

Antal Balog

Toward an Evangelical Missiology of
Humanitarian Aid Ministry

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*Dedicated to my mother Elizabeta
and to my children, Antun and Tea.*

Antal Balog

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Evangelical Theological Seminary, Osijek, Croatia

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FOREWORD

At the end of 1991, a group of pastors and deacons of the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia established a new organization for humanitarian aid named *Agape*. After fifteen years of continuous activities and efforts, during which *Agape* established numerous branch offices in many areas (republics and provinces) of the former Yugoslavia, it was deemed important to thoroughly assess the extent to which *Agape* activities had contributed to the decrease of human suffering. I started my research for this purpose, desiring to integrally investigate both the results of *Agape's* humanitarian activities and the ways in which *Agape's* founder (the Evangelical Church) has been changed throughout its humanitarian engagement. *Agape* emerged after one hundred Evangelical churches committed to publicly, responsibly and efficiently respond to the needs created by the war. The organization also dealt with the painful consequences of the social and economic transitions which all post-communist countries in Eastern Europe went through. The decision to found and later to expand *Agape* significantly contributed not only to decreasing general suffering, but also led to an inevitable change in the identity of the Church itself, transforming the Evangelical Church's public activity and behaviour on different levels.

It also became clear that more research would be needed as many other Christian humanitarian organizations began simultaneously to operate as non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations. As they gradually become part of the *civil sector*, which was, for them an unfamiliar area, they began to be confronted by numerous management-related problems (especially given the rapid initial expansion of these ministries, in terms of span, diversity, and territory). They urgently needed professional help in order to meet these challenges, especially in the area of adopting and using management methods, and their operational adjustment to new theological viewpoints related to church mission. Another aim of this work is to offer professional assistance to all individuals and organizations that want to make a more significant impact than they have in the past within their humanitarian or social church organizations. Although in Croatia there is no specialized literature on topics related to humanitarian and social work/ assistance as part of church mission activities (not to mention a complete lack of scientific and expert studies) it is possible – though with necessary ad-

justments – to make use of the rich and diverse foreign experience and managerial solutions.

My point of reference is to research and provide managerial insight for use by church organizations expanding into diverse and unfamiliar areas, and to use *Agape's* humanitarian work as a case study. Although the bulk of my expertise was related to economy and management, I have also studied theology throughout a significant part of my life. I have had experience working, first, in a printing house, then as a lecturer of economy in a secondary school, and finally, as a functionary in town government administration for ten years. Besides that, I was also a long-time volunteer in *Agape* where I put to use the experience and skills I gained through my professional work. The continuity of my activities within *Agape* has given me a thorough knowledge of this organization from its beginnings through all the stages of its development. This involvement has also provided me with insight into humanitarian work in Croatia, which was an additional motive for my researching and writing about this topic.

This work is comprised of several parts. In the introduction, I have articulated the main themes and dilemmas related to the area of research, as well as definitions and classifications of terms. Throughout the following chapters, I discuss the biblical theology of Evangelical humanitarian activity with special emphasis on the social ethics and social responsibility of the churches, and the relation between the Gospel and culture, or, in other words, how this relation results in the social engagement of churches. Based on this, it was possible to provide theological insight into the correlation between humanitarian work and the imperative of evangelization. In the following chapters, this study describes the work of church humanitarian organizations attempting to define their mission and vision, aims and principles of work, program orientation and target groups, as well as other aspects. While describing types of humanitarian assistance, this study lists different modalities of humanitarian assistance with a special analysis on the efficacy of the particular aid given from a viewpoint of success in evangelization and the rise of new churches. The role of volunteerism is another focus of this work, since it is considered vitally important for the humanitarian organizations and there is a long tradition of volunteerism both in churches and para-church organizations.

Additionally, because of the importance of fundraising, public relations, and publicity (in general), this study briefly explores appropriate methods for humanitarian organizations to use. Subsequently this study analyzes a possible model for a successful and efficient humanitarian organization in the framework of churches. My starting point is to define an integral, consistent, descriptive, and self-sustaining model with efficient mechanisms for resource management, management of projects and crises, as well as networking with other organizations. After this first theoretical part, follows a detailed description of how *Agape* was founded and operated in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H), Kosovo and Macedonia. This chapter ends with an evaluation using standardized criteria for humanitarian and mission work, and the method of comparing both aspects of *Agape's* work, followed by relevant conclusions. At the very end of this study is the list of conclusions in a synthesized and itemized manner.

The first and basic purpose of this research is to increase information and enrich knowledge about church humanitarian and social activities, since this is a relatively new area of engagement for the Protestant church communities in South-Eastern Europe. Therefore, the research I present may be beneficial to all who want to be more involved with humanitarian work in para-church organizations. Apart from this, I am convinced that some of the results I present on these pages can motivate others to become engaged in humanitarian and social service as professionals or volunteers on a temporary or permanent basis. Furthermore, it may encourage those already so engaged to improve their work using approaches that are more creative. Nonetheless, this text is primarily intended for the professional public, in particular for students of theology, pastors, priests, church deacons, and others interested in this area.

The author does not expect that every reader of this work will agree with my viewpoints and conclusions, but the least the author anticipates is that the reader will be challenged to expand his/her thinking and activity. The Missiology of humanitarian and social work in the Balkans is an entirely unexplored area, so every input may be considered important and relevant. The readers must judge how this research will contribute to humanitarian practice and theory, and their constructive critique will be accepted with gratitude.

ABSTRACT

This research project explores the missiological aspects of humanitarian activities initiated and implemented by the Evangelical Churches in the area of the former Yugoslavia between 1991 and 2006, covering the period of war and the aftermath of economic and political transition. The theological foundations of missiology of humanitarian activities can be found in the Holy Scripture and the New Testament; the main sources for the missiology of humanitarian activities and their contemporary organizational and functional modeling are church history and mission. The key premises of this research are in the statements that *the good news is to be preached to all people* and that *showing mercy to our neighbors* is part of our unique and permanent call being the *followers of the Way*.

Creating a para-church organization that intends to work in the area of humanitarian and social activities begins with defining its mission statement, foundations, and goals. In the passages that follow, this research delineates the main modalities of para-church organizations including: selecting target groups, defining the programs and projects, building the structure, developing the management of resources, defining leadership structure, etc. Volunteers are considered as one of the most important segments in the church not-for-profit segment. Due to the significance of fund-raising for developing an organization's humanitarian, social, and other programs and the special importance of the public relations, these areas are elaborated in separate chapters. The rest of the research includes different humanitarian programs and projects, and interprets *Agape* practical experiences regarding their implementation in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo.

The conclusions offer a view to the outcomes and achievements compared to the dual goals of the organization's mission (humanitarian and evangelistic) in the set time and space. The list of synthetically derived end points is related to the interactive organizational, social and spiritual effects of both the humanitarian and evangelistic mission of *Agape* and the Evangelical Church in general.

1. INTRODUCTION

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. Mt 22:37-40

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger, invite you in or needing clothes, and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.' They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?' He will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.' Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life. Mt 25: 31-46

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age. Mt 28:18-20

During the last decade of the twentieth century, the sudden fall of socialist states in East and South-East Europe took place. The collapse of the political and state system of the USSR and in the other Warsaw pact¹ member states triggered a similar process of social and political disintegration in the former Yugoslavia. One of the differences

¹ The fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 (on the 60th anniversary of the *Christal Night* that was also considered a turning point in the history of the then Nazi Germany) and the fall of the *Iron Curtain*, symbolised the end of the *Cold War* and the beginning of a new political era for Germany, Europe and the World.

between the decomposition of the Eastern European states which were created artificially and by military force of the *Red Army* of USSR after the World War II and the Yugoslavian situation was the occurrence of a number of wars and armed conflicts within the former Yugoslav republics. Although war always brings great pain, suffering and enormous material destruction to any nation, the wars and military battles of the Balkans seemed to occur more often, with exaggerated cruelty towards the civil population. In those newly-risen circumstances of war and despair, faced with a surge of refugees and displaced people and large-scale human suffering, the evangelical churches found themselves in a situation in which they had no other option but to take responsibility – both social and Christian, moral and spiritual – in response to that human suffering. In order to preserve their authenticity as Christ's followers for themselves and in the eyes of the world, they realized they must respond to the people in need that were all around.

The political circumstances in South-East Europe, which emerged after the end of the *Cold War*, were exceptionally complex when the so-called *Balkan barrel* exploded. They resembled something we had already seen and experienced in the boiling political atmosphere of the pre-World War II riots and turmoil filled with uncertainties and fears. In this relatively small area of the world, both then and now, met opposing cultures and civilizations of East and West, and different religions – Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Protestantism, Judaism, and Islam.² Here, the political battles springing from the political and military interests of the big powers of Europe caused crossed swords and frequently grew into military conflicts and wars. The socio-political and economical complexity of the Balkan situation has created immense challenges for the church imperative of Christian service – evangelistic and humanitarian – best expressed by an old and almost prophetic text of Catholic professor theology J. Kolaric,

Balkan barrel (of gunpowder). This abbreviation emerged by the end of 19th century, during the decay of the Turkish empire on Balkans. Within this area, the so-called Balkan wars were led,

² In Sarajevo, within less than a square kilometer there is a Synagogue, a Mosque, an Orthodox Christian Church and a Catholic Cathedral – they were recently joined by a few protestant communities (Baptists, Pentecostals and Adventists), creating a phenomenon that bears a resemblance to Jerusalem.

many meaningless murders and assassinations executed. World War I started here. Here, it seems as if every shot resounded more powerfully, every explosion was stronger, and the human blood flowed more abundantly than elsewhere. Beneath the boiling sky, in the long tangle of inversions and breaks hardly known to the other parts of the world, a *Homo Balcanicus* was born and matured ... like a set of specific spontaneous feelings, bluntness, simplicity and brutality of living, but also like an array of unachievable beauties, unconventional heartiness, simple-minded beauty, and amazingly generous hospitality. ... Here as if the evil is more permanent, revenge less forgetful, hatred strengthened and insults more frivolous than anywhere else. The Balkan man is oversensitive, and less rational, and not as much realistic, always prepared for revenge but rarely able to forgive.³

The geo-political constellations of this part of Europe, where centuries mix and interface, and where Orthodox Christianity, Catholicism, Protestantism, Judaism and Islam mutually oppose, seems to be genuinely analogous to Huntington's controversial view and the dark scenario of the future of the contemporary world.⁴ In this area of old historical misfortunes, where numerous armies came led by tsars, kings and popes who took away peoples' faiths and replaced them with new identities, evangelical believers, though few in numbers, bravely started preaching and promoting; using their own words and works/deeds they preached eschatological theologies of hope saying that the time would come according to the words of the Prophet Isaiah when people will

³ Juraj Kolaric. *Pravoslavni*. Zagreb: Krscanska Sadasnjost, 1985. Pg. 7.

⁴ Samuel P. Huntington. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. In his article "The Clash of Civilization?" Huntington writes the following: The essential idea of this significant author is articulated in the following passage: "It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future." In *Foreign Affairs* 72, 3, Summer (1993). Pg. 22.

... beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.⁵

At the end of 1991, almost one quarter of the Croatian population were either considered refugees or displaced. The Serbian army and paramilitary forces occupied one-third of the country, and many of the larger cities were found to be on the so-called front line, without regular power and/or water supply. The population was under a constant threat of artillery fire, and about half of the adult male population was mobilized to defend the country in the Croatian army. Those who stayed worked in the factories and/or served in civil service units. Traveling within or outside the country was extremely difficult, and a great number of the population was not allowed to leave their homes to search for safer places to live.⁶ The war danger was continuous throughout the country; army fortifications were set on the streets and squares in case of an enemy advancement, and bunkers and shelters were built. An atmosphere of fear and uncertainty was constantly present everywhere.

Throughout the years of war many new humanitarian organizations emerged offering urgent humanitarian and welfare assistance to endangered individuals, families and certain target groups (such as refugees, the displaced, war sufferers, and others). A special category of humanitarian organizations were those being established and led by the churches, and by certain religious communities.⁷ In these war circumstances, on December 15, 1991, the Main Presbytery in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, founded *Agape*,⁸ the humanitarian activity of the

⁵ Isaiah 2:4

⁶ Only elderly, people with disabilities and children were allowed to leave their towns or the country in search for safer places.

⁷ For instance, the Catholic Caritas, The Bread of St. Ante, A Drop of Goodness, Adventist Adra, the Islamist Merhamet, Jewish Hevdra Kadiša, Baptist Moj bližnji, Honest Words, Spiritual Reality, Tabita, the Evangelical Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Orthodox Christian Kolo Srpskih Sestara, Evangelical Jerusalem, Agape, Ecumenical Humanitarian Organization, etc.

⁸ *Agape* [αγάπη] is a Greek word for love, representing divine, unconditional, self-sacrificing, active, volitional, thoughtful love. The term is rarely used in ancient manuscripts but was used by the early Christians to refer to the special love for God and God's love for humanity, as well as the self-sacrificing love they believed

Evangelical Church in the Republic Croatia. The Osijek daily, "*The Voice of Slavonia*" (Glas Slavonije) on January 7, 2007, announced the fifteenth anniversary of *Agape*:

Agape is a humanitarian organization with a Christian orientation that works in partnership with many international organizations of reforming provenance. *Agape* was established when, unfortunately, this town was under violent bombardment and before its founders even knew that the organization would be needed for Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia too. That was, the *Good News* in sad times, a message of hope during times of despair, food for the starving, and clothes for those that were freezing. Through *Agape*, tens of thousands of human lives were saved, and that was not the end of their activities. *Agape* today continues working in Croatia in areas where the needs are still great, though also covering parts of Bosnia and Kosovo, because even today there are still those that are hungry, not only as a consequence of war, but also due to social crisis, unemployment, lack of social care...⁹

That same evening (December 15, 1991) the text of an appeal for humanitarian assistance was written and sent throughout the world to different churches, Christian organizations and denominations,¹⁰

The Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia, sympathizing with the pains and sufferings of an innocent population and the destruction of the Croatian economy and cultural heritage, with

all should have for each other. A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature describes it as *the quality of warm regard for and interest in another, esteem, affection, regard, love*. *Agape* also means *a common meal eaten by early Christians in connection with their worship, for the purpose of fostering and expressing mutual affection and concern*, as in Jude 1:12, and 2nd Peter 2:13. In, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature*. Frederick William Danker, (ed.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. Pg. 6. See also: Clive S. Lewis. *The Four Loves*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960.

