

## ABSTRACT

### **EVANGELIZATION THROUGH DEEDS OF COMPASSION: DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL EVANGELIZATION AMONG PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN THE DISTRICT OF TIRUCHIRAPALLI**

by

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Compassion ministry in churches can be a great evangelistic tool to win the lost. Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli are increasing in number and they have been using many methods in their evangelistic work. This study seeks to explore the effectiveness of evangelization that is carried out through deeds of kindness and also develop a list of practices that can be used for successful evangelistic work in this context.

Mercy or compassion is one of the most important themes that runs through the entire bible. Key elements of compassion and compassion ministry were derived biblically, theologically, and historically from the Literature Review. The ministry of compassion has been carried out right from the inception of the Jerusalem church and is still being carried out around the world effectively causing churches to grow in great numbers. The Lausanne Movement has been at the forefront in the modern times advocating evangelism through social action. To achieve the findings, a church questionnaire and interviews were used to evaluate the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli in order to develop new practices in compassion ministry. The findings suggest compassion ministry is an effective evangelistic tool and there is huge potential for rapid growth of the Pentecostal denomination in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

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DEVELOPING BEST PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL EVANGELIZATION AMONG  
PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN THE DISTRICT OF TIRUCHIRAPALLI**

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by

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
CHAPTER 1 NATURE OF THE PROJECT	1
Overview of the Chapter	1
Personal Introduction	2
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Project	6
Research Questions	6
Research Question #1	6
Research Question #2	7
Research Question #3	7
Rationale for the Project	7
Definition of Key Terms	9
Delimitations	12
Review of Relevant Literature	13
Research Methodology	14
Type of Research	14
Participants	15
Instrumentation	15
Data Collection	16

Data Analysis	17
Generalizability	18
Project Overview	19
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT	20
Overview of the Chapter	20
Biblical Foundations	20
Old Testament	21
New Testament	28
Theological Foundations	40
God's Self-Determination towards Loving Kindness	40
Compassion Flows out of God's Nature	41
Compassion dictates God's Intervention in the Life of his People	42
God's Compassion results in Salvation and Deliverance	43
Compassion Ministry is an Incarnational Ministry in Jesus	45
Key Theological Foundations and Concern for People	45
From the Perspective of God	45
From the Perspective of Creation	46
From the Perspective of the Kingdom of God	46
From the Perspective of Sin and Redemption	47
Historical Foundations of Compassion Ministry.	48
Ministry of Compassion in Early Church History	49
Ministry of Compassion during the Middle Ages (A.D. 500-1500)	51
Ministry of Compassion after the Reformation	52

Compassion Ministry and Evangelism in the Pentecostal Movement.....	53
Pentecostal Church and Compassion Ministry	53
Pentecostal Pioneers and Compassion Ministry	54
The Inseparable Relationship between Evangelism and Good Works.....	57
Three Kinds of Relationships between Evangelism and Social Action	61
The Place of Evangelism and Action in the Good Samaritan Narrative (Luke 10.25-37)	61
Deeds of Compassion and the Power of Conversion around the World.....	63
Asian Context—India	63
Philippines	64
African Context—Kenya	64
Mozambique	65
North American Context—Cincinnati, Ohio (USA)	66
South American Context—Guatemala	66
Evangelism Verses Evangelization.....	67
Various Types of Compassion Ministry Today.....	68
Human Needs	68
Tim Keller’s Four Areas of Needs	68
Craig W. Ellison’s Five Areas of Felt Needs	69
Research Design Literature	70
Summary of Literature	71
<b>CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT.....</b>	<b>74</b>
Overview of the Chapter.....	74
Nature and Purpose of the Project	74

Research Questions	76
Research Question #1	76
Research Question #2	76
Research Question #3	77
Ministry Context	77
Participants	79
Criteria for Selection	79
Description of Participants	81
Ethical Considerations	81
Instrumentation	83
Expert Review	85
Reliability & Validity of Project Design	85
Data Collection	87
Data Analysis	88
CHAPTER 4 EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT	90
Overview of the Chapter	90
Participants	91
Research Question #1	94
Compassion Ministry as an Evangelistic Tool	99
Mercy Ministry and Church Growth	100
Leader's Role in transmitting Vision of Compassion	101
See the Need and Act Formula	104
Deeds of Compassion focused on Physical Needs	104

Research Question #2	105
Compassion Ministry is a Special Vocation	105
Lack of Resources is a Major Impediment	106
Fear Factor Among Church Leaders	107
Opposition from the Society and Non-Christian Groups	108
Church Growth due to Compassion Ministry	108
Mercy Ministry out of Compulsion rather than Passion or Vision	109
Research Question #3	110
Commitment and Enthusiasm	110
Effective Training Method	111
Women Empowerment Center	112
God Factor—Key Strategy Approach	112
Effective Prayer Ministry in Compassion Work	114
Ministry out of Compassion for People and not for Money	115
Mercy Ministry of Deeds—Programs and Activities	116
Summary of Major Findings	121
<b>CHAPTER 5 LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT</b>	<b>122</b>
Overview of the Chapter	122
Major Findings	122
1. Reality of Deeds of Compassion as an Effective and Promising Evangelistic Tool	122
2. A Belief that Deeds of Compassion Lead to Measurable Church Growth in the District	124
3. Belief that Church puts more focus on Physical Needs than	



Mental and Emotional	126
4. Belief that lack of Resources affecting and limiting the Works of Compassion Ministry in the District.....	129
5. Whole Hearted Involvement of the Pentecostal Churches in doing Compassion Ministry among Non-Church members/Unchurched People	131
Ministry Implications of the Findings	133
Limitations of the Study	134
Unexpected Observations	135
Recommendations	136
Postscript	138
APPENDIXES	
A. Questionnaire in English	141
B. Questionnaire in Tamil	145
C. Interview Protocol for Episcopal Leaders—Bi-Lingual	149
D. Senior Pastor’s Consent Protocol	153
E. Statement of Informed Consent for Interview	154
F. Statement of Informed Consent for Questionnaire.....	156
G. Confidentiality Agreement.....	157
WORKS CITED	158

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 4.1. Different methods currently followed as Acts of Compassion for Evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli	103
Table 4.2. Interview Participants who are involved in Compassion Ministry	106
Table 4.3. List of Best Practices for the District of Tiruchirapalli.....	128

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 4.1. Demographics of Questionnaire Participants	100
Figure 4.2. Demographics of Interview Participants	100
Figure 4.3. Questions 9, 12, 15 and 17	104
Figure 4.4. Questions 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20 and 21	109
Figure 4.5. Interview questions 3 and 4	110

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## CHAPTER 1

### NATURE OF THE PROJECT

#### Overview of the Chapter

This chapter sets the stage to explore the effectiveness of evangelization through acts of kindness in order to develop a list of best practices which will pave the way and create opportunities for successful evangelism in the context of the researcher. This chapter sets the tone for creating a profitable environment for effective Evangelism among the Pentecostal churches through acts of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli as opposed to the traditional way evangelism, namely sole proclamation in the midst of the challenging social, economic, cultural, and political situations which is prevalent in the context of research. As far as the researcher's background is concerned, the main focus of the Pentecostal churches is primarily reaching out to people in a preaching mode through various evangelistic outreaches which failed to bear fruit as anticipated and does not effectively win souls.

With these initial thoughts, the researcher will then summarize the purpose for this project which is to explore the effectiveness of Evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli and develop a new list of practices for effective evangelization. In order to achieve the setout purpose, this chapter will employ three questions which will guide and focus the research. Then the rationale for the project will be discussed by presenting a brief summary of the state of current methods for evangelization among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. Thereafter, the chapter will define the key terms used in this project and the delimitations for the research as well as present a summary of the relevant literature and the research methodology that was used to focus the research and generate the findings and conclusions. Lastly, this chapter will define the research type, participants, data collection

methods, data analysis, and generalizability which was used in the research study. The final section of the project provides a project overview giving the summary sentence for each of the remaining chapters to follow.

### **Personal Introduction**

I have been pastoring an independent Pentecostal church in South India since 2012. I also started a Global Compassion ministry outreach, a Charitable Trust, which caters to the needs of the poor and needy based on James 1.27 that “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (NIV). My passion has been to serve and help the poor since my childhood. St. Francis of Assisi has been a role model for me in reaching out to the poor who have been created in the image of God. The poor around me deserve a better quality life as John 10.10 says Jesus came to offer the abundant life to all. My ministry serves and covers the entire district of Tiruchirapalli. My district has the population of 2,722,290 and is located at the heart of the State. My city enjoys a population of around 847,387 of which male and female are 418,400 and 428,987 respectively (“Tiruchirapalli District Population”). This city is fertile ground for Evangelism and church growth of Christianity.

My major responsibilities are preaching and teaching the Word of God, training new believers, counseling people of all walks of life, and to oversee the entire operations of Global Compassion Charity. My motto in life is to serve God, love all people of all nations, and help the poor and needy. Just three months after I became pastor of a newly planted church in my home town with just thirteen people in my mother’s living room, I understood the enormity of the pastoral calling. Winning souls in the beginning was really a struggle. Nevertheless, I have always been determined to love all people unconditionally at any cost irrespective of their social,

financial, and economic background. After all, as ministers of God we are called to love people the way Jesus our Master loves them. This calling has been at the back of my mind all the time. As John Wesley says, love is the center of the Gospel message, and Christianity revolves around this grand gospel of love which permeates every sphere of a believer's life; there is no ceiling for love. (Wynkoop 236) The incident in my ministry that I am going to narrate is the motivation behind this project.

God has His own ways of bringing people into our lives when we least expect them. My sister-in-law Jeni happened to meet her friend Lilly after some years and during her conversation she said to Jeni that her aunt was suffering from stomach cancer and she needed prayers. My sister in law asked me if we could go to Lilly's aunt's house for prayer. I agreed immediately even though it was far away from my place. I always made sure I prayed for the sick. Acts 10.38 says Jesus went about doing good, healing the sick and casting out demons. I believe that Jesus still heals people. Jesus is the true healer and we are just his conduits. I began to enquire about the cancer patient's health condition. Within ten minutes into our conversation I found out she was a very angry woman inside. Her face became red and her words expressed deep anger despite the fact she was physically fragile with what was happening in her body. After some 30 minutes of conversation, I began to pray for her and told her how much Jesus loves her and wants to heal her. I came back home. I had told her and her husband John that they could call me anytime in case they needed prayer. After a few days, I got a call at midnight that she was experiencing unbearable stomach pain and I prayed for her over the phone and told the husband to take her to the emergency ward. My wife and I went to the hospital and prayed for her. We also cooked food for them for a week. On our visit to hospital, we happened to meet the patient's older brother, a respectable businessman and a staunch catholic. He was deeply touched by what

we did that night and he thanked us for not only praying for her but also the visit we made to her home to comfort her some days ago. She was discharged from the hospital. Our visits to their home continued in spite of our ministry commitments. In the meantime, the cancer patient was also getting better. She felt so much better and believed that God had healed her. One Sunday morning she along with her entire family came to our church and testified to the goodness of the Lord. Consequently, her family was baptized, and her older brother Daniel was amazed by what was happening to his sister's life.

Daniel attended Sunday service the following week and committed his life to Christ. He brought his best friend to the church the very next week. Slowly, he brought his wife who was not happy with her husband's conversion, but she still came to church out of curiosity. Daniel invited me and my wife for dinner one day. That was the beginning of our friendship. When we went to their home, he introduced to me all his family members and some relatives. We had a wonderful time of prayer and fellowship. His son got saved soon and one Sunday morning I saw some more of his relatives attending our service. In two months' time, our church had twenty-five people from Daniel's family alone. I was so excited. I began to sow acts of compassion as the days and months progressed. This resulted in church growth. Action speaks louder than words. As John Wesley says, "Love may link the persons into a fellowship" (Wynkoop 379). The normal approach to evangelism in my district is done through door to door preaching methods, distributing tracts, and asking church members to invite new people to the church service and most importantly to cell groups. What I did to one family by sowing acts of compassion resulted in an increase in church attendance. This occurrence has motivated me to write this project with a new perspective of doing evangelistic work in our context where churches believe in sharing the good news in different settings. Church leaders in my area think



that acts of compassion should be carried out by Charitable and nonprofit organizations. This is what disturbs me and troubles me as a minister of God. I want this scenario to change. For that reason, I am passionate about exploring and finding out the effectiveness of evangelization through acts of compassion and finding new ways and practices that open doors for successful and productive evangelization in our district.

It was St Bernard who said, “Take care of order and order will take care of you” (Woodgate 4). A true disciple of Jesus will always go to where people are feeling weak, broken, and sick, in pain, poor, lonely, forgotten, anxious, and lost. Therefore, true evangelization always includes responding from the heart to the needs of the poor in a spirit of true compassion. My wife and I want our church to be the fragrance of God’s love to our fellow brothers and sisters in our city. As Wynkoop says, “It is in consequence of our knowing God loves us that we love him, and love our neighbor as ourselves. Gratitude towards our Creator cannot but produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. The love of Christ constrains us, not only to be harmless, to do no ill to our neighbor, but to be useful, to be “zealous of good works” (Wynkoop, Kindle 1213). We have been helping so many poor people through our compassion outreach ministry and they come to know the true love of the One True God. I believe in good works toward the poor, naked, hungry, outcasts, and marginalized for whom Jesus came and ultimately these actions will result in their salvation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The district of Tiruchirapalli is at the heart of the state of Tamil Nadu. The district is famous for multi-religious and multi-ethnic groups. The Hindus are predominantly the majority and the Muslim population is steadily growing in number. The Christian community have their task cut out in doing effective evangelistic work here. Although the district is well known for the

myriad of catholic churches that are involved in various social services, they are not fulfilling the great commission as their goal is not to make people the followers of Christ. Having said that, over the last thirty years the Pentecostal denomination and independent Pentecostal churches have been on the rise. A perception exists among some people, especially the poorer sections of the district, that their physical, material, and emotional needs can be met by joining and becoming a member of a Christian church. As a pastor of an independent Pentecostal church, I come across this reality daily as I meet people from various walks of life. People need some kind of material needs irrespective of their religious and ethnic backgrounds. As their needs are met, they also come into the knowledge of the savior. Various deeds and acts of compassion should also be effective tools as far as evangelism is concerned while meeting the needs of the people. Evangelism should not be restricted to preaching the Gospel on the streets and from the pulpit in the churches alone. Evangelism should also include deeds of compassion that should ultimately lead one to Christ.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of the research was to explore the effectiveness of Evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches in order to develop a list of best practices that might open doors for successful Evangelization in this context.

### **Research Questions**

To explore the effectiveness of the evangelistic endeavor through deeds of compassion and to develop a best list of practices for successful evangelization in the district of Tiruchirapalli, the research was guided by following three questions.

#### **Research Question #1**

What are the different methods currently followed as acts of compassion for Evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli?

**Research Question #2**

How do the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli understand and feel about evangelism through deeds of compassion?

**Research Question #3**

What are the best practices from models of evangelism that incorporate deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?

**Rationale for the Project**

Acts of compassion are critical and inevitable when there are many poor and needy people located in the ministry place as it is in Tiruchirapalli district. Teddy Roosevelt once said, “Nobody cares how much you know until they know how much you care” (Evsborokhai 42). Jesus always demonstrated his love and care before telling people who he was. Work Evangelism is a work of faith and, if it is not accompanied by actions, then it is not from God. James 2.14-16 says, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith, but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you tells him, “Go in peace; stay warm and well fed,” but does not provide for his physical needs, what good is that?”

The first reason for this study is because the assumption is made that churches and their leaders in general want to pray for the poor and needy in their communities and countries around the globe instead of reaching out to people and helping them in their real needs which are present in their day to day lives. Church congregations can be mute spectators when people are hurting. Churches and their leaders should understand their social responsibility in their communities.

Congregations need to have not only the mind of Christ to evangelize but also have his heart of compassion to reach them with acts of compassion along with the good news of the Bible.

The second reason why this study matters is that the true ministry of evangelism is blended with acts of compassion. The apostle Paul, the greatest missionary in his time and an evangelist, says in Galatians, “They only asked us to be mindful of the poor, the very thing I was eager to do” (Gal. 2.10). Acts church sets the stage, the early church followed Christ’s pattern and did the same thing preaching, healing, and serving the poor and the helpless. The early church emphasized the connection between compassion and evangelism which is why it thrived and flourished. Thousands were added in a short period of time. This emphasis is all the more important for present day church ministers and leaders to emulate. Evangelism and good works (compassion) cannot be separated as was evidenced by Jesus when he was doing ministry here on earth two thousand years ago. He preached the Gospel, healed the sick, fed the multitude of people, and comforted the mourning.

The third reason why this study matters is because the God of the Bible is the God of love who loves and cares for his people. The rich young ruler was commanded to sell his possessions and give to the poor. Jesus answered, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me” (Matt 19:21). What is acceptable and pure in the sight of God and this pleases God. James 1.27 says, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” Only a true religion can care for the good and the welfare of the people. Therefore, in Tiruchirapalli where the churches are surrounded by people of other faiths like Hindus and Muslims, compassionate deeds demonstrate the uniqueness of the loving God which Christianity preaches.

Finally and most importantly, Christians are called to establish stronger and deeper interpersonal relationships with the people they serve. Establishing relationships with people by reaching out to them through acts of compassion while winning them for Christ is important. This act allows them to have a strong relationship with God while finding love from our actions. People would love to be part of a church that is strong in interpersonal relationships among the members. They feel they are accepted and feel love from the acts of kindness extended to them by the leaders and the members of the congregation. They do not want to feel lonely or feel they are on their own in their struggles of life. Psychologically, every human wants to feel loved by others in the form of smile, warm hug, eye to eye contact, and handshakes besides receiving physical, mental, emotional, and material needs.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

#### **Evangelization**

Evangelization is defined as the “action or work of preaching the gospel.” It is the process of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ into every sphere of human lives. Pope John Paul VI defined Evangelization in the modern world as “the process of bringing good news into all the strata of humankind and, through its influence, transforming from within and making it new” (Grogan 210). Evangelization is bringing the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ into every situation of human existence in order to bring total transformation in people and communities by the supernatural power of the gospel.

#### **Evangelism**

The next term that needs definition is Evangelism. According to the Lausanne Covenant, Evangelism is simply “proclamation of the good news concerning the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Stott 20-21). According to William Abraham, a renowned Irish

Theologian, evangelism is announcing the arrival of the kingdom of God here on earth (40). According to Ronald Sider, “Jesus announces the kingdom not just by his words but also by deeds” which means Jesus announces the good news verbally by his teaching and preaching wherever he goes and shares the good news by verifiable actions. (Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action* 159) A paragraph on evangelism on Lausanne Covenant summarizes this way,

To evangelize is to spread the good news that Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead according to the Scriptures, and that as the reigning Lord he now offers the forgiveness of sins and the liberating gift of the Spirit to all who repent and believe. Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Savior and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God. (Stott 20)

Thus, evangelism is announcing the good news to others. That good news is all about Jesus who has come to this earth to die for the sins of the entire mankind and has risen again to rule over the earth as savior and king. Evangelism is just the proclamation of the good news irrespective of the results (Stott 38). It is not about winning souls, but it is all about spreading the good news. Samuel Bahah argues that since evangelism is good news, it is supposed to meet needs of all sorts that include both spiritual and material (227).

International Review of Missions says evangelism is the mother of all Christian ministry tasks and hence the number one task of every Christian (*Evangelism: Witnessing to Our Hope in Christ* 79). The central mission of the church in evangelism is that the church partners with God in reclaiming the lost and the unsaved into the kingdom of God.

## **Compassion and Mercy**

To give clarity to the discussion of examining the relevant literature to this project, understanding the definition of the term compassion and how it is related to evangelistic ministry is helpful. The Jewish encyclopedia explains compassion as stated in Biblical Hebrew, רחם ("riḥam," from "reḥem," the mother, womb), "to pity" or "to show mercy" in view of the sufferer's helplessness (Jewish Encyclopedia). The Jewish view of compassion is the sense of feeling and showing the love of a parent for a child which is described when baby Moses was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter with motherly love, demonstrating deep sympathy and mercy for the baby as if it were her own (Kohler).

Jewish understanding of the word compassion and compassionate have the same meaning as mercy and merciful. The Hebrew word for mercy, known as *hesed*, is loving kindness. In the Institute of Creation Research, Robert Morris describes "the four Hebrew and three Greek words connected with the term *hesed* appear a total of 454 times in fifty books of the bible and are also translated as 'kindness,' 'loving kindness,' 'goodness,' 'favor,' 'compassion,' and 'pity'" (Morris). The consecutive use of the theme of mercy and compassion in the Bible, therefore, indicates how the concept is close to the heart of God and to who he is.

## **Pentecostal Congregation (Pentecostalism)**

Pentecostalism is one of the major denominations within the protestant Christian churches. People who embrace Pentecostalism are known as Pentecostals. The major emphasis of the Pentecostal church is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The term Pentecostal is derived from Pentecost from the Greek Pentēkostē meaning "fiftieth." It refers to the feast celebrated on the fiftieth day after Passover also known as the "Feast of Weeks" and the "Feast of 50 days" in

Jewish Rabbinic tradition. The Pentecostals are also known as Charismatic Christians and they have their presence in all parts of the world. (“Pentecostalism”)

### **Delimitations**

This project focused on Pentecostal denomination churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The participants for this study were senior pastors, assistant pastors, elders, believers, and other district ministers that belong to the Pentecostal churches. There are no more than four hundred Pentecostal churches that are either independent or affiliated to some Pentecostal mission. Not more than ten churches have more than one thousand church members. The rest of the churches are mostly small congregations ranging in attendance from fifty to four hundred. Tiruchirapalli district has the population of 2,722,290 and is located at the heart of the State. The city enjoys a population of around 847,387 of which male and female are 418,400 and 428,987 respectively (“Tiruchirapalli District population”). The Christian population is around 9.5 percent. The scope of this study is very limited as not many Pentecostal churches are involved in compassion ministry in comparison to other denominations such as Lutherans, Seventh day Adventists, Catholics, and Anglicans who are involved in compassion ministry through their charity work. The project did not cover the charity organizations, institutions, and mission agencies that are run by either private individuals or agencies affiliated to the Pentecostal denomination for the sake of community development in this district as this project sought to find the effectiveness of compassion ministry in the Pentecostal churches alone.

To keep the subject pool for this study focused and limited in scope, churches that are not of Pentecostal denomination are not included in the study nor are para churches and religious organizations that are not considered to be Pentecostal. The project did not cover charitable organizations and other institutions that are heavily involved in doing Samaritan works due to



other religious faiths such as Hinduism and Islam. Christians in any capacity or role other than the Pentecostal denomination are not part of the project. Most importantly, the project focuses only on the Pentecostal denominational churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. Although this project is vital for the entire Christian community, the scope of the study is restricted to Tiruchirapalli district alone.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

This project consulted a wide range of primary and secondary resources that address the Biblical, theological, and social aspect of compassion ministry around the world. Though there are a plethora of resources available on the themes such as compassion, mercy, and the loving kindness of God, a very limited amount of resources is available on the theme of evangelism through deeds of compassion. Interestingly, the whole gamut of the ministry of Jesus evolved around both the word and deed. Though Jesus came to save the sinners, he has never lost sight of the plight of the people who are in need. Jesus is always for the whole person, namely spirit, soul, and body. Several authors have dealt extensively on the topic of mercy and compassion that are explained in the Biblical and Theological foundations sections of Chapter 2. The biblical literature gives many instances where Yahweh, the one true God of the Universe, has been portrayed using his dual nature as God of wrath as well as God of mercy and compassion. The compassion of God and his compassionate deeds are intrinsic in the biblical story of the Old as well as New Testament. The biblical narrative of God's compassion also invites and summons God's people to follow Yahweh's footsteps. Various definitions on themes such as compassion, mercy, and evangelism have been explained.

The types of resources used in this study range from scholarly books, articles, websites, and research reports. One the most notable people who are deeply involved in this area of

research is John Stott through the Lausanne movement which voices the importance of evangelism and social responsibility. Since 1983, they have strived hard to address the issue of combining social action and evangelism in the Church's evangelistic mandate. Major proponents who advocate compassion ministry as an evangelistic tool are Ronald Sider, Tom Sine, Waldron Scott, and Timothy Keller of the USA, Vinay Samuel of India, and Chris Sugden of the UK. Missiologists David Bosch and Donald Macraven have been discussed widely in terms of their contribution to evangelism as the mission of God based on the perspective of the early church as described in Acts. Waldron Scott highlights the fact that mercy ministry brings about social transformation in every continent. He explains how mercy ministry has been done in different ages of history. Timothy Keller, Senior pastor of the reformed Presbyterian Church in New York has been vocal about mercy ministry and is renowned around the world. The Pentecostal approach to compassion ministry has been well developed and explained by the Assemblies of God denomination that has done immense work around the world as their denomination has strong presence around the world because of their tireless evangelistic work through major social action. Many worldwide examples of how the integration of deeds of mercy and evangelism has succeeded have been explained in the review of literature. Ronald Sider, a popular expert on church's need on social action, contends that both evangelism and social action go together and has proposed some models that can be seen as benchmarks in church compassion ministry.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Type of Research**

This project was a mixed method, pre-intervention study which researched the present effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion among the Pentecostal churches

and developed a list of best practices for others to follow in the evangelistic work in the area of Tiruchirapalli. The researcher used the quantitative method of questionnaire and the qualitative method of a semi-structured interview and a focused group to collect data to ensure balanced and well-rounded research. Pentecostal pastors who are involved in compassion ministry and longtime believers were subjects of the research.

The research was done to find out what kind of compassion ministry models or methods are used among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli in their evangelistic work and the effectiveness of good deeds to the poor and needy while winning souls for God's Kingdom. The participants were asked to comment on why they think doing acts of compassion are important in their evangelistic ministry and how far they have been effective and successful. They were also asked about their understanding of deeds of compassion in effective evangelization. Having acquired the inputs, a list of best practices was developed from this research and from the insights gleaned in the Literature review.

### **Participants**

My participants were primarily Pentecostal pastors and ministers who are involved in the compassion/mercy ministry and have a good standing in the body of Christ. Men and women who have been doing compassion ministry outreaches in the designated area of research and are also seasoned believers were also participants. Ten pastors including some women who play lead roles in Pentecostal churches took part in the semi-structured interview. Forty people that included believers, pastors, and ministers of charity organizations and para churches have responded to questionnaires. A random selection of pastors and believers also responded to the questionnaires and were interviewed in a semi-structured interview.

### **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire was used as a qualitative method of gathering data about the effectiveness of deeds of compassion in evangelization among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. Pastors and believers were interviewed, being a qualitative method, to find out their understanding of compassion ministry in the evangelistic task of winning souls and to determine what kind of deeds of compassion they are doing. This qualitative method was basically used to elicit information as to why some are involved and some are not involved in doing acts of compassion as an evangelistic tool. The interviews were also used for the purpose of knowing the effectiveness of such deeds or lack thereof.

The questionnaire was used to answer research questions number 1 and number 3 by identifying the understanding pastors and believers have in doing compassion ministry for effective evangelism. Interviews were used to answer research question 1, 2, and 3 in order to elicit information used to determine the level of understanding of compassion ministry in this context and some of the models used as tools of evangelism. After obtaining the responses through the questionnaire and the interview, the researcher tried to develop a list of practices that would open new doors for effective evangelism through acts of compassion among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

### **Data Collection**

Research was conducted between January and February of 2020 in the participants' offices/churches. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire followed by semi-structured interviews with seven senior Pentecostal church pastors. The qualitative, semi-structured interview participants were chosen according to their work in the ministry of compassion as a tool of evangelism. Consent to participate in the interview was given over the phone or in some cases through mail or in person. There were twelve candidates out of which seven were

identified by the researcher for face-to-face interviews at their respective premises. Some of the participants received the interview questions in advance to facilitate the familiarity with the questions they were required to answer. All seven candidates were interviewed in person individually on different dates. The interview process was completed within a fifteen day time period. The interviews were recorded using an android phone and downloaded later onto a laptop. The interviews were transcribed and assessed manually to discover the similarities, differences, and discrepancies in various churches' compassion outreach ministry and to gather new themes and concepts that could help the research in finding out the effectiveness of current practices in evangelism. This research could also help to determine new methods and practices that could make evangelism more successful in this context. The interviews consisted of the purpose statement of the study and specific questions about the current practices, church's involvement, and general understanding of deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelism among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirpalli.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data from the questionnaire and personal interview manuscript was reviewed many times to see how deeds of compassion are carried out and practiced among the Pentecostal churches in the context of research. This process revealed the health of the compassion ministry in the churches that took part in the questionnaire and personal interview. While reviewing them, different insights, themes, and various concepts of compassion ministry practices were noted, recorded, and analyzed.

