

Philosophy of ministry among the poor

David and Michele Clinton

- 1. Nothing is more important than Jesus Christ.** Although we minister to people with various material and physical needs, we believe that every person's greatest need is to be saved from sin and death through faith in Jesus Christ. It is our goal to present Christ as the Savior of the world in all of our compassion ministries. Without Christ, our good works are 'filthy rags', and we are not Christian missionaries but simply humanitarian workers meeting people's lesser needs. (1 Peter 4:11, Isaiah 64:6)
- 2. Fill their stomachs, then fill their hearts.** People are more open to hear spiritual things when their physical needs are met. This was Jesus' way. As He preached about the Kingdom He healed the sick and fed the hungry. We will not attempt to 'buy' conversions by providing material things for the poor. At the same time, we will not be content to hand a tract to a hungry person. We want to minister to both the spiritual and physical needs of the poor people around us. (Matthew 14:13,16)
- 3. We are servants.** Every needy person who comes to us is an immortal soul, created in God's image and beloved by Him. We are not above anyone. We should treat every person with respect and dignity, regardless of their financial status, educational level, or spiritual state. As grace has been freely given to us, we should give grace to others. (Philippians 2:3-4, Mark 10:45)
- 4. We can't help everyone, but we can help some.** Working with the poor means we will always be fielding requests for help. We are here to be taken advantage of, but we must rely on the Spirit to help us make wise decisions with our limited resources. We will grant requests based on how great we perceive the need to be, giving priority to situations such as fatherless and widows. If we ever feel lead to give loans, we will give them without expecting any repayment. There are some situations in which saying 'yes' too quickly is not the best way to help someone. (James 1:27, 2 Thessalonians 3:10)
- 5. Our money is not our own.** In our ministries we are spending money that God has provided through the generosity of churches and individuals. The donations we receive are the tithes and offerings of those who have given them. We take seriously the responsibility to be good stewards and to use our funds for their intended purpose. We are accountable before the Lord and before our supporters for how we use the money we receive. (Luke 16:9-13, Matthew 25:29, 1 Corinthians 16:3)
- 6. Our philosophy of ministry is a work in progress.** It will continue to grow as we continue to learn, experience, and grow in our ministry and in our relationship with the Lord.