⁹ Ljerka Bobalic. "Agape – Radosna Vijest u Tuznim Vremenima." *Glas Slavonije*, January 7, 2007. Pg. 13.

¹⁰ The decision of founding the humanitarian organization *Agape* was enacted at the extended Presidency of the Evangelical Church in Croatia, 15. 12. 1991. *Agape* Archive in Osijek, Pg. 1.

gratefulness to God for freedom and democracy, and in the light of the evangelical message of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, and with a deep sense of moral and spiritual responsibility, at the extended meeting of the National Presbytery held in Zagreb on December 15, 1991, took the following decision:

- The Main Presbytery of the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia will send a call for prayer for peace to all evangelical and other churches in Croatia, as well as to the other republics of the former Yugoslavia and around the world. The call for prayer will include information about the aggression in Croatia, the victims and other consequences of the war, and ask for solidarity and widespread assistance.
- With gratitude to all that our churches, institutions, and believers have done so far, we acknowledge that our social and charitable mission activities and deeds of love need improved organizational management, and coordination that is more efficient. Therefore, the management of this service will be given to the newly elected Board for Coordination¹¹ that will function under the name *Agape*, the humanitarian activity of the Evangelical Churches in the Republic of Croatia.¹²

The so-called operational duties of the elected *Board for Coordination* were as follows:

- 1) To organize regional centers for collecting relevant information about the needs and for managing efficient distribution of humanitarian assistance;
- 2) To appoint coordinators for the regional centers and supervise their work;

¹¹ The *Board for Coordination* of *Agape* consisted of the following elected representatives: Peter Kuzmic (President), Franjo Prem, Zdravko Klescik (Vice Presidents), Adam Spis, Pavao Mogus, Bozo Marsanic (Secretaries), and Zeljko Karnicnik, Damir Spoljarić, Mihael Jonke, Milan Spoljaric, Olga Ullen and Stanko Jambrek (members). See: Decision of the EC in Croatia Presidency. Ibid. Pg. 1.

¹² Ibid. Pg. 1.

- 3) To coordinate and synchronize the humanitarian activities with similar activities of other Christian, social and state institutions in order to hasten humanitarian aid;
- 4) To maintain regular communication with churches and other institutions abroad as well as with potential donors to insure the regular inflow of humanitarian assistance;
- 5) To investigate other possibilities and ways Christians can contribute to humanitarian assistance and renewal of the homeland.¹³

This Decision also recognized the basic principle along which the activities were to be conducted:

All these humanitarian activities will be conducted based on the Christian principles of love, truth and justice, in happy obedience to Christ's Command to *love your neighbor as yourself* and the Holy Bible's imperative to *do good to all*.¹⁴

Immediately after *Agape* was founded, churches abroad were challenged with the great need to send humanitarian help for the victims of the war in Croatia. Humanitarian relief started to come in abundance (clothes and shoes, food, medications, second-hand furniture, money, bed sheets, blankets, etc.). Later on, *Agape* also received donations of agricultural tools, seeds for farms, as well as livestock and building materials for houses and farm rebuilding projects. *Agape* was also involved in other kinds of projects related to peace building, assisting the return of emigrants after a period of exile, offering psychological, spiritual, and legal assistance, different development projects, and the like.

The Evangelical Church's humanitarian assistance to the great suffering caused by the war catastrophe was essential. The Church could not simply stay indifferent and aloof, and at the same time keep its Christian and moral credibility. The very beginnings of the humanitarian work could be seen as the personification of authentic theology and the evangelical message of hope, just as Christ as both God

¹³ Ibid. Pgs. 1-2.

¹⁴ Ibid. Pg. 2.

and man on Earth embodied God and the heavenly Father. Without the evangelistic message of redemption and salvation, *material* humanitarian assistance loses its *spiritual* strength; likewise the evangelistic message, without the concrete work of love of those who preach, has no authenticity and truth. The consistent balance of these dualities and their mutual interweaving became the main theological framework and operational model for this type of humanitarian work.

This framework was continuously emphasized from the very beginning, that the basic mission of *Agape* was to bring to all that are needy *two breads*, the *bread of our everyday living* and the *bread that has come down from the Heaven*, the celestial bread of hope for their spiritual and eternal life. The successful balance of these two activities, the humanitarian and the social, together with the central mission of the Church – preaching the Gospel – had been and remains the permanent challenge. To achieve this goal, two sidetracks were to be avoided: on one hand, to use agitation or even a proselytizing approach in the humanitarian activities, and on the other, to fail to preach the *Good News*. To use theological wording: we needed a consistent balance and integrated approach to Christ's teachings from the texts in Matthew 25:31-46 and Mathew 28:18-20.

Building such a mature and stable balance between preaching the *Good News* and doing the work of love is neither easy nor fast; on the contrary, it demands both effort and time. This process was especially complex in the loose alliance of evangelical churches, which lacked a developed mission conscience and tradition. An evangelically-balanced and biblically-founded approach for the Church towards evangelization and social responsibility removes the above duality that separates and divides (this dualism can also be found in other areas, such as between natural and supernatural realities or between religion and science, etc.). *Agape's* practice has shown that young and newly founded churches and mission organizations find it easier to accept the described integrated concept of mission and social responsibility, than the older churches. The reason is probably the absence of a long mission tradition. Consequently, tradition can sometimes be considered a disadvantage, while for others, an advantage.

The founders and workers of *Agape* intended to accomplish both: obedience to the *Great Commandment* (Mt 22:37-40) and practice of the *Great Commission* (Mt 28:18-20), something that was given to the

Church as its permanent task. *Agape* workers were untrained volunteers from local evangelical churches, mostly without previous managerial and/or humanitarian experience. Very quickly almost every local evangelical church became a center for humanitarian aid, developed in accordance with the applicable Croatian laws and regulations. Church boards played the role of boards for the local organization and overtook the responsibility of coordinating *Agape* humanitarian work in a particular area. There was no time for training leaders and managers of the *Agape* distribution centers, nor for regular coordination and instructional meetings. Organizational problems were to be solved along the way, and the whole organization with many local centers was challenged to work fast and hard, anticipating there would be mistakes and errors.

Humanitarian assistance was coming abundantly from all sides of the world, from different churches, church organizations, non-government organizations and even from several European countries through their governmental relief organizations, such as Sweden and Finland. The need for relief grew rapidly as the war was expanding and as the domestic industry was not able to satisfy in an efficient manner the peoples' needs.

Accepting the new concept of not-for-profit, social entrepreneurship, or in other words, new paradigms for social and public roles and activities, the Evangelical Church went through certain inner processes. This was the beginning of deeper church transformations with construction of organizational structures and changes in the routine methods of work and activities. The decision to take this step initiated the complex and, at times, disturbingly painful formation of a new ethos for the evangelical churches while maintaining the basic authenticity of the mission. While these inner transformations and changes within the Church were expected, they also hastened the process of globalization and numerous political, economic, technological, ecological, demographic, social, and ethical changes as well transforming contemporary life.¹⁵

¹⁵ *Ecclesia semper reformanda* – the main principle of *Reformation* is that the Church is always in a process of reforming and changing (itself). The churches with a reformation heritage accept and strive to cherish this principle.

It is necessary to stress what is especially significant here, namely the change of the external behavior of the Church and the change within its Christian culture to a new openness and gradual engagement with its social surroundings.¹⁶ This process of 'approaching' has been mutual and has significantly contributed to the gradual decrease in shared polarizations and prejudices and to an increase in social cohesion. Other inner changes occurred within the Evangelical Church as well, which in the end has created self-sustaining mechanisms for continuous adjustment to the permanent changes in its surroundings. With this, the most important task of the Church – preaching the evangelistic message to the world – grew not only in intensity and authenticity, but also in contextualization too.

It is important to keep in mind one thing in particular that is true for church communities: they show a general tendency towards a traditional way of organizational behavior, or to use theological terms, they tend to run their missions and Christian services in a customary manner, strongly resisting change and/or adjustment to the their immediate surroundings. This resistance is greater and tougher I believe, than the one found in other non-for-profit activities and institutions. The probable root causes of this opposition to any change can be found in the very nature of the Church community, in other words, in its long tradition. Contrary to this tendency, the dynamism and diversity as well as the accelerated changes in the Church's surroundings are so obvious and inevitable that adjustment to these new social, economic, political, information-related, and other circumstances becomes an important condition for Church survival and efficient activity.

Running humanitarian and social assistance activities and working within the area of so-called not-for-profit entrepreneurship, the Evangelical Church gradually entered the public sphere becoming part of civil society or the so-called third sector. In this way, the Church has entered new areas and gained possibilities for promoting evangelical values continuously through the centuries. Mutual interaction between the changes within churches and the changes within their social sur-

¹⁶ Social surroundings is a synthetic term that in this case involves both in-country and foreign state, social and political institutions, the units of local self-government, profit and non-profit sectors, NGOs, unions, media, religious communities and citizens.

roundings were obvious. Successful internal transformation became the key condition for prosperous continuation of church communities' basic mission – constant preaching of the Gospel in new social conditions and circumstances. This is the only way for the Church to preserve its influence during the continuous social upheaval and changes in the social behavior of individuals, families and different groups, and over society in general.

In this context, one significant theme or thread comes to mind: it is the need for permanent research and learning about efficient methods of work and activity (and not just humanitarian and social activities) which can be used for the efficacious communication of the evangelistic message of the Church in any newly risen circumstances. The aim for preaching and communicating the message is related to the Church's eternal and unique final aspiration: to influence change in the social behavior of the target groups to which this message is conveyed. Evangelistically speaking, with responsible behavior and a holistic approach to preaching the Gospel and caring for the poor, the Church becomes transforming yeast for the societies in which it operates, refining, enriching, and sanctifying them. Today, as well as in the past, there is a necessity for authentic Christians to gather and interrelate with their communities, looking at Christ and His knowledge, celebrating and glorifying God with their words and deeds, and together with all other men and women of good will, to work for building a more just and more humane world, a *civilization of love*. Because the Church is out and above the world, but,

... The Church and the World are entwined. The Church's dialogue with the World is not achieved by simply standing on a periphery – the Church is to saturate as *yeast* (Mt 13,33), as *salt to the Earth* (Mt 15,13), as *seed*, (Mt 13,24), as *light of the World* (Mt 5,14) being in the midst of the World.¹⁷

In modern society, the Church of Jesus Christ is present and efficient only insofar as its members, in other words believers, are present and reaching the world with their testimonies and giving the example with their lives. If this individual and collective testimony of moral

¹⁷ Joseph Höffner. *Krscanski socijalni nauk* [Christliche Gesellschaftslehre]. Zagreb: Krscanska Sadasnjost, 2005. Pg. 23.

authenticity grows dim or extinguishes, the Church will be unable to fill the spiritual space within society, and into this 'hole' like an intruder, another content will enter and occupy it. To this end, every believer is invited, personally and together with the others to a constant and endless struggle against the consequences of *original sin*, against spiritual darkness and poverty, illness and social injustice. Although humankind is fallen, occupying a fallen world, even after the fall in sin we strive to put order in our social life and create a meaningful social community. On the other hand, using the language of the Theories of Systems and Cybernetics, we try to reduce the degree of entropy inside and around us. The contemporary individual is like those in ancient and medieval times facing the same dilemma: whether to turn to Christ and take a step towards the eschatological hope, or to continue walking in the darkness of atheism, the New Age, post-modern views, or other modern ideologies or quasi religions.

At the end of this introductory part I feel it is necessary to stress that the main purpose for writing this paper was to thoroughly investigate all the results, both internal and external, which emerged after a hundred evangelical churches efficiently, responsibly and publicly took a stand for social responsibility towards the consequences of the briefly described, turbulent wartimes and period following the war, and through the later process of social and economic transition of the post-communist countries in the Balkans. The decision about founding the humanitarian organization *Agape* and its consequent persistent and consistent development and expansion – in terms of activities and territories – significantly and permanently contributed to a decrease in the general suffering of the poor, and promulgated a change in the Church's identity and its behavior in many areas of public activity. Accepting social responsibility and providing humanitarian assistance for those that suddenly found themselves in existential troubles redefined the Church's public image and changed its own view/perception of itself.

2. THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

The humanitarian and social activities of the churches have a long and dynamic history. In the area of Balkans, they have occurred within a specific social environment that is entwined with not only different religious, but also other sorts of influences. The intensity and diversity of new worldviews, ideas, theories, and cognitions have advanced within the last few centuries and have contributed to dynamic changes in churches' and church institutions' behavior. Surrounded by new, and at times according to their belief systems, adversarial ideas and ideologies, the churches and church institutions have had difficulty in accepting other particularly useful viewpoints of contemporary life, even though these viewpoints did not conflict with Christian beliefs. Although the gap between evangelical values and secular ideas is most apparent in the area of ethics and certain individual issues, it is also considerable in the creative application of scientific thought and practices within many social sciences.

Church humanitarian, social, educational, and other institutions have their own *modus operandi* and pace with which they accept the scientific and common social changes of their environment. The basic conditions that must be fulfilled before the church accepts these new concepts coming from other scientific arenas are their biblical foundations (starting points) and empirical authentications. Before adjusting to certain social phenomena or scientific achievement, every Christian church should use a theological methodology and investigate the compatibility of the change and the achievement with basic biblical coordinates and truths. As this process takes time, the strong perception of the public is that churches and church organizations need more time to adjust to contemporary changes. Looking at history following the Renaissance, it's clear that the church let go of its responsibilities in many areas such as in training children (pedagogy), education and science, or in other words its social and humanitarian functions and allowed the state to take over these areas. It substituted pastoral and spiritual service for activism, and its former leading role and public mission in the aforesaid areas. Yet, parts of these activities were continued especially within the so-called 'border zones' where public offices (services) could not contribute in an effective manner, or where the state needed time to adjust and find appropriate mechanisms for action. Some hu-

manitarian and social needs are perhaps the best example, since there are always situations the state cannot respond to efficiently, appropriately or quickly enough.¹⁸

The contemporary church increasingly shapes its activities based on the moral values of social and scientific prosperity and particular social phenomena (political, bio-ethical, ecological, technological, economic, social, sociological, culturological, globalization and other), while having in mind biblically-founded lasting values. Through the strength of its eternal ethical and human values, and its personal example, the church can show what is good and what is bad. Unburdened with its historical and traditional mission to be the leader of cultural, scientific, and social progress, the church is today released from its old role of being an obstruction to the change. In attempting to evaluate either society as a whole or a particular social phenomena, the contemporary church and church organizations do not do this using sometimes ambiguous and amorphous postmodern criteria of contemporary social progress, but by assessing what is good or bad in itself, what is right or wrong. Being at the avant-garde of the general progress of society is not a priority for the church; its priority is to be *the light, the salt, and the yeast* in the contemporary world. It is not of utmost importance that the church is first in anything or not or how far advanced it is, but whether it is good or bad.