The analysis of the questionnaire involved demonstrating patterns of various deeds of compassion practiced and not practiced among the Pentecostal churches in Tiruchirapalli. Common attitudes and understanding of compassion ministry among the churches as a tool of

evangelism were noted and examined, and their effectiveness was found out. This analysis led to the in-depth personal interviews with senior Pentecostal pastors that were involved in deeds of compassion. Through the interviews, the pastors' feelings, motives, understanding of deed ministry, and modus operandi were recorded and analyzed. The data represented the clear picture of why some choose to do compassion ministry and some do not. The trends were also analyzed to find out the effectiveness of compassion ministry as a tool for evangelism.

The questionnaire was given to and collected from forty participants consisting of junior pastors, elders, and church believers of various Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. In addition, qualitative, semi-structured interviews were obtained from selected seven senior Pentecostal pastors from the district of Tiruchirapalli. There were twenty-five questions in the questionnaire and seven questions in the interview. Once all data was collected, they were analyzed in MS EXCEL program 2013.

### **Generalizability**

A broad generalization of this project is not likely due to the small number of participants in this project and one specific geographically concentrated. The findings of this project are restricted to a small number of church pastors and their congregational members. The repetitive work of this project can be a possibility. Unlike this research project which is restricted to only one particular denomination and one district area, someone in India might venture into doing the same research on a broader scale which may not be restricted to one denomination or one particular locality. Having said that no supportive evidence for this project was found in literature sources, the researcher managed to gather that a similar project has been carried out before both in India and abroad. This work could certainly help someone who would be interested in doing similar projects especially in India and abroad to a certain extent. Having said

that, compassion ministry may involve different factors in different contexts. While doing compassion ministry, people may have similar needs in various forms in different contexts, but strategy and feasibility may differ due to lack of resources, interference from the local authorities or Government, malpractices, etc. Hence, carrying out a similar project in a different context may or may not yield the same results.

### **Project Overview**

Chapter 2 of this study establishes the biblical and theological foundations and perspectives of evangelization through acts of compassion and deeds of kindness as well as a historical review of literature on evangelization that could be carried out by doing sincere and spirit filled deeds of compassion in order to make evangelization more effective and efficient in various places. Chapter 3 presents the research design, methods of research, and data analysis methodology. Chapter 4 shows the results of the research and analysis of the collected data. Chapter 5 offers the interpretation of the research findings as well as observations and suggestions to develop best practices that might pave ways for effective and successful evangelization in the chosen context.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

The goal of this project was to explore the effectiveness of employing (deploying) acts of compassion in the process of evangelization. The project explored how kind and compassionate actions towards people is an effective tool in carrying out the great commission of Matthew 28 given by Jesus Christ. The chapter demonstrates that evangelism and acts of compassion are two equally important aspects of the gospel even though they have their own characteristics. Therefore, Chapter 2 argues that contextually relevant social action motivated by Christian compassion is relevant to the evangelistic task of the church.

This chapter's contents are categorized into four sections. Firstly, the chapter defines compassion, mercy, and evangelism versus evangelization to give clarity to the discussion. The second section explores the Biblical foundations for compassion from both the Old and New Testament. Thirdly, this chapter provides the theological overview of compassionate and merciful words and deeds of God towards his people and their relevance to the questions at hand. The final section explores and analyzes compassion ministry and evangelism in different ages and in various stages of history. Towards the end of the project, different themes that are pertinent to this research are explained with examples of how evangelism has been carried out through deeds of compassion in India and other nations. This chapter concludes by highlighting the inseparability and inevitability of evangelism and acts of compassion.

#### **Biblical Foundations**

The compassion of God and his compassionate deeds are intrinsic in the biblical story of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament. The biblical narrative of God's compassion



also invites and summons God's people to follow Yahweh's footsteps. The scripture says, "The Lord is full of mercy and compassion" (Jas. 5.11c, NIV). As Jerry Ireland states, the word compassion is viewed as a "system of interrelated terms and ideas that define human response to God's mercy and compassion." (16) The following sections show scripture's use of these two concepts of mercy and compassion in the Old and New Testament and also how deeds of compassion and mercy are illustrated in different parts of the Bible.

The biblical literature gives many instances where Yahweh, the one true God of the Universe, has been portrayed with a dual nature —God of wrath as well as God of mercy and compassion. Fathoming how God can be both compassionate and wrathful is quite difficult. As Frederic L. Godet explains, "God's wrath is 'moral indignation' in all its purity... holy antipathy...without even the slenderest touch of irritability or dislike" (152). His wrath can never be equated with human beings' wrath which is full of bitterness, hatred, vengeance, and spite. God is not run over by his feelings and emotions like people. In the same vein, his love for his people is full of compassion, mercy, and is totally pure, holy, and sacrificial; these qualities cannot be equated with his people who have been created in his image.

### **Old Testament**

**Compassion in Pentateuch and Law.** Multiple passages in the Old Testament give accounts of how God commanded and instructed the Israelites regarding mercy, compassion, kindness, and justice. The widows, orphans, strangers, slaves, homeless, fatherless, and hungry were supplied with necessary provision. (Exod. 22.25-27; Lev. 14.21-32; Deut. 15.1-11; Isa. 1.1-31; Amos 2.6; 5.11-12) (Watkins 5). Just to highlight one passage in Exodus 22:21-24:

You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. You shall not harm *or* oppress any widow or fatherless child. If you

harm *or* oppress them in any way, and they cry at all to Me [for help], I will most certainly hear their cry; and My wrath shall be kindled *and* burn; I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless. (AMP)

God is concerned with the poor, needy, and the marginalized of the society. In the above-mentioned verses, God seems to impress the Israelites with clear instructions through Moses that they need to take care of and protect the vulnerable people failing which they will face dire consequences. God reminds the Israelites in Exodus 3.9 and Deuteronomy 26.7 that “they have been once strangers and oppressed people in the land of Egypt” (Baker 22). God has had compassion on them; therefore, they have been liberated and have been sent to a new land. Now they in turn must show compassion to those who are in need. In compassion, God gives a warning in Exodus 22.23 that he will be angry if his people are harmed or oppressed as he cannot stand evil and bad things done to his people. He even goes to the extent of killing those who harm his people as is seen in Exodus 4.22-23, “Then say to Pharaoh, ‘this is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son’, <sup>23</sup> and I told you, ‘Let my son go, so he may worship me.’ But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.” David Baker states, “When Israel is oppressed, God comes to her rescue” and “takes up her cause; but if the Israelites become oppressor, they make themselves enemies of the very God who has had compassion on them.” (22)

This passage reveals God's compassionate mind-set towards his people. His people cannot be oppressed or suppressed by people. He comes to their rescue in every sense. He is interested in the overall wellbeing of his people and not just the spiritual wellbeing. He also sets an example for his people to emulate him as compassionate people towards fellow human beings.

**Different types of compassion in Pentateuch.** God shows his *hesed*, mercy and compassion, in various ways to his people. Francis Anderson identifies four key passages in the books of Moses where the nature and the acts of compassion are distinct from each other. Passages such as Exodus 20.5-6 (Deut. 5.9-10) relates to “Jewish motivation to keep the second commandment.” Exodus 34.6-7 relates to “Lord’s own self-declaration” as a compassionate God. Numbers 14.18-19 relates to his “forgiving nature.” Finally, Deuteronomy 7.9-10 deals with “warning and exhortation to adhere to his commandments.” They are “variations on the same theme” (Anderson 44).

The merciful acts of God are not restricted to his act of forgiveness of sins alone (Num. 14.18-19). He extends his mercy and compassion in terms of meeting the needs of the poor and needy. He not only exhibits his compassion by his saving acts when his children are in danger, pain, and agony. He also exhibits his compassion by providing for the needs of his people as a compassionate provider, because he is a God who cares by meeting the needs of his people. He stands and fights for the people who are weak and needy.

According Alan Keith-Lucas, “there are 105 references that point to injustice, 32 to compassion and 21 to loving kindness.” Most of them specifically point toward those marginalized, “less fortunate,” and the weak and oppressed section of the society (Keith-Lucas 5)

**Compassion in Wisdom Literature.** Wisdom Literature, also known as poetic books, are filled with references to mercy and compassion. The word “*hesed*” (loving kindness) appears “141 time in the three poetic books, viz Job, Psalms and proverbs that is more than half of the occurrences in the entire bible” referring mostly to the compassionate and merciful acts of God (Anderson 80). Darrel Watkins suggests that God has promptly made “His will known

concerning compassion ministry to people through Job even before God gave laws to Moses concerning treating the poor and needy” (Job 5.16-17; 20.19-20; 22.7-9; 24.1-21; 29.11-14; 16-17, 31.16-23) (Watkins 9; Baker 55; Waltke 607).

These verses show God’s special concern for the poor and needy and he expects and commands his people to do the same. Baker sees people’s responsibility towards especially the poor and needy with “an attitude all humanity in one family” (Baker 55). As all people are created in the image of God (Gen. 1.27), the poor, needy, strangers, neighbors orphans, widows, destitute, marginalized must be treated well and taken care of knowing that one day all of us have to give an account to God and be judged according to our deeds (2 Cor. 5.10; Job 31.14). Waltke, while elaborating the Proverbs 14.31, explains, “The poor and needy have an exalted status together with all humanity by reasons of their creator, whose honor is inseparably connected with His Workmanship.” (Job 31.15; Matt. 25.40) (607).

This passage amplifies the fact that taking care of the weak, helpless, poor and needy in ministry at any level brings glory and honor to God. The book of Job perceives that when these lowly people are not taken care of or are treated badly, it is considered a “moral failure” and “deserves punishment from their creator” (Job 5.15-16; 20.19-20; 22.7-9). Moreover, if the needs of the poor are neglected and refused, God their maker is insulted as this action is tantamount to sin (Pro 14.21; 17.5).

**Compassion in Prophetic books.** Compassion is one of the major themes in the prophetic books. In the Old Testament, prophets are considered as God’s spokesmen and spokespersons. They have been appointed as messengers to announce God’s intentions and plans for his people. Moreover they have been set apart to convey the messages of God to people. In

simple terms, God spoke to people through chosen prophets (2 Kings 17.13; 2 Kings 24; Ezek. 38.17; Zech. 1.6).

**Compassion in relation to His action towards the poor and needy.** God's Compassion for the poor is further highlighted in the book of psalms where mercy and compassion, 'hesed,' is always related to his action (Psalm 82.2-4; 72.12-14; 10.17-18; 107.9; 145.15; 142.7; 103.6).

Psalm 146.7-9 beautifully describes the merciful acts of God,

Who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry?

The LORD sets free the prisoners. The LORD opens *the eyes of* the blind;

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; The LORD loves the <sup>[a]</sup>righteous

[the upright in heart].The LORD protects the strangers; He supports the

fatherless and the widow; But He makes crooked the way of the wicked.

He *feeds* the hungry of all kinds. He *releases* the prisoners from their bondages and afflictions. He *opens* the eyes of the blind. He *lifts* up those who have been knocked down by various problems in life. He loves those who are upright in their ways. He protects the innocent, the strangers, and the vulnerable people. He supports those who have been abandoned, rejected, orphaned, widowed, destitute, homeless, and so on. His actions manifest his mercy and compassion. The psalmist lavishly praises Him in Psalms 145 for his compassionate character and merciful deeds.

They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great

deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is

good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. All your works praise you, LORD;

your faithful people extol you. The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are

bowed down. The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time. You open your hand to satisfy the desires of every living thing.

God's compassion is not only for the Jews or the Jewish Community wherever they are placed, but he has compassion on all he has created irrespective of caste, color, creed, and religious affiliation, nation, and people groups. He is compassionate to all and so are his deeds and works. His actions are his expressions of his kindness toward his people. According to Francis Anderson, the book of proverbs compares "compassion" to a "superlative human virtue" and is an essential qualification to become a ruler. A man of compassion is antonymous to a "cruel person" (80). Proverbs 19.17 says one who is compassionate to a poor man lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his good deed. Those who are compassionate towards the poor by doing good deeds are helping and lending to the Lord. Jesus affirmed these acts of compassion two thousand years ago in Matthew 25.40, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

**Compassion in relation to sacrifices to God.** Through Prophets, God reveals that he is more concerned with compassion and mercy than religious rituals, traditions, and ceremonies. Hosea 6.6 says that God desires 'hesed,' mercy, not sacrifice; he prefers growing the knowledge of God over burnt offerings. Prophet Micah demonstrates this Godly desire by saying:

With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)

The prophet puts God's mercy and compassion into perspective. God is not interested in burnt offerings or thousands of rams as a sacrifice or ten thousand rivers of oil. He proceeds to say God's people should act justly towards his people and love mercy. God is not interested in the religious fanfare or festivities when people cannot show love and compassion towards the poor and need. God hates religious celebrations which do not make any sense to him. He hates the noise that emanates from their celebrations (Amos 4.4-5; Isa. 1.10-20; Amos 5.18-27).

**Compassion in relation to Worship.** Daniel Carroll laments that "the people of Israel think their worship methods and patterns meet God's standards of praise and worship" and the worshippers are convinced that they celebrate God's goodness through their act of worship. He adds their worship was more about "satisfying their own religious impulses than pleasing God" (36). People are not aware that their festivals, worship services, offerings, and all sorts of prayers have not pleased God as they have failed to show true compassion and mercy to the needy and the poor who are around them. Moreover, the prophets are disgusted with the fact that the rulers and elite have exploited the innocent and poor for their personal benefits and selfish ambitions. In Jeremiah 22.13-16, the prophet condemns the king of Judah, Shallum, son of Josiah, who builds an expensive and luxurious royal palace at the expense of the sweat and blood of the innocent, poor laborers. They have not received their wages due them. Jeremiah lambasts the king for the lack of compassion and mercy which Josiah, his father, has shown to the poor and needy. "Is not what it means to know me?" says the Lord in verse 16. The Prophet emphatically states that to know God means to show mercy, compassion, and do justice in all words and deeds.

**Compassion in relation to repentance of people.** The prophetic books also reveal that true repentance attracts God's compassion and mercy. When God sees people returning to him in

true repentance by forsaking their sinful habits and disobedient ways, he relents and shows his compassion as seen in 2 Chron. 30.9; and Joel 2.12-13. Joel 2.12-13 explains,

That is why the Lord says, “Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me all your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, mourning. Let your remorse tear at your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful. He is not easily angered; he is full of *hesed* and anxious not to punish you. (TLB)

When his people return to the Lord, he is not only merciful and compassionate to accept them, but he is also anxious not to punish those providing people with great incentive to come back to God to attain his mercy. When people return to him in true repentance, his anger is restrained by his compassionate and merciful character. According to Bryan Stone, “to be compassionate and merciful and to justice is to know God as He is the defender of the poor, needy and oppressed. The practice of mercy leads the doer to know God as He is” (53).

### **New Testament**

**The Act of Compassion in Christ’s Incarnation in Synoptic Gospels.** Two thousand years ago as prophesied by the prophets, Jesus reveals himself as the true son of a compassionate God. God has executed his redemptive plan by sending his son Jesus. The act of sending his son is nothing short of a compassionate act. Jesus is a true compassionate savior, deliverer, healer, comforter, shepherd, and friend to all. His ministry is marked by compassion to the poor and needy. Modern New Testament scholar Marcus Borg, when describing the compassion of Christ, advocates that the prime idea that the “ministry of Jesus on earth has been primarily about compassion” (Alistair Wilson 94). Jesus is radically compassionate to all especially to those who come to him with all out desperation. All the four gospel writers present Jesus as not only a compassionate son of God but also someone who responds to the needs of all sorts of people.



Jesus has not come to this world just to proclaim the good news and to save sinners, but the Gospels are flooded with the stories of Jesus moving and acting with compassion wherever he goes as love is the cornerstone of his earthly ministry. He is the epitome of compassion.

**Grace and Truth (Word and Deed).** Ronald Sider makes the case for Jesus' ministry when he discusses evangelism and social concern for the poor. The kingdom of God which Jesus introduces is a perfect “combination of logos and action.” Jesus has shared the good news by “verbal proclamation and visible demonstration” (Evangelism and Social Action 159). The kingdom of God is not based on ministry of the ‘Word’ alone but also punctuated by ‘good deeds’ which flow out of a compassionate master, savior, and friend to all. As Thomas Nees says, “the ministry of Jesus always leads to compassion” irrespective of what he says or does or thinks (20). The compassion of Jesus has become the ministry template for the New Testament Christianity.

**Christ’s willingness to identify himself with the needy of the world.** In the Gospels there is a vivid expression of Jesus who is said to be “moved with compassion” when he sees the sick, hungry, helpless, and the desperate for help. Jesus portrays this image of someone who is truly moved to reach out to people with love and compassion twelve times. Henry Nouwen, while reflecting on the compassion of Christ, explains that the Greek verb *splanchnizomai* unlocks powerful meaning which is deep and mysterious. “When Jesus is moved with Compassion, the source of all life trembled, the ground of all love burst open, and the abyss of God’s immense, inexhaustible and unfathomable tendered revealed itself.” (17)

Throughout the gospels Jesus has been known for his compassion and acts of compassion through various stories. He is a loving and compassionate father (Luke 15.11-32). He is a compassionate Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37). He is a compassionate healer (Matt. 9.20–22;

Mark 5.25–34; Luke 8.43–48). He not only heals individuals, but he heals all people as stated in Matthew 15.30. The reason why he heals an individual or all people is because of his compassion which forces him to act. Mathew 14.14 says, “When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sickness.” When he sees a multitude of people, he is moved with compassion and springs into action in order to feed them as they are tired and weary. He takes care of the hungry and weak (Luke 9.16). He is a compassionate Shepherd as described in Matthew 9.36, “When he saw the crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.” As King David has narrated in the famous Psalm 23, he is indeed a true shepherd for all and wants to lead his sheep into green pasture where their needs are met. As a true compassionate and good shepherd (John 10.11), he wants to take his people to the right place and provide their needs and protect them from their enemies.

**His provision of salvation out of compassion.** The most important and exceptional facet of Jesus’s act of mercy and compassion culminates in his conversations with sinners, outcasts, and the marginalized of the society in order to offer them eternal life. He ate with sinners and tax collectors (Mark 2.17) because he came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19.10). The woman who is caught in adultery red handed, an act punishable by the death penalty according to the Jewish laws, (John 8.1-11) has her sin of adultery and imminent death eliminated by the indescribable love and compassion of Jesus. His forgiveness of sins brings total transformation in her life. He loves sinners and hates sins.

This love is also very evident when he enters into a conversation with the Samaritan woman described in John 4. Jews and Samaritans have enmity and hatred towards each other but Jesus, because of his love and compassion for the whole world, breaks that caste barrier and

moves into her territory in order to meet her needs both physical and spiritual. John Perkins, while talking about Jesus ministry approach towards meeting the needs of the people, says that Jesus reaches out to the Samaritan woman in order to show that “meeting people’s physical needs are stepping stones to treat their spiritual needs” (65). This action demonstrates that good and compassionate deeds always lead to the good news that Jesus has come to proclaim. The Samaritan woman who has had a troubled married life comes to fetch water, but Jesus offers her eternal life by his cordial, genuine, and compassionate conversation. She ends up being the first evangelist of the New Testament. She goes back into her town and tells people about Jesus (John 4:38-42).

**Demonstrating the heart of Christ to the needy.** Jesus is also moved with compassion when he sees a leper fall on his knees to be cleansed (Matt. 8.2) and two blind men who cry to him for mercy so that he can heal them (Matt. 9.28) and a widow of Nain who has just lost her precious son and is about to bury him (Luke 7.11-17). The compassionate Jesus voluntarily goes to her and says, “Do not weep” (v 13). He brings her out of her misery and pain by resurrecting the dead boy. Her sorrow has been turned into joy as told by Jesus in John 16.20. When he sees people with pain, agony, misery, sickness, and hunger, his whole being begins to saturate with compassion and purposes to meet every need. His indescribable “divine compassion transforms people’s brokenness from a cause of despair into a source of hope” (Nouwen 17). He always sides with the weak, weary, poor, and needy. In others words, “Jesus Christ reveals God’s solidarity” with his people (Nouwen 17).

B.B Warfield in his masterpiece work on “the emotional life of our Lord” describes that,  
 “The emotion which we should naturally expect to find most frequently attributed to that Jesus whose whole life was a mission of mercy, and whose ministry was so

marked by deeds of beneficence that it was summed up in the memories of his followers as a going through the land “doing good (Acts 10:38), is no doubt “compassion.” In point of fact this is the emotion which is most frequently attributed to him. (Warfield 93, Nouwen 97)

One must carefully analyze the centrality of the compassion of Jesus in relation to his actions towards people. R.T France, a prominent Bible commentator, gives useful insight in this regard when he interprets the key term which is the strong emotional Greek verb “*splanchnizomai*”. This term represents the compassionate acts of Jesus to human needs. This term is mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew in 9.36; 14.14; 15.32; 18.27; 20.34) (France 373). They all indicate that when Jesus has compassion for people, he acts instantly. France further explains that in each case Jesus is not only feeling sympathy for people’s needs, but his compassion results in a practical response to meet each of their needs. His compassion always culminates in verifiable actions of care and concern. Scott McKnight makes an interesting observation that apart from Jesus “no one in the gospels” except the “characters of Jesus’s parables of Good Samaritan and the prodigal son” seem to have “compassion,” and these two parables show the true compassionate nature of Jesus and God (66).

In the gospels wherever Jesus manifested his compassionate nature, there seems to be a clear pattern. McKnight identifies four stages. Firstly, a situation of a desperate “need emerges” and secondly Jesus is “filled with compassion.” Thirdly “someone or a group of people” do not show much “needed compassion” on those who are in need, and finally, the compassion of Jesus springs into action instantly to “alleviate the need” (65). One more stage exists, being that the beneficiaries will propose to follow him. That is the result of his compassionate deeds and the junction where the proclamation and compassionate deeds collaborate. The portrayal of the

compassionate Jesus by the Gospel writers demonstrates how Jesus wants “to draw his disciples” and his followers into a new way of doing ministry in the kingdom which is unique and founded on love and “motivated by compassion” (Wilson 102). While attending a wedding at Cana, Jesus comes to know that the host has run out of wine. He performs his first ministry miracle by turning water into wine as John 2.1-11 suggests. That action is a simple yet profound act of compassion which ends in a miracle. His compassionate act also culminates in the revelation of who he is. The chapter concludes that his disciples believe in him as the Messiah after seeing this compassionate act.

In a quest to further highlight the remarkable aspect of compassion and the deeds of compassion in the life of Jesus which is the heartbeat of the gospel stories, the compassion narrative would be incomplete without uncovering the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10.25-37), the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15.11-32), the parable of sheep and goat.(Matt. 25.31-46), and the rich young ruler. (Matt. 19.16-30). All of these parables expose the deep connection between the acts of compassion and eternal life. They are greatly intertwined. The acts of compassion shown in these four parables are “connected to Salvation” (Ryken 152).

**Compassionate deed and the Parousia in reference to Matthew 25.31-46.** This passage from Matthew 25.31-46 explains the imminent return of the Son of God in his glory to sit on his glorious throne to judge people of the nations “based on their deeds.” He will separate the people as a shepherd separates the sheep and the goats, setting sheep to his right and goats to his left. Jesus will say to those who are on his right:

I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink,

I was homeless and you gave me a room, I was shivering and you gave me

clothes, I was sick and you stopped to visit, I was in prison and you came to me.’

(Matt. 25.34-36 MSG)

He commends them for feeding him, giving him drink, giving him room while wandering without a place to stay, clothing him while shivering, visiting him while being sick, and visiting him in prison. All these are actions of love. The king Jesus will say to them to enter into their rightful place in the kingdom prepared by his Father. He then goes on to say, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (v. 40). The king Jesus judges people based on their compassionate deeds to people while on earth. Timothy Keller states that “Jesus is not advocating that all workers of charity are entitled to go to heaven by virtue of their good deeds rather he is talking about the essence of being a true Christian” (12). Jesus condemns those who did not do good deeds to the least of the brothers and sisters saying, “You go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life” (Matt. 25.46). If people ignore and disregard the poor by not meeting their needs, they are sinning against God, and the unrighteous do not inherit eternal life (1 Cor. 6.9-11). The centrality of Christian living is in its actions towards those who are in need. Jesus’s incarnate presence proves just that.

**Compassionate deeds of the early church and its impact in evangelism.** If Christian denominations are looking for better ways to address the pain and suffering of needy people in society and in church particularly, the early church lays out a good template for an effective compassion ministry to win the lost. The most prominent verse in the book emerges at Acts 10.38, “Jesus went about doing good.” His relentless acts of “doing good” during his earthly ministry are not only restricted to saving the “sinning individuals” but also the “struggling

people” who are in desperate needs of all sorts. This is a perfect road map for the church and believers to follow.

**Spirit empowered the church with Radical compassion towards the needy.** Though the book of Acts does not mention the word mercy or compassion explicitly, Acts provides exemplary details of how believers in the early church set the benchmark in terms of showing compassion towards each other especially to those who are in need. The early church was founded on love and compassion for fellow believers and they are challenged to meet the needs of others. This challenge is evident right in the second chapter of Acts where believers are seen springing into acts of compassion by selling their “property and possessions” to give to anyone who has need. (Acts 2: 45). While describing compassion and social transformation in the early church, Waldron Scott states that “the early disciples have shown true mercy and compassion” (207). The Holy Spirit empowered church of the Acts to take responsibility not only in taking care of the spiritual needs of the community by sharing the good news to people but also to care for the day to day physical and material needs of their community.

Going to the extent of selling valuable possessions and properties in order to meet the needs of fellow church members who are in dire needs is not something very common in contemporary believers and churches irrespective of denomination. Compassion which the Acts church has shown is simply extravagant and the believers have exhibited their mind-set like their savior. Their level of mercy and compassion is such that Acts 4.34-35 says, “And so it turned out that not a person among them was needy. Those who owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of the sale to the apostles and made an offering of it. The apostles then distributed it according to each person’s need.” No needy people exist in their community. The level of compassion has been such among the early Christians that they have been willing to

sacrifice their possessions by selling their houses and lands. They joyfully bring the proceeds of the sale to the apostles so that the proceeds could be distributed to those fellow believers who are in need. The early church seems to adhere to the command given to the rich young man who in Matthew 19.21 was commanded “Go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven.” Jesus replies to the young man’s question of obtaining eternal life. The words of Jesus to the rich young man have become a lifestyle among the early church believers as seen in Acts 4.34-35. The early church believes in word and deed ministry. The compassion of Jesus has caught up with believers as well as the disciples in the early church. Acts 6 further explains the fact that the number of disciples has been increasing when the church is actively involved in social ministry specifically addressing the needs of the widows and food distribution program of the church both to Jews and Greeks. Hence, concern for the poor and needy and subsequent acts of compassion helped the early church to grow in numbers numerically.

**Compassion in Acts 3.** When Jesus asks his disciples in Matthew 14.13-21 to feed the multitude with food, they give many excuses, and they request Jesus to send them away as there is no food to feed them. Verse 14 says, “Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.” They are concerned by the fact there is absolutely no way they could feed five thousand people or more. Even though Jesus is present on the scene, they could show more sympathy, care, and concern for the hungry people instead of requesting Jesus to send them away so that they may buy food elsewhere. The disciples fail to understand that in the presence of compassionate Jesus all needs are met. In the third chapter of the book of Acts, there is complete change in the disciples’ attitudes in the healing story of the beggar at the temple gate.



Now Peter and John are filled with compassion for a crippled beggar and grabs hold of his right hand, lifting him up in the very name of Jesus.

This beggar has been crippled since his birth and now a compassionate act by Peter has transformed his life completely. The beggar's pain and misery have disappeared for good. His mourning has been turned into dancing. Having been healed completely, the beggar goes into the temple with Peter and John (Acts 3.8). He walks inside the temple back and forth praising and glorifying God, thus becoming a child of God. A compassionate deed leads to winning the lost in the case of a man who was crippled from birth. The people who have witnessed this miraculous act of compassion come running to Peter and John. Peter seizes the opportunity and begins his instant evangelistic outreach. He proclaims Jesus as Lord to the assembled Jews and confirms that Jesus has healed the crippled man. This paved the way for many to put their faith in Jesus.

