



Statement on Compassion Ministry

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A Compassionate God and His People

Biblical Ministries Worldwide affirms the following biblical truths regarding compassion:

- We serve a God of compassion (Ex. 34:6; Ps. 86:15; 103:13; 145:8-9; Lam. 3:22-23; 2 Cor. 1:3; Jam. 5:11), an attribute He shares with humankind (Gen. 43:30; Col. 3:12; 1 Jn. 3:17-18).
- Compassion is one of the themes of Scripture, and one of the motivations for our Savior's sacrifice for us (Mt 9:36; 14:14; 20:34; Mk 1:41; 6:34).
- Compassion ministry was commanded throughout the Law of God (Ex. 22:21-27; Deut. 14:28-29; 24:17-22), and it was a sign of true repentance and revival in Scripture (Is. 1:16-18; Jer. 7:5-7; 22:3-5; Zech. 7:9-12).
- In the New Testament, the ministries of Christ, the Apostles, and the early church intertwined the three elements of the gospel message, ethical teachings, and compassion ministry into a unified gospel ministry (Mt. 4:23; 9:35-36; 18:21-35; 25:31-46; Lk. 7:22; 10:30-37; 15:11-32; Acts 3:1-10; 4:36-37; 5:12-16; 5:42-6:7; 8:4-13; Gal. 2:10; 6:10; Jam. 1:27; 2:15-17; Rom. 12:13, 15, 20; Eph. 2:10; Tit. 3:8, 14).
- Compassion is commanded, it is an element of godliness and Christlikeness, it is portrayed as pure and undefiled religion, and it will be part of the basis of future judgment. (Jam. 1:27; 2:5-10; 5:1-6)

Compassion and the True Gospel

BMW missionaries should be committed to a life of compassion, combining practical help, the gospel message, and ethical teachings for the lives of the needy around us, both believers and nonbelievers.

At the same time, BMW missionaries must consistently resist any attempt within so-called Christendom to redefine sin in terms of physical, social, or economic human suffering, to redefine ministry as social work, or to redefine the work of Christ, the gospel, or salvation in terms of merely improving the human social condition.

A Prioritist Position

The "gospel message" is of primary importance when engaging nonbelievers: it was Jesus' primary reason for coming to earth (Mk. 1:38), it was the center of the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20), it was the focus of the Apostles (1 Cor. 9:16-23), and it is the power of God in changing the eternal destiny of a human being (Rom. 1:16-17). The gospel message, therefore, is central, theological, objective, and individual.

Compassion Ministry

The "gospel ministry" includes the message but also involves practical, relational, interactive and culturally-sensitive labor and teaching directed at the whole person to help restore and transform the four broken human relationships with God, self, others, and the creation (Gen. 3:6-24; Lk. 4:18-21).

BMW missionaries desiring a compassion ministry should educate themselves and make every effort to help relieve the suffering in their communities using great wisdom and a keen sensitivity to the will of

the Lord, so that they do not hurt themselves or those they are trying to help. Those who engage the poor and suffering should, without neglecting the gospel message and gospel ministry defined above:

- Ideally adapt themselves to identify with their host society: living near or among the target recipients, continuously studying their culture, worldviews, history, and language, connecting with them in ways that are in harmony with the moral and ethical teachings of Christ, and communicating God's truth (Acts 17:18-34; 1 Cor. 9:19-23);
- Understand the biblical causes of poverty and clearly recognize the differences between assisting in relief, rehabilitation, and development situations (Ex. 22:25; Prov. 19:17; 22:9; Acts 11:29-30);
- Take care to avoid paternalism and the reinforcement of third-world stereotypes in their words and actions (Ex. 23:6, 11; Prov. 14:20-21; 16:19; 17:5; 22:7; Jam. 2:1-7);
- Advise and adhere to proper stewardship principles on their team and on short-term teams that are looking to assist with compassion ministry; and
- Aim to involve those who are suffering with the remedies for their own condition so that they, in turn, can minister to others (2 Cor. 8:2; Eph. 4:28; 2 Thess. 3:6-12).