In the political circumstances of the then Eastern Europe (the so-called Communist arena), development of humanitarian and social work within the church communities was sporadic and very tiny. Lacking experience, little research and writing on these topics existed, thus few studies and scientific works were done on these matters. However, compared to Eastern Europe, the situation in the countries of

¹⁸ For instance, the first centers for treating former addicts were founded by the Pentecostal minister, David Wilkerson from New York in 1958, who established a network soon to be called *Teen-Challenge* and now present throughout the world with 370 centers. Available online: <http://www.tc.asn.au> (January 21, 2007). Only recently has social service become interested in learning about their experiences. Or another example: the Moscow state directorate back in 1997 sent an urgent appeal to the Spanish Christian organization *Reto* to found centers for treating severe drug addicts in Moscow since the then-social services were losing the battle. Available online: http://www.reto.ru/english/reto_rus.shtml (January 21, 2007). *Reto* was founded in 1985 and has centers in 21 countries throughout the world. Available online: <http://www.reto.ru/english/cetres.shtml> (Jan 21, 2007).

Europe and Northern America was different – there is a long tradition of humanitarian and social activism,¹⁹ founded and led by churches and church associations gaining immense experience and knowledge through this process. Their humanitarian activities were beyond the boundaries of their own countries, and became international and global, including most continents. A number of interdisciplinary scientific studies followed the growth of church humanitarian and social activism,²⁰ which can be useful for us to examine and emulate though with certain degree of adaptation and contextualization.

2.1. MINISTRY SETTING

2.1.1. INTRODUCTION

After its development in the 19th century and earlier, and its symbolic commencement in the 20th century at Azusa Street in Los Angeles, U.S.A.,²¹ the Pentecostal and charismatic movement spread throughout Eastern Europe. Small communities of Protestants were surrounded by a majority of Catholic and Orthodox Christian believ-

¹⁹ For example, World Vision International, World Relief, Samaritan's Purse, Dorcas Aid, Christian Aid, Tearfund, Christian Children's Fund, Center for Global Ministries, Church World Service, Caritas, ADRA, CARE, Christian Medical Fellowship, Operation Christmas Child, PMU, Star of Hope, FFFM, Aide Medicale Internationale, Mercy Corps, LWF, PC(USA), Food for the Poor, Youth with a Mission, Evangelical Medical Aids Society, MAP International, etc.

²⁰ For example, *World Disasters Report*, Geneva: IFRC, 1999. *Humanitarian Assistance in Armed Conflict with a Children's Perspective*. Stockholm: Sida/SEKA, 1998. *The Protection Crisis: A Review of Field - Based Strategies for Humanitarian Protection in Darfur*. S. Pantuliano and S. Callaghan, *Overview of the Emergency Needs Assessment. Implementation Plan*, World Food Programme, 2006.

²¹ For more details, see: John L. Sherrill. *...I govore drugim jezicima...* [They speak with other tongues] Osijek: Izvori, 1978. Frank Bartleman. *Azusa ulica*. [Asusa Street] Osijek: Izvori, 2006. Ted Olsen, "The Rise of Pentecostalism: The Most Explosive Christian Movement in the Twentieth Century." *Christian History*, 58 (Vol. XVII, No. 2). Synan, Vinson. *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition: Charismatic Movement in the Twentieth Century*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977. Stanley M. Burgers, (ed.). *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002.

ers²² in areas such as Prekomurje (today, Republic of Slovenia), Medimurje, Slavonija, Baranja and Western Srijem (today, Republic of Croatia), and Vojvodina, with the regions of, Backa, Banat and Srijem.

Pentecostals in Croatia appeared spontaneously, at first among the German “*schtundenists*” that belonged to the Evangelical believers (Lutherans) and Reformed (Calvinistic) Church, and who conducted their religious services in the churches but also in small, private houses where they have held classes (“*schtunden*” or “*hour/class*”) studying the Bible, praying, singing, etc.²³

The growth in the number of believers and the number of local churches was steady and especially significant between the two world wars. During this period religious publishing began, local churches bonded and created unions (associations, alliances), and new church buildings were constructed - on the whole, the expansion was significant and involved many different aspects. However, after the end of the Second World War and the forcible expulsion of Germans and Hungarians from these areas, the number of believers declined significantly, and one part of local churches ceased to exist.²⁴

The Communist rule in former Yugoslavia kept its repressive stance towards religious communities, though on a much lesser scale compared to other countries of the Real-Socialism.²⁵ Nevertheless, a

²² The believers of the Evangelical Church were mostly of German, Slovak and Croatian origin, while the Reformed Church members were mostly Hungarians and Croats. See, Juraj Kolaric. *Ekumenska trologija: istocni krscani, pravoslavni, protestanti*. Zagreb: Prometej, 2005. Pgs. 448 and 462.

²³ For more details, see: Borislav Arapovic. *Njihovim tragom: prvi pentekostalci u Hrvatskoj: prinos istrazivanju povijesti protestantizma u Hrvatskoj*. Osijek: Izvori, 2003. Pgs. 50-51.

²⁴ Stanko Jambrek. *Crkve reformacijske bastine u Hrvatskoj: Pregled povijesti i teoloske misli*. Zagreb: Bogoslovni institut, 2003. Pgs. 100-115.

²⁵ Ilija Podrugović was one of the pastors of the Christ Pentecostal Church in Osijek. In 1963 he wrote the unpublished “History of Christ Pentecostal Church in Osijek and Its Close Surroundings,” in which he stated: “1951 and the two years that followed will remain in my memory as long as we live on Earth. In these years, we were under the strict control of those who had physical authority over us. Every letter, every word, every person was under strict surveillance. I was trembling and fearing what would any of us say, write or do, that would be opposed by the laws.” Pgs. 14-15. Compare with

small number of believers and pastors did serve jail sentences due to public preaching of their faith,²⁶ and at times, the state would obstruct and hinder some of the rights of the religious communities. In spite of these limited religious freedoms, the number of believers gradually increased and soon surpassed the number from before the war. During Communism and the systematic *atheisation* of society, Christian publishing still managed to rise, an advanced school in theology was established, there were pastoral services for youth and children, and mission was launched to establish new churches in the bigger cities of former Yugoslavia. The inner organization was fairly stable so local churches were able to link in a single alliance on the federal and republic level of the then-state (Yugoslavia). The union of relative autonomous churches with jointly accepted belief and doctrine functioned well following a heterogeneous Congregational-Episcopal model, with a significant shift towards greater autonomy of the local churches.²⁷

The Evangelical Church in Croatia is composed of local churches, mission centers, and institutions. The highest managing body of the Evangelical Church is the Assembly in which there are representatives of the local churches, mission centers, and institutions. The Church's executive body is the Presbytery represented by the regional presbyters or representatives, and the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer.²⁸

The success of the alliance could be seen in the local churches and believers' preparedness to effectively participate in different, joint projects.²⁹ The success in cooperation and connection (with each other)

Borislav Arapovic. *Njihovim tragom: prvi pentekostalci u Hrvatskoj: prinos istraživanju povijesti protestantizma u Hrvatskoj*. Osijek: Izvori, 2003. Pg. 128.

²⁶ As an example, Peter Dauterman, Adolf Lehotsky, Ludvig Ullen, Andrija Sabo, Radomir Vlaisavljevic, and many more. The author also served a jail sentence in the County Jail in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, during 1976, for distributing Christian literature in public, and organizing services outside church premises.

²⁷ Similar models for organizing church alliances were shared between other churches of the so-called reformist inheritance, such as the Alliance of the Baptist Churches, the Church of God, the Church of Brothers, the Church of Christ, etc.

²⁸ EC(RH) Constitution. Compare Borislav Arapovic. *Ibid.*, Pg. 44.

²⁹ As an example, they founded the *Balkan Mission* and sent missionaries to towns where there were no churches; they purchased, adapted and reconstructed local

could also be observed through the offering of pastoral and other spiritual assistance, and in mutual support when faced with difficulties in the state management or judicial system. The interaction was also fruitful with foreign Pentecostal missions, churches, and denominations. Especially important were the traditional pastoral conferences and seminars which gathered pastors and other church leaders together, aimed at continuous theological and pastoral education, and preaching, or were organized solely for the purpose of being together and exchanging experiences. During these decades and until the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the joint identity of both churches and their believers was gradually built up and matured. Church leadership differentiated between the so-called conservatives and those who considered themselves differently. In spite of periodic tensions in the relations between some pastors, and frictions and misunderstandings within the leadership in regard to certain questions, especially ecumenical cooperation,³⁰ the church alliance as a formal and functional union remained and continued to operate on all levels.

The 'spatial coverage' of churches was uneven, since the majority of churches were stationed in the northeast of Yugoslavia, in the areas that were previously under Protestant influence. The rest of the country was devoid of a single evangelical church. This 'spatial coverage' remained almost the same until the mid 1980's; during that time the Head Presbytery of the evangelical churches began sending the first missionaries to unreachable areas. Those sent were the first graduate students of the Biblical Theological Institute in Zagreb. This was the

churches, purchased equipment, founded a joint theological seminary, published materials (book publishing, monthly magazine, etc.) and much more. The cooperation existed as multilateral (on different projects) and bilateral (between the local churches).

³⁰ The reasons for periodic conflicts and divisions within the denominational leadership were mainly due to human nature. This was also a result of the low level of general and theological education of pastors and church seniors, lack of personal and general Christian culture, conservatism and (self) isolation from the rest of the world. In spite of all this, the inter-alliance cohesion and joint interests remained stronger than the destructive episodes and sporadic attempts to disunion.

beginning of a systematic missionary effort by the Alliance of Churches aimed at founding new churches mainly in larger towns.³¹

Before the decision to plant new churches was reached, the union needed a fairly long period during which representatives of all churches within the alliance gradually developed a joint consciousness about the importance of mission and the need to establish new churches in other cities and regions of the former Yugoslavia where there were none.³² The new mission concept was developed and missionaries started to go to different areas, republics, and provinces.

Prior to these systematic missionary activities, joint meetings of church representatives took place, shaping joint mission awareness of the need to open churches in other areas of the former Yugoslavia. This was how the new mission concept was gradually developed and how mission workers were encouraged to set off for the capital cities of different regions. After a time dedicated to the work of personal evangelism, a new group of believers would emerge and gather in a house or apartment. These groups would have all the characteristics of a church community. As a next step, the group would rent a more suitable place for gathering, leading to a more numerous and financially-strengthened community that would decide to invest in its own facility, which would then be constructed or adapted for church use and worship.

Throughout the following decades, a suitable mission organizational infrastructure gradually emerged – the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia (ECRH). It functioned reasonably well, considering the challenging internal and external circumstances. To be more specific, the internal or intra-church situation was unfavorable for sys-

³¹ Without exception, the new local churches were usually founded in areas where (old) churches previously existed though covering only the villages and smaller cities. After the period of urbanization, a number of these so-called village churches had closed down. Younger groups of believers migrated to the cities that rapidly underwent a process of industrialization, leaving the villages to their elderly inhabitants.

³² In this process Andrija Sabo, pastor of the Evangelical Church in Nasice and former President of the Evangelical Church in Croatia, and Peter Kuzmic, Director of the Biblical-Theological Institute in Zagreb and member of the Head Presbytery played the leading role together with Dragutin Volf, pastor of the KPC in Novi Sad and member of the Head Presbytery. See, Andrija Sabo. *Prostranstva Zovu* [Areas Invites]. Osijek: Izvori, 1974.

tematic and swift development of the mission's organizational infrastructure for a variety of reasons. To name only a few, churches were challenged by:

- An insufficient number of believers (or in other words, an absence of critical mass) for considerable and prompt mission development, partly due to a lack of consistent and sufficient flow of resources necessary for mission;
- A need for theological and wide-ranging education both for church members and their leadership;
- Community self-sufficiency and self-isolation, or in other words, *xenophobic* membership and leadership focusing only on their immediate surroundings; and
- Lack of collective and individual mission activism and mobilization.

On the other hand, the external circumstances, generally related to the socio-economic and political context in a communist country, were also not conducive to mission development, for example, difficulties related to procuring licenses for operation of the new church communities, registration of church property/facilities within the land-registry (cadastre), constant inspections of pastors and other church leaders by the secret service, required periodic informative interviews in police quarters, and so on.³³

2.1.2. DEMOCRATIC CHANGE AND NEW MISSION CIRCUMSTANCES

Evangelical church mission activities in Croatia gained impetus with the fall of the communist regime and after democratic changes.

³³ Zeljko Bartolovic. *Probusena Mantija*. Osijek: Vlastita Naklada, 2004. Recollections of a former theologian and Yugoslav secret police agent (UDBA) on the after-war police methods and relations with the religious communities and their leaders. He is writing about recruiting priests and developing an agent network within the churches for the purpose of gathering information on their inner life. UDBA agents were trained by the Stalin's secret police (NKVD), while being part of the OZNA (political police of the Communist Party) in Yugoslavia, using all means to spread fear: surveillance, spying, blackmail, arrests, molestation, convictions, etc.