**Salt and light through deeds of compassion.** Acts 9.36 describes a disciple named Tabita who is well known for her continuous deeds of compassion and charity among the poor and needy. She has been labelled as a disciple by virtue of being a compassionate woman who is involved in continuous "good works." Faith without works is dead (Jas. 2.14). She sets herself as an example for a modern-day disciple of Christ. By her benevolent deeds, she is able to bring many to Christ. She can be commended for her compassionate nature which pleases God as she is an instrument in bringing many to the Christian faith.

To illustrate further, acts of compassion in the book of Acts can be seen during the famine in Judea. The disciples, again moved with compassion for the fellow brothers and sisters, are determined to send relief materials (Acts 11.29). This act also throws an insight into the ministry of the early church as compassion ministry is not only an "obligation of the individuals but also a corporate endeavor of the church" (Scott, 208). No wonder the church has grown in a

rapid pace and the Lord has added souls in great numbers daily as acts of compassion play a decisive role in the lives of believers and in the church. This occurrence demonstrates that the focus of the early church is not restricted to only preaching the gospel and side-lining the social ministry that involves deeds of compassion to both believers and non-believers alike. Both deeds of compassion and evangelism have gone hand in hand as evidenced by the early church. This occurrence also demonstrates the mind-set of the early Christian community. The church and the believers have become the salt and light of their communities.

**Compassionate deeds and evangelism in Epistles.** Paul echoes similar sentiments of Jesus when he deals with the subject of mercy and compassion to all. Jesus commands his followers to love all their enemies and do good to those who hate them as he is a compassionate son of God (Luke 6.27). He goes one step further to instruct, “Be compassionate as your father is compassionate” (Luke 6:36). As Paul is deeply attached to Christ, he emulates his Master’s compassionate lifestyle by saying if someone’s enemy is hungry, he has to feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink (Rom. 12.20). For Paul, this reflection comes from his own testimony. He has been the enemy of Christ Jesus and his followers, but Jesus, by his divine mercy and compassion, meets him and redeems his life by His grace. This transformed man now has become an ambassador of mercy and begins to preach about the love and compassion of His master to the Jews and the gentiles.

Philippians 1.8 gives us the picture of his compassion for people saying, “God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus” (NLT). While reflecting on this verse, Nouwen says that Paul has similar feelings of love and compassion for people “with the same divine intensity that Jesus feels for those who come to him with pain, suffering and agony” (22). This attitude of Paul does not stop with feelings of sympathy, but his

words are translated into actions. He is so eager and mindful of the needs of the poor and needy (Gal. 2.20). Paul tells the churches that believers should be trained to devote themselves to do good by meeting the urgent needs of others and sharing their possessions with each other (Tit. 3.14; Tit. 3.8; Rom. 12-13; Eph. 4.28). Paul seems to impress upon people that doing good deeds are “excellent and profitable for people” (Tit. 3.8). This act implies that from Paul’s point of view when people are abound in doing good deeds motivated by love and compassion to others, these actions will result in salvation in their communities. These actions are an invitation to others to imitate Paul as he imitates Christ (1Cor. 11.1).

**Faith versus Works.** The book of James offers an insight into doing deeds of compassion. He explains the spiritual tension between salvation as faith and love in action accompanied by faith. According to James, genuine faith should produce good works otherwise it is not faith at all (Jas. 2.14). He points out that if anyone claims he has faith in God, he should demonstrate that faith by doing deeds of love and compassion. “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it?” (James 2:16) True love is not something expressed in words alone, but rather true love must result in verifiable deeds done out of compassion and love for people. Faith should be counted as worthless and false if faith is not backed up by good deeds. Paul writes that people are created to do good deeds and these good works are expressions of our love for God first and then to people (Eph. 2.10). Love is expressed both vertically and horizontally. In his epistle, John asks how anyone can say that he loves God and yet has no compassion for his brother or sister in need (1 John 3.17). True love for people is expressed by deeds of love and compassion just like Jesus.

These deeds have the power to allow people to experience the salvation Jesus offers. Let the very words of Jesus ring in the ears of his followers, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matt. 5.16).

### **Theological Foundations**

This section deals with the theological foundations of God’s mercy and compassion as depicted both in the Old and the New Testament. This theme is the most integral part of the entire Bible. Also, this theme has great theological significance as it runs through the bible starting in Genesis to Revelation. John Cox writes, “The Bible is saturated with mercy. God is a God of mercy and compassion; Jesus is the mercy promised by the prophets; and saints are vessels of mercy” (Cox, iv). Divine mercy is the single greatest characteristic of God that is portrayed in the entire Bible. Thomas Aquinas describes God’s mercy this way:

In his opinion, since God is the absolute superior, the perfect and self-existent creator, He is never self-seeking, but acts only and always with selfless generosity, pouring out good gifts out of His abundance on His creatures. Showing mercy is therefore proper to God in a special way, for it manifests His infinite perfection, and His infinite abundance and generosity. But if we consider a virtue in terms of its possessor, we can say that mercy is the greatest of the virtues only if its possessor is himself the greatest of all beings, with no one above him and everyone beneath him. This, of course, is properly true only of God Himself. Thus, mercy is, in that sense, the greatest attribute of God. (Thomas 30)

### **God’s Self-Determination towards Loving Kindness**

Compassion of God is not to be seen as ambiguous which the human mind cannot fathom or understand, but compassion is a “concrete, specific gesture by which God reaches out to the people” (Nouwen 23). As the Bible says, “We love him because he first loved us” (1 John 4.19). This fact manifests God's self-determination of his loving kindness, in other words his ‘hesed’ towards people. The books of Exodus and Hosea amplify this self-determination of his loving kindness. God’s loving kindness is evident when he decides to enter into a special relationship

with the Israelites, making them his chosen people because of his penchant for mercy which he showered upon his people. God does not withdraw his mercy and compassion from people he loves. Even though the very people he has chosen rebel against him by worshiping the golden calf and forsaking his commandments, he still continues to love them. He does not eliminate them from the face of the earth by destroying them forever. He still has prepared them a land flowing with milk and honey, feeds them, and quenches their thirst every day for forty years. In God's response to "Israel's adultery God confirms his love and faithfulness" (Spieckermann 310). In fact, God portrays his '*hesed*,' mercy and compassion, by professing his true nature and character in Exodus 34.6, "And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, 'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.'" Even though the Israelites have hurt him by their disobedience and rebellious deeds, God's '*hesed*' for Israel stays true and constant. This loving kindness "takes the shape of mercy and grace, of abstaining from anger and of being ready to forgive them" (310).

In the book of Hosea, the Israelites turn their backs on God and betray His loving kindness again and again. God laments their inability to love him and understand Him. In spite of their continuous refusal to love God, He still does not want to give up on them. Though he is angry with them, He is repenting for his anger (Hos. 11.8-9). God can repent from his anger because of his steadfast love for the covenant people which turns into mercy (318). This act is highlighted in Hosea 2.19, "I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion." This verse shows God's intimate relationship and unbreakable bond with his people. He is the epithet of mercy and compassion.

### **Compassion flows out of God's Nature**

The acts of mercy and compassion can be observed even right after the fall of Adam and Eve. They were naked and filled with shame. Genesis 3.21 states, “And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife” (NLT). Derek Kidner says, “This act of God is the magnificent and exalted imagination of compassionate action to meet their physical needs” (161). Though their disobedience has severed their unhindered relationship and deep intimacy with God, God does not fail in his responsibility of being a compassionate master and creator. This act of clothing Adam and Eve shows that God cares for their physical and emotional wellbeing as much as their spiritual well-being. This act also confirms that he has prepared a plan of redemption for humankind by bringing them back to their original state.

### **Compassion dictates God’s intervention in the Life of his People**

The words “compassion” and “gracious” are mentioned in eleven passages in the Old Testament. These terms stand by themselves in five passages and are connected to “slow to anger” and rich in “hesed” in five additional passages. God’s mercy and compassion are very evident in the manner with which He has treated the Israelites, his chosen people. The book of Exodus is the perfect example of “how God always and everywhere acts for the welfare of his people” (Kysar 10). Here are a people under slavery and physical bondage of hard taskmasters, the Egyptians, and when they cry to Yahweh out of their anguish and pain, God does not seem to be silent or apathetic. God hears the “groaning of their people” (Exod. 2.23-25). God took notice of their plight and hardships. The psalmist expresses the same sentiment in Psalm 12.5, “Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan, I will now arise [says the LORD] I will protect them from those who malign them.” Psalm 10.17-18 says, “You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted; you encourage them, and you listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed, so that mere earthly mortals will never again strike terror.” As Bryan Stone believes

that the “listening and hearing now has been turned into a voluntary compassionate action and he took the sides of the Israelites when they are harassed and persecuted.” (55) God tells Moses, “I have certainly seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their cry caused by their slave masters, I really do understand their pain and agony I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land...” (Exod. 3.7-8). The masters have all the rights legally to keep them under their slavery. As Waldron Scott explains, God put aside the “legal niceties” and he took the side of the oppressed by “understanding this to be a reflection of the compassionate nature of God” (149). As Bryan Stone puts it, God’s nature of compassion and mercy literally means “to have one’s gut wrenched” and his compassion is the “combination of tenderness and intensity” (55).

### **God’s Compassion results in Salvation and Deliverance**

God’s compassion for his people always results in salvation, deliverance, freedom, protection, and provision. God desires good for his people which is highlighted at the creation when he pronounces after each and everything he has created, “It is good!” Hence, salvation is earthly and physical from the perspective of God. Throughout the Old Testament one can witness the compassionate and saving activity of God. His acts of compassion and mercy are evident when he hears the cry of his chosen people who have been under the slavery of the Egyptian rule and delivers them from the hand of oppressive ruler Pharaoh, the Egyptian king. The compassionate God sent a compassionate messenger, Moses, to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians.

However, when they cross the red sea and walk through the wilderness they sin against their compassionate deliverer by worshipping the golden calf (Exod. 32.4). The leader of the Israelites, Moses, vents his fury and says, “And I see how you have sinned against the LORD

your God; you have made for yourselves a molten calf. You have turned aside quickly from the way the LORD has commanded you” (Deut. 9.16). Their sin is so blatant they cannot escape God’s wrath and punishment, but God does not kill them. Punishment is withheld. Francis Anderson says, “The Israelites break the covenant with God by not obeying his rules and commandments, then God breaks it by not carrying out his punishments” (Anderson 51) even though God has every right to punish them for their wrong doing. His compassion for his people is “simply incomprehensible” (Anderson 51). This action gives us a clear picture of a compassionate father who is keener to forgive than to punish. His forgiveness flows from his hesed—loving kindness. The Israelites do not deserve this treatment from their deliverer, yet by God sparing them, his act demonstrates that God is “Extravagant with his compassion” (Anderson 51). God forgives their sins to make the Israelites realize and know that they have entered into a true relationship with a God who is “gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abundant in love and mercy” (Exod. 34.6).

There is a perception that words like “salvation” and “evangelism” are New Testament themes, but the Bible testifies differently. Nees Thomas explains compassion and mercy are the same and they are biblical descriptions of the divine character of God who “offered covenant to Israelites through Moses” and “gospel to the whole through Jesus” (30). The psalmist declares that “The *LORD is my light and my salvation*” (Ps. 27.1a, KJV). Justo Gonzales makes a pertinent statement when he states: “the central messages of the Bible is that people’s souls can be saved and live eternally, then the Hebrew Scriptures are the best prolegomena to the real message, and at worst a misunderstanding of the message itself” (90). In the “books of Moses,” God’s “salvation” is a successful uprising against oppressors. In Isaiah and in several other prophetic books, salvation is freedom and a return from exile. In the Psalms, salvation is the destruction of



one's enemies. If all of these scriptures have nothing to do with "salvation," then it is difficult to see why these books are considered sacred and inspired scriptures (Stone 154). All these different expressions of God's saving act obliges us to consider evangelism in its broader sense embracing the physical as well as the spiritual needs of humanity.

### **Compassion Ministry is an Incarnational Ministry in Jesus**

Compassion or mercy ministry is an incarnational ministry of God in Jesus Christ. Both the Old and the New Testament echoes in unison that God of the Bible is a loving, compassionate, and merciful God. The entire Bible is a collection of stories that depict God's unfailing love and compassion.

Henkel Barnett says with affirmation that the theology of compassion ministry to people must be grounded in the "character of God as revealed in Christ and ministry will be formed on the Biblical view of humanity" (72). Biblical Theology categorically points to one divine being of the universe who loves every individual human being and the entire humanity. John 3.16 states "For God so loved the world." This verse has become the central message of the gospel proclamation around the world. He loves the world and the entire human race. He loves people so much he creates the first man Adam in His own image. He is called Emmanuel (Matt. 1.23) meaning "God is with us." The triune God wants to stay and live with his people he created. What cannot be changed is that God is a God of mercy, a God of action, and a God of word.

### **Key Theological Foundations and Concern for people**

#### **From the Perspective of God**

The Scriptures are very clear that God loves his people and he has special concern for the poor, needy, destitute, marginalized, and hopeless people. God invites his people to have the same concern for them. Matthew 25 sets the theological blueprint in regards to having concern

for the poor, hungry, naked, strangers, sick, and prisoners. If people fail to address their needs, they disobey God, and they go to hell, because whatever is done to these people is done to God. Vernon Wishart says, "If Jesus so loved the world that he entered it by incarnation, how can his followers claim to love it by seeking to escape from it?" (Stott 48). There are more verses about God's concern for the poor than verses about prayer, death, and the resurrection of Jesus (Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action* 141). For Sider, God's concern for the poor and needy is a theological statement about the creator and is the center of Biblical teaching. God's concern is central to God's character. (Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action* 142)

### **From the Perspective of Creation**

God's creations are perfect in his eyes. After each day of creation, he says, "it is good." He makes man in his own image and gives them the right to rule over his creations. This act implies that man is called to care, nurture, and enjoy the earth (Gen. 2.15). He partners with man and continues to take care of him and protect him. God is interested in the wellbeing of humanity in every area of their lives. Every person has "value and worth" and must be treated equally and cared for and loved because they are created in his image (Petersen 58). So, Christians should strive for the betterment for physical, social, economic, emotional and mental wellbeing of fellow brothers and sisters (143).

### **From the Perspective of the Kingdom of God**

One of the major themes of the New Testament is the kingdom of God. God invites people to be participants in his kingdom. The kingdom of God is unique, spiritual, and people oriented. As Jesus begins his earthly ministry in Galilee, he announces in Mark 1.15, "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" The very first words from the mouth of Jesus are about the kingdom of God. The kingdom of

God is not an ordinary kingdom or worldly in nature but is “characterized by mercy, love, justice and peace as its principle moral features” (Petersen 55). This kingdom of God is not only a kingdom of “spiritual deliverance but also physical deliverance” (Ireland 33). This deliverance is evident by his reply to the messengers of John the Baptist, his forerunner, when being asked about his kingship:

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor" (Luke 7:21-22).

The good news that Jesus brings to the poor is the good news for the whole person namely spirit, soul, and body. The good news is a kingdom of blessing in every area of life. The king offers healing, deliverance, social-justice, prosperity, freedom, peace, and joy. Jesus says, “The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life” (John 10.10). Jesus is not just talking about the future kingdom, rather he says the kingdom is at hand and here and now. Most importantly, the kingdom of God is a compassionate kingdom that is ruled by a compassionate king.

### **From the Perspective of Sin and Redemption**

Sin is simply rebelling against the creator. Sin breaks the relationship with God and destroys the created order and harmony God has established. Sin can be viewed both as sin of omission and sin of commission. God is full of love and compassion and when Christians do not exhibit love and concern for their fellow human beings they sin against God as they are disobeying the commandments of God. Jesus says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart

and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 'You have answered correctly,' Jesus replied. 'Do this and you will live.'" (Luke 10.27-28). In order to live a life that pleases God, Christians are commanded to do things which God wants people to do. As James 1.22 says, do not be just hearers of God's word but doers of his words. Anything that Christians do which does not contribute to the welfare and growth of others is sin and they cannot stay in the path of selfishness and greed. (Watkins 83)

Redemption is the willful and gracious act of God towards humanity. God takes the initiative by sending His son to redeem mankind from sin as human beings are incapable of redeeming themselves. As apostle Paul states Romans 5.8, "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners" (NLT). Jesus is the manifestation of God's love who has come to die for the sins of the world. This ultimate form of redemptive love is seen in Christ Jesus (Watkins 84). Jesus is the hope to this hopeless world and its inhabitants and now Christians are in turn are the conduits of this hope by bringing people to saving knowledge of Christ by their words and deeds. The transformed become transformers when the redemptive love of Christ begins to work in each of them. As William Hendricks says, "the redemptive work of God is still going on in this world through the auspices work of His people" (Hendricks 35).

### **Historical Foundations of Compassion Ministry**

Mercy or compassion is one of the most powerful words that appears throughout the Bible, appearing more than 250 times. The Hebrew for 'hesed' is translated in English as steadfast love, loving kindness, and goodness. During the ministry of Jesus, he challenged his followers twice saying, "go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice'" (Matt. 9.13; 12.7). The gospels record that he is moved with compassion whenever he sees people with

needs. He himself has been full of mercy and compassion and expects his followers to do the same. When an individual, a group of people, or an institution indulge in an act of mercy or compassion toward people in need, this can be described as compassion ministry or ministries. Over the centuries, this continuous endeavor of addressing both individual needs as well as needs of the society has brought about social and spiritual transformation as has been witnessed in different stages of church history. Acts of mercy and compassion have been carried out in different ages of Christian history.

### **Ministry of Compassion in Early Church History**

The early church is seen as the epitome of love and compassion. Adolf Von Harnack describes early church's "gospel of love and charity as a witness that includes alms, care of widows, orphans, the sick, prisoners, poor, slaves and travelers" (Bosch, *Witness to the World* 99). Conversion in the early church takes place not out of any religious sentiment but out of a lifestyle of charity toward people who have no influence in their society. Early Christians have been a group of transformed individuals who were challenged in every way to perform deeds of love and compassion. Wherever and whenever opportunity arises to meet the needs of fellow brothers and sisters, they were ready.

The early church believers understood that the "ministry of compassion is not only an individual obligation, but as a corporate endeavor of the church" (Scott 208). A clear instruction was given to the church as a corporate body which is evident when the Apostle Paul said to the believers, "let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds, so as to help cases of urgent need, and not to be unfruitful" (Titus 3.14). Churches begin to grow and spread through the Roman Empire because of the ministry of compassion and social relief becoming the monopoly of the church in Rome and Alexandria (Scott 208). Even though the Christian community is a

minority in the early part of the first and second century, a concern for the new community exists which is motivated by love and compassion. Massive social transformation in the first five centuries can be attributed to the “corporate Christian ministries of mercy” among the poor and needy which has played a major role (209).

Adolf Harnack described the works of compassion in the early church which has resulted in massive church growth. He elaborated on the following ten areas:

1. Alms in general, and their connection with the cultus and officials of the church.
2. The support of teachers and officials.
3. The support of widows and orphans.
4. The support of the sick, the infirm, and the disabled.
5. The care of prisoners and people languishing in the mines.
6. The care of poor people needing burial, and of the dead in general.
7. The care of slaves.
8. The care of those visited by great calamities.
9. The churches furnish work, and insist upon work.
10. The care of brethren on a journey (hospitality), and of churches in poverty or any peril. (36)

Thus, the early church followed the footsteps of their Master Jesus by applying his instructions and teaching and placed high value on deeds of love and compassion toward those who are poor, needy, and the marginalized of the society. Fourth century church offers one example. Julien, an apostate and fourth century emperor, has witnessed the impact of the church’s ministry of compassion. He asks,

Cannot we see growth of atheism [Christianity to him was atheism] which is due to its humanity towards strangers, its thoughtfulness towards everyone, even its care of the dead? These are the works to which we should apply ourselves quite openly. It would be shameful if the impious Galileans, in addition to succoring their own beggars, were to feed ours too, if we stood by and watched our poor lacking the aid which we owe them. (Scott 314; Lampe 50; Pohl 44)

### **Ministry of Compassion during the Middle Ages (A.D. 500-1500)**

Christian missionaries began moving towards Europe where they set up charitable institutions through convents. These convents began to address the needs of strangers and offer help to the poor. A church synod at Aix in 815 A.D. orders medical services to be given to the sick near each church and convent. Some prominent individuals also come to centre stage who have given their lives for the sake of poor, needy, lepers, and strangers in the cities. St. Francis of Assisi and Queen Matilda kiss the lepers and wash their feet. Through their deeds of love and compassion and personal contact with the sick and the poor, they express God's care and compassion to people who have been cruelly stigmatized by the society (Scott 209).

In the fifteenth century, a poor Dominican monk by the name Girolamo Savonarola became very famous for his works of compassion in the city of Florence. He preached about Jesus and requested the people of Florence to accept Jesus as their savior. He pleaded to the people to help the poor and needy. People adhered to his plea and supported the cause of the poor and the whole city was saved and transformed. During one of his sermons, he exhorted his people by saying, "do you want to see a beautiful temple and inhabitation of God? Gather all the poor and provide for all their needs and be merciful toward them. Blessed are the merciful for they will be filled" (Savonarola 149). During Sunday services he collects an offering twice for the sake of the poor in the city and outside of the city. Gregory the Great was known for his acts of compassion during the medieval period. He believed in compassionate deeds in order to bring people to Christ.

### **Ministry of Compassion after the Reformation**

Some notable figures whose ministries centered on deeds of compassion are John Knox, John Wesley, Charles Finney, William Wilberforce, and Jonathan Blanchard. In Scotland, the founder of the reformed protestant church, John Knox, divided the country into many parishes. Each church had two groups of officers, namely elders and deacons. The latter is given the responsibility to take care of the poor of the parish from the church funds. The funds were spent on the physical and spiritual needs of the people in the parish. John Wesley caused the Methodist movement to flourish “because of their methodical Bible study and prayer habits and regular attempts at social service in jails and homes of the poor” (Cairns 384). Rev. Thomas Chalmers, a Scottish minister at St. Johns’ church in Scotland, came out with a great plan to reach the four thousand unchurched people in his parish. His parish was divided into many quarters with a deacon to oversee each quarter. Each deacon had been given responsibility to report to the elders about the economic condition of the people in his quarter. When a family is in need, it was added into the church relief payroll. Within a year, ninety-seven families were added into church relief payroll, and thus many families were added into the church. The gospel was shared to these families, and children were enrolled in church school with aid. (Keller 88). The church was able to accomplish what the government could not accomplish as Rev. Chalmers dealt with the moral and spiritual roots of poverty (89).

The nineteenth century saw major missionary advances across the globe. As Scott says, it was the “mission field that led the isolated acts of mercy into dramatic programs of social reform” (319). Through acts of mercy, by implementing social transformation projects and programs, the missionaries were able to draw various people into the Christian faith. The missionaries went into the mission fields with the gospel in word and deed.



## **Compassion Ministry and Evangelism in the Pentecostal Movement**

### **Pentecostal Church and Compassion Ministry**

The modern Pentecostals movement flourished at the start of the twentieth century. This movement began with the Azusa street revival in Los Angeles, California in 1906. Though Pentecostalism may look like a single religious group, in reality Pentecostalism is a multi-faceted and “complex social movement with different strains” (Miller 336). Numerous Pentecostal denominations exist such as the Church of God, Holiness Pentecostal movement, “the Assemblies of God, Foursquare Gospel church and there is a myriad of indigenous and independent Pentecostal churches” around the world (Miller and Yamamori 1). At this point in time, Pentecostalism was considered the fastest growing section of believers in the world. The Pentecostals were a dominant force in all continents.

The mainline churches were the ones that were active in terms of serving the poor and needy through their church's involvement in their outreach ministry. The Pentecostals were much more concerned about praying in the Spirit for their holy living. This was proved wrong by the pioneers and the movement continued to synergize the compassion ministry around the world. Miller and Yamamori termed Pentecostals involved in various forms of social ministry as ‘Progressive Pentecostals’ who have moved beyond acts of individual charity to actual social transformation through development-oriented ministries (Miller and Yamamori 59). “Pentecostalism has begun as a multicultural (ethnically, culturally, and economically) movement and the revival at the Azusa Street in Los Angeles has seen a diverse group of people consisting of various races, ethnicities and conditions gathered to experience the new Pentecost” (Tucker 5). As a matter of fact, the Movement started with the “underprivileged, often among the colored people” (Vaccaro De Petrella 34).

Since the inception of the Pentecostal movement, leaders of the Pentecostal denomination established orphanages, hospices, rescue homes, and leprosarium out of compassion for the homeless and the outcasts of the society in order to awaken the social conscience because of the dire human needs in the society to whom the gospel is preached (Dempster 44). As a result, Richard Shaull states Pentecostals are “emerging as an important force for social transformation, especially among poor and marginal people” (214).

### **Pentecostal Pioneers and Compassion Ministry**

The pioneers of the Pentecostal movement, such as William Seymour and Charles Parham, developed Pentecostal Theology at the Bethel Bible College and were involved in social transformation and works of compassion. In 1898, Bethel Healing home was opened in Topeka, Kansas where rescued prostitutes and the homeless were brought and taken care. An employment bureau and an orphanage service began to operate (Van der Lann 37). These outreaches were “the power to draw all people into one Church, irrespective of racial, ethnic or social diversity” (MacRobert 9). This power is the power of love for fellow human beings. Every deed of compassion towards fellow human beings is an expression of the power of love. For William Seymour, the architect of modern Pentecostalism, Baptism of the Holy Spirit means to be “flooded with love of God and power for service” (Seymour 43) and this should be the goal of every believer in the church. This power of “love has the power to draw all people to church, Irrespective of racial, ethnic or social diversity” (Seymour 43).

Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944), the founder of Foursquare church in California, expressed God’s compassion to people by feeding thousands of hungry people. One of the core values of the church which has been documented in their church’s articles with a title, “Social Conscience” reads “We prioritize the Gospel of Jesus Christ as God’s power unto salvation for

all, begetting works of compassion, justice and human aid (Matthew 5:13-16)” (Church Reimagined 5). She has been one of the very first modern Pentecostal pioneers whose church has been deeply involved in doing deeds of compassion which has drawn a great number of people to her congregation.

Pandita Sarasvati Ramabai (1858-1922), founder of Mukti revival in Kedgaon which is near Pune in India, was influenced by what happened at Azusa Street. She started a center for women where hundreds of widows and out caste Hindu women who came to her shelter homes saw visions, fell into trances, and spoke in tongues. Her mission still continues in India providing housing, education, vocational training, and medical services to the needy groups, orphans, blind, and widows (Van De Lann 39). Hindus in India were brought to Christianity through deeds of compassion by a single woman visionary.

The Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination known as AG, has seen tremendous growth of their churches due to their work among the vulnerable people and destitute around the world. They addressed the physical needs of millions of people around the world and showed strong support and commitment to the poor and needy. Douglas Petersen, the director of Foreign missions of the Assemblies of God, observed that the works of compassion are carried out both at the personal level and the Institutional level for church members as well as the surrounding community. He further states that Assemblies of God denomination is the “one of the largest ‘caregiving’ entities on the planet” (54).

David Yonggi Cho, the founder of the Yoido Full Gospel Church—the largest church on the planet, always encourages his congregation to actively participate in personal as well as church led compassion ministry. He writes:

that the love of God that fills the Christians by the power of the Holy Spirit enables them to share the love of Christ through serving poor and disadvantaged people in the immediate society and around the world. For him, Acts of compassion to the poor and needy are the acts of compassion of God. (Anderson 167)

His church's ministry of compassion has been one of the hallmarks of the massive growth of the church. The ministry of compassion was their evangelistic tool for successful ministry to the poor and needy.

All of the above examples prove and are evident of the Pentecostals' concern for emancipation of the poor not only in their spiritual life but in every walk of life. Pentecostals' concern for the poor and needy is the church's mission at large in their evangelistic framework. Their Pentecost narrative of Acts 2 is the place where they "formulate the principles for the integration of evangelism and social ministry to the poor" (Dempster 44). Pentecostals have grown in numbers by leaps and bounds in all the continents, and the impact they made in the church growth movement through social concern by doing deeds of compassion around the world is very obvious. Donald Miller, a liberal Episcopalian, suggests that the massive growth of the Pentecostal churches around the world can be attributed to their social or compassion ministries. He further observes in 2006:

Pentecostals are increasingly engage in community-based social ministries' and added that 'Unlike the social gospel tradition of the mainline churches, this movement seeks a balanced approach to evangelism and social action that is modelled after Jesus' example of not only preaching about the coming kingdom of God , but also ministering to the physical needs of the people He encountered. (Miller 335)

From the evidence above, modern Pentecostalism cannot be seen or portrayed as a denomination which indulges only in praising, worshipping, operating in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and doing personal evangelism. Rather, Pentecostalism is a group of people that are keen on reaching out to the hungry, homeless, destitute, marginalized, starving, and the list goes on. As Vaccaro de Petrella suggests, Pentecostal communities do not want to be known as a “pietistic or spiritualistic movements” (37) but rather as a movement that is inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit to reach out to the needy and suffering so that people can receive the love and the message of a compassionate God. True Pentecostals are the instruments of God’s intervention in this world” (Vaccaro de Petrella 37). The work of evangelism in our society will be incomplete if its purpose is only spiritual well-being of the hearers of the good news. The true spirit of Pentecostalism lies in its focus on spirit, soul, and body. This holistic ministry approach is at the heart of the Pentecostal ministry’s DNA.

