached the process differently. At Green Acres, an individual with the passion for orphan care approached the pastor. At Living Hope, it started with the pastor seeking help from an experienced advocate. Summit started by asking its community leaders what the community needed. Yet, each church has developed a strong orphan care culture.

The third strength worth noting is that this method utilized telephone interviews to collect data. This limited the cost of collecting data while providing audio

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recordings for later transcription. It also permitted participants the freedom to choose when and where an interview was conducted. This not only provided them with the opportunity to choose comfortable surroundings, but presented them with an opportunity to be more open.

Weaknesses

There are two weaknesses of this research design observed. The first was selection methodology. During the development of my panel of experts, I collected thirty-nine names and emails. In some cases, contact information was out of date. Of the thirty-nine experts, only thirteen responded to my emails. Out of that thirteen, only six were able to help. Twenty-seven churches were identified by the expert panel, but only thirteen recommendations had complete contact information. Out of the thirteen churches invited, only three responded, thus limiting the number of cases to three.

The second weakness of this research methodology was the lack of outside validation. I created my own interview protocol, but did not have its validity tested by an outside source. If an instrument had been available for this particular research, it would have made validating the responses easier. Also, this process did not involve submitting transcripts or conclusions to the participants to determine their accuracy. The idea of doing that had not occurred to me prior to making my initial contacts with the participants. Having informed them that the process would consist of one interview that would take no more than an hour of their time, I felt it would be a violation of their trust to contact them for more information once the interview was finished. While writing chapter 4, I realized that it would have been a good idea to have built that into the research.

Further Research

Throughout the course of this study, several suggestions have come to mind

concerning further research. I will suggest four:

1. Culture is a relatively flexible term. A study using text-based methods or content analysis could be done to provide a clear definition of what an orphan care culture is.

2. Using a similar design and method as was undertaken in this research, a study could be done among smaller churches that have been identified as model churches or churches with an orphan care culture.

3. A study could be conducted to assess the impact having an orphan care culture has on the church, its community, and the areas it serves. In essence, does the church's culture make a difference?

4. A study could be conducted to examine church cultures that have shifted from a parent-centered model of orphan care to an adoptee/foster child centered model.

Conclusion

Orphan care should not be seen as a fad or a trend. The needs are real, and so is the call to respond. As has been echoed throughout this research, true religion cares for the orphan. Churches need to take up this cause to the glory of God and the good of their neighbor. Not everyone is called to adopt, but all are called to serve. This research has identified some key strategies churches have used successfully to develop and nurture a culture of orphan care. May many more churches find them successful, too.

APPENDIX 1

CAFO CORE PRINCIPLES

Christian Alliance for Orphans (CAFO) is a network of organizations and churches united to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children around the world.[1] These are the Alliance's core principles:

God's Heart and Ours. God is vested, deeply and personally, in the plight of the orphan—and in all who are destitute and defenseless (Dt 10:18; Ps 10:14; Ps 68:5-6, Is 58:5-12). He calls His people to join Him in this, sharing His passion for orphans and bringing to each child the love of Jesus Christ in both word and deed (Is 1:17; Jms 1:27; Mt 25:40).

Responsive Love. To act upon God's call to care for orphans is not merely a matter of duty or reaction to need. It is first a response to Gospel: the loving Father who sought us, adopted us, and invites us to live as His sons and daughters (1 Jn 4:19; Eph 1:15; Gal 4:6).

Commitment to the Whole Child. To meet only spiritual or only physical needs of an orphan is incomplete (1 Jn 3:17; Jms 2:16; Mk 8:36). Christian love seeks to address both. Even a cup of water given to quench the momentary thirst of a child is of eternal value (Mt 10:42). Yet of surpassing greatness is to know Jesus as Lord (Phil 3:8). So, just as in the ministry of Jesus, we should always hold together the meeting of physical need with the Gospel and our hope that every child will know God's love deeply and personally.

Priority of Family. God created the family as the ideal environment for every child, and the best outcome for an orphan is to know the love of a permanent family. Given the vast and complex needs facing orphans worldwide, this is not always possible. However, priority should always be placed on family-based solutions, and any long-term care should be as *permanent, nurturing* and *close to family* as is feasible for the particular situation.

Role of Residential Care. Crisis situations sometimes demand residential care for children, including orphanages and foster care group homes. To the fullest extent possible, however, residential care should be viewed as short-term and transitional. In general, the goal for each orphaned child should be to seek a solution as far as feasible along a "continuum" toward permanent family: large

[1]Christian Alliance for Orphans, "Core Principles," accessed November 2, 2013, http://christianalliancefororphans.org/ about/core-principles.

group homes, small group homes, foster care, kinship care, and, ultimately, full adoption whenever willing families can be found.

Family Preservation. Whenever possible, children classified as "orphans" that have one surviving parent or other relatives should be helped to remain with family members. Efforts that enable families to stay together and prevent children from ending up in orphanages or on the streets are a vital part of response to the global orphan crisis.