Measured by the number of newly established churches, mission efficiency reached its peak during the 1990's when the number of newly established local churches equaled the number of those that already existed. Similar phenomena occurred in other alliances of churches or denominations, as well. This growth was generally attributed to societal changes, wide-ranging democratization and the spread of religious freedoms and, at a later stage, related to the Croatian War for Independence (CWI), or the Homeland War 1991–1995. These abrupt and rapid changes are also known as a *social-economic transition* or transfer from the former socialist (or communist) to the new capitalist social system. During this transitional time, particularly the years of the CWI and the post-war period, a variety of humanitarian activities were initiated and carried out by different churches and denominations. These activities played a pivotal role in evangelizing, assembling, and teaching small groups of believers, as well as founding new church communities.³⁴

Evangelical Church humanitarian activities greatly supported founding the new churches. During the Homeland War and in the post-war years many people in exile or refuge found their safe-heaven and food within the Evangelical Churches. Many converted and accepted the Gospel joining the nearest church. The *Agape* humanitarian organization opened distribution centers in many cities in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Assisting the people, it also assisted the Pentecostal communities growth.³⁵

Churches and denominations in those years encountered a number of unknown situations and problems - pastoral, mission-related,

³⁴ This method of creating new churches by using humanitarian assistance was used (apart from the Evangelical Church) also by the Alliance of Baptist Churches and Christian Adventist Church both in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For more details see: *Zapisnik sa Sabora Evandeoske crkve u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini*, May 24, 2006.

³⁵ Stanko Jambrek, *Ibid.* states, "Almost every church that was planted included the following scheme: [1] Personal evangelization; [2] Practical assistance and prayer for personal needs and the needs of our close ones; [3] Gathering for service in a house of a believer; [4] Buying and building the facility for the community gathering; [5] Developing the spiritual work, in youngsters and in adults." Pg. 142.

organizational, cultural, cross-cultural, public, media-related, educational, humanitarian, and ecumenical, etc. Functioning and coping within these new circumstances was neither easy nor smooth. This was especially true for reformed churches³⁶ given the broader social context, as they had to redefine their relationship with the new state structure and legislature. For the first time in recent history, reformation churches became a part of public political processes such as participation in proposing laws (the law on humanitarian assistance, the law on the legal status of religious communities, the law on building church objects, pension insurance for priests, and the like). Churches began participating in defining and shaping various public activities with religious components, such as religious instruction in public elementary and secondary schools. They gained access to the media. They became involved in theological education (especially for theologians), in organizing religious gatherings, and Christian publishing.

An especially significant public arena, which churches of the reformed inheritance have gradually begun to get involved in, and/or to periodically participate in, is the so-called sector of civil society - the area that promotes working for the public good. Organizations and associations included in this area are brand-new creations, unknown to the social system of the past. Some of the activities within the sphere of civil society proved to be interesting and attractive to churches and individual church organizations, especially if related to social entrepreneurship, human rights, democratic citizenship, foundations and philanthropy, social responsibility, local self-government, volunteerism and the like.

The Catholic Church represents the majority of the Croatian populace and inter-religious dialogue periodically occurs between that church and the churches of the reformed tradition. That process, which began in the 1980's, has passed through several phases. At the beginning of the democratic changes, the Catholic Church obtained a new status, whereby it became necessary and important for non-Catholic communities to redefine the existing dialogue and spectrum of rela-

³⁶ Churches of the reformed inheritance include historical reformation churches (Lutheran and Reformed Christian churches) as well as Evangelical churches, Baptist churches, Pentecostal churches, the Churches of God, the Churches of Christ, Christian Adventist Churches, etc

tions with this Church. This process has had several levels. The dialogue at the level of high Church functionaries was carried out within the *Ecumenical Council of Churches* where religious communities, members of the European Council of Churches, were represented too. Another level was the communication/cooperation between the local churches and Roman Catholic parishes, though this relationship was periodically troubled by minor conflicts. Fortunately, these were eliminated quickly and usually through the intervention of higher levels of both churches' power hierarchies. Such events said more about the interest of all sides to maintain long-term solid and tolerant relations, than about the narrow-mindedness of some church personnel.³⁷ Time has shown that a new quality of relations and mutual understanding has begun to develop. Or, as stated by James I. Packer,

The co-belligerence of Catholics and Protestants fighting together for the basic understandings of the creeds is nowadays more important [than discussion of individual doctrines], if only because until the cancerous spread of theological pluralism on both sides of the Reformation divide is stopped, any talk of our having achieved unity of faith will be so irrelevant to the real situation as to be both comic and pathetic."³⁸

The newly-risen social circumstances in Croatia have demanded opening the question of establishing and defining inter-relationships with other traditional Protestant churches as well, including all other churches and denominations of the Reformed inheritance. The interaction and deepening of the inter-relationships between existing Protestant churches has had its own history, organizational and formal. At the beginning of the 1990's, the Protestant-Evangelical Council was established gathering different Protestant denominations, churches, church organizations and individuals for the purpose of partnerships and general common interests. The achievements of this body throughout the years was significant, especially in the area of regulat-

³⁷ "If relatively important theological differences still divide Catholics and evangelicals, nonetheless, the contemporary world needs to hear more about what Catholics and evangelicals share in common than about their legitimate disagreements." Pg. 248.

³⁸ James I. Packer, Foreword to George Carey, *A Tale of Two Churches: Can Protestants and Catholics Get Together?* Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1985. ii.

ing relations with the state, standardization of religious instruction, promotion of theological education, advancement of pastoral services, coordination of a Christian publishing industry and intensification of evangelization and mission activities in general.

That period was marked by the beginning of the process of self-determination and creation of our own Christian, Protestant and Evangelical identity that was continuous, though at times troublesome. With significant growth in the number of new believers – converts,³⁹ this process of defining the new identity has gotten underway,⁴⁰ calling into question different areas of church life and work, from the style of worship, sermons, inner organizational structure, and functioning, to community relations. Although believers for years have wished for the number of church members to increase, resistance on a larger scale appeared when the up-to-then established routine of the life of the Church was challenged by the influx of new believers with new culture. Stated differently, conflicts between so-called younger and older believers, those considered more and less educated, or new believers and long-time believers, have encouraged the process of creating and developing a new Christian identity, and a new, open, Christian sub-culture.⁴¹

2.1.3. CONTOURS OF THE NEW MISSION PARADIGM

After a number of years of transforming its Christian mission identity, the Evangelical church, as a denomination, has found itself on the brink of accepting a new mission paradigm. In the initial stages of mission services, the Mission Board had sent missionaries into those areas and regions of the country where local churches had not yet been founded. After a time, a new network of soundly intertwined commu-

³⁹ A sudden rise in the number of highly educated believers, with different scientific and/or professional backgrounds, and who were also fairly young, significantly influenced these changes.

⁴⁰ Sometimes, two or three families creating an impression of being a clan, a resilient sub-culture closed to their surroundings, dominated the smaller churches.

⁴¹ Minutes from the Pastors, Preachers and Spiritual Workers Meeting – Zapisnik Sabora pastora, propovjednika i duhovnih radnika Evandeoske crkve u Hrvatskoj, March 27, 1993.

nities emerged. This situation can be paradigmatically compared to a *category* within the New Testament, namely the case of Samaria⁴² – an area within the same country where a different nation lived and with which a relatively long history of inter-ethnic conflict, intolerance, and tension existed.⁴³ It was within this context, that the preaching of the Gospel gained spiritual authenticity and strength. Furthermore, in the context of the former Yugoslavia, missionaries began crossing the border to neighboring countries – Bosnia and Herzegovina – launching missionary and evangelistic activities, founding churches in central towns of different regions, developing a systematic network of mutually interconnected and evenly distributed local churches throughout the country.

Since the beginning of the 1990's, with the threshold of democratic changes, missionary work experienced significant changes in its methodology. The rise of humanitarian neediness in the whole region due to the war, combined with the humanitarian activities of churches and church organizations, enabled unforeseeable development of this activity in the framework of churches. This was a unique occasion for preaching the Gospel to every recipient of humanitarian assistance who wanted to hear and listen. At the same time, numerous foreign Christian missions and publishing organizations made it possible to print evangelical literature in quantities that, up to that time, were considered inconceivable. The free distribution of this literature was im-

⁴² ...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:7). The metaphorical meaning of this text could be interpreted such that the Christian mission of evangelization begins in one's own town and its immediate surroundings, and continues within the borders of one's own country, reaching out to areas and populace which are either minorities or those marginalized on a certain basis (for instance, ethnic origin, living in a special territory, having a significantly different culture or way of life). At the end of this verse there is a very significant category – *to the ends of the earth*. This is why I think that every Christian, whether alone or in the community of believers, bears responsibility for the evangelization of the rest of the world.

⁴³ In Croatia, these are areas populated by Serbs; in Serbia, areas populated by Albanians (Kosovo), Hungarians (Vojvodina), and Turks (Sandzak); in Macedonia, Roma or Albanian people; in America, where Native Americans live; in Australia, Aborigines, etc.

mense, to the extent that certain books were literally present in every home within the country.⁴⁴

Bearing in mind the progression of the mission command in Acts 1:7 where Jesus includes *Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, until the ends of the earth*, we can conclude that local Evangelical churches have completely neglected the last category of this commandment – they have not been witnesses of Christ to *the ends of the earth*. It is my opinion that every local church, independently, jointly with other local churches, or as part of a denomination, with respect to mission and the fullness of its own Christian and spiritual identity, needs to be (at least symbolically) involved in mission activities directed towards peoples who have never encountered the Gospel, and where the Gospel cannot ever reach by simply using a person-to-person approach. There are barriers of language and culture in preaching the Gospel that, in this case, can never be crossed except by missionaries who are specially prepared and sent out to fulfill this task.⁴⁵

Throughout these years mission activity achieved a stable organizational form with all the necessary elements. By this, I mean a solid, normative, and organizational system, program structure, and guidelines. This in turn enabled a relative continuity in collecting and allocating financial resources. Long-term partnerships with comparable domestic, foreign mission, and para-church organizations insured logistical support for activities such as humanitarian and social assistance, Christian publishing, radio production, pastoral services for a variety of target groups (children, youths, adults, men, and woman), and the like.

⁴⁴ For example, the *Gideons*, an international organization, during the last fifteen years has printed around 1.5 million New Testaments for Croatia. Croatian *Gideon* members with assistance of *Agape* volunteers have distributed all printed copies within Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. *Life Publishers* publishing house, also from the U.S.A., during the same period, printed and distributed the *Book of Life* (free translation of selections from the Gospels) in quantities of close to 1 million.

⁴⁵ “Even if every Christian in the world became an anointed evangelist, and furthermore, every person they witnessed to became Christian, at the end of this wave of evangelism there would still be over a billion people who have never heard the gospel message.” Timothy C. Tennent. “Top Ten Things You Should Know About Missions in the 21st Century.” *American Baptist Evangelicals Journal*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2003. Pgs. 3-17.

In a relatively short period, significant changes in the mission paradigm of the Evangelical Church in Croatia occurred. The swiftness of this change was partly facilitated by the hasty start of the social and economic transition and by the state of affairs related to the Croatian War of Independence and the years after the war. On the other hand, in the beginning of the 1990's, part of the leadership in local churches and in the denomination was replaced by a number of younger and more educated leaders. That change abetted further transformations in understanding and managing mission. These changes also contributed to the emergence of inner tensions, conflicts and disagreements, but the outcome was creative and properly focused.

Reviewing notes from meetings of the local church pastors, elders and deacons during that time period, it is apparent that through the debates and their outcomes, there runs a clear thread of new understanding and acceptance of Christian mission and evangelization. The determination of leaders and their ability to turn away from an inward focus and old unresolved dilemmas towards new tasks and the monumental challenges in their surroundings preserved them from organizational atrophy and spiritual dryness.

In spite of a relatively small number of believers, the Evangelical Church is institutionally strong and always on the move: it has established the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek with its several institutes and high-quality publishing activities, then the humanitarian organization *Agape*, initiated a new number of churches that were opened in the last couple of years, with young people in high places convinced about the place of their church both under the skies and on the earth.⁴⁶

2.1.4. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions regarding the period from 1990 to 2005 could be summed up as follows.

1) Conversions to Christ are still occurring primarily on an individual level, though a small shift towards the turning of whole families

⁴⁶ Borislav Arapovic, *ibid.*, pg. 222.

to the Lord can also be noted.⁴⁷ The largest number of conversions has been among the younger population and among those who are either exiles or refugees. The restoration of church membership and growth has been left to the old Christian families, and has occurred through a number of church activities, among which the Alpha course appears to be the most successful so far. Mass public evangelization, organized by the Evangelical Church in Osijek (satellite broadcasting Billy Graham's sermons⁴⁸ or the arrival and sermon of David Wilkerson in Osijek) has produced relatively limited results. Success has been limited mainly to those individuals who were already in close contact with believers prior to the special events, those who were friends and spent considerable time together. As to whether there are cultural reasons that can be considered an impediment to mass conversions in Christ, the answer is probably positive. However, to identify those reasons and arrive at an integral understanding of their impact, it would be necessary to undertake comprehensive sociological research. Discovering effective formula(s) for successful evangelization on a mass level is important; however, now we must make peace with the fact that until now, the growth of the churches has been based on individuals approaching the community of believers.⁴⁹

2) With respect to centers undertaking comprehensive mission activities in this region of Southeastern Europe, the Biblical Theological Institute (BTI) and the Osijek (Croatia) Evangelical Church *Radosne Vijesti* (*Good News*) clearly stand out. The majority of missional *impulses*, development initiatives, implementation plans and concrete projects

⁴⁷ In general, this did not happen in families of several generations (though there are some exceptions). Most often those who converted were young families with small children.

⁴⁸ See *Izvori*, XXXVIII, 3-4/95, Pg. 38.