### **The Inseparable Relationship between Evangelism and Good Works**

This section deals with the inseparability of the good news which is the verbal proclamation of the gospel and the good works which are the intentional actions or deeds done out of love and compassion toward fellow human beings. This idea of an inseparable relationship between the “Good news and good works” came out of the Manila manifesto of the Lausanne Movement (The Manila Manifesto 3-4). In other words, evangelism and acts of compassion are indispensable and inseparable. These acts are closely related to each other. As Keller says, they are “two wings of an airplane” (Keller 110).

When rural racism was very high in rural Mississippi, John and Vera Mae began to preach the Gospel to people who were affected by the scar of racism. They started a tutoring program for the struggling black students and were sharing the gospel with them. The tutoring

program was so effective that they were able to start housing programs, medical clinics, and cooperative businesses. Through these programs, many got saved and became disciples of Lord Jesus. In turn, the surge of new believers resulted in starting a church for them in order to develop them as leaders. According to John and Vera Mae, “evangelism and social concern are inseparable partners” (Sider 175). The Manila Manifesto explains this further in the Lausanne Movement:

Evangelism is primary because our chief concern is with the gospel, that all people may have the opportunity to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Yet Jesus not only proclaimed the kingdom of God, he also demonstrated its arrival by works of mercy and power. We are called today to a similar integration of words and deeds. In a spirit of humility we are to preach and teach, minister to the sick, feed the hungry, care for prisoners, help the disadvantaged and handicapped, and deliver the oppressed. While we acknowledge the diversity of spiritual gifts, callings, and contexts, we also affirm that good news and good works are inseparable. (The Manila Manifesto 3-4)

John Stott has said during the plenary at Lausanne, “people can evangelize by word of mouth, by print, picture and screen, by drama..., by good works of love, by a Christ centered home, by a transformed life” (Sider, 165). Word and action go together. During the Bangkok conference in 1973, the world council of churches mentioned that “Social concern is evangelism and when the hungry are fed they are evangelized” (Keller 111; Sider 165). Even though they are different in nature, they can never be separate.

Ronald Sider denotes five specific areas showing that social concern and evangelism are interrelated.

1. Biblical evangelism provides the theological framework that social concern and evangelism are inseparable: When a sinner accepts Christ as Lord, he is not only inviting Christ into his life, but he is also repenting and getting rid of sin of any nature. “By paying equal attention to repentance of both personal and social sin,” the one who is preaching creates a powerful link to social action using “contextual incarnational model of Jesus” (Sider 176).

2. Evangelism promotes social action: “The gospel creates new persons whose transformed character and action change the world.” Those who hear the gospel repent of their unrighteous deeds and submit to the Lord Jesus; they become better people and create better societies (177).

3. The common life of the church shapes society: “when the church is a visible demonstration of the gospel it preaches, then its own fellowship has strong evangelistic dimension. The quality of its common life attracts unbelievers to the Lord of the church” (177).

4. Social action also promotes and “fosters evangelism”: “When people care for people in the name of Jesus, their acts of mercy open hearts to the gospel. When people stand for the cause of the poor and needy, they get an opportunity to turn to Christ” (182).

5. Social action promotes Christian discipleship and the Christian environment: When social actions are carried out in the form of deeds of compassion and love for those who are in need—for example jobs, medical care, orphanages—they will make easier for new converts to be more faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus (183).

As Timothy Keller says, ministries of mercy and evangelism are like “smoke and fire – where one is, the other must be near” (Keller 116). Even if these two ministries are not provided

by any church, the church may still look good and successful, but the kingdom of God will not be established; people may not experience true fellowship and love for one another. The Acts church was special as people in the early church experienced God in the form of love from people. The word was preached while at the same time the disciples were bringing their possessions to the apostles with a heart of compassion in order to meet the needs of those who did not have anything. The possessions were shared among themselves equally. Due to this, the church saw a massive growth in numbers (Acts 2.41).

As D.A. Carson states, after the “ministry of *diakonia* has been firmly established, the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem greatly increased.” (Carson 17). The early church understood the inseparability of deed ministry and word ministry and has followed the Jesus pattern of ministry. In Matthew 4.23, Jesus taught, preached, and healed all kinds of sickness. Luke 9.16 says he also fed the hungry multitude. These verses show that his acts of mercy were inseparable from evangelism. Just as deeds of compassion and mercy are inseparable from faith in the life of a Christian, so is the ministry to the needy and poor people inseparable from the work of evangelism and ministry of deed (17).

Evangelism is part of the kingdom endeavor which has been given as a primary task of a believer and church corporately. However, this task cannot happen in isolation by ignoring the works of mercy and compassion. Evangelism and works of mercy and compassion must be two sides of the coin. As Edmund Clowney says, Christians cannot be truthful to the word of God if our actions do not reflect the love and compassion of his ministry. “Kingdom evangelism is therefore holistic as it transmits by word and deed the promise of Christ for body and soul as well as the demand of Christ for body and soul” (Clowney 22). If one could observe closely the



Gospel of Luke, Luke points out the close relationship between the ministry of the word and the ministry of the deed.

### **Three Kinds of Relationships between Evangelism and Social Action**

In 1982, prominent evangelical leaders around the world got together to discuss evangelism and social responsibility. In their report which is the Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility (CRESR '82 report), they considered three valid reasons as to how evangelism and social action are related to each other.

1. Social action is a “consequence of evangelism”: “Evangelism is the means by which people are brought to a brand new life and their new life manifests itself in the service of others” (Sine 452, Ireland 15). A man transformed by the good news is now ready to transform others. The love of God that is poured into our lives will now overflow to those in need through our deeds of love (1 John 3.16-17).
2. Social action can be a “bridge to evangelism”: If Christians ignore the plight of the sufferings of people in every form, then there is every chance they ignore the message of the gospel. Christians’ involvement in social action is not meant to bribe people in need to believe in Christianity, rather they “build bridges of love to the world” (Sine 454, Ireland 15).
3. Social action “functions a partner of evangelism”: This is the Jesus model of ministry. He preached the gospel as well fed the multitude because of his compassion for people. His ministry of “*kerygma* (proclamation) and *diakonia* (service) always goes hand in hand” (454).

### **The Place of Evangelism and Action in the Good Samaritan Narrative (Luke 10.25-37)**

In Luke 10, an expert in law comes to Jesus and asks him, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” (v 25). This question is pertinent and pointed. Jesus asks him what is written in law, which is to love your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength and secondly love your neighbor as you love yourself. The expert in law moves to his next question, “Teacher, who is my neighbor?” (v 29). Then Jesus begins to narrate a story about a man who has been beaten and robbed and left on the road in a bad physical state. A Priest and a Levite pass by him doing nothing because he is unclean according to Numbers 19.11-16. As Tim Keller says, both not only pass by the wounded man but also the instruction of God to have mercy on a stranger in need as written in Leviticus 19.34 (11). This action shows that the priest and the Levite may have a sound understanding of Torah and full devotion to God.

However, they totally ignore the man who is fighting for his life. They have the right theology, but they fail to show any compassion for the man who is lying in the pool of blood. At the same time, there is a Samaritan who happens to pass by the same road and sees the man who is beaten up and wounded. He gets into action swiftly. He bandages, pours oil, puts him in his vehicle, brings him to the inn, asks the innkeeper to take care of the patient promising to come back and pay any charges that the man incurs. The Samaritan reaches out, acts, and commits himself to a risky task. As Chuck Swindol says, it is the “act of compassion that sets the Good Samaritan apart from the priest and the Levite and it is “compassion that makes Christianity authentic” (17).

Jesus asks the expert in law, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (v 36). The expert in law promptly answers Jesus, “the one who has had compassion on him.” Jesus gives the final verdict to his initial question of inheriting eternal life by saying, “go and do likewise” (v 37). What Jesus implies here is that

being a good neighbor is not about just loving people with words and feelings but doing acts of charity. Jesus answers the “query of eternal life with the case study of compassion” (Stone 47). The demonstration of love may begin in feelings of sympathy for a needy person but, as Murray Dumpster says, the demonstration should culminate in an “active and concrete involvement” on behalf of those who are in dire desperate needs (Dempster 50). Compassion requires “response” and “direct Involvement” (Beals and Libby 43).

### **Deeds of Compassion and the Power of Conversion around the World**

This section of the project deals with some compelling stories that illustrate the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion and how intentional compassionate deeds among people in need bring about spiritual transformation in the lives of people irrespective of where they live and who they are. Preaching the gospel is the essential part of evangelism but is not the only way to communicate the good news to people. The good news of the kingdom should be announced to people both in word and deeds. Jesus shared the “good news by verbal proclamation and visible demonstration” (Sider 159).

When Christians sow good deeds with love and compassion for the poor, they can witness conversion and spiritual transformation in the lives of people. The result will be the same in any part of the world. When Christians reach out to the poor with deeds of love and compassion, their actions open the hearts of the poor to the Gospel. When they side with the needy and treat them in a way God would treat them, they are most likely to accept the invitation to accept Christ (Sider 179). The below stories are a few examples which validate the above.

#### **Asian Context—India**

Vinay and Colleen Samuel, the husband and wife team from southern Indian city Bangalore, have pastored a large wealthy Anglican church. They started a ministry in a slum area

at the edge of the city. Soon he along with his family moved to this slum where Vinay pastored a church. They start a tailoring center to provide jobs to the forced prostitutes and destitute women. They also started a school to educate the poorest slum children. Their Bridge foundation has granted loans to more than one hundred small businesses. They did it in the name of Jesus through their church ministry. Their work in the slums has seen hundreds of conversions in the last decade. The entire slum has been transformed. One Sunday service, more than twenty people gave their lives to Christ. The story according to Vinay is that one day the wife of a prominent military official knelt down next to a prostitute and both gave their lives to Christ. Soon many people moved out of the slum and found a better place to live with the help of the Foundation run by Vinay and Colleen. They also ran literacy classes and leadership courses. They have trained many non-Christian leaders in the context of prayer and Bible study and soon those leaders have become Christians. Thus, the poor, the destitute, and the outcasts have found new identity in Christ and dignity in their lives through the church ministry of compassion by Vinay and Colleen in Bangalore (Sider, *Evangelism and Social Action* 114-15).

### **Philippines**

A church in the city of Cebu started the “Precious Jewels Development” project to help the neighbors and needy people of the city. They provided education, child care, nutritional programs, and emergency relief as an expression of love and compassion to the needy of the city. The church says that its ministry of love and compassion is a bridge to evangelism. Non-Christians were ready to hear the gospel and became Christians. One of the converts said that he felt as if God himself is preaching the gospel to them and meeting their practical needs (Sine 456).

### **African Context—Kenya**

Bishop Gitari and Chikane were doing evangelism and church planting ministry in Kenya. They soon began community development work among the poor. Their leadership in South Africa told them not to do anything other than preaching, but they refused and started their diocese of Mt. Kenya East. Their community development work was very successful, and, as a result, there has been fantastic church growth. The number of new Christians grew fast and comes from over two-thirds of Kenya. Bishop Gitari opened one or two churches every month due to his community development projects (Sine 138).

Nomadic Maasai people in Kenya have come to Christ dancing and singing due to the development work of an Anglican Bishop. He notices most of the people in the tribe are blind. The Bishop started a health care program for them which has helped them to get back their vision. As a result, they are so happy to receive Christ and are welcomed by the bishop into the church (Sine 456).

### **Mozambique**

One of the modern day stories which relates to compassion ministry as an evangelistic tool comes from the nation of Mozambique. The founders of IRIS Global ministries, Roland and Heidi Baker, have literally transformed this African nation through their orphan care to the dying and destitute children. In the 90s, 350 orphan children were picked on the streets and put in an orphanage. Most of them became Christians and got baptized through the communal love of the Bakers and the Iris team. They were radically transformed by the power of the Gospel (Rolland Baker 128). The orphaned and abandoned children here are tasting the goodness and favor of their heavenly Father” (135).

Candy Gunther Brown points out that Iris Global ministries grew “from two churches and a children’s home to 7,000 churches and homes for 10,000 orphaned children” (Brown 353).

Obviously, the miraculous and explosive growth of Christianity is due to Iris Global's multifaceted ministry due to their work of compassion among the orphans and destitute children in all the ten provinces of Mozambique. This success story uses deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelization which is the purpose of this project.

#### **North American Context—Cincinnati, Ohio (USA)**

Pastor Steve Sjogren planted a church in Cincinnati which is considered as America's most unfriendly city. He exhorted his members to take part in some acts of kindness. They would stop cars at busy intersections in the city and offer free water bottles with a kindness card attached to each of the bottles. The card reads, "God is in love with you and this is to show His love." The volunteers also washed cars, cleaned public toilets at gas stations, and did many practical things. They were very creative in doing acts of compassion. Steve would call his volunteers "Kindness Rambos." Today his church has more than 7500 members in every Sunday attendance and has twenty-two satellite locations. He attributes the growth of his church to deeds of kindness which his members were able to sow sacrificially day in and day out. No words were preached, only deeds of love. Almost every Sunday one new church member would come and say to Steve that a bottle of water given to him in Jesus' name on the roadside changed their lives forever (Sjogren 193).

Having shown various illustrations above, it is obvious how deeds of compassion are effective as a major tool in evangelization. However, either word or deed may be the priority in a given context. In other words, "the nature of needs, problems, opportunities, and available resources within a given context of the church's ministry must determine which aspect of the ministry to be underscored at any given time" (Yamamori 272).

#### **South American Context—Guatemala**

For nearly a century, evangelical Christians have been doing evangelistic work and planting churches in Guatemala. A massive earthquake struck the nation in 1976 and more than twenty thousand people were killed. The North American evangelical mission agencies came to Guatemala for rescue work which resulted in tens of thousands of people coming to Christ. Many churches have been established since then. These churches experienced unprecedented church growth in the last decade. Approximately twenty-two per cent of the population joined the evangelical movement. One of the converts is General Efraín Ríos Montt, former Guatemala's president (Sine 323-33).

### **Evangelism verses Evangelization**

The question of whether evangelism is different from evangelization has always been debated. Pope John Paul VI defined evangelization in the modern world as “the process of bringing good news into all the strata of humankind and, through its influence, transforming from within and making it new” (Grogan 210).

Evangelization is bringing the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ into every situation of human existence in order to transform people and communities by the supernatural power of the gospel. People always find ways to define both evangelism and evangelization differently. Ecumenical movements made attempts to project an alternative for evangelism by terming evangelization. According to William Abraham, “evangelism and evangelization are the two sides of a coin” and historically they mean the same thing (Abraham 40). Evangelism came into prominence globally late in the 19th century.

Scholar John Westerhoff echoes a similar view stating that “evangelization is synonymous to evangelism” (235). He further elaborates that while “evangelism is bringing people into the house of God,” evangelization has to do with the process of “inviting people into

Christian faith and integrating them into the new found life of Christ and settling them into the Christian community” (235). Both terms complement each other. While evangelism is the act of proclamation of the good news to people, evangelization is the process involved in the proclamation of the good news.

### **Various Deeds/Activities/Types of Compassion Ministry Today**

#### **Human Needs**

All human beings have needs irrespective of what they do, who they are, and where they live. No one is self-dependent. Timothy Keller explains that one of the prominent proponents of Compassion or mercy ministry is meeting “felt” needs through deeds (46). Mercy is the “impulse that makes people to be sensitive to the hurts and lacks in others and creates people to have desire to alleviate them and these hurts or lacks are called needs” (46).

#### **Tim Kellers’ Four Areas of Needs**

1. Psychological needs: “People are separated from true selves due to guilt, fear, unhappiness, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicide, sexual problems, shame” (Keller 47).
2. Theological needs: It is due to separation and alienation from God. People reject God and they become the center of their own existence and live for their own comfort and glory. (48)
3. Social needs: People are separated from others and show the inability to live with one another; Loneliness, interpersonal conflicts, marital and family problems, immorality, poverty, class struggle, political confrontations, crime and selfishness. (50)
4. Physical needs; “People are separated due conflict with the disorder and decay



of nature. Natural disaster, famine, various diseases, mental, physical, emotional disabilities, ageing and death” (51).

### **Craig W. Ellison’s Five Areas of Felt Needs**

Craig W. Ellison divided felt needs into five categories. He categorized the needs according to human nature. This is called “multidimensional view of human nature.” (Ellison 34) Here below are the five areas.

#### 1. Spiritual/moral needs

Child rearing, Forgiveness/freedom from guilt, Purpose in life/guidance and direction. (Ellison 34)

#### 2. Social needs

Loneliness, Marital difficulties, sexual problems such as homosexuality, prostitutions, divorce recovery, parent/child tensions, child abuse, juvenile delinquency, injustice/oppression of groups or communities. (34)

#### 3. Emotional needs

Depression, interpersonal conflict, Substance abuse, suicide, grief, stress, anxiety, problems of ageing (34).

#### 4. Cognitive needs

Basic literacy needs for adults in terms of reading and writing, Education for the youth and kids, Career guidance, social skills, job, seeking skills, legal aid, advocacy, homemaking skills (35).

#### 5. Physical Needs

Food and nutrition, Shelter and housing, Clothing, Child care, elderly care, health care, safety, quality of life: economic self-development, Disaster relief (35).

### **Research Design Literature**

This project explored the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The effectiveness cannot be quantified by any statistical analysis as it is difficult to gauge the degree of personal transformation within a person who has received any help through compassion ministry carried out by a church. Therefore, qualitative research was necessary in this pre-intervention project. Creswell states, “In qualitative data collection, purposeful sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced that central phenomenon” (Creswell 217).

The reason behind employing a qualitative research design for this project was because the research was intended to find out the effectiveness of compassion as a tool of evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches. As Denzin and Lincoln note, “Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials--case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives” (2). In order to obtain the information, qualitative methods were imperative to get the perspective, firsthand knowledge, experiences, and insights from participants.

The qualitative interview from the senior pastors was significant for this project in order to elicit honest and personal information for the research questions. Answers based on contextual awareness and personal experiences can help the researchers in collecting and evaluating the data presented to them. Sensing asserts, “Qualitative research is grounded in the social world of

experience and seeks to make sense of lived experience” (57). Moreover, since this project is a church related project focusing on one particular denomination in a specific area, qualitative research was highly relevant and appropriate. This approach is supported by Sensing: “Qualitative research produces culturally specific and contextually rich data for the design, evaluation, and ongoing health of institutions like churches” (58).

### **Summary of Literature**

Mercy is a major theme of the Bible. Mercy is kindness and compassion expressed in deeds. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament are founded on this major theme, ‘hesed,’ which is loving kindness of a wonderful God who is rich in mercy. Mercy is the most important attribute of God. This loving God wants his children to have mercy and compassion on others just like him. You must be compassionate, just as your Father is compassionate (Luke 6.36 NLT).

Compassion is derived from the Latin words ‘pati and cum’ meaning “to suffer with.” Compassion is a challenge for Christians to share the pain, suffering, misery and brokenness of those who are in the neighborhoods, communities, and cities. As Henry Nouwen says, compassion is full immersion in the life condition of fellow human beings and through compassion humanity reaches its fullness (Nouwen 4). The Biblical God is the God of compassion. This compassionate God is revealed to us through his son Jesus Christ who set the benchmark for his disciples to follow. Jesus met the needs of all sorts of people. He healed the sick and infirm, mended the broken hearted, and liberated the depressed and the oppressed people. He cast demonic spirits out of people. He entered into lifesaving relationships with outcasts and neglected people of the society. He ate with sinners and tax collectors. He transformed the lives of prostitutes and murderers; he took on the powerful religious and political

leaders. He came to offer people abundant life as written in John 10.10: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” Jesus was the epitome of compassion which is why he was able to establish rapport and friendship with all sorts of people in the society. He came to repair the damaged human soul and to redeem it. John Perkins says Jesus used all the opportunities to meet people’s needs as stepping stones to treat their spiritual needs (Perkins 65).

God cares for every single person (Matt. 18.12-14). He goes after a single lost sheep leaving behind the ninety-nine. God does not want to miss anyone here on earth as well as in heaven. The very fact he associates with sinners shows his deeper love and concern for all sorts of people. As Philip Graham Ryken says, God expects his children to show love and compassion to people around them through deeds as they are the clearest sign that people are saved by his grace. True intimacy with God always leads people towards the poor and needy. (Ryken 52)

As Sider says, the Church must act as a vehicle to share the love and compassion of God in deeds even though the primary responsibility of the church is to preach the good news. (Sider, Good News and Good Works 165) Good news must be preached in word and deed. They go hand in hand.

The church lives and breathes a life of compassion into witness as compassion is unique to Christianity and is desperately required in this world which witnesses hate, greed, apathy, and selfishness. Christians become the light and the salt of the earth as they intentionally serve their fellow citizens, neighbors, poor, and needy by sowing good deeds for the betterment of life while also leading them to Christ. Jesus says in Matthew 5.16, “Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” The Church is challenged to be radically loving and merciful towards fellow human beings by sharing the gift of love and

mercy through deeds of love and compassion. “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matt. 5.7).

As John Stott states through the Lausanne Movement, the great commission should include both social action and evangelistic responsibility. (Stott 35) They are two wings of the bird that cannot be separated. Both are partners in the kingdom of God though they are independent of each other. In other words, evangelism and deeds of mercy belong to each other in the mission of God. The early church is the perfect example as the disciples were merciful and compassionate toward needy, orphans, widows, and strangers. Souls are added into the kingdom through acts of mercy and compassion. As Sider says, the gospel of love is verbalized and actualized simultaneously. (Sider 159) Jesus said in Mark 10.45, “he came both to proclaim the gospel and to serve.” If so, then the church’s responsibility is to both evangelize and serve the poor, needy, and the marginalized. Doing so should be the mission of the church and the goal of Christians wherever they may be.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter describes the research methodology used for this project with an analysis of the methods used to choose the participants and conduct the research necessary to complete the purpose of the project. After a brief review of the nature and purpose of the project, the project's research questions are presented along with the instrumentation used to address each question. The step-by-step procedures for how the project was done are detailed including how each research tool was used to fulfill the project's purpose and answer the research questions. The cultural context of the project is then presented, followed by specifics on the participants in the studies, the instrumentation employed, and the process of data analysis.

#### **Nature and Purpose of the Project**

The topic of this dissertation project is: "The Effectiveness of Evangelization through Deeds of Compassion in the District of Tiruchirapalli." The research was done among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli which is located in South India. Ever since Jesus pronounced the great commission in Matthew 28, the universal church body has sought to execute the commission in different ways and means. Various Christian denominations around the world devised plans, methods, and tools for evangelism which focuses on the salvation story enacted by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection. These denominations invited people to embrace Jesus as their savior and follow him through verbal proclamation using different means. While most of the evangelistic approaches in the district of Tiruchirapalli were in the form of word proclamation, some were defined by their action, in other words by deeds. These deeds of love and compassion served as opportunities to proclaim the good news to those who

need to hear. These deeds can be called compassion ministry, social ministry, or mercy ministry of which their main aim is to evangelize through deeds of compassion. This process is proclaiming Jesus not only by word but also by deed.

Compassion ministry is a specialized ministry which addresses not only the spiritual wellbeing of the people but also their physical, emotional, and social well-being. The scripture is clear that Jesus not only came to save sinners but he also fed, healed, and mended the broken hearted as well as narrated the stories of deeds of love and mercy. Jesus was a catalyst in showing to his followers by doing good wherever he went. This project has its footprints on the loving actions of Jesus while he was doing his ministry among people two thousand years ago.

The purpose of this project was to explore the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of love and compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches so that a new list of best practices can be developed which can open new avenues to enhance further success in evangelization in this context. Thus, the goal of the project was to find out the effectiveness of evangelistic work through deeds of compassion and how they can be made better which can be more successful with new methods and practices. Most Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirappalli heavily emphasize personal evangelism which is the main mode of evangelistic work. A few churches that are financially well off are able to conduct some public meetings and conventions to draw new people into their churches. This project explores how doing deeds of love and compassion in the lives of people who have not heard the gospel can be effective in evangelization and what are the new practices that can be incorporated for successful evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli. This way of evangelizing can serve as a template to other Pentecostal churches to follow in order to make their evangelistic work more effective and successful.

## **Research Questions**

### **Research Question #1**

**What are the different methods currently followed as acts of compassion for Evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli?** This research question addressed the purpose of identifying various patterns and methods that Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli have currently put into practice as relates to acts and deeds of compassion for evangelism and what reasons they may have for their methods that are used for evangelism. The purpose of this question is also to establish best practices of doing deeds of compassion for evangelism in Acts church and in different stages of church history up through today as described in the literature review. Aspects studied in the literature review were historical, theological, and practical factors that contribute primarily to the current methods that are followed in the Pentecostal churches of Tiruchirappalli District. Moreover, questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the Senior Pastoral Interview addressed this research question. Questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 on the questionnaire addressed this research question.

### **Research Question #2**

**How do the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli understand and feel about evangelism through deeds of compassion?** This research question addressed the purpose by identifying the training, knowledge, and awareness that believers, church leaders, and pastors of the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli received in the context of outreach ministry to the poor and needy while doing evangelism. The goal of this research question is to find out the overall general understanding of church leaders and believers as far as doing evangelism through deeds of compassion is concerned. This question sought to discover what the reasons and factors were that influenced the church in understanding acts of compassion



as an evangelistic tool for church growth and how thoughts of compassionate deeds were transmitted into the church by the church leadership. Questions 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 of the questionnaire and questions 2, 5, and 6 on Senior Pastoral Interview addressed this research question.

### **Research Question # 3**

**What are the best practices from models of evangelism that incorporate deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?** This research question addressed the purpose statement in the exploration of effectiveness of current methods that are followed in the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli in order to develop a list of successful new practices, methods, and strategies that will pave the way for effective evangelization in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches. Questions 23, 24, and 25 of the questionnaire and question 7 on the Pastoral Interview addressed this question. The main goal of this question was to explore the various methods and practices and identify the best practices and methods which can be implemented in churches for effective evangelization through deeds of compassion. Findings from the review of literature was also taken into consideration while addressing this question.

### **Ministry Context**

The ministry context included the senior pastors, church leaders, and believers of Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The Pentecostal churches in this district are mostly independent churches. Pastors do not require a seminary or college degree to be licensed or ordained. Some of them are pastoring churches, along with their spouse, and have a secular job. Some do not have any formal Pastoral training. They have a great desire to serve God by running independent churches for the sake of winning souls. Pentecostalism has flourished in this

district of Tiruchirapalli since 1980 for this reason. This district was once called “the little Rome” due to the fact that there are many catholic churches. Many people follow catholic traditions and they call themselves true Christians. Over the last twenty to thirty years, things have changed, and many Catholics have embraced Pentecostalism. The number of Pentecostal churches and believers has increased rapidly.

Having said that, some senior pastors have seminary degrees, were ordained by State Pentecostal Synod, and are allowed to pastor independent churches and ministries on their own. Some pastors completed Bible school through correspondence courses online. There are some women who pastor churches either independently or along with their spouse. Since the culture is very conservative, women who are involved in church ministry are in the best position to deal with women’s problems and communicate to female congregants in order to make them comfortable in the church. Women’s prayer meetings and other meetings pertaining to women are usually run by women pastors. One of the unique things in this context is that the pastor's wife is considered as a pastor too as they are involved in the ministry. Pastors’ wives play a central role in doing a ministry of compassion. Wives understand the various needs of people when new people are invited to church.