Central Role of Local Church. The local church in every nation possesses both the Christian mandate and many other resources needed to care for the world's orphans in a nurturing, family-based environment. Every initiative to care for orphans should prioritize and honor the role of the local church, carefully pairing what foreign resources may be necessary with local believers willing to open their hearts and homes to orphans in their community.

APPENDIX 2

CAFO STATEMENT OF FAITH

Christian Alliance for Orphans requires its membership to affirm its statement of faith.[1] Their statement reads:

1. We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.

2. We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

3. We believe in the deity and humanity of Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, in His present rule as Head of the Church and in His personal return in power and glory.

4. We believe that, for the salvation of lost and sinful man, repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ results in regeneration by the Holy Spirit and that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation.

5. We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.

6. We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost, they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.

7. We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, with equality across racial, gender, and class differences.

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[1]Christian Alliance for Orphans, "Statement of Faith," accessed November 2, 2013, http://christianalliancefororphans.org /about/statement-of-faith/.

APPENDIX 3

EXPERT PANEL:
LETTER OF INQUIRY

Dear (Participant),

My name is Randy Burns and I am a Doctor of Education candidate at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I am writing to inquire whether you would be interested and available to serve as a member of the "expert panel" for my thesis.

The focus of my research is to identify the best practices in developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in a local church. For the expert panel, I am looking for people who have an understanding of adoption and orphan care ministry and the local church. I desire to identify and research churches that can serve as models of some aspect of adoption and/or orphan care (i.e., promotion of adoption, pre-placement adoption training, post-placement adoption support, foster care training and/or support, support for youth who age out of the foster care system, global orphan care, etc.). Members of the panel would be asked to identify five (5) churches which they consider to be good models and likely to participate in this research. Members would provide the name of the churches, the areas in which the churches can serve as a model, and contact information, if available. A list of model churches will be generated from the panel's recommendations.

Your involvement would only take a few hours, and would help to advance the culture of adoption that is so important to the adoption movement. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in my research. I believe this research will be helpful in encouraging churches to engage in orphan care and adoption. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 270.791.0334 (Central Standard Time) or via email at rburns839@students.sbts.edu or brorandy@ymail.com. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Randy Burns

APPENDIX 4

DISSERTATION PARTICIPATION FORM

Participants filled out an electronic version of the form, through Google Forms, that had fields in which they could enter their answers.

Instructions:

- In section 1, read "Agree to Participate" statement and confirm your willingness to participate in this study by checking the appropriate box and entering the requested information.

- In section 2, provide responses to each of the prompts and questions by entering you information in the appropriate location. Please enter a response for every prompt.

Section 1

Agreement to Participate

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and orphan care in the local church. This research is being conducted by Randall Damon Burns for purposes of dissertation research. In this research you will complete the form below and participate in a personal interview. Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

By your completion of this form and the subsequent personal interview, and by checking the appropriate box below and entering the requested information, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research. Your personal information will not be shared and you will remain anonymous.

___I agree
___I do not agree

Name:
Email:
Date:

Section 2:

Preferred Name (if different from above):

Name and location of the church you serve:

What is your role?

___ Pastor/Elder
___ Staff
___ Teacher/Helper
___ Ministry Leader
___ Adoptive Family
___ Member
___ Volunteer
___ Other

How long has your church been involved in adoption/orphan care?

___ < 1 Year
___ 1-2 Years
___ 3-5 Years
___ 6-10 Years
___ 11-15 Years
___ 16-20 Years
___ 20+ Years
___ Uncertain

How long have you been involved in adoption/orphan care?

___ < 1 Year
___ 1-2 Years
___ 3-5 Years
___ 6-10 Years
___ 11-15 Years
___ 16-20 Years
___ 20+ Years
___ Uncertain

What is the nature of your involvement?

What is the best way to contact you?

___ email
___ telephone
___ Skype

___ Facetime
___ Text
___ Google Hangout
___ Other

Based on your contact preference, please include that information:

APPENDIX 5

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Looking Backward (Establishment of Orphan Care/Adoption Culture)

a. We are interested in learning your view on your church's orphan care/ adoption culture? In your opinion, what does it mean to have an orphan care culture?

Alternates: How does a church know that it has an orphan care culture? What markers would others, outside of the church, point to that would indicate a church has an orphan care culture?

b. Thinking back, what do you believe prompted your church to focus on orphan care/adoption?

c. Thinking back, what do you believe prompted you to embrace the church's culture of orphan care/ adoption?

Probes (request examples, tie together threads of narrative, relate to earlier experiences): Outside of Scripture, what has had greatest influence on your church? On you? Was it a book? A particular speaker/message? Personal experience? Seeing others involved in orphan care? Who were the key influencers? What was their role? How long did the progress take?

2. Concerning Methodology

a. What approaches or strategies have had the greatest impact in developing the culture of orphan care and or adoption in your church?

b. Imagine God led you to join a new church. This new church does not have a culture of orphan care/ adoption. How would you go about seeing an orphan care culture birthed in that church?

c. What advice would you give an enthusiastic orphan care proponent who was in a church that had not yet caught the vision for orphan care ministry?

d. What has been the greatest challenge your church has faced in building an orphan care culture?

e. What pitfalls would you warn other churches of when it comes to establishing an orphan care culture?

f. Is there anything about developing a culture of orphan care which you have not yet mentioned, that you feel is important people hear?