⁴⁹ It is the conviction of this author that such a formula does exist, for the following reasons: (1) There is a traditional inclination among Catholic believers in Croatia towards mass religious pilgrimages (these frequently number as many as a hundred thousand individuals); (2) Responses of believers on day-long charismatic *seminars for spiritual restoration* (Rev. Tomislav Ivancic, Rev. Zlatko Sudac, Rev. Zvezdan Linic, Rev. Maniako) when it is typical for tens of thousands participants to gather in sport halls - for a period of couple of days are also great; (3) There is also at least one mega-church in the region - the *Roma Evangelical Church* in Vranje (Serbia), which numbers a thousand believers, something considered a precedent in terms of church membership among evangelicals.

undoubtedly have come from these two core institutions. For example, throughout the last fifteen years, numerous organizations and activities have been launched, such as the publishing activity of the *Izvori (Springs)* organization, radio and video production, the *Agape* humanitarian aid organization, partnerships with the *Gideons*, *Youth for Christ*, *The International Biblical Society (IBS)*, *The Student Evangelical Movement - STEP (IFES)*, *Alpha* courses, camps for children and youth in Orahovica and Ploče, a home for abandoned children (*Oasis*), the Center for Christian Psychological Services (*Karis*), centers for the rehabilitation of former drug addicts, etc. Moreover, through these two centers (the BTI in Zagreb and *Radosne Vijesti* in Osijek), missionaries have been sent throughout different countries and regions, including the countries of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Macedonia; as well as Montenegro and Dalmatia and Istria (in Croatia). An abundance of logistical help has also been provided to establish local churches and denominations, as in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The BTI in Slovenia (and later, the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Croatia) also organized advanced undergraduate and post-graduate studies of theology with the aim of educating and training experts with different concentrations (pastors, evangelists, Christian educators, counselors...) Considered to be especially significant is their contribution in initiating and forming the Protestant Evangelical Council (PEC) - a community of churches of the reformed inheritance, which has played a pivotal role in the introduction of several laws, particularly those relating to the regulation of the work and activities of religious communities, and religious education in public schools. The PEC has also played a pivotal role in the establishment of a contract between all non-Catholic religious communities and the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Furthermore, the launching and growth of an even greater diversity of Protestant movements in other (new) states in the region came about through the *effect of imitation*. Many former students of ETS, after finding themselves in mission and ministry circumstances related to evangelization that demanded undertaking certain decisions, acted consistently with (or imitated) what they have observed and learned throughout their education at the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Osijek. However, in doing so, they did not adhere strictly to what had

already been done, but creatively adapted to the particular circumstances of their own cultural surroundings.

Noteworthy also is the fact that prior to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, active Christian missions were already deeply-rooted in the social fabric of the capitals in many of the former republics and autonomous provinces.⁵⁰ Such mission development can certainly be attributed to God's providence and the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Given the context of religious war and post-war nationalistic homogenization along religious lines, initiating and maintaining evangelical missions without that prior framework would have been far more difficult.

Such a sequence of events enabled the emergence and growth of a number of other regional centers of mission, a process that resulted in the Osijek head office gradually ceasing to play a vital role in making operational decisions. After the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia and the creation of independent republics and provinces, these regional centers of mission assumed independence in terms of continued development and became self-sustaining in terms of function.

3) Formed in this way, these mission centers with growing autonomy had considerable freedom to develop their own initiatives, thus becoming the backbone for a later stable process of founding new local churches and a variety of para-church organizations. Especially interesting was the development of the evangelical movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the Croatian Evangelical Church actively participated in founding many local churches, providing personnel and logistical support. At a later stage, when it was deemed appropriate both by the pastors of the local churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina and by the leadership of the Evangelical Churches in Croatia (who jointly evaluated the network of local churches according to their size and spiritual maturity and considered these elements to be sufficient for them to function and develop independently) an independent evangelical denomination was founded. After remaining functionally connected to the main office in Croatia (the Church in Osijek) for a time, and following a transitional period of a few years, the evangelical

⁵⁰ This includes the republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, and the autonomous province of Kosovo – which did not have more extensive communities of believers before the breakdown of the former Yugoslavia.

denomination in Bosnia and Herzegovina became completely independent and continued its activities autonomously.⁵¹

4) During this period, and from a cultural point of view, there was a shift in the way the Gospel was preached. Local churches, their pastors and educated members of the church boards became more open to miscellaneous influences, challenges and requirements based on their surroundings, though taking care to maintain the authenticity of the *Good News*. For example, new social circumstances opened the way for believers to appear in public, either at different places and events or in the public media. These public appearances in connection with special events were used to communicate their Christian faith, morality, and world-view. The readiness and inclination to publicly affirm and testify about Christianity has been especially noticeable among the younger and more educated population of believers, as well as those that began attending church after the democratic changes. It is also interesting to follow the way in which different individuals with diverse experiences and professions, in the course of different contexts and conversations, public speeches and dialogues, debates and media appearances, succeed in weaving in the Gospel message and reference to the Word of God. This is true whether in the context of sports and multiple Olympic champion Janica Kostelic; the arena of internal and external politics, economic or social transition; or about rights, governmental administration and justice. What has been crucially important is to skillfully avoid proselytizing in public appearances, whether in speech or writing, but rather to use and preach the Word and the message as harmoniously as *salt is in the meal*.

Although this cultural step forward in changing the paradigm of the preaching of the Gospel in our churches is still small by comparison and thus often insufficiently perceived, it is significant that it has

⁵¹ Similar mission development and progression are described in the works of Lesslie Newbigin, *Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. On pages 144 - 145, Newbigin describes the methods of the Apostle Paul in founding a church as follows: (a) Paul never stayed too long with the newly founded church community but prepared them to undertake their own responsibilities for their spiritual growth and prosperity; (b) Paul maintained no financial relations with the new church; (c) With them he behaved as with *grownups*, expecting strength and maturity; (d) Most importantly, he did not impose on them his own particulars with respect to service, but expected that they would shape it in accordance with the local culture and circumstances.

happened at all, and that it has happened within the most noteworthy and most influential Protestant denominations in Croatia. It is also important that a critical number of believers has emerged, who are self-confident and widely educated, willing and able to be *opinion leaders* in their various social circles, whether in the church, workplace, professional association, or public appearances; they are self-confidently announcing *the old*, unchanged message of the Gospel using new words and new social contexts. The degree to which this process of cultural adaptation of evangelistic messages, or their translation and transmission, is challenging and demanding, is illustrated by the following text by Andrew Walls, in *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*,

Politics is the art of the possible; translation is the art of the impossible. Exact transmission of meaning from one linguistic medium to another is continually hampered not only by structural and cultural differences; the words of the receptor are pre-loaded, and the old cargo drags the new into areas uncharted in the source language. ... In the light of the frustrations inherent in the translation process, it is the more astonishing that God chose the translation process as his mode for action for the salvation of humanity. Christian faith rests on a divine act of translation: "the Word become flesh, and dwelt among us." (John 1:14)⁵²

The *Word*, or *Logos*, as the evangelist John has called it, originally comes from the Aramaic language, was recorded by John in Greek, and comes to us through yet another translation in our mother tongue. The language in which the *Word* is proclaimed changes, as does the culture into which it comes; yet it maintains its essential content and fundamental meaning, or, to use the language of philosophers – without changing its *Being*. The consistency of the *Word*, translated from one

⁵² Andrew F. Walls. *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of Faith*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000, 173-186. Writing on the cultural significance of the Great Commission, Walls quotes Henry Venn, in William Knight, *The Missionary Secretariat of Henry Venn* (London, 1880), pg. 282.: "The object set before us is ... that all nations should gradually adopt the Christian religion as their national profession of faith, and thus fill the universal church by the accession of national churches."

language and culture to another, without its basic substance changing, is reminiscent of the First Law of Thermo-Dynamics.⁵³ Jesus so underscores the stability, durability and consistency of the Word, distinguishing it from all that is created, beyond time and space, when He says: *Heaven and earth pass away, though my Words will never pass away* (Mt 24:23). Therefore, it is only through translating the *Word* from one language to other that we recognize its unambiguousness, and through conveying it from one culture to another – that we recognize its consistency. In his latest book, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*, Andrew Walls emphasizes the importance of transfer and translation of the *Word*,

For Christians ... the divine Word is translatable, infinitely translatable. The very words of Christ himself were transmitted in translated form in the earliest documents we have, a fact surely inseparable from the conviction that in Christ, God's own self was translated into human form.⁵⁴

2.2. THE PROBLEM

Given the historical, political, geographical and ecclesial contexts of the former Yugoslavia, the church's decision to found *Agape* was an imperative of the moment, or to use biblical a term – *kairos*, a moment (point) when God intervenes in human history.⁵⁵ In times of war and

⁵³ The Principle of the Conservation of Energy posits that energy can neither be created nor destroyed, but is transformed from one form to another. In other words, the total amount of energy in an isolated system is said to remain constant, although it may change forms.

⁵⁴ Andrew F. Walls. *The Cross-cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith*. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2002. pg. 29.

⁵⁵ *Kairos* (καῖρος) means (1) a point of time or period; (2) a defined period for an event; (3) a period characterized by some aspects of special crisis. According to, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Christian Literature*. Frederick William Danker, (ed.) Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000. pgs 497-498. Theologically it means the appointed time in the purpose of God. It differs from the more usual word for time, which is *chronos* (χρόνος). While *chronos* is quantitative, *kairos* has a qualitative nature. In *The Interpretation of History*, (1936) neo-orthodox Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich made prominent use of the term. For him, the *kairos* are those crises in history (see Christian existentialism) which create an opportunity for, and indeed demand, an existential decision by the human subject

after the general disintegration of the former Communist regime an appropriate evangelical answer was needed that would pave the way for reconciliation, tolerance, dialogue and pluralism. Hence, the research topic/aim of this paper – to discover and assert the optimal organizational structure that would offer humanitarian and social assistance while being at the same time a church not-for-profit organization, in the circumstances known as the *social and economical transition* after the political end of Communism. A special effort is directed towards a clear definition of the sphere of work of social (state) institutions, their tasks and aims, and finding organizational solutions consistent with biblical theology and church practice.

It is important to consider the questions closely related to the following aspects of a humanitarian organization's system and functioning: First, to explain what is the relationship between evangelization (Mt 28) and social responsibility (Mt 25) – two tasks that are clearly given by us by Christ; Second, we need to clarify whether churches should even be involved in humanitarian and social assistance again, after so many centuries when this area was left solely to public, state and social institutions. Do these public and state units fulfill their social and humanitarian services at a professionally higher and better level than a group of volunteers within a certain church association? How should we understand Christ's commands from Mt 25 and 28, and combine them with the professionalism and effectiveness of public social services? Is this problem something we need to address first using the dynamic perspective of Christian evangelization in a developed country, and then second in an under-developed, suffering, and destroyed one, with a populace suffering from hunger, diseases, and constant poverty?

2.3. DELIMITATIONS

This research focuses on the humanitarian work of *Agape* in the framework of the Evangelical Church and in the following regions of former Yugoslavia: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, and the autonomous province of Kosovo (that is *de jure*

- the coming of Christ being the prime example (compare Barth's use of *geschichte* as opposed to *historie*). Available online: <http://www.religion-online.org/show-book.asp?title=377> (March 29,2007)

still part of Serbia and de facto protectorate of the Organization of the United Nations and its military partners).⁵⁶ In this work the term *region(s)* is used to mean the areas that are either defined as “independent states” (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro) or as “regions” (Kosovo, for instance); in a more general, geographical sense of the word, *the region* will be covering what is known as “South-Eastern Europe”, or simply the “Balkans” though the best denotation to use would be “former Yugoslavia” excluding Slovenia and Serbia, which are not part of the research.

The timeframe of this research covers a span of 15 years, starting with December 1991 when *Agape* was launched in Croatia until the end of 2006, which is the end-date for this research, and includes *Agape* branch-offices that were founded in the aforementioned regions and their activities during the years in-between. However, the greatest attention will be devoted to the *Agape* activities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the other areas will be included to a lesser extend.

2.4. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Besides the general and basic results of research work, such as expanding and extending the level of professional knowledge and awareness, this thesis should contribute to practical outcomes and offer tangible answers to questions such as, what is the religious communities’ humanitarian and social work/assistance, and what are the efficient ways for their implementation? At the same time, this research will aim at offering clear answers to the stated (general and particular) conceptual problems facing contemporary humanitarian organizations and the way they operate.

The concrete, expected outcomes of this research will cover the following areas:

⁵⁶ The Christ Pentecostal Church, by the end of 1989, at the General Assembly meeting in Belgrade changed its name to the Evangelical Church. During the process of registering and inscription in the Book of Evidence of Religious Communities (*Evidencija vjerskih zajednica*) within the Ministry of Justice, State Directorate, and the Local Self-Government, the Church in 2004 had to put an addition to its name: the Evangelical Pentecostal Church in the Republic of Croatia.

1. To research the general and particular organizational characteristics of *Agape* as a para-church humanitarian activity;
2. To analyze both common and distinguishing features of the humanitarian work in different regions during the period of research;
3. To describe the features that distinguish similar humanitarian projects in different regions, why they differ and what would be the factors influencing these distinctions;
4. To identify major problems and challenges the *Agape* organizations faced while performing their activities;
5. To affirm which types of humanitarian activities dominated and which were ancillary, and what was the combination of various activities and evangelization methods that gave the best results in preaching the Gospel and launching new churches;
6. To research the influences and interactions between the Evangelical Church while performing its humanitarian activities and its nearer and broader surroundings;
7. To affirm and describe the general contribution of these activities for the development and promotion of the church's humanitarian organization's methodology of work, organizational solutions and their adaptation to the concrete conditions on the ground;
8. To analyze the ways of establishing effective synergy between humanitarian and social assistance with the tasks of mission and evangelization, or in other words, to discover ways humanitarian projects could anticipate and support evangelization;
9. To recognize all other types of humanitarian activities launched and generated by *Agape* and determine what was their correlation and long-term interaction with humanitarian and social work;
10. To propose an efficient organizational structure and long-term strategy for humanitarian and social work that will at-

tain optimal synergy with the mission and evangelistic tasks of the Church.

Besides the aforementioned, one of the outcomes of this writing would certainly be the interest for further professional improvement of the author himself; working on this theme, he will need to study a significant amount of texts from this area.

This work is also necessary to safeguard for the future the great accomplishments of a small number of volunteers, which in spite of their inexperience and lack of professionalism within the area of not-for-profit entrepreneurship had the courage to face challenges in this area of service.

Finally, this work should be highly motivating for all those within these surroundings and churches who desire to practice humanitarian and social work. Reading these texts might be a good start for their further professional education and preparation for service.

2.5. ASSUMPTIONS

The basic assumption for this research is related to the premise that humanitarian and social assistance can be successfully accomplished by the Church and be effective for its general mission and evangelistic preaching. Therefore, the general success of humanitarian and social work, on the one hand, and effectiveness of the Church's mission and evangelization, on the other hand, must function in dynamic interrelation, balance, and synergy. The continuing process of their interaction/joint involvement results in a progressive and multiplying efficiency – both qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative aspects will be identified and explained, while the quantitative analysis will not be part of this research, not only because of how the research is framed and limited, but also because interpretations that follow quantitative analyses of mission works and their effects often encounter problems caused by the transcendental, spiritual nature of the Church and its mission.