As far remuneration for the pastors was concerned, Pentecostal pastors live by faith and they solely depend on offering and tithe given by the church members. Each church must be registered under the Religious Trust Act of the Government of India so that churches can be free from income tax. This is good for the churches that are involved in compassion ministry for the poor and needy. Independent Pentecostal church pastors are not accountable to any group or board as far as church finance is concerned. They are accountable to God alone. This freedom helps them to make decisions as far as outreach ministry toward the poor and needy is

concerned. Deeds of compassion are the result of the pastor's passion and desire to serve the community in an effective way irrespective of the size of the church. Some independent Pentecostal church pastors who are bi-vocational are rich enough to spend their personal money for ministry development. They have their own business and church buildings, and it helps them immensely to allot resources and finances to do compassion ministry to the needy people. In turn, these Pastors become part of their churches. Finally, doing deeds of compassion is one of the most important ministries among the Pentecostal churches as many people are in various needs irrespective of their religious faith.

### **Participants**

The participants for this project were carefully identified and chosen to match the purpose and research questions associated with this project. Interview participants have been chosen based on senior pastoral leadership positions in the Pentecostal churches. The selection for the project was very purposive as senior pastors that are involved in and see compassion ministry as a tool for evangelism were chosen for face-to-face interviews. The senior pastors that are involved in compassion ministry were asked to suggest some names of the church believers, elders, and leaders to take part in the questionnaire. In order to maintain confidentiality, a smaller number of members were chosen from the suggested pool of names by the researcher to take part in the questionnaire

### **Criteria for Selection**

The criteria for selection was as follows:

1. Senior Pentecostal Pastors that are well versed both in English and Tamil who understood the nature of the project as doing deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelism.

2. Pastors, elders of the church, and church believers from Pentecostal churches regardless of their involvement in compassion outreach in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

3. Restricted to Tiruchirapalli District and belonging to a Pentecostal church.

Participants who took part in the face-to-face interviews were senior pastors who have pastored independent Pentecostal churches for more than ten years. They were all senior, reputed, and distinguished Pentecostal leaders; some of them have churches in multiple locations. These participants have been well educated with theological training in Bible colleges. I personally had interactions with them and they were all well trained in the pastoral area as well as in compassion ministry outreaches. They had solid ministerial experience in the Pentecostal denomination for three decades. The potential participants came from my personal rapport over the years in the Pentecostal circle in the district and some of them through ministry friends. These senior pastors were invited to take part in the interview as they were doing compassion ministry as part of the evangelistic outreach. Their level of expertise matches the criteria set for this project work. Participants for the interview were personally invited via phone or email in order to obtain permission for an interview at their respective places. All seven senior Pentecostal pastors who participated in the project were interviewed individually. They were given the interview questions in advance so that that would be familiar with the questions during the interview. These pastors were chosen as they had in depth knowledge of the district Pentecostal Christian community and also of how other churches operate. They also understood the nuances of compassion ministry as a tool for evangelization not only in this district but also in others districts. Both men and women Pentecostal pastors were invited to take part in the interview. They were seven pastors in total that participated in the interviews.

As far as the participants who took part in the questionnaire, they were a mixture of assistant pastors, church elders, leaders, and believers who are active members of a Pentecostal church for more than five years. They had a good standing in the church congregation and were regular church attendees. Some of the participants in the questionnaire were involved in the compassion outreach through their churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli and some were not involved. There were forty participants that took part in answering the questionnaire.

### **Description of Participants**

As stated above, seven senior pastors took part in the interview. The pastoral group consisted of both male and female. This was intentional in order to get a fair view of both men and women. They were fluent in the local language Tamil as well as English. They were all above forty years of age. They have been in leadership positions for at least five years or more. The rationale behind this qualifier was to interview pastors who were well experienced in pastoral ministry as well as in their ministry outreach to the poor and needy. All of them have been ordained in the Pentecostal denomination. Similarly, the people who took part in the questionnaire were a mixture of both male and female pastors, male elders, leaders, and believers. In the group of participants who took the questionnaire, there were twenty males and twenty females. These forty participants were recommended by their respective senior pastors. They were all above twenty years of age. All participants served Pentecostal congregations in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The participants were in good mental and physical condition. They were regularly attending church. Some were participating in the compassion ministry outreach while some were not participating.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants were informed of the nature of the project through an informed consent letter which was handed over personally. The informed consent letter also included an abstract of the study undertaken. A copy of the informed consent letter is attached in Appendix E.

Three statements of Informed Consent were used for this project. Two of the consent forms were used to get the consent of the participants for the interview and questionnaire. Besides these two forms, the senior pastor's consent form was used to request recommendations of six people from the senior pastor's church and allow them to take part in the questionnaire.

The consent form was given to each of the participants personally and they were requested to read the Informed Consent and answer yes to the question, "Do you agree to the above terms? By clicking yes, you consent that you are willing to answer the questions in this questionnaire." The participants in the Interview were given a written copy of the Interview Informed Consent to read, sign, and. Interviews were conducted at the premises of the senior pastor on the appointed time and date.

In order to maintain confidentiality, no names, individually identifying church, personal information, or any other distinguishing characteristics of individual participants are reported in the study. If referencing a particular participant was needed, he/she has been referred to using a pseudonym known only to the researcher. Anonymity was ensured for the questionnaire's participants as each of the forty participants' identity was given a code in the form of 001, 002, 003 etc. For the personal interviews, each of the seven candidates was identified using a letter of the English alphabet beginning with the letters A, B, C, D etc.

Raw data, including transcripts of interviews and questionnaires, will never be shared or disseminated. Confidentiality for the personal interview was obtained with an assurance in the informed consent that the participants' answers were confidential and only accessible to the

research team. Important findings from this study were shared in a colloquium with Doctor of Ministry cohort colleagues and Asbury Theological Seminary faculty on Asbury's Kentucky campus. The research details were also shared with some of the pastor's friends and other ministers who are involved in church related compassion ministry in the district of Tiruchirapalli and other parts of India. Only research findings were shared; no raw data, including audio files, interviews notes, etc., were ever distributed or shared online.

Electronic data was stored on a password protected laptop computer. Interviews were recorded by using a password protected android smartphone for which permission was sought from the senior pastors before the recording. After the interviews, the collected data was stored on a laptop computer. Only the researcher had the password to the laptop computer. The interviews were only audio recorded by a smartphone and stored in the researcher's secure laptop. The hardcopy data was kept in the safe cabinet in the researcher's church office and he alone had the keys for the cabinet as well as for the room. All electronic data will be deleted completely, and any hardcopy data will be disposed of within six to twelve months after the completion of the dissertation and its final approval of the research project. All hard copies of data will be torn into pieces and burnt after one year of the completion of dissertation and final approval.

### **Instrumentation**

Two instruments were used to collect data in this project. Both were researcher designed instruments. The first one was the semi-structured interview and the second one was a questionnaire. The interview was a qualitative instrument, semi-structured in nature and research designed to interview seven participants to explain in depth all aspects that are pertinent to the research questions. For this qualitative research, "purposive samples select people who have awareness of the situation and meet the criteria and attributes that are essential to your research"

(Sensing 2271). Seven pertinent questions under three research questions were put forward to the senior pastors to draw information on their understanding, opinions, knowledge, approaches, and further plans on the given area of research undertaken. As Tim Sensing says, “interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge” (2192).

This instrument was used to elicit information from the senior pastors of major Pentecostal churches about the current practices of deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelism, their overall understanding of compassion ministry for evangelism, and finally new practices or methods that could be put into practice for successful and productive evangelism. They were also asked to explain the pros and cons of the deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelism. These instruments allowed them to express freely what the current scenario is, their pros and cons, and finally how they can be changed or modified in the area of compassion ministry as a tool for evangelism in order to be more effective. Moreover, this instrument helped the researcher to get answers for all the three research questions and to formulate a new list of practices that can open doors for successful evangelism through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches. The interview protocol can be found in Appendix C.

The second instrument questionnaire was a researcher-designed quantitative instrument. This instrument was designed to find out the current trends and practices of deeds of compassion in the churches, the general understanding or the view of the leadership and the church members on compassion ministry as a tool for evangelism, and finally new methods that can be put in place to enhance evangelistic outreach through deeds of compassion.

The survey also included a demographic section which included the age, sex, age of the church, role of the participant in the church, and the strength of the church. The goal of this instrument was to find out current methods and practices followed by churches as part of the



compassion outreach for evangelism in the district of Tiruchirpalli. The questionnaire had twenty-five questions in which some of them were yes or no questions and some were multiple choice questions with the scale of one to five with no option for “undecided.” Some questions were such that the participants were asked to write an opinion or observation.

### **Expert Review**

Expert advice was gathered from three research reviewers on the design of the instruments used in this project. The research methods were sent to Dr. Ellen Marmon, Director of D.Min. Program at the Asbury Theological Seminary. She made some suggestions with regard to the type of questions asked in the interview protocol as well as the questionnaire. The expert reviewers were sent the purpose statement, statement of the problem, the research questions, interview questions, and the questionnaire. The other two reviewers from India gave the researcher some insights on framing questions based on the Indian context. As a result, three research questions were reframed which suited the core of the project. A suggestion was received from the Institutional review board to make a change in the questionnaire as well as to add a couple of things in the questionnaire.

The Interview questions and the questionnaire were prepared both in English and Tamil so that non-English speaking people would be able to answer the questionnaire and participate as well. An expert translator translated the original English Interview questions and the questionnaire into Tamil. The expert translator was a senior Pentecostal pastor and a charity worker who was involved in Prison ministry. Bi-lingual (English and Tamil) questionnaire forms can be found in appendix A and B.

### **Reliability and Validity of Project Design**

The goal of the project was to explore the effectiveness of evangelism through deeds of compassion. This effectiveness cannot be quantified by any statistical analysis as it is difficult to

gauge the degree of personal transformation in a person who has received any help through a compassion ministry carried out by a church. Therefore, qualitative research was necessary in this project.

Personal interviews and a questionnaire were the two instruments used to explore the effectiveness of the project. The use of questionnaires among the participants in the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli was the best way to explore the effectiveness of evangelization by means of doing acts of compassion in order to understand the current practices and methods used by the participating churches. This also helped in knowing the general understanding and opinion people had in regards to all aspects of compassion ministry for evangelistic purposes.

The interview of a smaller sample of the larger group enabled a deeper understanding of the various current practices, of the participants' understating of social ministry for evangelism, and of the new strategies and practices that can be put into practice in order to create new avenues for furthering a successful evangelistic outreach. These two instruments enabled the participants to go deeper in their reflection upon the deeds of kindness they are involved in, if applicable, in their outreach ministries to the needy and poor. These instruments also gave the participants the opportunity to deliberate on the pros and cons of the ministry of compassion. In depth interviews always bring the trove of information from the participants which makes the research more effective when analyzing the results. As Seidman says, "the case can be made in some research situations the in-depth interview, as the primary and perhaps singular method of investigation, is most appropriate" (6). This in-depth interview allowed the small group participants to express their opinions and ideas freely, thus, more information can be elicited that would help to collect upon new themes, insights, and concepts. Personal rapport with all the

interview candidates also helped in getting the honest answers from them. As Creswell states, “An important step in the process is to find people or places to study and to gain access to and establish rapport with participants so that they will provide good data” (184). These interviews and questionnaires helped to formulate a new list of practices and methods that could be incorporated into compassion ministry in the Pentecostal churches for furthering the successful evangelization in this context which this project was looking to achieve.

### **Data Collection**

The research design in this project is pre-intervention in nature which uses both a qualitative questionnaire form and a qualitative interview. The questionnaire was prepared in English and Tamil and handed over to the forty participants in person. The option of choosing the language in which they wanted to respond was given to them. These participants belonged to and are current members of different Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. “In qualitative data collection, purposeful sampling is used so that individuals are selected because they have experienced that central phenomenon” (Creswell 217). They were given a week to complete their response. These participants were recommended by their respective pastors which added credibility to the project. The participants responded to the questionnaire in good faith and sincerity. The questionnaire forms were collected from those responders after a week.

The qualitative, semi-structured interview participants were chosen according to their work in the ministry of compassion as a tool for evangelism. Their willingness to participate in the interview was verified over the phone, through mail, or in person. There were twelve candidates out of which seven were identified by the researcher for face-to-face interviews at their respective premises. Some of the participants received the interview questions in advance to facilitate the familiarity with the questions they were required to answer. All seven candidates

were interviewed individually in person on different dates. The process was completed fifteen days from the day the first candidate was interviewed. The interviews were recorded using an android phone and downloaded later into the laptop. The interviews were transcribed and assessed manually to find out the similarities, differences, and discrepancies which existed in various churches' compassion outreach ministry and to gather new themes and concepts that could help in finding out the effectiveness of current practices in evangelism and determine new methods and practices that could make evangelism more successful in this context. The interviews consisted of the purpose statement of the study and certain specific questions about the current practices, the church's involvement, and the general understanding of deeds of compassion as a tool for evangelism among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirpalli.

### **Data Analysis**

Deborah K. van den Hoonaard and Will C. van den Hoonaard explain, "Data analysis is an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping-stone toward both gathering data and linking one's findings with higher order concepts" (186). The data for this project was collected through questionnaire and personal interview methods. The questionnaire was given to and collected from forty participants consisting of junior pastors, elders, and church believers of various Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. In addition, qualitative, semi-structured interviews were obtained from seven selected senior Pentecostal pastors from the district of Tiruchirapalli. There were twenty-five questions in the questionnaire and seven pointed questions put forward to the candidates during the interview. Once all data was collected, they were analyzed in MS EXCEL program 2013. After the comprehensive data analysis from the questionnaire, interviews, and from the findings of the literature reviews and contextual

understanding was completed, a list of best new practices was developed for the Pentecostal churches in Tiruchirappali to satisfy the soul of this research.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **EVIDENCE FOR THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

Mercy ministry has been an effective evangelistic tool since the inception of the early church to win the lost and is gaining prominence around the world in different denominations. Churches around the world have taken some measures in planning, creating, and implementing a clear strategy to use deeds of mercy as a tool in their evangelistic work to bring people into the family God. There are more than four hundred Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. All of these churches are either independent churches founded by an individual Christian minister or denomination affiliated churches such as Assemblies of God, the Church of God, The Pentecostal Mission, overseas Pentecostal mission agency, and so on. Some of the churches have branch churches that are active and functional in different locations of the district or elsewhere. There are more than three hundred senior and assistant pastors in the district of Tiruchirapalli. Some churches are actively involved in compassion ministry and some are not due to various factors such as lack of vision or lack of resources to do effective compassion ministry. The purpose of this research was to explore the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches in order to develop a list of best practices that might open doors for successful evangelization in this context.

This chapter identifies the people who participated in this study and their demographic makeup. Then the chapter presents the qualitative data collected from the open-ended questionnaire and the coded qualitative data from the senior pastors' interviews for each of the

three research questions. Chapter Four concludes with a list of major findings gathered from the data.

### **Participants**

The initial open-ended questionnaire was handed out to forty people which included assistant pastors, elders, church leaders, and believers within the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The participant group was made up of both males and females. All forty members took part in answering the questionnaire. They were chosen with the help of the senior pastors who gave their consent for their members to take part in the questionnaire. Participants from twenty churches took part in answering the questionnaire. Two participants from each church were identified and invited to answer the questionnaire to determine similarities. The ages of the participants ranged from twenty-five to seventy-five. They were part of their respective churches for no less than 5 years. They served their role as pastor, leader, elder, or believer. Among the forty participants, there were nine pastors, twelve elders or leaders, and nineteen believers. They were from urban, semi urban, and rural areas of the Tiruchirapalli district. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants in Tamil so that they could find it easy to understand and share their opinion correctly.

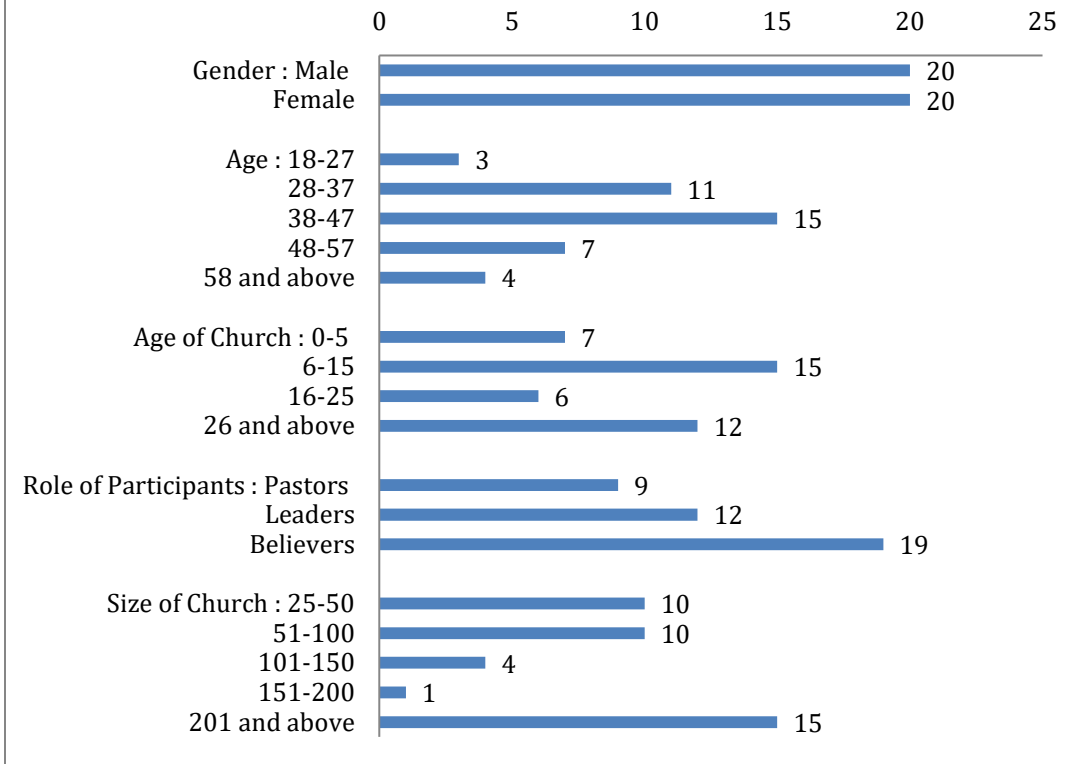
Ten pastors who are involved in compassion ministries were identified but only seven gave consent to be interviewed. All seven pastors were senior pastors who held prominent leadership roles in their church ministry. Six pastors were male and one pastor was a female who represented her husband. In this district, a woman leading a Pentecostal church is uncommon. The pastors had their ministry bases in both urban and rural areas. Each pastor was interviewed between forty-five minutes to an hour. Two pastors were between thirty and forty in age; the rest of the pastors were above fifty years of age. Five of the pastors have been in the

compassion and church ministry for well over twenty years and two of them have been in ministry under ten years. They all served as pastors in an independent Pentecostal church that had a compassion ministry. All of them were working as full time pastors and were married. Two of them have bachelor's degrees in Theology and five of them have never been to any Bible school. All interviews were recorded in a password protected android phone with a code and later transcribed and translated into English. The interviews were conducted in Tamil so that pastors were familiar and were able to express their opinion without any reservations and inhibitions. All of them shared their insights and opinions freely, openly, and passionately. The findings were organized around the three research questions with a number of operational questions as subcategories.

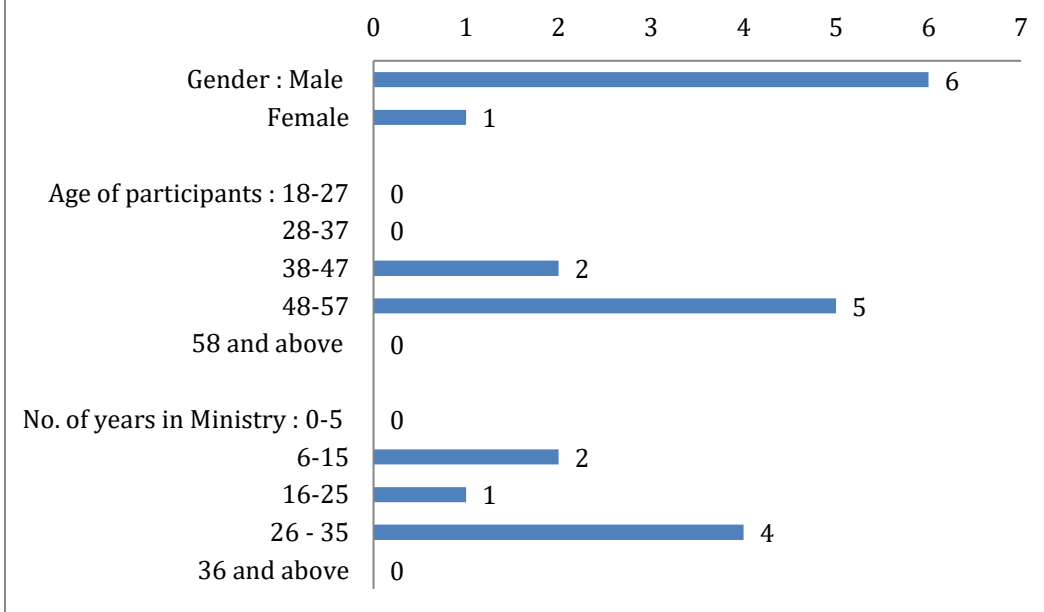
The demographic profile of those who took part in the questionnaire is represented in Figure 4.1. The demographic profile of those who took part in the Interview is represented in Figure 4.2



**Figure 4.1 : Demographics of Questionnaire Participants  
(N = 40)**



**Figure 4.2 : Demographics of Interview Participants (N = 7)**



### **Research question # 1**

#### **What are the different methods currently followed as acts of compassion for Evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli?**

This first research question was all about finding out current methods and approaches used by Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli as tools for evangelism. In order to answer this research question, responses to the questionnaire were generated in the form of yes or no questions, multiple choice questions, and some open-ended questions. There were twenty-five questions in the questionnaire. Seven questions were related to the first research questions. They were questions 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. Out of seven interview questions, the first four questions are meant to elicit information to answer the first research questions (see figure 4.3 & Figure 4.4).

Question 9 asked the participants to rate their church's involvement in compassion ministry on a scale of one to five. The data indicates that thirty-one participants (78 percent) stated that their churches were intentionally involved in compassion ministry to serve beyond its church community. They reached out with acts of compassion to members who are not part of their churches. Their deeds were not focused on their members alone. This question also showed that the churches were not only involved in sowing deeds of compassion, but their involvement was to use these activities as an evangelistic tool. Question 10 asked the participant to name all the types of deeds of compassion the churches are involved in currently. A detailed list of activities can be seen in a table below (see Table 1.1). Members from twenty-eight churches took part in answering the questionnaire and seven senior pastors from other churches were interviewed. The research revealed that all churches were currently involved in compassion

ministry in some activity or the other. There was not a single church that was not involved in doing acts of kindness towards others in need.

Question 12 asked how often their churches carried out deeds of compassion. Data reveals twenty-one churches, that is more than 50 percent, met the needs of people whenever their people had need and around 25 percent of the churches are involved in compassion ministry activities once a week. Questions 13 and 15 asked if new members were added as a result of compassion ministry and what was the percentage of church growth ascribed to compassion ministry. The data showed that thirty eight members, more than 95 percent, asserted that there were new members added to the church as a result of compassion ministry. This means 25 percent of the churches have welcomed new members every week as they were involved in helping people in need every week. More than 50 percent of the churches have seen church growth in the range of 30 to 80 percent due to their compassion ministry programs directed towards the needy people.

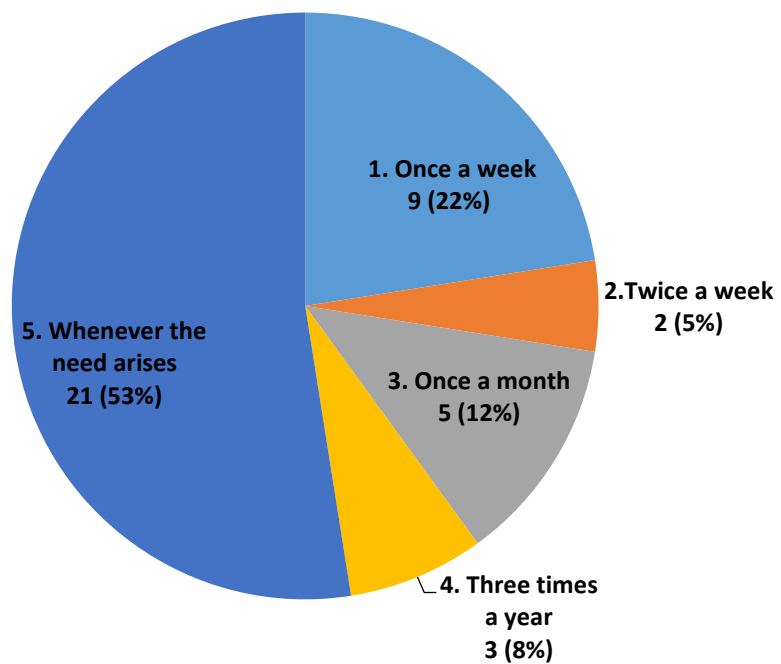
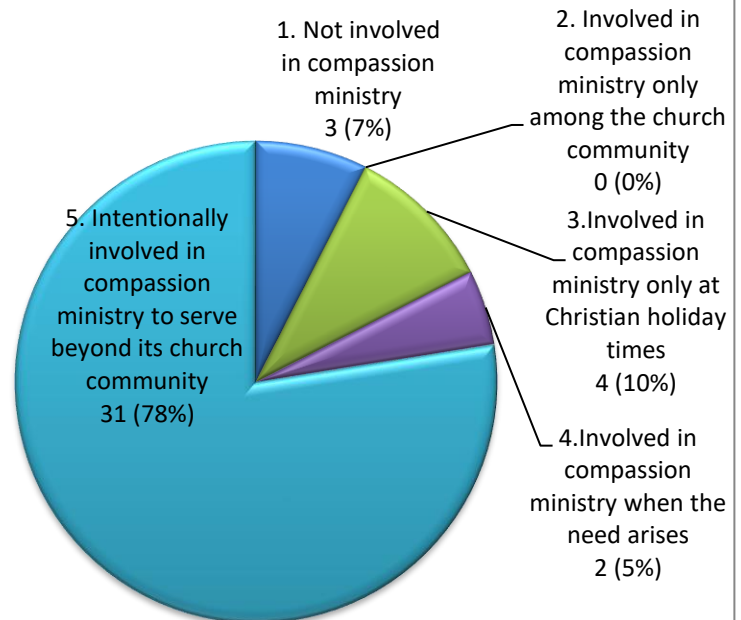
All seven pastors interviewed were involved in compassion ministry on either a daily or weekly basis. Their churches have grown due to their consistent ministry activities towards the poor. All seven pastors attributed their church growth to their focused mercy ministry in their respective area of ministry. The below table shows current activities or deeds of the Pentecostal churches involved in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