3. Looking Forward (Sustaining Orphan Care/Adoption Culture)

a. What approaches or strategies have had the greatest impact in sustaining the culture of orphan care and or adoption in your church?

b. In your opinion, what has been key to maintaining the orphan care culture in your church?

c. Are there any additional insights you would like to share concerning sustaining a culture of orphan care within a local church?

APPENDIX 6

PRIMARY CONTACT:
LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear (Primary Contact),

My name is Randy Burns and I am a Doctor of Education candidate at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My thesis research seeks to identify key strategies for developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and/or orphan care within the local church. Your church has been identified as a model of adoption/orphan care in the area of (area or areas). I am writing to request your church's participation in this research.

This research has the potential to help countless churches and church leaders to develop and sustain a culture of adoption and orphan care within their congregations. If you would like your church to participate in this study, you will need to identify "key informants" in your church who would be willing to be interviewed. In this study, a key informant is any active member of your church, male or female, who is over the age of 18. It would be helpful if representatives of every facet of church life were selected; examples might include pastors and staff, deacons, ministry leaders, adoptive families, foster families, small group leaders, etc. In addition to identify key informants, I will need access to the materials your church uses to promote adoption and/or orphan care; examples might include book titles, websites, brochures, sermons, etc.

Once you provide a list of names and email addresses for each key informant, I will send a letter of invitation to each, asking them to participate in the survey. The letter will include an introduction to the study, a link to the participation form, and copy of the interview questions. Interviews can be done one-on-one or if your informants prefer they can be done as a group. If possible, they may be done in person or via the internet through Skype, Facetime, or Google Hangout. The interview should not take more than an hour.

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in my research. I believe this research will be helpful in encouraging churches to engage in orphan care and adoption. I will contact you to follow up regarding this request if I have heard from you in the next week. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 270.791.0334 (Central Standard Time) or via email at rburns839@students.sbts.edu or brorandy@ymail.com. Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead!

Sincerely,
Randy Burns

APPENDIX 7

KEY INFORMANT:
LETTER OF INVITATION

Dear (Informant),

My name is Randy Burns and I am a Doctor of Education candidate at the Southern
Baptist Theological Seminary. My thesis research seeks to identify key strategies for
developing and sustaining a culture of adoption and/or orphan care within the local
church. Your church has been identified as a model of adoption/orphan care in the area
of (area or areas). You have been identified as a key informant. In this study, a key
informant is any active member of your church, male or female, who is over the age of
18. I am writing to request your church's participation in this research.

This research has the potential to help countless churches and church leaders to develop
and sustain a culture of adoption and orphan care within their congregations. If you are
willing to participate in this research please complete the "Dissertation Participation
Form," found at:

https://docs.google.com/a/students.sbts.edu/forms/d/1dTt2yRkEzxnhiVCioqXKhwiJO84
OAO49MiRr1tBj9ic/viewform

Once you have completed that form, we will schedule a time for the interview. The
interview should not take more than an hour. The interview will be recorded and
transcribed to ensure that the research accurately reflects what was said. This researcher
will have access to those records, but the participants will remain anonymous.

I would greatly appreciate your assistance in my research. I believe this research will be
helpful in encouraging churches to engage in orphan care and adoption. I will contact
you to follow up regarding this request if I have heard from you in the next week. If you
have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 270.791.0334 (Central Standard
Time) or via email at rburns839@students.sbts.edu or brorandy@ymail.com. Thank you
for your time. I look forward to working with you in the weeks ahead!

Sincerely,

Randy Burns

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ABSTRACT

CREATING AND NURTURING A CULTURE OF ADOPTION
AND ORPHAN CARE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH:
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY

Randall Damon Burns, Ed.D.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2015
Chair: Dr. Anthony Wayne Foster

This research, a multiple case study, examined three churches to identify the key strategies used to develop and sustain an orphan care culture within their congregations. A minimum of five participants were interviewed at each church. The qualitative research design was achieved by completing semi-structured interviews over the telephone. Following the interviews, I transcribed, coded, and analyzed the data.

This research identified four main strategies: teaching, leading, providing opportunities to engage, and developing support structures. Each strategy had sub-strategies. Teaching included awareness, communication, instruction, preaching, theology, Bible study, practical information, and training. Leading included types of leadership and methodology. The strategy providing opportunities to engage included raising awareness about the types of orphan care and making them accessible. Developing support structures included organizational support structures like a resource library and relational support structures like a support group.

Key terms: adoption, adoption culture, culture, forming culture, orphan, orphan care, orphan care culture, orphan care strategies.

VITA

Randall Damon Burns

EDUCATION
        B.A., Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 2000
        M.Div., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2007

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        Adult Education Instructor, Butler County Adult Education, Morgantown,
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