The next premise of this research is that its overall results (the results of the humanitarian and social work) are dynamically interrelated

and greater than the bare sum of many individual and independent activities of the single churches/church organizations. This assumption is based upon the common understanding of the multiple effects of integrated, though diverse (and yet similar), activities.

Furthermore, the research includes analysis of the available data resources. It is based upon accessible documents and archives related to the *Agape* regional centers. The regional *Agape* leaders, due to an acute lack of time and human resources or personnel sufficiently trained for administrative work and organization management, could not devote the attention needed to document business changes or to create a documents data base. In other words, the regional centers could not establish the administrative infrastructure when launching their activities – this step was done later, and mostly on donor request and/or due to the legal obligations they needed to fulfill in the regions they operated. So, wherever it was not possible to have access to the so-called primary sources – the documents – either because they were not accessible or perhaps never existed,⁵⁷ interviews with the *Agape* personnel from the organization in question are substituted, covering and clarifying the areas for this research. The assumption is that information and data gathered through interviews and questionnaires are truthful and complete, and reflect what was or should have been documented. Selected examinees are also considered to have provided required information to their best knowledge – truthfully, completely and in consistency with their experience and expertise.

Another assumption is that launching this kind of significant and long-term project research in the area of not-for-profit entrepreneurship such as humanitarian relief will result in comprehensive and constant change both within the identity and within the culture of the Evangelical Church and its members.

⁵⁷ For instance, a number of meetings in some *Agape* regional centers were held without taking minutes. This omission could be considered significant, but we must keep in mind that in Bihac (Bosnia and Herzegovina) there was no electricity, drinking water, gas, telephone or other connection with the outside world for quite some time. The only documentation manageable to be kept was that related to the people receiving humanitarian assistance. In this light, the so-called *papirology* related error might be observed differently.

2.6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is based mainly upon using the primary data sources, or in other words, the archives and other documentation about the work of *Agape* and the interviews prepared and structured beforehand. Besides these primary sources, secondary sources are used, such as scientific and professional books and university textbooks, scientific and professional journals and other publications, master and doctoral theses, results of scientific and research projects, collections of papers from domestic and foreign scientific and professional conferences, Internet data sources or on-line computer bases of university and other research institutions, and different data bases of church communities, church institutions and para-church organizations.

Throughout the research, the interview method is used, but also empirical, comparative, descriptive, and statistical methods, methods of analysis and synthesis, and inductive-deductive and historical methods. The usual explorative instruments such as tables, diagrams, and illustrative displays are also applied. Apart from the aforementioned, the very nature of this research problem demands interdisciplinary study and consulting secondary data sources from the areas of Missiology, Applied Theology, Christian Ethics, Psychology and Sociology of Religion, Management of Para-church organizations, and other areas.

3. THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR EVANGELICAL HUMANITARIAN AID MINISTRY

Christianity has brought new meaning to all areas of human life – culture, economy, science, education, politics, ethics, and even to recreation. It offers existential hope through the announcement of the coming of the *Kingdom of God*, through the redemption, salvation and renewal of all that is created. Nevertheless, this world of ours, which is *here* and *now*, is hurt, broken and stumbling, and the people living within it need help, help coming from Christians. Being socially responsible, the Church can provide answers to the sufferings of the world in at least two ways: by offering direct assistance to the needy and by participating in changing and building a better, more just, or at least less unjust, society. The supposed dilemma of whether the Church should become involved in these activities or not has no theological foundation, since Jesus allowed no room for such a question. The right question is not whether to be involved, but what are the right ways for the Church to participate and provide assistance.

3.1. OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

When setting the theological framework for evangelical humanitarian work and its relationship to the Church's mission, attention will be focused on some biblical texts that deal with these issues. Many texts in the Old as well as in the New Testament talk about assisting others who are in need. In His *Sermon on the Mount* (Mt 6:1-18) Jesus paid special attention to doing good and giving to the needy, and He placed these activities at the same value level as prayer and fasting. He considered both charity and mercy as authentic and equally significant examples and representations of the religious life of His followers and discussed these issues before talking about prayer or fasting.

3.1.1. OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

The source of Christian teaching on social responsibility is found within the Old Testament's anthropology and the truth that human beings are created in the image of God,⁵⁸ and through that *Imago Dei*

⁵⁸ So, God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Gen 1:27 (*Imago Dei*, lat.)

every human being gains basic value, regardless of his/her knowledge or education, acts or any other steps that might be considered useful to the community or the family. This view of humanity lays the foundation for the biblical truth that has been preached by the prophets and further extended and enriched by the rabbis throughout the centuries. According to them, the wellbeing of our neighbors and, in particular, the wellbeing of the poor and the needy, is an assessment criterion for both society and the individual. A series of texts within the Holy Bible, particularly within the Old Testament and traditional rabbinical teachings associates charity and fairness with respect for the commandments.⁵⁹

God's deep and exceptional concern for social justice, equality and impartiality is obvious in numerous texts in the Old Testament. Severe punishment of the nation of Israel during its history was the result of its lack of respect and upholding God's commands, including the ones related to God's intention to establish and preserve a society of social justice, rightfully and impartially for all chosen people, and to extend to those not among them regardless of their material and other differences.⁶⁰

In one of the most important texts, which is actually the prophet's address to his listeners, Isaiah places philanthropy higher than common religious expressions such as prayers and fasting, using the following words,

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the chords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter – when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from

⁵⁹ The rabbis' expression for charity resembles the word used in the Bible, צדקה – *cüdqâ* (*tsedaka*) *righteousness*, (in some cases it can mean *acts of justice* or *righteous acts*.) ref. Pr 10:2 and 11:4. And further down in the Old Testament: Gen 18:19; Ex 22:21; 23:4; Lev 19:17; Dt 10,19; Ps 37:21; 41:1-2; 82:3; 112:9; Job 31:16-20; Pr 12:28; 13:6; 14:21, 31; 19:17; 21:13; 22,9; 28:27; 29:7; Isa 58:1-12; Jer 22:15-16; Ez 16:49, etc.

⁶⁰ Actually, one of the greatest complaints of the prophets to the Israelites, as a chosen people, was their blantant neglect of the needs of the poor living within their surroundings. With this behavior, they were not witnessing God's love for justice and impartiality to all other nations. (e.g. Eze 34:4; Zec 11:16; Is 58:1-12)

your own flesh and blood? [...] ...and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.⁶¹

The needy are equally challenged with the rest of society by the rabbi's request for "*the poor living from the charity to show charity to the one that is even poorer.*"⁶² Maimonides lists eight levels of charity, with the giving of money as the lowest level and the preparation of the poor for independent and self-sufficient life and earning their own funds as the highest level.⁶³ The overall ethos behind doing charity work in Jewish literature is particularly rich and has been developed and expanded throughout the centuries. For instance, Judaism teaches that by accepting the gift, the one in need accepts part of the goods that had already been created and which by God, or by the law, already belong to him/her.

This religious and philosophical sense of righteousness finds its origins within the Old Testament, and the writers of the Torah adjusted it and made it more applicable for everyday use. In later historical stages, this long tradition of offering charity was linked with social and legal norms, which in turn laid the groundwork for establishing the first (though fairly rudimentary) systematic policy of social work

⁶¹ Is 58,6-7; 10.

⁶² Adel Th. Khoury (ed.). *Leksikon Temeljnih Religijskih Pojmova: Zidovstvo, Krscanstvo, Islam*. Zagreb: Svjetska konferencija religija za mir, Prometej, 2005. Pg. 112.

⁶³ "The greatest level is to strengthen the name of another by giving him a present or loan, or making a partnership with him, or finding him a job in order to strengthen his hand until he needs no longer to [beg from] people. Below this is the one who gives *tzedaka* to the poor, but does not know to whom he gives, nor does the recipient know his benefactor. Below this is one who knows to whom he gives, but the recipient does not know his benefactor. Below this is one who does not know to whom he gives, but the poor person does know his benefactor. Below this is one who gives to the poor person before being asked. Below this is one who gives to the poor person after being asked. Below this is one who gives to the poor person gladly and with a smile. Below this is one who gives to the poor person unwillingly." Miamonides (1135-1204), *Mishneh Torah, the Code of Jewish Law: the Book of Knowledge*. Available online: <http://www.panix.com/~jjbaker/rambam.html> (January 22, 2007).

with the general aim of decreasing and eliminating poverty and misery. This policy was especially important because of its systematic and consistent prevalence, which attempted to eliminate the sporadic and occasional character of charity and the recipients' dependence on these gifts. Although these forms of organized social care grew within the closed Jewish communities of the diaspora throughout the centuries, they became credible models for organizing similar policies and services in the societies where Jews lived. Sensitivity to the needy and social care program implementation developed over a long period of time, and its roots were in the Old Testament texts and laws. However, the key difference between the social ethics of the theocracy of the Old Testament and the social ethics of the New Testament community is in the Old Testament's approach which had Israel isolated from the rest of the world. Only after Christ's resurrection and the Holy Spirit's descent does the Church receive the mission to go into the world.⁶⁴

3.1.2. NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

3.1.2.1. JESUS' TEACHINGS

The New Testament texts contain Jesus' teachings on offering mercy and assisting the poor and the needy. They grew as result of the already developed Jewish tradition *cedaka*, or fairness (Mt 6:1). What Jesus demands of His followers is that they should differ in the way they give offerings and assist the needy, namely that the acts should be selfless, generous and never a means to achieve gratitude and appreciation; the donor should not expect a favor in return, but be joyful in the very *act of mercy*; giving should be constant, and the donor should always be ready to act without setting any boundaries for the assistance. Jesus also teaches that by helping the poor we work for our reward that will be given to us by our Father in the heavens. Jesus teaches us that acts of mercy and compassion towards our neighbors in need are considered by our Father in the Heavens as good deed towards Himself.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ According to, Charles C. Ryrie. *What Should You Know About Social Responsibility*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1982. pg. 22.

⁶⁵ "Over and over again the emphasis of Luke is for Jesus' disciples to live compassionately, with an eye to the poor, being quick to open their hands to help."

Doing good to the needy helps us to feel the source of God's love within us, a love that is changing us from within, purifying, and ennobling our souls and our bodies. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to perform acts of justice – charity, prayer and fasting – in secrecy, away from the eyes of the world, since that is the only way to create the spiritual energy that is considered necessary for our spiritual growth and gradual transformation into the image of Christ.⁶⁶ According to Mt 6:1-18, these three pillars of our religious life are in compliance with the totality of human relationships: charity is for our relationships with others, prayer is towards God, and fasting is for ourselves. Granting the needy material goods from our surplus is attributed to the so-called natural, regular economy of the fallen world. But, giving up freely and happily what we find essential or 'fasting' for the greater needs of our neighbors whose needs are greater than our own is the area of the transcendental, Godly, messianic economy. Prayer is between charity and fasting, between building our relationships with others and ourselves. Prayer is about our relationship with God and through it our charity receives double meaning, earthly and heavenly.⁶⁷ Jesus is the ultimate example of giving one's self as an act of charity; this kind of behaviour He demands of His disciples as well, giving them a lasting command. He expects them to give up not only their material goods and their rights but their lives as well, because only in such a way can they find real wealth and experience genuine and complete lives.

3.1.2.2. THE CHURCH'S DEEDS – ANNOUNCING THE KINGDOM

Later texts of the New Testament operationalize these teachings of Jesus in different ways, putting them in variety of social contexts.

Warren Heard. "Luke's Attitude Toward the Rich and Poor." *Trinity Journal*, Volume 9, (1988). pg. 47.

⁶⁶ Greeks and Romans did not support personal charity; wealthy contributions to public projects or to poorer clients were meant to secure the giver's popularity. In contrast, charity was central in Jewish piety. Craig S. Keener. *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993. pg. 61.

⁶⁷ The church [*ekklesiá*, gr.ἐκκλησίαν, assembly (of Christians); heb. קהל – qähäl, (holy) assembly (of people), ref. Dt 23,2] should be devoted equally to the acts of charity, prayer and fasting as necessary conditions for spiritual and social integration and joint spiritual growth.

While the Old Testament *demand*s acts of charity towards our neighbors and the needy considering those actions an authentic part of true religiousness, the New Testament talks about *different ways* of doing these deeds. By doing charity the followers of Christ announce, using their words and acts, the near advent of the Heavenly Kingdom on Earth, as well as the second advent of Christ. Regarding the possession of material goods, Christ's followers believe that the Heavenly Father is the only true 'owner' of all that is on the Earth and that we are given parts of these goods only temporarily.

Due to this concept, charity and mercy are perceived as an 'allocation' of something that already belongs to God. So these acts proclaim the second coming of Christ and the full redemption and transformation of this world, as well as establishment of the Kingdom of Christ. Writing about the biblical theology of ownership, Craig Blomberg says,

To the extent that the kingdom has been inaugurated from the cross of Christ onward, Christians individually and corporately are called to model that transformation, however imperfectly, as a foretaste of the perfect redemption that must ultimately await the age to come.⁶⁸

3.1.2.3. THE EARLY CHURCH

Charity played a significant role in the life of the early church and strengthened its unity. The Apostle Paul called his service of gathering offerings for the Mother-Church in Jerusalem *diakonia*.⁶⁹ Realizing

⁶⁸ Craig L. Blomberg. *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999. pg. 246-247. See also, Desmond T. Alexander (et. al.) *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2000. pg 691.