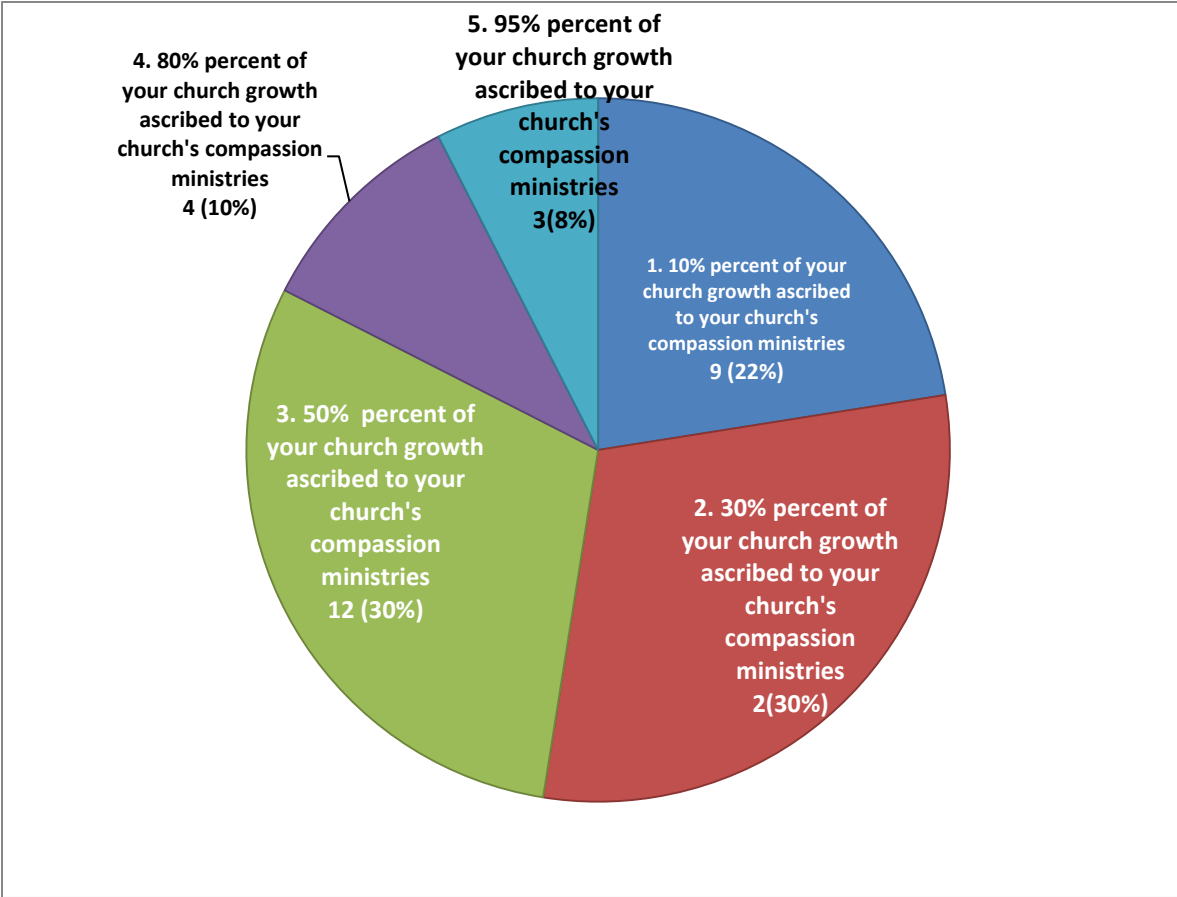
**TABLE 4.1**

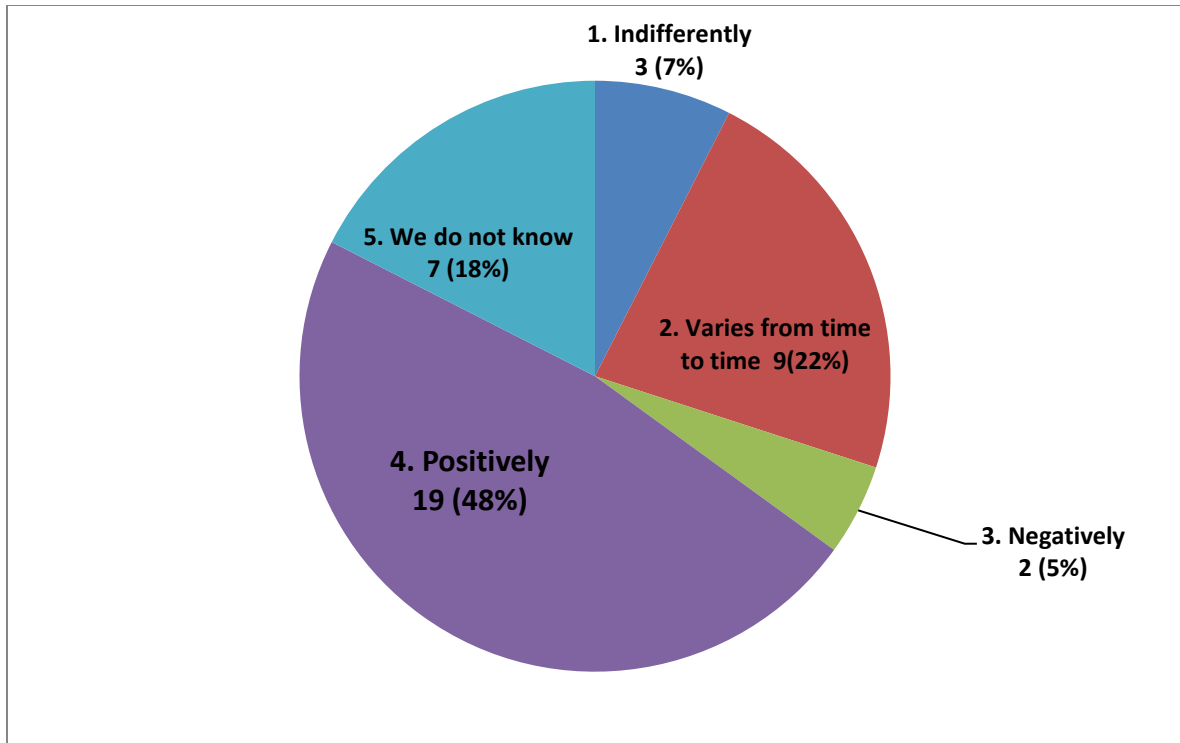
**Different methods currently followed as Acts of Compassion for Evangelism in the district of Tiruchirapalli**

<b>Current activities by Churches</b>		<b>Respondents</b>
➤ <b>Widows Support</b>		➤ <b>Nine</b>
➤ <b>Orphanage support</b>		➤ <b>Two</b>
➤ <b>Children's Ministry</b>		➤ <b>Ten</b>
➤ <b>Youth programs</b>		➤ <b>Seven</b>
➤ <b>Beggar Ministry</b>		➤ <b>One</b>
➤ <b>Leprosy</b>		➤ <b>Two</b>
➤ <b>Prayer Ministry</b>		➤ <b>Two</b>
➤ <b>Medical Camps/support</b>		➤ <b>Nine</b>
➤ <b>Tailoring for women</b>		➤ <b>One</b>
➤ <b>Education Ministry</b>		➤ <b>Ten</b>
➤ <b>Ministry to the Blind</b>		➤ <b>Eight</b>
➤ <b>Street Ministry</b>		➤ <b>Three</b>
➤ <b>Village Ministry</b>		➤ <b>Ten</b>
➤ <b>Gospel ministry</b>		➤ <b>Nine</b>
➤ <b>Counselling</b>		➤ <b>One</b>
➤ <b>House visits</b>		➤ <b>Five</b>
➤ <b>Ministry to the seniors</b>		➤ <b>Five</b>
➤ <b>Food &amp; Clothing</b>		➤ <b>Thirty Five</b>
➤ <b>General compassion work among the poor</b>		➤ <b>Twenty Nine</b>
➤ <b>Tuition centers</b>		➤ <b>Three</b>
➤ <b>Hospital ministry</b>		➤ <b>Four</b>
➤ <b>Financial help to needy</b>		➤ <b>Fourteen</b>
➤ <b>Daily Lunch feeding program</b>		➤ <b>One</b>
➤ <b>Vacation Bible School</b>		➤ <b>Four</b>
➤ <b>Christmas outreach</b>		➤ <b>Seven</b>

**Figure 4.3 : Questions Nine, Twelve, Fifteen and Seventeen  
Questions (9,12,15 & 17)**







In addition to the forty questionnaire respondents, there were seven senior pastors who were all involved in church ministry as well as mercy ministry in different locations. Four of them were carrying out deeds of compassion in two or more locations; as a result, they were able to plant new churches in those places.

**TABLE 4.2**

**Interview Participants who are involved in Compassion Ministry**

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS	COMPASSION MINISTRY

# Participant One	➤ <b>Multiple Social –activities</b>
# Participant Two	➤ <b>Among the Blind people (250 Blind families in a village)</b>
#Participant Three	➤ <b>Among cobblers, low caste people and rural children</b>
#Participant Four	➤ <b>Among sorcerers and nomadic people ( Hindu Witches)</b>
#Participant Five	➤ <b>Among rural people ( Masons, daily laborers, painters, peasants, Farmers)</b>
# Participant Six	➤ <b>Among Beggars and vagabonds</b>
#Participant Seven	➤ <b>Among Lepers and Blind</b>

### **Compassion Ministry—an Evangelistic Tool**

All the seven interviewees participated and convincingly asserted that any compassion ministry that satisfies the needs of the people is an instrument in bringing people to Christ. Pastor #2 who was involved in compassion ministry in the blind people’s colony made a statement that true ministry is centered on love and compassion of Christ. Jesus had compassion when he saw the poor. The ministry of Jesus was a compassion ministry.

Participants #1 and #5 planted their church first and later on after having seen the plight and sufferings of people they got involved in compassion ministry by carrying out activities and programs directed towards the poor. Whereas the rest of the participants (#2, #3, #4, #6 and #7) started their compassion ministry among various groups of people (see table 1.2) by meeting the people’s needs first and by gaining their trust and confidence. Then these participants established



their churches in the localities of their ministry. Soon the church began to grow slowly and steadily as they would say with a lot of hard work, sacrifice, and opposition in those areas.

### **Mercy Ministry and Church Growth**

A correlation between the deeds of compassion carried out by the senior pastors and the church growth they witnessed is evident in the data that was analyzed from the interviews of senior pastors.

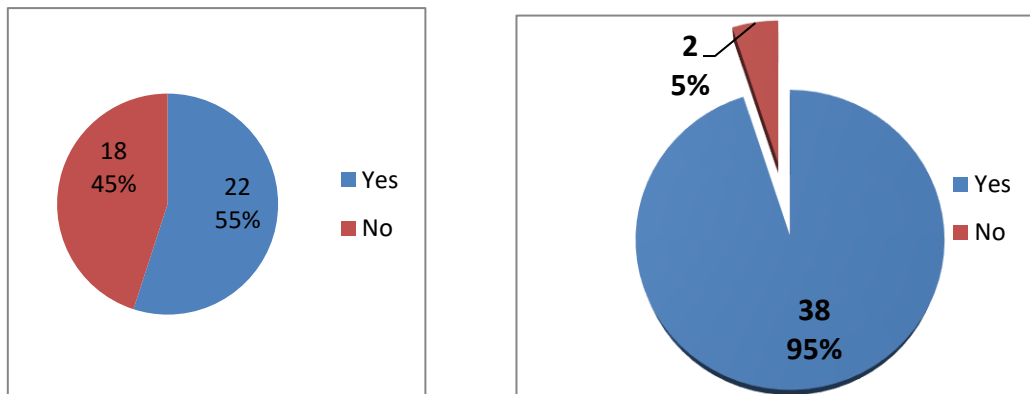
- Par #2 narrated, I started helping some blind people by visiting their homes to pray and having seen my work among the blind people, one blind man gave a small place to start a church by faith in 2001, now we have 80 families that are blind. Interestingly the children are not blind. The church musicians are all blind, singers are blind. The elders are blind. Now we have 150 people in the church.
- Par #4 narrated, God asked me to go to a different place like Abraham. I was involved in sorcery and witchcraft. God saved me and sent me my own tribe in a different rural area. They did not accept me in the beginning. Later on I began going to house telling the truth about Jesus. They saw me as a threat to their corrupt business. I prayed for a girl who was about to die. She was cured amazingly. Some families came to prayer weekly. Then I started a small church in a hut. Now we have 35 families all belonging to my Hindu nomadic tribe.
- Par #7 narrated, I had a compassion for lepers and I wanted to serve like mother Theresa. I cleaned their wounds and provided materials to their families. One of the leper's sons got educated through our ministry. He was able to become an engineer. We helped another Girl with nursing studies. She became a nurse. We helped a woman to get

married and we conducted her wedding. As a result of our compassionate work we have four churches with 250 people in all.

**Leader’s Role in transmitting Vision of Compassion**

When a leader is a man of compassion and is involved in the ministry of compassion, church members tend to catch the leader’s passion and vision. As the shepherds are so are the sheep. Interview questions 3 and 4 asked the pastors if they were able to create awareness among church members in regards to compassion work in their evangelism training and were their churches intentionally promoting evangelism through deeds of compassion. For both these questions, all the pastors confirmed that they were able to do such and that people tend to catch their personal vision and passion. Those who have been helped began to help others.

**Figure 4.4: Questions (11, 13, 16,18,19,20 & 21)**



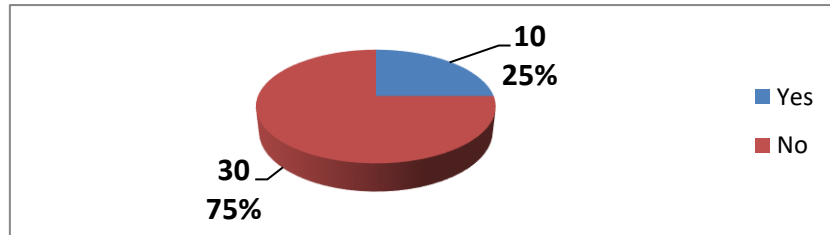
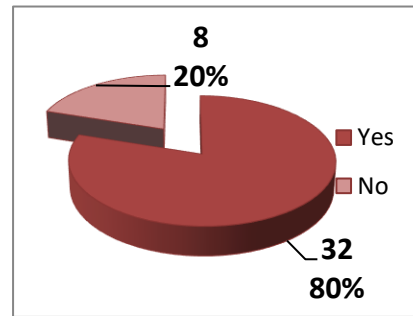
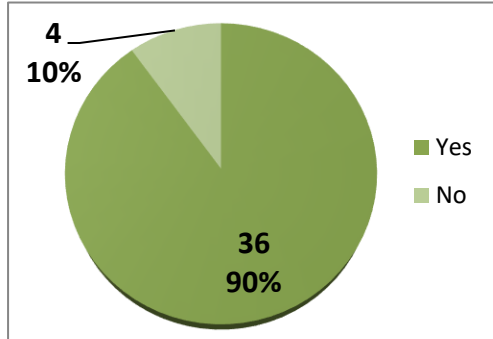
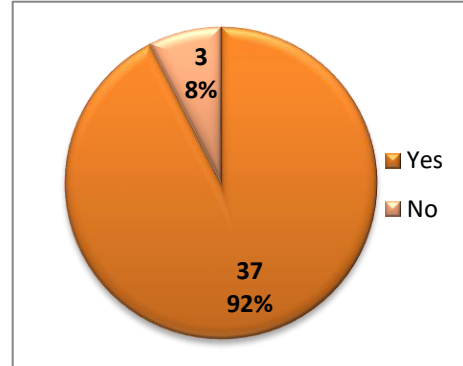
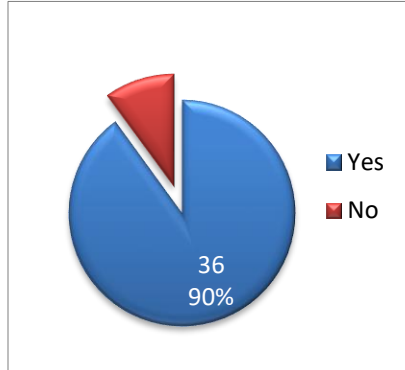
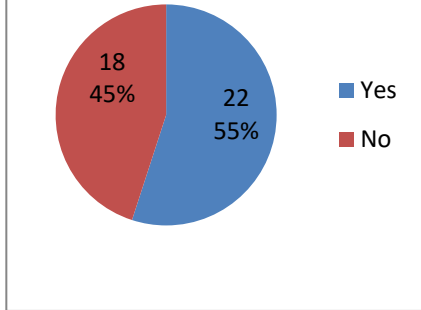
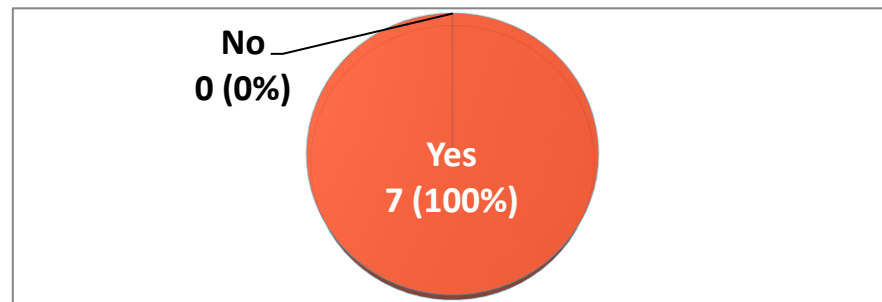
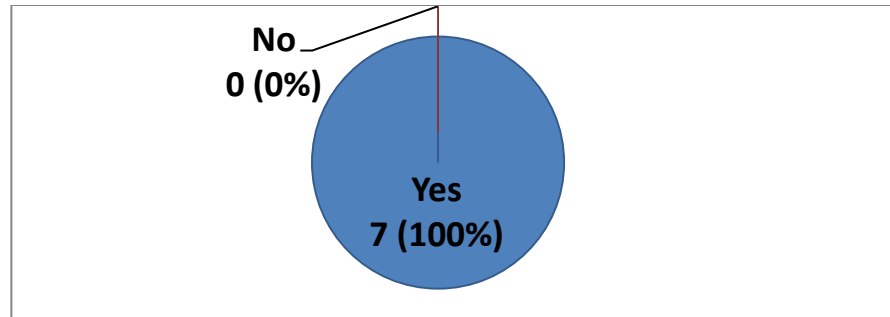


Figure 4.5: Interview Questions (Three & Four)



Senior pastors who were involved in the ministry of compassion intended to communicate to their group or church members the importance of the congregation reaching out to those who are in need. Their evangelistic training included the role of compassionate deeds in evangelism. When they hear their lead pastor's words and subsequently see his actions, then they tend to follow. Par #2 said:

During hurricane Vardha, the state was in total chaos. People lost their homes, paddy fields, source of income and livelihood. Our church members who are blind most of them came forward to raise money and buy food items, clothes and other sanitary items for people who had been affected by the hurricane. We went to a particular places and offered the things they collected. That was the kind of sacrifice they were able to make in spite of their own struggle and problems in life. This was possible I was able to create awareness and train people for the purpose of evangelism. Compassion should flow from the vision of the leader into people.

**See the Need and Act Formula**

Question 15 was a pointed question that asked the participants how often they helped people—was it weekly or monthly or yearly once like during Christmas or whenever they saw a need in people. Having analyzed the data, more than 53 percent of the churches reached out to people whenever the church found there was a genuine need—whether there was a need of prayer for someone or financial help for a wedding, medical emergency, or tuition fee for a student. All interview participants were able address the important needs of people by way of meeting their needs whenever they came to be aware. Interestingly 27 percent of the churches were able to participate in helping people either once or twice a week (Figure 4.3).

### **Deeds of Compassion focused on Physical Needs**

Question 10 asked about the various kinds of practices and activities churches were involved in with their compassion ministry. Having analyzed the data shown in Table 1.1 which consists of activities carried out by the churches that took part in the questionnaire and the data shown in table 1.2 which consists of activities by the pastors interviewed, more than 95 percent of their activities of compassion ministry of the churches were directed and focused on taking care of physical needs. The most prominent activity was feeding and clothing those in need which was more than 88 percent among the churches that responded to the questionnaire. One church was involved in taking care of the emotional needs of people while helping them which was in the form of emotional counseling. Among the pastors who were interviewed, the data shows that all seven churches again were involved in taking care of the physical needs more than psychological or emotional needs. They were focused on taking care of material and physical needs more than anything. The places and the people they work with were being factored into their decision to take care of physical needs even though there may be people with emotional

needs as the pastors noted. They think taking care of people's physiological needs is their priority.

### **Research question # 2**

**How do the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli understand and feel about evangelism through deeds of compassion?**

This research question which was asked of the seven pastors who were interviewed determined how the Pentecostal churches, ministers, and believers alike generally viewed and understood deeds of compassion in evangelistic work and what are the current methods used by Pentecostal churches on the whole in the district of Tiruchirapalli. The forty respondents of the questionnaire were also able to give their responses by answering questions 17 to 22 which relate to this research question.

### **Compassion ministry is a Special Vocation**

Compassion ministry is a special ministry vocation. It requires dedication and consecration to be with the poorest of the poor, marginalized, the sick, afflicted, and needy. All seven pastors who were involved have dedicated their lives to the betterment of the poor and needy. They said this betterment was their vocation which no Bible College taught them. They felt that mercy ministry was a special calling. Mercy ministry was not everyone's forte. Pastor #2 asked why was there only one mother Theresa in India? Unless one is called, doing compassion ministry among people is very difficult. Compassion ministry is not having tons of money and trying to do social ministry. Compassion ministry is all about having a heart of compassion for people to meet the needs of people when they need them and where they need them. Pastor #3 stated:

My father was a compassionate man but never ventured into compassion ministry as he believed in conventional methods of evangelizing. He believed in preaching the gospel and bringing people to Christ. He was a man of prayer and invited people to come to church. He never went out to do any sort of mercy ministry neither did he encourage the congregation to do so. But I am different. I want to address the needs of people. How can I ask a person to come to church when they don't have basic necessities for living? We cannot put spiritual clothes and ask them to get saved and when people live in hunger and physical needs.

### **Lack of Resources is a Major Impediment**

All the interview participants except Par #1 deemed that their main concern and challenge was lack of financial, material, physical, and infrastructural resources. Their work among the poor and needy was hampered by lack of it. They could see the immense need among the people of their ministry locality, yet they could serve them with whatever was availed to them which was little. They had a desire to do more but lack of resources in every sense have tied their hands. They felt hapless at certain times when they saw the enormity of needs among people.

Par #6 stated how lack of sanitary and clean drinking water facilities in their area are affecting people. If only I could build toilets and dig bore well for water many people would benefit and this would help non-Christians see that we were trying to help them.

This is a good way to promote evangelism among them.

There seems to be genuine problems with those who got saved and yet their livelihood after their conversion was not addressed said Par #5 who was working among the vagabonds and sorcerers and magicians.

Through their profession people were making a lot of money by illegal means. Having preached the gospel to them they were willing to come to church. They wanted to give up their sinful ways. But their concern was how they will meet their families' needs after conversion. They don't have any education or skills that would fetch them jobs. All they knew was how to perform magic, witchcraft and sorcery as a profession to make money from people. Now, these people need financial help and job openings that are hard to come by as we don't have resources to support them in any way. What will you do once I come to church for my regular income? This was the question asked by the people in my group.

### **Fear Factor among the Church Leaders**

Interview participants have categorically stated that their ministries are self-supported and have not been supported by any outside agency or overseas donations. Their ministry was run by faith, by the support of their church members to a certain extent, and by some local people who were appreciative of their efforts and work among the poor. They did compassion ministry by faith as they were called by God to do such ministry. When they were all pressed with the question as to why many were not able to do mercy ministry in the district, their answers were that in order to get involved in mercy ministry, a lot of money is involved. There was fear among the pastors over how they could afford to take off people when they themselves do not have resources to take of themselves. The general understanding was that if pastors started to help and support people with material and financial needs, there would be a continuous expectation from people which would put upon them a serious stress in ministry. The pastors were worried that they would lose credibility and testimony if they started helping for a few months and then stopped.

### **Opposition from the Society and Non-Christian Groups**



The questionnaire respondents and the interview respondents felt that one of the contemporary issues that not only Pentecostal churches but also the entire Christian fraternity faces at present is that our Christian ministry work is threatened by the Hindu militants. The militants were amply supported by the present Government that is pro-Hindu and anti-minority. This posed a major challenge for Pentecostal churches and ministers who were doing both compassion ministry as well as church ministry. The contention of the Hindu groups is that “Christians are trying to convert people in the pretext of helping people. Pastors are not able to raise money openly and work towards the emancipation of the poor and needy due to the Hindus. Hindus see Christian work as a threat to their religion. Pastors fear that their churches might be burnt or destroyed and they are intimidated on a regular basis. In some cases, pastors who are doing compassion ministry have been falsely accused and imprisoned. According to one of the participants, new converts were threatened by Hindu family members and relatives to give up practicing Christianity or they would be expelled from their community. Fear exists among pastors as well as among the converts and would be converts. These happenings are not true of all places in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

### **Church Growth due to Compassion Ministry**

There was a feeling among the respondents that compassion ministry was the root cause of the growth of Christianity in India as is evident from the fact that there are many Christians hospitals, schools, institutes, and organizations which used compassion ministry as a model in evangelistic ministry. In the district of Tiruchirapalli, compassion ministry could be the cause of church growth according to the following participants:

- Par #3—“In the year 1990 there were just about forty churches in our district and now there are four hundred and fifty churches in this district alone which was due to the fact that churches were able to do compassion ministry through various forms.”
- Par # 5 from the town of Lalgudy stated that “when he started his church in 2001 they were only two churches, now in nineteen years, nearly forty churches have come up as pastors in this town were able to carry out many activities and programs for the poor and needy.”

### **Mercy Ministry out of Compulsion rather than Passion or Vision**

Though churches that are involved in doing good deeds are doing so wholeheartedly, some well-off churches are doing compassion ministry out of compulsion and not out of real social concern for the poor and needy according to the participants. A couple of senior pastors mentioned that money is spent on people randomly as certain churches received aid from overseas. These churches were accountable to their benefactors so they do compassion ministry out of compulsion. In these situations, a tendency exists to help people who might not have real needs. These churches failed to help people who were in real need. Greed, selfishness, and lack of integrity exists among ministers of the big Pentecostal churches. As par #3 pointed out:

There is a disconnect between small churches and big churches that are financially wealthy and small churches that are doing mercy ministries are not helped and encouraged. I am not getting any support and motivation from others churches. I am not even respected as a servant of God as I am doing ministry in a rural area among the poorer sections of the society. As noted by the pastors interviewed, mainline churches such as Catholics, Anglicans, and Lutherans in the Tiruchirapalli district were good examples that compassion ministry can be done due to having monetary resources more than real proclivity to help people in dire states or to help out of

a felt compassion. These churches receive a lot of money from overseas because of their affiliation to their denomination. Having monetary resources and the lack of it is the major difference between independent Pentecostal churches and mainline churches that are involved in mercy ministry in the district.

### **Research question # 3: Description of Evidence**

**What are the best practices from models of evangelism that incorporate deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?**

This research question was all about developing a list of methods that could make evangelization more effective and successful in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches. In order to answer this research question, questionnaire participants were asked to provide insightful suggestions and recommendations that could be incorporated by Pentecostal churches—can you suggest a new approach or a method in compassion ministry that can be a useful tool in evangelism? In your opinion, what best practices can be incorporated in the compassion ministry for evangelism that can be effective for the District of Tiruchirapalli? The participants were asked to make additional comments in that regard. The seven senior pastors that were interviewed were asked what they thought would be the best evangelistic practice or approach that incorporated deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?

### **Commitment and Enthusiasm**

What I gathered from the seven pastors that were interviewed was that there was a strong urge to excel in their respective mercy ministries. They were very enthusiastic and committed to do more for the communities in spite of several challenges they have faced. All of them have short term and long term goals; they wanted to continue their good works against all odds. None of them want to give up this special ministry as each of them said that they received direction

from God to do compassion ministry in that particular place where they have established their ministry base to work for the poor and needy people.

According to the pastors that were interviewed, less than 10 percent of the Pentecostal churches are fully involved in evangelistic work through deeds of compassion. The reasons are, according to the participants, lack of biblical knowledge and lack of an understanding of mercy ministry. Moreover, according to Pastor #2,

Compassion ministry is a ministry of patience and endurance. Every pastor may not have the calling of Mother Teresa with a compassionate heart. Patience is not everyone's forte. One needs to have a strong character of patience and suffering to get along with lepers, beggars, blind and physically and mentally disabled people. This is not a ministry for a short period. Compassion ministry should be a long term and sustainable one as people are dependent on you. All seven pastors were of the opinion that pastors have dedication for preaching and teaching the congregation the Word; they do not want to dedicate their lives to the sake of the poor and needy. Pastor #1 suggested that real dedication is needed to do effective compassion ministry at any level.

### **Effective Training Method**

Pastors need to be educated of the importance of compassion ministry and its implications. Pastor #3 stated, while explaining the need for training and mentoring for contemporary young pastors, that: There should be a training center for youth pastors below forty years in the district and in other districts as well where they should be given theological and sociological training so that they would come to understand various needs of the people and how those needs can be met. Jesus did not come to take care of spiritual needs alone but also physical, sociological and emotional needs of the people. This is where training the pastors would be key.

Social transformation is possible only when there is proper awareness and training. These trained pastors should in turn train the church members so that compassion ministry can be done by all in the church. This approach will fetch good results when coupled with evangelism and deeds of compassion.

The comments of the questionnaire participants indicated that none of their churches have a separate department dedicated to carrying out compassion ministry activities, and, though people have been given training as to how to win souls, they have not been taught or trained on how to bring people to Christ through social or deed ministry. Four pastors also observed how secular organizations and other denominations such as Catholics, Lutherans, and Anglicans have managed to establish social ministry in this district by forming a department where people are well trained to meet people's needs at various levels.

### **Women Empowerment Centers**

Young widows need to be trained with skills so that they can be self-reliant. Pastor #6 focuses on widows' ministry as 60 percent of the women are widows in the rural area where a church runs. These women are really struggling as they have lost their husbands due to drugs and alcohol addictions. This state of being for women has been the pattern in that area. Women become widows at a very young age. An empowerment center should exist where these women are trained with skills so that they could be employed. As they come to the center for training, an opportunity exists to evangelize to them and lead them to Christ. Women need comfort and constant encouragement.

### **God Factor—Key Strategy Approach**

All seven senior pastors that were interviewed stated that each of their ministries was given and led by God to work among a specific group of people at a specific location. They all

started their churches by working among people such as lepers, street beggars, the blind, sorcerers, homeless people, gypsies, slum dwellers, fortune tellers, cobblers, and people who belong to the lowest strata of the society. Grace and wisdom from God is required to move and work with these people groups. Some people tried to work among the poor and needy, but their work never lasted more than a year according to a pastor who took part in answering the questionnaire.

Pastor #1 stated that pastors should not be doing what they feel like doing because they have resources. Rather, they need to wait on God to get specific instructions and guidance from Him. Do what God wants; let your strategy come from God. Only then will the ministry or initiative be effective and successful.

God led me to a specific place where he asked me to gather blind people. I never advertised or used any social media to gather people. I just got help from three blind people who were willing to gather people. It turned out to be that 450 blind people gathered. Our ministry gave them a bag of rice, a stick, gave them good lunch and I gave them a simple salvation message on Jesus. They were so happy and more than three hundred people committed their lives to God and were saved. They were all Hindu folks. It was major success because I heard from God and He gave me specific instructions. As a matter fact, many tried to do this before but no ministry was able to gather these many people. It was truly from God.

Pastor #2 narrated a similar story about how God led him to the district of Tiruchirapalli about twenty years ago from his native city which is four hundred miles away. God showed him in his dream to go to Panjapur County to work among the lepers and blind people.

When I was praying for my ministry after my bible college studies, the Lord showed me this particular place in Tiruchirapalli district. I came here in obedience with my family without knowing anybody in this place. I realized after arrival, it was a designated place for families of lepers and the blind. Two of the most downtrodden people in the society. First, they never accepted me but as I began to pray for them and understood their needs they accepted me. A blind family gave us a place to start a church. Now around 80 families attend Sunday service. They play music instruments God said go! I came! Now I see the results of this compassion ministry.

All seven pastors were convinced in their understating that true compassion ministry starts with God who leads people into the right place and to the right people group for their ministries as all souls belong to God.

### **Effective Prayer Ministry in Compassion Work**

Prayer ministry within the church is another important component in mercy ministry. Five senior pastors and some believers alike feel that pastors and church members who volunteer for prayer ministry should go house to house to find out the needs of the people, to pray for them, and most importantly to spend time with them.

Pastor #3 was very specific about prayer ministry. He stated Jesus' ministry was the ministry of incarnation. He spent time with sinners, the sick, afflicted, poor, and the suffering. When he saw people, he had compassion on them. If Jesus had not spent time with the Zacchaeus or the Samaritan woman, their lives would not have been transformed. Spending time with people and praying for them is the single most crucial aspect of establishing rapport with people.

I was working in a village where Hindus were a majority. I kept going from house to house though I was refused entry in the beginning. Later on they understood I was going with the intention of helping them. So, they opened their homes. My wife and I understood their needs and began to pray for them. In some cases, we helped them materially and financially. They felt the love of God. It paved a way for them to come to church regularly and they got baptized. When we prayed for them God worked in their lives and transformed them. They brought other people.

### **Ministry out of Compassion for People and not for Money**

Even though compassion ministry involves a lot of money in terms of meeting various needs of people, the sole purpose of this ministry is to make money which is the root of all evil. It has been noted that those who really want to serve people with love and compassion lack resources in every sense. Both the pastors interviewed and the participants who took the questionnaire echoed that their churches lack physical, financial, and material resources, thus hampering them from doing consistent work and carrying out sustainable activities for a longer period of time. Pastors #3, #5, and #6 have noticed that some charity organizations and big church pastors use our mercy ministry efforts as a tool to raise money for their selfish purposes.

They came to our villages and saw our work among the poor and needy and promised they would help us with financial and material resources. They did help for a couple of months and they stopped. We were not [able] to continue helping people having promised them regular help. They had the habit of taking pictures and taking some videos of our work that will be sent to overseas contacts to raise funds for them in the pretext of helping our ministries. We realized that the purpose of their visits were to raise funds for them and not us. This has affected our testimony among the people of other religious



faiths. Compassion ministry is also misused by those who are greedy and lust after money. But in spite of all this we never allow our work among the poor and needy to stop. Even though we lack resources, God sees our commitment and truthfulness and comes to our rescue in times of need. We serve and help people with the sacrificial contribution of some friends and local donors who help people for the sake of our hard work among the people.

Just because churches or pastors have money does not mean they have compassion or the calling to serve the poor and needy. All seven senior pastors have a tremendous heart for the poor and needy, and they all serve with great commitment and vision, but they lack resources to effective mercy ministry in their workplace.

### **Mercy Ministry of Deeds—Programs and Activities**

All seven interview participants recognized and confirmed that mercy ministry is an invaluable tool for successful evangelistic work in the district of Tiruchirapalli. All of their churches were built, developed, and have grown because of their deeds of compassion which they carried out in their respective area of ministry. All of their churches have seen church growth due to their compassion outreach through which they were able to meet the needs of various people. Their only challenge was adequate financial, material, and physical resources. Moreover, from the forty participants of questionnaire's response, thirty-eight of them (95 percent) have seen church growth due to the mercy ministry being carried out by their churches. Deeds of compassion have helped the churches to grow. Churches were able to welcome new members into their congregations as their deeds of compassion have shown people the love of Jesus. The data from the questionnaire participants revealed that thirty-two out of forty participants (92 percent) believe mercy ministry is a very good approach to win souls and is an

effective evangelistic tool. Moreover, more than 75 percent of the participants have stated that church members were encouraged and motivated to see new believers through their church's compassion ministry. In fact, eleven churches (25 percent) of the churches involved in this study started a new or branch church in a different location due to their compassion outreach to needy people. Six of the seven interviewed pastors have started one or more branch churches in different locations. Pastor #7 has started four more churches due to his church's mercy ministry outreach in those locations.

The following is a representative sample of the answers given with regard to church growth after deeds of compassion.

- Our church helped a blind family as a result, fifteen relatives of that family became our church members. When we relatives could not help that family, how could you love and help? You are true Christians.
- God directed me to gather 500 people in a particular place and provide them with rice and clothes. I obeyed His order. As a result 450 non-Christians turned up. I gave them a simple salvation message. We gave them a bagful of rice and clothes. As a result 250 people accepted Jesus.
- Because of our timely help a Hindu boy could finish engineering studies and His family has been saved and redeemed.
- During 2015 floods, people in our village lost everything. When our church helped people with food, clothes and built their houses, many came to Christ after seeing our compassion work. Even the Government failed to provide for their needs.

- I just out of compassion prayed for a cancer patient who was a Hindu, God healed her. I don't know how. I simply prayed over the phone. But that lady and her daughter got saved and now they help our ministry.
- I am a Hindu magical priest. I hated all Christians especially preachers. I used to make witchcraft practices against them. When my father was bedridden and about to die with a life threatening disease, ten ladies from a church came to the hospital and they cried and prayed for my dying father kneeling beside the bed. I was astonished. Why would these people cry for another person? My father was miraculously healed to the surprise of the doctors. My entire family got saved. Now my father is a pastor, I am a pastor, my brother is a pastor. We serve among our community people in three different places along with our own families. What a mighty God Jesus is. A small act of praying for strangers indeed a deed of compassion and that transformed us forever.
- I had a burden for small school going children in my area. So, I invited them to the terrace of my church building where I appointed 3 teachers to give them free evening coaching and mentoring classes. My wife began to teach the kids Christian songs and bible stories. On Sunday these children brought their mothers to church. Now we have 80 people in church because of our act of kindness towards children.
- I have been doing compassion ministry among the beggars for the last twelve years. I used to sleep among them, clean them, feed them, clothe them and be one among them. I have led them to Christ and been invited to our prayer centre.

Anything we do in the name of Jesus with his love and compassion in our hearts.

It works and even beggars' lives are transformed.

The above are some of the transformative stories gleaned from the pastors. These stories show how a single act of love and compassion paves a way for people to come to Christ.

Figure 4.3 reveals the percentage of increase attained in the growth of the pastors' churches. It shows that 30 percent of the churches have seen a 50 percent increase and another 30 percent of the churches have seen a 30 percent increase in church growth due to compassion ministry. An increase in church growth exists when mercy ministry is carried out by churches in the district as a tool for evangelism. When asked how the non-Christian local communities view compassion ministry in their areas, around 50 percent of the participants stated that compassion ministry has positive effects on their communities. In other words, compassion ministry activities have been seen in a positive light and are viewed as helpful by the local communities despite some opposition from non-Christians.

**List of Best Practices for the District of Tiruchirapalli TABLE 4.3**

ACTIVITIES SUGGESTED	NO OF RESPONDENTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Food/clothe Distribution</li> <li>● Health care</li> <li>● Agricultural</li> <li>● Prison Ministry</li> <li>● Vocational training</li> <li>● Rehabilitation centers for drug addicts and alcoholics</li> <li>● Counselling</li> <li>● Language Training</li> <li>● Computer training</li> <li>● Vocational training</li> <li>● Humanitarian help during natural disaster</li> <li>● Skill development programs</li> <li>● Widows/women empowerment programs</li> <li>● Healing and deliverance ministry</li> <li>● Special ministry to blind/beggars/disabled/lepers/bonded laborers</li> <li>● Children's ministry</li> <li>● Hospital visits to meet the sick</li> <li>● House to house prayer visits</li> <li>● Housing projects for the lower class</li> <li>● Education for children</li> <li>● Technical education for rural youth</li> <li>● Medical camps in villages</li> <li>● Orphanage</li> <li>● Micro financing schemes for the start-ups.</li> <li>● Building Public toilets and sanitation facilities and clean water in villages</li> <li>● Blood donation camps for evangelism</li> <li>● Creating job opportunities programs</li> <li>● Sports and recreation ministry</li> <li>● Telephone ministry</li> <li>● Home for the aged</li> <li>● Mid-day meals for the Hungry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Thirty Four</b></li> <li>● <b>Thirteen</b></li> <li>● <b>Nine</b></li> <li>● <b>Two</b></li> <li>● <b>Eleven</b></li> <li>● <b>Three</b></li> <li>● <b>Seven</b></li> <li>● <b>Twenty Four</b></li> <li>● <b>Twelve</b></li> <li>● <b>Three</b></li> <li>● <b>Twenty Seven</b></li> <li>● <b>Eighteen</b></li> <li>● <b>Two</b></li> <li>● <b>Two</b></li> <li>● <b>Thirteen</b></li> <li>● <b>Twenty Four</b></li> <li>● <b>Nine</b></li> <li>● <b>Six</b></li> <li>● <b>Twenty eight</b></li> <li>● <b>One</b></li> <li>● <b>Twelve</b></li> <li>● <b>Nineteen</b></li> <li>● <b>Three</b></li> <li>● <b>One</b></li> <li>● <b>One</b></li> <li>● <b>Two</b></li> <li>● <b>Ten</b></li> <li>● <b>One</b></li> <li>● <b>Seventeen</b></li> <li>● <b>One</b></li> <li>● <b>Seventeen</b></li> </ul>

### Summary of Major Findings

Several major findings emerged from the data analysis of both research tools. I have listed them here.

1. Reality of deeds of compassion as an effective and a promising evangelistic tool.
2. Belief that deeds of compassion leads to measurable church growth in the district.
3. Belief that the church puts more focus on physical needs than mental and emotional.
4. Belief that lack of resources both affect and limit the work of compassion ministry in the district.
5. Whole hearted involvement of the Pentecostal churches in doing compassion ministry among non-church members/unchurched people is needed.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **LEARNING REPORT FOR THE PROJECT**

## **Overview of the Chapter**

The few Pentecostal churches involved in compassion ministry are sowing deeds of compassion for the evangelistic purposes whole heartedly in the district of Tiruchirapalli. As a result, these churches have seen growth in their churches. The majority of the churches in the Tiruchirapalli district are not involved in compassion ministries for various reasons such as lack of resources, lack of awareness, and lack of vision. This research project investigated the effectiveness of evangelization through deeds of compassion among the Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli in order to develop a list of best practices and approaches that would pave the way for successful evangelization in the district.

This chapter identifies five findings from this research study and expounds how they correspond to personal observations, literature review, and the biblical and theological narrative of the project. Then, limitations of the research study, unexpected observations, and recommendations for further study are also explored.

## **Major Findings**

Several major findings became clear from the data analysis of both research tools. I have listed them here in a numbered list.

### **1. Reality of Deeds of Compassion as an Effective and Promising Evangelistic Tool**

I have found that the pastors and church members are highly convinced in the district of Tiruchirapalli that acts of compassion or deeds of kindness towards the poor and needy have proved to be an effective and a promising tool for evangelism and church growth. Before I started interviewing and distributing the questionnaire, I was not sure if that was the case because of my preconceived notion of pastors' indifference towards compassion ministry. I was not even sure that many were doing compassion ministry in the district. All I knew was pastors were more

interested in evangelism than any sort of compassion ministry.

After interviewing the pastors and analyzing the responses of the questionnaire, I discovered that the participants were convinced that deeds of compassion was and is an effective and a promising evangelistic tool used by them. All seven interview participants have categorically stated that they believe compassion ministry was an effective tool in evangelistic outreach. Many of the interviewed pastors themselves were saved because someone did an act of kindness in their lives that brought them to Christ. Thirty seven participants out of forty, 93 percent, of participants who took part in the questionnaire have affirmed that merciful needs to the poor and needy people are indeed a powerful tool of evangelism. I was once invited to a Christmas outreach to one of the churches where the pastor fed 250 people and the gospel was preached. Through the feeding and clothing program, they were able to invite people to Christ. It remains a powerful and promising tool when people are in dire needs. Word and deed go together.

In my literature review, there were many authors and resources that support this finding. The prominent ones are John Stott and Ronald Sider who are the chief contributors to the Lausanne movement which oversees Global evangelism and social responsibility. Timothy Keller is a prominent Presbyterian minister who passionately advocates that compassion ministry and evangelism are two sides of the coin and are inseparable. He emphasized mercy and evangelism are like “smoke and fire – where one is, the other must be near.” (Keller 116)

As this project is related to Pentecostal churches in my district, I explained in my literature review how the modern Pentecostal movement has always been actively doing compassion work among the poor and needy since 1906 when the Azusa street revival took place in California. Prominent Pentecostal authors such as Miller and Yamamori have stated that



Pentecostals were involved in various forms of social ministry and they used them as an instrument in their evangelistic outreach. In fact, the assemblies of God used compassion ministry as a global strategy in their quest for expanding the kingdom of God around the world. The results are very obvious. As far as India is concerned, the Salvation Army played a vital role in pushing this strategy all over India. They provided soap, combs, and salvation to people. Even my district benefited because of their endeavor.

As far as the biblical and theological framework in this project is concerned, the early church has understood the inseparability of deed ministry and word ministry and followed the Jesus pattern of ministry. In the ministry of Jesus, as Matthew 4.23 says, he taught, preached, and healed all kinds of sickness. Luke 9.16 says he also fed the hungry multitude. These actions show that his acts of mercy were inseparable from evangelism. Just as deeds of compassion and mercy are inseparable from the faith of a Christian, so work for the needy and poor people is inseparable from the work of evangelism and ministry of deed. Not only did Jesus come to this world to save sinners, he met all the needs of those he encountered. He taught, preached, healed, and delivered people who were mentally, emotionally, and psychologically afflicted. He had compassion on people when he saw them with various needs. He used deeds of compassion as an evangelistic tool to save the lost.

## **2. Belief that Deeds of Compassion lead to Measurable Church Growth in the District**

I found out from the pastors that were interviewed and from the questionnaire participants that their compassion ministry programs and activities for the purpose of evangelization have led to measurable church growth whenever and wherever they happened. I have observed that churches involved in compassion ministry were able to see an increase in the arrival of new members in their churches. All seven pastors have emphatically stated, with data

to support their claims that their deeds of compassion among various groups of people have certainly led to church growth. They said people saw our sincere and genuine efforts in helping them. Churches were able to show the love of Christ through their genuine acts of kindness which enabled people to come to churches to have relationships with God as well as the church leadership. A pastor who works with blind people started from scratch with just eight people; now they have built a church and more than 150 come from one village. Another pastor started with 2 families and now he has thirty-five families due to his work among the gypsies and vagabonds in a village. Another Pastor started a church among lepers and blind people in 2001; now he has four rural churches with 250 members. Among the forty participants that answered the questionnaire, thirty-eight of their churches, more than 95 percent, grew due to their social ministry to the poor and needy. This percentage is a very big number considering the fact 92 percent of the population in Tiruchirapalli consists of Hindus and Muslims. This study has found out beyond any doubt that when compassionate acts are carried out, there subsequently is an increase in church attendance.

In my literature review, I have narrated through real stories from various continents of how mercy ministry in the form of good deeds/acts of kindness among people always brought about social transformation as well growth in Christian churches. This growth is a global phenomenon and a reality when there is a true intention from those who are involved in compassion ministry. Timothy Keller, an exponent of mercy ministry, stated that, "Mercy ministry is a kingdom endeavor and it is not an end, but a means to an end – the spread of God's kingdom;" in other words, mercy and evangelism have the same goals (Keller 208). It is believed that the church should always grow numerically in its life of service. Growth should result from a commitment to evangelism which is carried out through loving actions and deed

ministry to the poor, broken, the outcasts, and the oppressed. The largest Pentecostal congregation in the world was founded by Dr. David Yongi Cho in Seoul, South Korea. His church's ministry of compassion has been one of the hallmarks of the massive growth of the church. Compassion was their evangelistic tool for successful ministry to the poor and needy.

From the biblical and theological perspective, the Acts church provides the perfect template for an effective compassion ministry to win the lost. Their level of mercy and compassion is such that Acts 4.34-35 says, "And so it turned out that not a person among them was needy. Those who owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of the sale to the apostles and made an offering of it. The apostles then distributed it according to each person's need."

The early church adhered to the command given to the rich young man who in Mathew 19.21, "Go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasures in heaven." Acts 6 further explains the fact that the number of disciples increased when the church was actively involved in social ministry specifically addressing the needs of the widows and food distribution program of the church both to Jews and Greeks. Hence, concern for the poor and needy and subsequent acts of compassion helped the early church to grow in numbers numerically.

### **3. Belief that Church puts more focus on Physical Needs than Mental and Emotional**

All the Pentecostal churches that are involved in compassion ministry focus on the physical needs of the people they serve in the ministry locality. They do not focus on the mental and emotional issues of people. Before I undertook the study, I was under the opinion that churches involved in mercy ministry were focusing on not only physical needs such as food and clothing but also various social, family related, mental, and emotional needs of the people as

well. In the district of Tiruchirapalli, the majority of the people belong to either the middle class or the lower middle class. Various issues ranging from illiteracy, caste system, unemployment, alcoholic and drug addiction, mental issues, and marital problems exist. What I observed and noticed from the interviews was that most of the compassion ministry activities and programs that are part of the Pentecostal churches focused on physical needs. After analyzing the data (Table 1.1), I found that more than 90 percent of the deeds of compassion are related to the physical needs. Food, clothing, and financial help are the three major assistance rendered to people. Less than 5 percent of the activities focus on education, counseling, rehabilitation, etc. Pastors are aware these are important needs, but they were not able to minister to these needs due to human and financial constraints.

In my literature review, I have narrated how churches and some pastors around the globe have ventured into conducting and organizing special programs for illiterates as well as transformational programs for various people who had been addicted to various vices of the society such as prostitutes, and programs for people who had mental issues. In India, the poor, the destitute, and the outcasts found a new identity in Christ and dignity in their lives through the ministry of compassion started by Vinay and his wife Colleen in Bangalore. I have also quoted from the compassion ministry experts such as Timothy Keller and Craig Wilson who have expounded various types of needs that churches should address while doing a ministry of compassion. This list can be found on page 73-75 of this dissertation. Various types of needs are described such as spiritual, moral, emotional, social, cognitive, physical, and psychological. Therefore, the deeds of compassion cannot be restricted to only one type of need. While analyzing the works of the Pentecostal pioneers, they worked on social transformation and works of compassion when their movement began. They were working on the transformation of the

whole person such as spiritual, social, moral, physical, and emotional needs. The true spirit of Pentecostalism lies in its excellence in human flourishing in spirit, soul, and body. This holistic ministry approach is the goal of Pentecostal ministry's DNA.

From the biblical and theological framework, God is the provider of all human needs. He does not restrict himself to focus on one type of human needs. The Scriptures are abundantly clear he provided and still provides all kinds of needs. God is the ultimate source of all and provider of all. The kingdom of God is all about that. The kingdom of God is not an ordinary kingdom or worldly in nature but is "characterized by mercy, love, justice and peace as its principle moral features" (Petersen 55).

At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. (Luke 7.21-22)

The good news that Jesus brings to the poor is the good news for the whole person namely spirit, soul, and body. The good news is a kingdom of blessing in every area of life. The king offers healing, deliverance, social-justice, prosperity, freedom, peace, and joy. The good news is echoed in the words of Jesus in John 10.10, "The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life." Jesus is just not talking about the future kingdom rather he says the kingdom is at hand and is here and now. Most importantly, the kingdom of God is a compassionate kingdom that is ruled by a compassionate king who, as Paul says, "... will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4.19).

#### **4. Belief that lack of Resources affecting and limiting the Works of Compassion Ministry in the District**

I noticed after my interviews and going through the responses of the questionnaire participants that there is an enormous amount of needs that people have in the district as neither the city nor the district is affluent. There were major problems in the district; according to the District Planning Authorities Report these problems are employment, lower income, and poverty. Hence, people's needs are many both in rural and in urban areas. Pastors and churches are facing huge challenges. In order to use compassion ministry as a tool for evangelization, churches should be armed physically, materially, financially with resources that will enable them to reach out to people in need. Unfortunately, I found that Pentecostal churches are lacking resources to cater to the needs of people. In the same breath, I observed that main line churches such as Catholics, Lutherans, Indian division of Anglican churches, and Seventh day Adventists have strong financial support to conduct programs and do activities as part of their outreach ministry drive. They have big schools, colleges, empowerment centers, rehabilitation and counseling centers, hospitals, and health care centers. Pentecostals have none of those which is a blaring contrast in the way compassion ministry is done in the district. As a result, lack of resources among the Pentecostal churches has affected and limited the works of compassion ministry in the district. Every pastor that was interviewed lacked resources as they run independent churches by faith and depend on faithful donors to raise money to support their compassion ministry.

In my literature review, I have given some illustrations on how various churches in various places tackle this problem of lack of resources. Waiting for resources to come is one thing and identifying the resources within the church community is what is required. Pastor Steve Sjogren planted a church in Cincinnati with a small group of people. He grew his church

by involving the church members in creative ways. He identified the talents of the members and put them into effective use. Some did car washes, some repaired cars, some cleaned homes, some cleaned toilets in gas stations, etc. Through these ministries, they attracted new people to their church. One of the issues with the local pastors in my district is that they are waiting for things to happen, hoping to get donors, and looking for funds from overseas instead of making things happen. Churches should look for creative ways to raise and collect resources first before they look for outside sources. A bishop in Italy ordered all the priests in his diocese to collect two offerings every Sunday out of which the money collected from the second offering was exclusively used for compassion ministry activities. The poor of the diocese were taken care.

While analyzing this point from a biblical and theological perspective, attention should be given to the early church and how mercy ministry was conducted by them in terms of securing resources for the needy people in their community. The apostles were able to garner resources from the church members themselves as Acts 4.34-35 says, “And so it turned out that not a person among them was needy. Those who owned fields or houses sold them and brought the price of the sale to the apostles and made an offering of it. The apostles then distributed it according to each person’s need.” All their needs were met as people willingly and sacrificially offered their resources for the sake of the needy. Though this practice would be highly impracticable and unfeasible with a few exceptions, the churches should strive to create awareness among the congregants of the benefits of caring for each other. In 2 Corinthians 8.1-5, Paul proclaims how the Macedonians gave sacrificially for the sake of the poor out of their deep poverty. Churches should function with this spirit when dealing with lack of resources in compassion ministry. When Jesus wanted to feed the multitude, he depended on inside sources by getting five loaves and two fish from a small boy who was part of the crowd that listened to

him. God could multiply the resources when churches' inside sources are made use of, a valuable lesson for churches.

### **5. Whole hearted Involvement of the Pentecostal Churches in doing Compassion Ministry among Non-Church Members/Unchurched People**

I observed that all the Pentecostal churches involved in compassion ministry in the district of Tiruchirapalli are not only helping their needy church members but are wholeheartedly helping non-church members/unchurched that are in need. This action suggests that the churches do not seem to focus on only their own poor and needy church members in compassion ministry, but they also focus on non-church members and unchurched people. I was of the opinion that Pentecostal churches in the district tend to help their own congregants who may have needs of any sort. When I began interviewing the senior pastors and analyzed the responses of the questionnaire, I was surprised that pastors reached out to non-church members in their area ministry. Non-Christians were also helped and supported without the intention of bringing them to church. Pastors and congregants felt those people should be helped because of the prevailing conditions. The questionnaire result shows that more than 78 percent of the churches responded that they intentionally and wholeheartedly helped and served beyond their church community. This thought of not confining compassion ministry to their church walls speaks volumes for true Christian caregiving. These churches were not inclusive in their approach and compassion ministry strategy.

In my literature review, I mentioned how the Assemblies of God churches have gone out their way to help millions of people around the world, and they have become one of the largest caregiving entities in the world. They addressed the physical needs of millions of people and showed strong support and commitment to the poor and needy. Douglas Peterson, the director of



Foreign Missions of the Assemblies of God, observed that works of compassion are carried out both at the personal level and the Institutional level—for church members as well as for the surrounding community. Not only has the Assemblies of God contributed to various groups of people in regards to ministry of compassion, but other denominations that believe in city, state, and global mission work have as well.

From the theological and biblical perspective, one can say God is inclusive otherwise the scriptures would not read, “For, God so loved the world” (John 3.16). Non-Jewish people would not have been added into the genealogy mentioned in the first chapter of Matthew if God were not inclusive. The fact that God loves all people irrespective of caste, color, creed, religion, or nation is reflected through the Scriptures. While Jesus was on earth ministering to people, he exhibited the zenith of compassion ministry by reaching out to a Samaritan woman in John 4, a tax collector in Luke 19, and the Syrophenician woman who pleaded to Jesus to heal her daughter recorded in Matthew 15 and many more. Christianity should always thrive in this inclusiveness otherwise compassion ministry has no meaning. Pentecostal churches in this district have reached out to other communities while doing ministries of compassion, and they were and are doing so wholeheartedly.

### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

This project was the first of its kind in the district of Tiruchirpalli. This research has evoked new and increased interest among churches irrespective of their involvement in the compassion ministry. Several implications arose from the research.

1. Pentecostal pastors are beginning to understand the importance of compassion ministry as a tool for evangelism. This study argues well for those who are on the threshold of making

their church one that moves with great compassion among those in need. This study gave churches new insights, strategies, and approaches that will help pastors and church leaders to think differently in their ministry journey. I was told that only 10 percent of the Pentecostal churches are intentionally involved in compassion ministry in the district. This study will change that scenario.

2. One implication I foresee from this study is that compassion ministry has great potential in my district, and, hence, when it is carried out with the right approach and practices, there will be tremendous amount of church growth numerically and exponentially. People have a lot of needs in different forms, and they are looking for political leaders and religious gods and goddesses to fulfill their needs and desires. People lack direction and guidance as illiteracy, superstition, and traditional beliefs have blinded the eyes. As Jesus says, people are wandering without a shepherd. Churches have a great responsibility to reach out to these people. One of the ways churches can do it is through deeds of compassion. Compassion ministry will be a game changer in terms of taking the Gospel to people through actions of love and compassion. As Francis of Assisi once said, “preach the Gospel at all times. Use words if necessary” (McHenry 225). Actions will speak louder than words. This study will certainly help that cause not only in this district but also districts in the state and elsewhere. Compassion ministry has a huge potential for rapid growth of the Pentecostal denomination in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

3. This study will create an awareness among the pastors and leaders of the Pentecostal churches that they are called to take care of not just the physical needs as per the present scenario in the district, but also the emotional, mental, moral, social, cognitive, and psychological needs of people. They will do well enough to address the whole person concept where spirit, soul, and body are made whole and healthy.