⁶⁹ *Diakonia*, [Greek: διακονία], means service. Comp. 2 Cor 8:4; 9:1, 12, etc. Especially inspired and passionate is Paul's *caritas* speech [Latin: *caritas*, love, acts of charity] to the Corinthians (2 Cor 8-9) where he urges them to give/donate because of equality among the brothers (8,13), because they are the successors of Christ's example of charity (8,9), and because that is the way to celebrate the name of the God (9:11) and because of God's love towards joyful offerings (9:6). According to, Xavier Leon Dufour. *Rjecnik Biblijske Teologije*. Zagreb: Krscanska sadasnjost, 1980. Pgs. 550-551.

that the Romans, as an occupation army, heavily taxed the inhabitants of their provinces and all those funds went to Rome as the governing center of the world at that time, Paul directed funds differently. He turned the offering flow in another direction, towards Jerusalem, showing metaphorically, where the true, spiritual center of the world was. That was a *sign* for both Jews and non-Jews that the prophecy about the Messiah and His Kingdom on Earth was not to be fulfilled through another visible and governed earthly kingdom, but through a different spiritual and physically invisible kingdom. Paul was also building the unity of a church with the converted Gentiles and converted Jews. Paul assisted the Jewish convert believers in Jerusalem both materially and spiritually and thereby decreased the gap that had begun to appear between the Church of the Gentiles and the Church of Judaism.⁷⁰

Although many texts from both the Old and the New Testament talk about assisting those that are near to us regardless of whether they are part of our nation or simply our brothers and sisters in Christ, the concept of social responsibility does not end there. We are also asked to efficiently care for those that are outside our social circles, whether national, religious or other. In spite of being under constant persecution, the early church performed the service of mercy and charity faithfully to those that were close, to the ones that were outside and even to its adversaries.⁷¹ From reading the text in James's epistle we can conclude with great certainty that the majority of early Christians he addresses were poor, and thus in need for assistance,

The entire community is called to look out for the most dispossessed within its midst: the orphan, the widow, or the person without adequate clothes or daily food. Those who have even a modest surplus of goods with which they could help the destitute, but who refuse to do so, prove thereby that they are not truly Christian, regardless of

⁷⁰ For more details about Paul's work see: Scot McKnight. "Collection for the Saints", in *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters*, Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph Martin (eds.). Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1993. pgs. 143-147.

⁷¹ The Roman Emperor Julian (cca. 361 A. D.) addressing the pagan priests states: "It is disgraceful that ... while the impious Galileans (Christians) support both their own poor and ours as well, all men see that our people lack aid from us." According to Keller, J.T. "Ministries of Mercy: Diakonia in the Early Church," in *Service in Christ*, ed. J.I. McCord, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960. pg. 60.

any profession they may make. Social injustice must always be denounced, even if its ultimate abolition awaits Christ's return.⁷²

3.1.2.4. LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR

A society in which Christ's command to love our neighbour as ourselves through constant and consistent acts of charity cannot be created by the mere implementation of social reforms and revolutions. This kind of social system and relationship between people for which we all long and hope can only be initiated through personal faith/belief in Christ and His Kingdom on Earth. Personal belief in Christ and Christ's teachings produces hope that through the process of spiritual conversion – a process of life-long transformation to Christ's image – we are born again as a new people. Only then and by the power that comes from *above*, by the Holy Spirit and integration into the community of believers can this new person love his/her neighbour(s) with the *agape* love that comes from Christ and perform authentic acts of love to all people, regardless of whether they are good or bad.⁷³ This love which springs from eternity and is embodied in time and history is the source for the words and acts that the believer (alone or joined by the community) performs influencing his/her surroundings; becoming salt, light and yeast for transforming the world.⁷⁴ This

⁷² Craig L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches: A Biblical Theology of Material Possessions*. Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1999. pg. 160.

⁷³ According to the Apostle Paul (Cor 13:13) the three theological virtues are: "And now these three remain: faith (gr. πίστις), hope (gr. ἐλπίς) and love (gr. ἀγάπη). But the greatest of these is love". See, J.P.G. Baker. "Love." *The New Dictionary of Theology*. Sinclair G. Ferguson. David F. Wright and James I. Packer (eds.) Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988. ppg. 398-400. Old Testament equivalents are, faithfulness אמונה - 'émûnâ, ref. Jer. 7,27; or trust, confidence מבטח (mibtah) ref. Iz 22,19; hope תקוה - tiqwâ, ref. Job 5,16; love (an *agape* type of love, no erotic connotation) אהב - 'âhab, ref. Is. 20:6.

⁷⁴ "For this reason Evangelicals must ever contend that the first responsibility of the church is proclamation of the gospel and depend on the consequent spiritual change wrought by the Holy Spirit to create a community in which the unconverted may see a model of the kingdom of God." Russell PG. Shedd. "Social Justice: Underlying Hermeneutical Issues," in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization*. Ed., Donald A. Carson. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984. pgs. 195-233.

is the foundation of the Christian concept of social justice and a motivation for acts of charity to those that are in material need and otherwise destitute. Christ's command to love our neighbours has both special and dual meaning. Its implementation throughout our earthly lives is the key criteria that will be used by the Son of Man to judge each of us separately for the acts we did or did not do. Belief that is expressed only by words was denounced by James as useless.⁷⁵

Finally, love for our neighbors and love for God are inseparable and integrated (1 Jn 4:20), and as such, they are the proclamation of our salvation and witness of a better, more righteous life. Salvation is in time and yet timeless - it includes time and space which are created, but also eternity, since its effects are beyond time and the space. From looking at those key Old and New Testament passages, it is clear that the dual function of evangelization and social responsibility by both individual believers and the church as a whole community are the key conditions for authentic and efficient Christianity. That is simply *conditio sine que non*.⁷⁶

3.2. MISSION AND MISSIOLOGY

The term *mission* is highly complex and multifaceted, holding a variety of meanings in different areas of life.⁷⁷ For the purpose of this text, this term denotes *Christian mission*, which originates within biblical theology. The origins of the word *mission* can be found in the Latin word *missio*, while its contextual origin comes from Christ's Great Promise which precedes the Great Commission:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

⁷⁵ "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, 'Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (Jas 2:15-16)

⁷⁶ Lat., a necessary condition, the one that we cannot be without.

⁷⁷ There are 192 words similar to the term mission. Available online: <http://www.websterdictionaryorg/definition/mission> (January 11, 2006).

and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.⁷⁸

Christ's community of believers, the Church, is responsible to consistently and fully fulfill its role on the Earth, as Swiss theologian Emil Brunner said: "A church exists by mission as a fire by burning. Where is no mission there is no church."⁷⁹ One of many descriptions of mission is the following,

Mission is a joyous and loving response of the Christian community to the universal and exclusive claims of the triune God who has revealed Himself definitively in Jesus Christ. It involves crossing all human boundaries, by Christians who are called individually and cooperatively to proclaim God's purposes. By their witness and service they summon fellow-sinners to turn to God and share in His promised kingdom, for right response to God is inseparable from the calling of the nations and offer of new life to all who will hear.⁸⁰

Mission includes more than mere evangelization *urbi et orbi* and can be outlined in five general and equally important areas:

1. The Church should be involved in the ethical and responsible governance of all that is created;
2. The Church should serve its people with compassion and assist them with mercy in their regular or extraordinary needs regardless of differences;
3. The Church should continuously evangelize and act as a credible witness to *the truth that is in Jesus'* (Eph 4:21)⁸¹

⁷⁸ Mt 28,18-20. Or in another place where He says: *Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation* (Mk 16,15-19).

⁷⁹ Available online: www.bautz.de/bbkl/b/brunner_e.shtml (March 30, 2007).

⁸⁰ Ian Breward. "Christian Missions." *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*. James D. Douglas (ed.) Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978. pgs. 664-667.

⁸¹ "Mission includes *evangelism* as one of its essential dimensions. Evangelism is the proclamation of the salvation of Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sins, and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin lives

4. The Church should stand for realization of God's justice and righteousness, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness, in all segments of the life of the society;
5. The Church has a responsibility to show and model in its functioning what it means and how to be a reconciled and liberated community in the midst of a corrupt, distressed, and despairing world. The Church should be the sign and the model of God's intention to create a new social and natural (world) order governed by His peace and justice.⁸²

Holy Scripture describes mission in the following ways: as *electio* (the chosen), *vocatio* (calling/vocation) and *missio* (mission). In a theological sense, mission is fundamental to all believers and aims at preaching the Gospel to those who have not yet heard. In an organizational sense, mission denotes the organization that manages the work of missionaries in their own or in a foreign country.⁸³

3.2.1. MISSIOLOGY

Missiology is the ordered study of the Christian church's mission. As such, it is a discipline within theology, incorporating a number of strands: biblical and historical study, systematic theology, ethical studies, and pastoral theology. Because of the wide scope of missiology it has an important role to play in the integration of other areas of theology... every aspect of theology has an inescapably missiological dimension, for each one exists for the sake of the church's mission.⁸⁴

of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit." David J. Bosch. *Transforming Mission, Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1994. pgs. 10-11.

⁸² A. J. Kirk. "Missiology." *New Dictionary of Theology*. Sinclair G. Ferguson. David F. Wright and James I. Packer (eds.) Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988. pg. 435. Also, Rene Padilla. *Mission Between the Times*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980. David W. Taylor (ed.), *Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000.

⁸³ Available at: <http://www.wordiq.com/dictionary/Mission> (2006. 11. 11.)

⁸⁴ A. J. Kirk. "Missiology." *New Dictionary of Theology*. Sinclair G. Ferguson. David F. Wright and James I. Packer (eds.) Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1988. pg. 436.

There is also a spectrum of other approaches and modalities for defining missiology, which conceptually differ from each other.⁸⁵ In these, Christian mission has been defined similarly to evangelization in general. Consequently, the church has both a contemporary and an ancient mandate to carry out what is considered as her lasting task – the *missio Dei*, God's salvation work, within and throughout all of human history.⁸⁶ Therefore, the history of Christian mission and its biblical foundation are mutually and closely related and interwoven. One of the most essential definitions of mission is the following:

The entire Christian existence is to be characterized as missionary existence, or, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, *the church on earth is by its very nature missionary*. In light of this, it is tautological to refer to a *universal gospel*. The church begins to be missionary not through its universal proclamation of the gospel, but through the universality of the gospel it proclaims.⁸⁷

3.2.2. WHAT MISSION ENCOMPASSES

The focus of Christian mission activities, as described by H. Turner, is pointed towards three main areas: the individual, or in other words, the personal area, the general and the public – the social area,

⁸⁵ Missiology is also, *a science of multicultural communication of the Christian faith or a scientific discipline focused on the task of evangelizing the World*. In this sense, the author considers three areas to be of special influence on mission: theology, anthropology and history. Other social disciplines also contribute to development of the mission, such as psychology, communications theory and sociology. Through their multilevel interaction, the field of applied theology has been outlined with a common title – *missiology*. Walter A. Elwell. (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984. pg. 724.

⁸⁶ *Missio Dei* has been embodied following the concept of the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Lesslie Newbigin in the third chapter of *Open Secret* "The Mission of the True God" elaborates *missio Dei* in terms of the kingdom of the Father, the mission of the Son, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Lesslie Newbigin. *Open Secret: Sketches for a Missionary Theology*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978. pgs. 20-31

⁸⁷ David Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1996. pg. 9. Also, the missionary task is coherent, broad and deep as the need and exigencies of human life. Various international missionary conferences since the 1950s have formulated this as 'the whole church bringing the whole gospel to the whole world.' pg. 10.

and the cultural area.⁸⁸ On the other hand, M. W. Dempster quotes three types of mission activities: *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. *Kerygma* literally means preaching, and the traditional name for these activities is evangelization. *Koinonia* marks the unity of believers in their narrower and wider church community, and other activities that occur within this community. *Diakonia* stands for serving the needs of the others – different groups of believers, those which surround the Christian community and those outside the Church.⁸⁹

Other descriptions of Christian mission describe involvement with three main aspects of Christian life: (1) *Liturgia*, liturgy – worshipping God, both individually and collectively; (2) *Didaskalia* – religious teachings, and (3) *Diakonia* – serving the community of believers, e.g., the church, as well as those being outside the church community.⁹⁰

Worshiping, learning about the teachings of Apostles, and serving the needy are the three components of the complete Christian life. These have their starting point within the Great Commission, and they are in permanent interdependence and inner equilibrium. The growth and maturity of each Christian believer and each Christian community (church) is impossible without a balance of these three areas, both on the individual and on the collective levels. Therefore, general and long-term mission efficiency is said to be based upon not only the maturity and Christian completeness of missionaries, but also upon the maturity and Christian completeness of those who send them out on mission.

⁸⁸ Harold Turner. "The Three Levels Of Mission." <http://www.deepsight.org/articles/3levels.htm> (November 11, 2006).

⁸⁹ Murray W. Dempster. "Evangelism, Social Concern, and the Kingdom of God." in Murray W. Dempster, Byron D. Klaus and Douglas Petersen, (eds.) *Called & Empowered: Global Mission in Pentecostal Perspective*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1991. pg. 22-43.

⁹⁰ *Liturgia* [gr. λειτουργία, λειτουργικός] – public work; in the Old Testament עבֹדָה - `ábödâ (*aboda*), service (a ritual for YHWH), service for others, ref. 2 Chronicles 35:10, 16 and Numbers 4:24, 27, 28, 33. *Didaskalia* [gr. διδασκαλία] – doctrine; there is no Hebrew equivalent for the Greek *Didaskalia*, but the closest term in the Hebrew bible would be the word usually translated as *Law*, which literally means *teaching* or *instruction* תּוֹרָה - tōrâ (tora), ref. Ex 13:9. *Diakonia*, [gr. διακονία] - ministry and diakonos [gr. διάκονος] – servant; in Old Testament שָׂרֵת - šārēt (sharet), ministry, minister, ref. Num 4:12.

While talking about Christian mission in a somewhat different, operational sense, as in the preaching of the Gospel, various literature sources discuss different divisions or levels of mission activities. Most often, they talk about three levels: individual, social, and cultural levels of Christian mission.⁹¹ The individual level is associated with the process of personal conversion and further Christian growth and maturing. The social level integrates every aspect and modality of Christian service directed to serving the needs of the other. This service level can be conducted individually or collectively, as directed towards the members of a single Christian community or towards those that are outside of it, or in other words, towards the so called wider social community.

The third level of Christian mission is carried out on the cultural level, and is often known as *deep mission*. It aims at radical transformation of each society's basic values, and the key beliefs on which that society rests. In explaining this part of the role that His disciples were to take, Jesus used a metaphor saying that they were to be *yeast* that has converted itself to give a completely new quality to the world to which He was sending them. The influence of Christian mission on general culture is slow, and the process difficult to notice, but once it has developed then the change becomes permanent. Hence, it is important that every believer is fully aware about the triplicity of his/her own personal mission, in order to engage on all three levels. This is equally important for the collective dimension of Christian communities of believers, that they be engaged on all three levels of Christian mission and have in mind their interconnection and inner equilibrium.