### **Limitations of the Study**

If I were to repeat this research, I would expand the scope of research to other denominations instead of restricting the study to pastors and churches of one denomination. The instruments could be used to get information from other denominational leaders and churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli in order to get the District's overall effectiveness in regards to evangelization through deeds of compassion.

There were two instruments utilized for this study—qualitative open-ended questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. Adding focus groups would provide an opportunity to glean more insights, themes, and understanding on the research study from group participants. In any informal discussion, people always open up, bring their new ideas, and throw a lot of light on the subject matter of research.

Due to time constraints, I was not able to interview some prominent pastors who are involved in the ministry of compassion. I interviewed only the pastors that are involved in local church ministry as well as compassion ministry as this project investigated the effectiveness of evangelism through deeds of compassion. Due to time and ministry constraints, more time was not allotted for the interview. I was able to sit with each participant for thirty to forty-five minutes though I would have liked to spend more time with each interviewee. My greatest limitation was to gauge the authenticity of the answers from the respondents as I felt some of them were trying to impress me in terms of the measure of their work.

One thing I might consider if I were to conduct this study again would be to choose more senior pastors who are in compassion ministry and interview some Christian charity founders who have vast experience in compassion ministry for a longer period of time than the participants of this study. However, I would not alter the two instruments I have used for this

project nor the data collection; they were ideal and I did not encounter limitations with them; the instruments allowed quality data analysis. Though I did manage to talk to different groups of people such as pastors, laity, elders, leaders of the congregations, I was not able to interview many women senior pastors as it was difficult to find such in our denomination because of the contextual outlook towards women as senior pastors. I would have loved to interview some women pastors and their approach towards compassion ministry.

### **Unexpected Observations**

One of my surprises was discovering some senior pastors were already involved in some serious and dedicated compassion ministry in the district of Tiruchirapalli. I never knew of them personally or the places of their ministry. I had a different set of pastors in mind. Their area of ministry has been displayed in Table 1.2. Out of seven pastors who were interviewed, six of them have their ministry base in rural areas or villages where people are poor and hence financial viability is very limited for these pastors. They said their decision for their ministry location was prompted by God who asked them to start their ministries in the respective places. Since I have my ministry base in a big town, this was a surprise to me. Their ministries are led and guided by God. The place of ministry that is not what matters but the willingness to obey God in every situation that matters to him. Three pastors were from a different district than their place of ministry, yet they were able to do the will of God.

All the pastors that were interviewed were not well off financially, but yet they were not complaining and each of them was willing to do compassion ministry among the poor and needy people wholeheartedly along with their families. There was a sense of pride and satisfaction in what they were doing. They were not overwhelmed by the needs of people or by the financial constraints they faced. They are serving the Lord and his people at all cost. They were willing to

pay the cost by serving lepers, beggars, blind, and nomadic people. In fact, what was startling to me was that the pastor who serves among the beggars used to sleep along with the beggars on the road side in order to identify with them. He even went to the extent of eating their food.

Discovering that these pastors were serving in my district opened my eyes to more ministry of which I was not aware. They have defined what it means to be a passionate compassion worker for the sake of God's people.

### **Recommendations**

While this study was highly productive and yielded the desired value I was looking for, there are ways to improve and expand on this study for the benefit of future readers. I have seven things to recommend.

1. Every church in the district should plan on creating a separate team or a department for compassion ministry to oversee the ministry's programs and activities. Less than 15 percent of the churches in the district have a separate team or department for this purpose. This oversight may be attributed to the church's lack of awareness or lack of interest in this area. Compassion ministry should be viewed and treated as an intentional ministry which should be carried out throughout the year and not once a year or during the Christmas program as people and communities may be in need throughout the year.

2. There should be special budgets for compassion ministry activities in the overall church budget based on the financial capability and the size of the church. Churches should develop their own fundraising strategy based on their community's needs and essential requirements for living. Instead of looking for resources from outside all the time, churches should generate internal resources first. Internal sources are particularly applicable for urban churches that have

more than one hundred members. Even small churches should be encouraged to give generously towards compassion ministry.

3. Churches can organize “COMPASSION WEEK” in line with “MISSIONS WEEK” to promote compassion ministry activities. This idea will help churches to create awareness among the congregants and to inform congregations of what types of work the church is doing, who are the recipients, and where the activities are carried out. Special offerings can be collected that could be used for activities and programs. This drive can help churches to liaison with local charities and non-profits organizations to effectively meet the needs of the communities.

4. The church leadership and the compassion ministry department of the church should identify and understand the needs of the community and prepare a strategy with proper planning, preparation, and training for the necessary staff to be implemented for a successful outcome of compassion ministry. Every pastor should create awareness among the members of his congregation about different facets of compassion ministry as the church’s instrument for effective evangelization. Pastors should teach and train their members from the biblical, theological, social, and humanitarian perspectives.

5. One of the things that pastors should keep in mind while doing compassion ministry is though it could be deemed as an evangelistic tool. However, when new believers come to church as a result of being a beneficiary, they should be not forgotten and the church should not stop helping them either. This act will not help the church retain new members in the long run. A beneficiary becomes a benefactor sooner or later and the churches must realize this as a goal of a church. This is feasible and this is what happened to those who I interviewed as part of this study.

6. The idea of conducting compassion ministry seminars in the district was brought forth during my interactions with some pastors. Seminars will create an opportunity to address the nuances of compassion ministry from the perspective of evangelization in the district. This seminar will be an effective tool in terms of disseminating information and creating awareness among pastoral leaders about the important role of compassion ministry as an evangelistic tool in the district of Tiruchirapalli.

7. Finally, most of the compassion ministry efforts and activities in the district are directed towards meeting the physical needs of the people in the district of Tiruchirapalli. Data shows that more than 90 percent of activities and programs involve feeding, clothing, and other general activities. The pastors and church leaders should be educated to address the mental and emotional issues people suffer from. These issues are very important to deal with while continuing to deal with the physical needs of the people. A training program for church leaders in this area of ministry should exist.

### **Postscript**

Completing this research project has been an extraordinary journey for many reasons. My dissertation area of research was changed three times. I wanted to do a study on discipleship first, then I changed to church growth, and finally I decided to study compassion ministry as an evangelistic tool. Compassion ministry is in fact my ministry. My friend, Girma Bishaw, exhorted me to stick to my passion that the Lord has put in my heart and do research on the topic I have chosen. Therefore, I decided to do this project which is related to my ministry, passion, and vision in life. After starting to write this project, God amazingly open doors for me to do compassion ministry at a greater level in my context, and the knowledge I gained through this study is a divine gift from God which will keep in good stead as the kingdom of God is advanced

through our compassion ministry not only in my area but elsewhere as the Lord leads. The timing of doing this study could not have been perfect. During this research, God enabled me to start a new Foundation which will address and cater to the needs of many people not only in my district but also in some parts of our state. This study concluded that compassion ministry is indeed a great evangelistic tool to win a multitude of souls despite my country being predominantly a Hindu nation. This growth is what excites me.

It was so wonderful to meet like-minded pastors and ministers who are also involved in compassion ministry. They are doing great work among the poor and needy in spite of many facing practical hurdles and challenges every day in many areas. It was great to glean first hand field experiences, stories, and insights from them. I am grateful to them for sharing those things with me. I am looking forward to joining them in this great adventure of winning souls in our district through deeds of compassion. I echo Paul's words, "I can indeed do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me." (Phil 4:13)

Christians are called to be the light of the world, salt of the earth, and the very shadow of Christ Jesus in this inhumane and selfish world. We become the face of God in this wretched and dying world when we reach out to people who are naked, hungry, poor, homeless, broken, and sick.

Mother Theresa of Calcutta who was the epitome of deeds of compassion calls this the "Double Miracle of Incarnation." She composed a poem in her children's home.

Dearest Lord, may I see you today and every day in the person  
of your sick, and while nursing them, minister unto you.

Though you hide yourself behind the unattractive disguise of the irritable,  
the exacting, the unreasonable, may I still recognize you, and say, "Jesus  
my patient, how sweet it is to serve you."

Lord give me this seeing faith, then my work will never become



monotonous. I will ever find joy in honoring the fancies and gratifying the wishes of all poor sufferers.

O beloved sick, how doubly dear you are to me, when you personify Christ: and what a privilege is mine to be allowed to tend to you.

Sweetest Lord, make me appreciative of the dignity of my high vocation, and its many responsibilities. Never permit me to disgrace it by giving way to coldness, unkindness, or impatience.

And O God, while you are Jesus, my patient, design also to be to me a patient Jesus, bearing with my faults, looking only to me with intention, which is to love and serve you in the person of each of your sick. Amen. (Beals 72)

**APPENDIX A**  
**THE QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**(ENGLISH)**

1. What is your name?
2. What is your age?
  1. 18-27 years old
  2. 28-37 years old
  3. 38-47 years old
  4. 48-57 years old
  5. 58 years or older
3. What is your gender?
  1. Male
  2. Female
4. What is the name of your church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How old is your church?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. What is your position/role in the church/Ministry?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. How long have you been involved in ministry?
  1. 1-5 years
  2. 6-10 Years

3. 11-15 Years
  4. 16-20 Years
  5. 21 Years and above
8. How large is the church/ministry?
1. 25-50 people
  2. 51-100 people
  3. 100-150 people
  4. 151-200
  5. 201-and above
9. Compassion ministry is serving the physical, mental and emotional needs of others.  
According to this definition of compassion, how do you rate your church's involvement in compassion ministry on the scale of 1 to 5?
1. Not involved in compassion ministry
  2. Involved in compassion ministry only among the church community
  3. Involved in compassion ministry only at Christian holiday times
  4. Involved in compassion ministry when the need arises
  5. Intentionally involved in compassion ministry to serve beyond its church community
10. What type of compassion ministries does your church do/ get involved in?
11. Does your church have a separate department for compassion ministries?
12. How often are compassion ministry activities carried out in your church?
1. Once a week
  2. Twice a week

3. Once a month
4. Three times a year
5. Whenever the need arises

13. Do you see people coming to your church as a result of compassion ministries?

14. How long was your church involved in compassion ministry?

15. How many percent of your church growth ascribed to your church's compassion ministries?

1. 10%
2. 30%
3. 50%
4. 80%
5. 95%

16. Did your church's compassion ministry enhance the church's ability to connect with the local community?

17. How do you think the local community see your compassion ministry?

1. Indifferently
2. Varies from time to time
3. Negatively
4. Positively
5. We do not know

18. Do you think your church members view compassion ministries as a tool for evangelism?

( YES/ NO)

If Yes, Why

If No, Why not?

19. Are your church members trained or educated to participate in compassion activities to win souls? ( YES / NO)

If no, what is the reason?

20. Has there been a church plant as a result of compassion ministries? (YES/NO)

21. Are your church members encouraged or motivated by the fruit of compassion ministries? (YES/NO)

If yes, why?

If no, why not?

22. What are some of the challenges faced by your church or members while carrying out deeds of compassion for evangelism?

23. Can you suggest a new approach or a method in compassion ministry that can be a useful tool in evangelism?

24. In your opinion, what best practices can be incorporated in the compassion ministry for evangelism that can be effective for the District of Tiruchirapalli?

25. Any Additional comments you would like to make?

**APPENDIX B**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE (TAMIL)**

**Nfs;tpfs;**

1. ngah;?
2. taJ?
  1. 18 taJ Kjy; 27 kl;Lk;
  2. 28 taJ Kjy; 37 tiu
  3. 38 taJ Kjy; 47 tiu
  4. 48 taJ Kjy; 57 tiu
  5. 58 –f;F taJNky;
3. ghypdk; :
  1. Mz;
  2. ngz;
4. jpUr;rigapd; ngah;?
5. jpUr;rigapd; taJ?
6. jpUr;rigapNy jq;fsJ gjtp/gq;F/Copaj;jpd; jd;ik?
7. Copaj;jpNy jq;fsJ gq;F vj;jid tUI fhykhf ,Uf;fpd;wJ?
  1. 1 Kjy; 5 Mz;Lfs;;
  2. 6 Kjy; 10 Mz;Lfs;;
  3. 11 Kjy; 15 Mz;Lfs;;
  4. 16 Kjy; 20 Mz;Lfs;;
  5. 21 Mz;LfSf;F Nky;
8. jq;fsJ rig tpRthrpfs;pd; vz;zpf;if?
  1. 25 Kjy; 50 tpRthrpfs;
  2. 51 Kjy; 100 tpRthrpfs;

3. 100 Kjy; 150 tpRthrpfs;
4. 151 Kjy; 200 tpRthrpfs;
5. 201 tpRthrpfs;F Nky;

9. kdJUf;f Copak; vd;gJ kw;wth;fspd; rhPu> nghUshjhu kdk; kw;Wk;  
 czh;Tg;G+h;tkhd gyjug;gl;l Njitfis re;jpg;gjhFk;. ,g;gbg;gl;l cd;dj njhz;Lfis  
 nfhz;l kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaj;ij> jq;fsJ Copaq;fspy; fPNo nfhLf;fg;gl;Ls;s 1 Kjy; 5  
 tpfjq;fspy; ve;j msTfspy; kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaq;fspy; <LghL nfhz;Ls;sPh;fs;?

1. kdJUf;f Copaj;jpy; <Lgltpy;iy.
2. jpUr;rigapd; lf;fpaj;jpy; cs;sth;fspk; kl;Lk; kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaj;jpid  
 nra;JtUfpd;Nwhk;.
3. fpwp];jt tpLKiw ehl;fspy; kl;LNk kdJUf;f Copaj;jpy; <LghL
4. Njitfs; Vw;gLk;NghJ kl;LNk kdJUf;f Copaq;fis nra;J tUfpd;Nwhk;
5. KO ,Ujaj;NjhLk; jpUr;rigapd; lf;fpaj;jpw;F mg;ghw;g;gl;l kf;fSf;Fk;  
 kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaq;fis nra;JtUfp;Nwhk;

10.ve;j tifahd kdJUf;f Copaj;ij jq;fsJ jpUr;rig nra;J  
 tUfpd;wJ/<Lgl;LtUfpwJ?

11.kdJUf;f Copaj;jpid nra;tjw;f;nfd;W jq;fsJ jpUr;rigapy; jdpq;gphpT/FO cz;lh?

12.kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaj;ij jq;fsJ jpUr;rigapy; vt;tsT ehl;fSf;nfhU Kiw nra;J  
 tUfpd;wPh;fs;?

1. thuj;jpw;f;F xUKiw
2. thuj;jpw;F ,UKiw
3. khjj;jpw;F xUKiw
4. tUl;jpw;F %d;W Kiw
5. Njitg;gLk; Neuq;fspnsy;yhk;

13.kdJUf;f Copaj;jpd; gydhf Gjpa Mj;Jkhf;fs; jq;fsJ jpUr;rigf;F tUif je;jJz;lh?

14.vj;jid tUl fhykhf ,e;j kdJUf;f Copaj;jpid nra;J tUfpwPh;fs;?

15.,e;j kdJUf;f Copaj;jpd; gydhf jq;fsJ jpUr;rig vj;jid rjtPjk; tsh;r;rpapid fz;Ls;sJ?

1. 10%
2. 30%
3. 50%
4. 80%
5. 95%

16.cs;Sh; r%fkf;fNshL cs;s lf;fpa cwTfis ngyg;gLj;Jk;gb jpUr;rigahdJ kdJUf;f Copaj;jpid jpwikahf Nkd;ikgLj;jpdJz;lh?

17.jq;fsJ kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copaq;fis cs;Sh; r%fkf;fs; vt;thW fzpf;fpd;whh;fs; vd;W ePq;fs; epidf;fpwPh;fs;?

1. myl;rpakhf
2. xt;nthU Neuj;jpw;Fk; khw;wq;fs;
3. vjph;kiwahf
4. Mf;fG+h;tkhf
5. ehk; mwpe;J nfhs;sKbatpy;iy

18.jpUr;rigapd; mq;fj;jpdh;fs; RtpN\r Copaj;jpy; kdJUf;fj;jpd; Copak; ey;y mZFKiw vd;W jhq;fshy; ftdpf;f Kbfpd;wjh?

1. Mk; vd;why;> fhuzq;fis \$wTk;.
2. ,y;iy vd;why;> Vd; vd;gij tpsf;fTk;.

19.jpUr;rig mq;fj;jpdh;fs; kdJUf;f nray;Kiwfspy; Mj;Jkhf;fis Mjhag;gLj;Jk;gb gapw;rp my;yJ Nghjpf;fg;gl;lh;fsh?

- ,y;iy vdp; > fhuzq;fs; vd;d?

20.kdJUf;f Copaj;jpd; gydhf Gjpa jpUr;rig epWtg;gl;Ls;sJh?

(Mk;/,y;iy)



21.kdJUf;f Copaj;jpd; %ykhf tUfpd;w Gjpa Mj;Jkhf;fspd; epkpj;jkhf jpUr;rigapd;  
tpRthrpfs; nkd;NkYk; cw;rhfk; my;yJ Cf;fk; mile;Js;shh;fsh? (Mk;/,y;iy)

1. Mk; vd;why;> fhuzq;fs;

2. ,y;iy vd;why;> Vd; mt;thW ,y;iy?

22.kdJUf;f fl;lisf;fisf; nfhz;L> RtpN\r Copaq;fis jpUr;rig/tpRthrpfs;  
epiwNtw;wpaNghJ mth;fs; re;jpj;j rthy;fs; vd;d?

23.jhq;fs; ghpe;Jiuf;f\$ba kdJUf;f RtpN\r Copaq;fSf;F> kpf gpNuha[dkhd Gjpa  
mZFKiw my;yJ nray;Kiw vitNaDk; cz;lh?

24.jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpy; kpfTk; gaDs;s RtpN\rgezpfSf;F gpuNah[dkhd  
kdJUf;f nray;Kiwfisg;gw;wp jq;fspd; fUj;Jf;fs; vd;d?

25.NtW VNjDk; fUj;Jf;fis njhptpf;f tpUk;Gfpd;wPh;fsh?

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR EPISCOPAL LEADERS

Nghjff;Jt jiyth;fSf;fhd jdpq;gl;l Neh;Kfj;Njh;T

newpKiw

(BI-LINGUAL)

Purpose: *The purpose of the research was to explore the effectiveness of Evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches in order to develop a list of best practices that might open doors for successful Evangelization in this context.*

Nehf;fk; : ,e;j Muha;r;rpapd; Nehf;fk;> jpUr;ruphg;gs;sp khtl;l;ppy;  
nge;jNfh];Nj rigfspd; RtpN\rg;gzp nra;tjw;fhd thry;fs; jpwf;f> RtpN\rg;gzp rpwg;ghf  
mika kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafspd; topahf ehk; Nkw;nfhs;Sk; gapw;rp Kiwfs;

***What are the different methods currently followed as acts of compassion for Evangelism by Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli?***

RtpN\rj;jpw;f;fhf> jpUr;ruphg;gs;sp khtl;l;ppy;> nge;jNfh];Nj rigfspd; %ykhf>  
kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafspd; topahf jw;NghJk; Nkw;nfhs;Sk; tpj;jpahrkhd mZFKiwfs;  
vd;d?

1) What do you think about the place of deeds or actions of compassion as a tool for evangelism?

kdJUf;fkhd ew;fphpiafs;> RtpN\rg; gzp nra;tjw;fhd xh; fUtp vd;gij gw;wp ePq;fs;  
vd;;d epidf;fpd;wPhfs;?

- 2) What is the general understanding/ view of your church members about actions (deeds) of compassion as a tool for evangelism?

kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafs;> RtpN\r gzp nra;tjw;fhd xh; fUtp vd;gij gw;wp cq;fSila rigapd; cWg;gpdh;fspd;/tpRthr kf;fspd; nghJthd fz;Nzhl;lk; my;yJ mth;fspd; Ghpe;Jnfhs;Sjy; vd;d?

- 3) Did your evangelism training or talk include creating an awareness of the role of compassionate deeds in evangelism? Please state Yes or No

If the answer is yes, give an example.

If the answer is no, what could they have included?

cq;fsJ RtpN\r gapw;rp my;yJ Nghjid> RtpN\r Copaj;jpNy kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafis gw;wpajhd tpopg;Gzh;it cs;slf;fpAs;sjh?

gjpy; Mk; vdp; > cjhuzk; jUf.

gjpy; ,y;iynadpy;> mit vij cs;slf;fpAs;sj?

4. Were your church/ministry involved in compassion ministry to promote evangelism in the city of Tiruchirapalli?

jpUr;ruphg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpy; RtpN\r gzpapid Cf;Ftpf;f kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafs;py; cq;fs; jpUr;rig Copaq;fs;py; <LgLfpd;wjh?

If yes, what other approaches and methods adopted/used for evangelistic purposes alongside compassionate deeds?

Mk; vdp; > RtpN\r Nehf;fj;Jld; Nrhe;J ifahSk; kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafSld; ePq;fs; Nkw;nfhs;Sk; kw;w mZFKiwfs;/nray;fs; vd;d?

***How do the Pentecostal churches in district of Tiruchirapalli understand and feel about evangelism through deeds of compassion?***

jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpNy kdJUf;f nray;fspdhy; nra;Ak; RtpN\r;gzpapid gw;wp> nge;jNfh];Nj rigfs; vg;gb czh;e;J kw;Wk; Ghpe;Jnfhz;bUf;fpd;whh;fs;?

- 5) What do you think about the general understanding/ view of Pentecostal ministers /pastors about the place of deeds of compassion in evangelism in Tiruchirapalli District?

jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpNy RtpN\r Copaq;fspy; kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafis gw;wp nge;jNfh];Nj jpUr;rigfs;/Nghjfh;fspd; nghJthd mDgtk;/fz;Nzhl;lk;/Ghpe;Jnfhs;Sjiy gw;wp ePq;fs; vd;d epidf;fpd;wPh;fs;?

- 6) What are the different deeds of compassion methods/ currently adopted or used by various Pentecostal churches in the district of Tiruchirapalli for the purpose of winning the lost through evangelism?

jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpy;> nge;jNfh];Nj rigfspy; RtpN\r Copaj;jpNy nray;gLj;Jk;/iff;nfhs;Sk; kw;w kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafspd; mZFKiwfs; vd;d?

***What are the best practices from models of evangelism that incorporate deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?***

jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpNy> kdJUf;f nray;fNshL ,ize;J RtpN\rk; nra;tjw;fhd kpfr;rpwe;j gapw;rp vd;d?

- 7) What do you think would be the best evangelistic practice or approach that incorporates deeds of compassion for the district of Tiruchirapalli?

jpUr;rpuhg;gs;sp khtl;lj;jpNy> nge;NjNfh];Nj rigfspy; kdJUf;f ew;fphpiafNshL  
,ize;J RtpN\r Copak; nra;tjw;fhd kpfr;rpwe;j mZFKiwfisg;gw;wp jq;fsJ fUj;J ahJ?

**APPENDIX D**

**Senior Pastor's Consent Protocol**

**Project Title: The Effectiveness of Evangelization through Deeds of Compassion**

Date:

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

We would like to ask your consent to invite six people from your church members to be in a research study being done by Joseph Santhappan, to gather data for the doctoral dissertation on the topic mentioned above. Joseph is Head Pastor of Global Compassion Ministries, Tiruchirapalli and D Min Candidate with the Asbury Theological Seminary. The participants should be adults (20 years or older) who regularly attend your church.

With your consent, the selected individuals to be in the study will be asked to give written responses to an anonymous and confidential questionnaire which they would be able to complete in less than 15 minutes. They will also be asked to provide their consent to participate in the study.

There will be no payment offered in return for their participation in this study.

For this research, you are requested to recommend six members of your congregation, including from your junior pastors, elders and male or female believers. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the researcher will choose **three or more** out of the recommended six members to participate in the confidential survey. No one from your church or from outside will have the opportunity to view or handle the survey responses. The only person, other than the researcher, who will handle and see the survey form will be a data entry operator who would have signed a confidentiality agreement and will not belong to any of the churches being surveyed.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable with the participation of your church members in the study, please tell Joseph Santhappan who can be reached at josephcompassion@gmail.com. You may refuse to allow your members to participate in the survey at any time, and they will be able to withdraw from the process.

Please indicate your consent by placing your signature on the space provided below. By signing the document, you are confirming and giving your consent for your church members to be in the study. If you do not want them in the survey, please do not put your signature on the paper. Being in this study is voluntary, and you are free to choose not to participate or change your mind at a later stage.

Please indicate your consent by placing your signature below

I allow my members to participate in this study.

Senior pastor's Signature

Date

## **APPENDIX E**

### **Interviews in connection with a study on**

*“The effectiveness of Evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches in order to develop a list of best practices that might open doors for successful Evangelization”*

### STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to be in a research study being done by **Joseph Santhappan, Head Pastor of Global Compassion Ministries** and DMin Candidate with the Asbury Theological Seminary, to gather data for the doctoral dissertation on the above-mentioned topic. **You are invited because you are an adult (18 years or older) who regularly attends church, and a leader of the church.**

If you agree to be in the study, **you will be asked to give verbal responses to questions posed to you in a one on one, personal interview.** Please be advised that an audio recording of the interview will be made, for the sole purpose of assisting the researcher to correctly record your responses. In the event of the interview being conducted over skype or zoom, while all measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of the call, it cannot be guaranteed.

There will be no payment offered in return for your participation in this interview.

**Your responses to the interview questions will be treated with utmost confidentiality. In the event you or your responses are referred to in the report, you will be identified only by a code name, the definition of which will only be known to the researcher.** No one individual from your church will have the opportunity to hear or handle your responses. The only person, other than the researcher, who will interact with the voice recordings will be a transcriptionist who will have signed a confidentiality agreement. This individual will not belong to any of the churches being surveyed.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the interview, please talk to Joseph Santhappan **at the time of the interview or email him at josephcompassion@gmail.com.** You may refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

Indicating your consent by placing a X in the relevant space and signing your name below means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not place the X sign on the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and you are free to choose not to sign the paper or even to change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

**Indicate your consent by placing an X in the box below**

I agree to participate in this study

If you do **not** wish to participate place X in the box below

I do not agree to participate in this study

---

Date



## APPENDIX F

### A Questionnaire in connection with a study of

*“The effectiveness of Evangelization through deeds of compassion in the district of Tiruchirapalli among the Pentecostal churches in order to develop a list of best practices that might open doors for successful Evangelization”*

#### STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in a research study being done by Joseph Santhappan, Head Pastor of Global Compassion Ministries, Tiruchirapalli and D Min Candidate with the Asbury Theological Seminary, to gather data for the doctoral dissertation on the above-mentioned topic. **You are invited because you are an adult (20 years or older) who regularly attends church.**

If you agree to be in the study, **you will be asked to give written responses to an anonymous and confidential survey which you would be able to complete in less than 20 minutes.** There will be no payment offered in return for your participation in this survey.

Since you will not be required to write your name or any other identifying information on the survey, **your responses to the survey will remain anonymous assuring you of the utmost confidentiality.** No one from your church will have the opportunity to view or handle your survey responses. The only person, other than the researcher, who will handle and view your survey form will be a data entry operator who would have signed a confidentiality agreement and will not belong to any of the churches being surveyed.

If something makes you feel uncomfortable while you are in the study, please tell **Joseph Santhappan who can be reached at josephcompassion@gmail.com.** You may refuse to respond to any or all of the questions, and you will be able to withdraw from the process at any time.

Indicating your consent by placing a X in the relevant space below means that you have read this and that you want to be in the study. If you do not want to be in the study, do not place the X sign on the paper. Being in the study is up to you, and you are free to choose not to sign the paper or even to change your mind later. You agree that you have been told about this study and why it is being done and what to do.

**Indicate your consent by placing an X in the box below**

I agree to participate in this study

If you do **not** wish to participate place X in the box below

I do not agree to participate in this study

Date

## APPENDIX G

### Confidentiality Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, will be assisting the researcher by **transcribing interview responses**

I agree to abide by the following guidelines regarding confidentiality:

1. Hold in strictest confidence the identification of any individual(s) that may be revealed during the course of performing research tasks throughout the research process and after it is complete.
2. Keep all the research information shared with me confidential by not discussing or sharing the research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) with anyone other than the *Researcher(s)*.
3. Keep all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) secure while it is in my possession (e.g., using a password-protected computer).
4. Return all research information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts) to the *Researcher(s)* when I have completed the research tasks.
5. After consulting with the *Researcher(s)*, erase or destroy all research information in any form or format regarding this research project that is not returnable to the *Researcher(s)* (e.g., information stored on computer hard drive) upon completion of the research tasks.

However, although confidentiality will be encouraged it cannot be guaranteed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

*Researcher(s)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Print Name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

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