3.3. EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHES

3.3.1. THE HISTORY OF SEPARATION

In spite of the clarity in biblical teaching about the need for evangelization and social responsibility towards the poor, within

⁹¹ For example, Paul Windsor. "Three Levels of Mission Working Together." *The Magazine of the Australian Evangelical Alliance*. Victoria, Australia, 1, 2005. On this topic during the 1980s, Lesslie Newbigin wrote extensively in his books *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, *The Gospel as a Public Truth*, *Foolishness to the Greeks*, and others.

evangelical circles there are still differences regarding this issue, often with opinions in direct opposition to each other. The roots for such theological diversity can be traced back to the Middle Ages when the Church was the bearer of scientific, educational, cultural, health and social life. From the eighteenth century onwards many changes occurred, and the church lost its leading role in these areas. These jurisdictions became separated as was common throughout human history,⁹² and the church was left with only the areas of faith and eternity while organizations of secular society slowly took over the leading roles in all other areas of the society. The reasons for such a development in human history can be traced back to dualism in Greek philosophy about what is spiritual and material, supranatural and natural, coming from the heavens and being on the earth. This kind of thinking was then incorporated by Thomas Aquinas, which led to the sharp division between religion and science. This dualism also entered the protestant churches as well, influencing their theology, missiology, and relationship towards the society - in other words, the totality of their activities. On the other hand, it was obvious that secular institutions specializing in different areas of social work were far more effective than the church ones, which led them to try and maintain their spheres of interest. The question that arises here is the following: if public services (for instance, social services) proved to be more efficient than the church ones, what was the reason for such a long and at times fierce discussion within the Evangelical circles about the social responsibility of the Christ's followers?

3.3.2. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY

There are at least three reasons why the church cannot allow secular public institutions to take full responsibility for society.

First, the New Testament texts clearly call believers, as individuals and as church communities, to enter both areas of engagement, namely evangelization and social services within their surroundings.

⁹² The first great division of labour in human history occurred when farming and cattle ranching were separated, and then with the development of arts and crafts, leading to the creation and development of cities/city life. Specialization took place as a result of the division of labour leading to the productivity growth, as well as individual and collective wealth.

These two activities should be efficient, contextualized, interconnected, and complementary.⁹³

Second, there are areas of work that social services and state organizations overlook or fail to fulfill fully. In these cases, the church with its believers and specialized organizations can intervene for longer or shorter periods.

The third reason is related to the pastoral and spiritual nature and growth of the church and the community of believers: being obedient to the Word of God, they evangelize and carry out caritative services for people in need. Experience has shown that a holistic approach to church service integrating both evangelization and the service to the needy has meant the best results.

Social transformation is part of the message of and a natural out-growth of evangelism... (but) it will likely not take place through a dead evangelism: evangelism will likely not result in social transformation unless the church and Christian community witness by their lifestyles that they have been transformed. If we really mean business let us deflate our empty words and inflate our actions.⁹⁴

3.3.3. THE DEBATE CONTINUES IN EVANGELICAL CIRCLES

In spite of the constant and very thorough debates at different international conferences and congresses, numerous articles and books, this topic is still considered open. The consequences of this dualism can be found in different mission organizations, denominations,

⁹³ "The truth lies not in "either/or" but in "both/and." The task of the church is first evangelism to relate persons vertically to God by faith. These persons will then show love in action in society and serve until their hope of Christ's second coming becomes fact." Earle E. Cairns. *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966. Pg. 464. See also, Peter Kuzmic. "History and Eshatology: Evangelical Views." In *World and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*. Bruce Nickols (ed.) Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986. Pgs. 135-164.

⁹⁴ Vinay Samuel and Christopher Sugden, (eds.). *The Church in Response to Human Need* (Oxford, UK: Regnum Books, 1987. pg. 179.

and churches around the world⁹⁵ though three main viewpoints are most dominant.⁹⁶ The first is considered *fundamentalistic* or *conservative* and gives primacy to the historical understanding of mission only as evangelization – this approach was later articulated at the *Global Consultation on World Evangelization* (GCOWE, 1989, 1995, and 1997). Its main aim is church planting and developing church movements worldwide. The second is known as the *preferential option for the poor* and is repeatedly considered *Liberal Evangelical*, being advocated by several writers such as R. Sider, R. Padilla, S. Escobar (though at times their approaches are also deemed *radical*). This approach advocates not prioritizing words over action. The third view stands for balance and specific interaction between evangelization and social responsibility and was called *holistic mission* at the *Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism* in 1974. This approach advocates an integral, all-inclusive approach to mission while giving priority to evangelization.

Holistic mission is concerned with ministry to the whole person through the transforming power to the gospel. While holistic mission affirms the functional uniqueness of evangelism and social responsibility, it views them as inseparable from the ministry of the kingdom of God. Therefore, holistic mission is the international integration of building the church and transforming society. (...) Evangelical concern over the relationship between evangelism and social concern has contributed to the multiplication of specialized organizations. This dichotomy has been reflected in traditional evangelical mission's emphasis on evangelism and church planting despite their widespread involvement in education, health, and development. Growing out of concern for social need, evangelical relief and development organizations

⁹⁵ Thomas, Jacob. *From Lausanne to Manila: Evangelical Social Thought. Models of Mission and the Social Relevance of the Gospel*. Delhi: ISPCK, 2003. *Congress on the Church's Worldwide Mission*, Wheaton, 1966; *World Congress on Evangelism*, Berlin, 1966; *Workshop on Evangelicals and Social Concern*, Chicago, 1973; *Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization*, Lausanne, 1974; *World Consultation on World Evangelization*, Pattaya, 1980; *Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility* (CRESR), Grand Rapids, 1982; *Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need*, Wheaton, 1983; *Global Consultation on World Evangelization* (GCOWE), 1989, 1995, and 1997; *Lausanne Congress II on World Evangelism*, Manila, 1989.

⁹⁶ Scott A. Moreau. "Mission and Missions." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pgs. 636–638.

have multiplied. Unlike traditional missions, the relief and development groups have concentrated on physical and social needs, cooperating with other groups in their efforts.⁹⁷

Since 1974, Christian leaders have come together under The Lausanne Covenant to debate and discussion issues ranging from ministering to specific ethnic groups to evangelism and social responsibility. Chapter five relates to Christian social responsibility:

We affirm that God is both the Creator and the Judge of all. We therefore should share his concern for justice and reconciliation throughout human society and for the liberation of men and women from every kind of oppression. Because men and women are made in the image of God, every person, regardless of race, religion, color, culture, class, sex or age has an intrinsic dignity because of which he or she should be respected and served, not exploited. Here too we express penitence both to our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concerns and mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions for our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ. The message of salvation implies also a message of judgment upon every form of alienation, oppression and discrimination, and we should not be afraid to denounce evil and injustice wherever they exist. When people receive Christ, they are born again into his kingdom and must seek not only to exhibit but also to spread its righteousness in the midst of an unrighteousness world. The salvation we claim should be

⁹⁷ Douglas McConnell. "Holistic Mission." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pgs. 448 – 449. See also: Ronald J. Sider. *One-side Christianity: Uniting the Church to Heal a Lost and Broken World*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993. Bruce J. Nicholls. (ed.) *In Word and Deed: Evangelism and Social Responsibility*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Samuel Vinay and Chirs Sugden (eds.) *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Oxford: Regnum, 1987. Ram, E. R. *Transforming Health: Christian Approaches to Healing and Wholeness*. Monrovia: MARC, 1995.

transforming us in the totality of our personal and social responsibilities. Faith without works is dead.⁹⁸

The need to understand the relationship between these three views resulted in the *Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility* (CRESR), a conference held in Grand Rapids in 1982 and sponsored by the *Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization*. Similarly, the *World Evangelical Fellowship* sponsored the *Consultation on the Church in Response to Human Need* in Wheaton 1983. Both conferences affirmed the approach that evangelization cannot be separated from participation in assisting human needs and social transformation.

At the *Lausanne Congress on World Evangelism II* held in Manila, Philippines, in 1989, the balanced concept of *holistic mission* was given preference over the other two viewpoints, and at the end of the conference resulted in the *Manila Manifesto* – a text of critical importance for understanding the integrated concept of evangelical mission and social transformation. Here is full citation of chapter four: *Gospel and social responsibility*.

The authentic gospel must become visible in the transformed lives of men and women. As we proclaim the love of God we must be involved in loving service, as we preach the Kingdom of God we must be committed to its demands of justice and peace.

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 Saviour. 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.

⁹⁸ "The Lausanne Covenant." John Stott (ed.) *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Pg. 24.

The proclamation of God's kingdom necessarily demands the prophetic denunciation of all that is incompatible with it. Among the evils we deplore are destructive violence, including institutionalized violence, political corruption, all forms of exploitation of people and of the earth, the undermining of the family, abortion on demand, the drug traffic, and the abuse of human rights. In our concern for the poor, we are distressed by the burden of debt in the two-thirds world. We are also outraged by the inhuman conditions in which millions live, who bear God's image as we do.

Our continuing commitment to social action is not a confusion of the kingdom of God with a Christianized society. It is, rather, a recognition that the biblical gospel has inescapable social implications. True mission should always be incarnational. It necessitates entering humbly into other people's worlds, identifying with their social reality, their sorrow and suffering, and their struggles for justice against oppressive powers. This cannot be done without personal sacrifices.

We repent that the narrowness of our concerns and vision has often kept us from proclaiming the lordship of Jesus Christ over all of life, private and public, local and global. We determine to obey his command to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness".⁹⁹

Evangelism and social responsibility for social transformation can only be separated in that they represent two sides of the same coin. Social transformation is a true consequence of authentic Gospel preaching and is its natural ingredient. The Christian community is more effective in the long run in its call to witness the Gospel with words though only if it has built its new Christian identity and culture (worldviews, values, beliefs, customs, art forms, social relationships). A developed Christian identity and worldview result from Christian service that integrates preaching the Gospel with both words and deeds, and doing it under the authority of Jesus Christ from Nazareth.¹⁰⁰ If Christians are to reach this goal of true Christian service,

⁹⁹ "Manila Manifesto: An Elaboration of The Lausanne Covenant 15 Years Later." John Stott (ed.) *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Pgs. 236-237.

¹⁰⁰ Bruce Nicholls (ed.) *The Church: God's Agent for Change*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987. See also in Appendix two following texts, "Transformation: The Church in

they should do what was stressed by John the Baptist in Luke 3:11, namely with *economic repentance* which includes *spiritual, social, and political repentance* where needed.¹⁰¹

3.4. CHRISTIAN MISSION AND CHRISTIAN RELIEF CONVERGENCE

Throughout history, the church has shaped its relation to the outside world in four ways.¹⁰² According to the first way, the church promotes separation from the world by creating its own counter-culture as the sign of the Kingdom of God. The second view, sometimes called *Constantinism*, considers that the church should rule/govern the world with the authority of the state. The third perspective finds its inspiration in the contemporary theology of freedom – the church is considered the servant of the world and thus should be engaged in political movements for freeing the biggest number of people. The last, fourth view holds that the church should go into the world without becoming part of it.

The tension we notice in this last formulation arises from the fact that the church should be both in and outside (separated) from the world; though not isolated from the world, the church should not govern, nor participate in radical political movements and social revolutions, but should continuously advocate Evangelical values of the Kingdom of God. There are two ways the church can do this. One is to be part of the social and humanitarian activities directly assisting those who feel endangered – offering church social service in the form of di-

Response to Human Need” (The Wheaton '83 Statement), chapters “V. Social Justice and Mercy,” and “VII. Christians Aid Agencies and Transformation,” in, Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds.) *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Oxford: Regnum, 1987. Pgs. 260-261 and 263-264.

¹⁰¹ Viv Grigg. *Companion to the Poor*, Sutherland, NSW, Australia: Albatross Books, 1984. Pg. 79. Quoted from William E. Pannell. “Mission and Social Justice: An American Dilemma.” in *Toward the Twenty-first Century in Christian Mission*. James M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote (eds). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. Pg. 316.

¹⁰² “The goal of social action might or might not involve social revolution, violence, or civil disobedience in some degree. The goal of social action is to substitute just (or more just) for unjust (or less just) political structures.” Wagner C. Peter. “Social Action or Social Service.” *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach & Care*. James D. Barkley (ed). Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. Pg. 141.

rect relief and dealing with the consequences of poverty, misery, or disaster through developing resources and structures to fight the causes and prevent their return. Alternatively, it can actively participate in changing the social structures by participating in public socio-political life. This type of *church social action* deals with the causes of social problems such as poverty, starvation, and disease in a long-term manner with the aim of alienating and stopping them.¹⁰³ However, throughout church history this approach of consistent participation in changing social structures has caused great controversies and faced harsh resistance. The debate is ongoing even today, seeking answers about the relationship between the church and the world and looking for acceptable methods for social and cultural change that can be used by the church.

In its early days, the rise of church social activities was focused on providing direct assistance to the needy. The reasons for this are obvious since the church was banished and had a minority position in the political and social contexts during the days when it was beginning. In the cruel world of the Roman Empire, the early church was an example of teaching moral and social behaviour, as can be observed in Aristides' description of the early Christians,

They love one another, and from widows they do not turn away their esteem; and they deliver the orphan from him who treats him harshly. And he who has gives to him who has not, without boasting. And when they see a stranger, they take him into their homes and rejoice over him as a very brother... And if there is among them any that is poor and needy, and if they have no spare food, they fast two or three days in order to supply the needy their lack of food.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ "Social action focuses more on political, social, and institutional change. Preventive in nature, it seeks to keep social ills from developing in the first place. The church uses political interest groups, prophetic pronouncements (from both pulpit and organized church bodies), and educational programs to raise sensitivities and provoke on the part of Christians". Dennis Hollinger. "The Purpose of Social Compassion and Social Action." *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach & Care*. James D. Barkley (ed). Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. Pg. 137.

¹⁰⁴ Robert Webber. *The Church in the World: Opposition, Tension, or Transformation*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986. pg. 56.

The Christian social responsibility of the early church was not limited to food, shelter and clothing. It also included the areas of marriage and family, offering loans, educating and employing the needy, activities that can be called developmental social services. Within the context of one decadent and merciless society in the fourth century, the text *Apostolic Constitution* shows an exceptional and surprising range of social services by the early church. According to this document, the early church was called to provide,

“to the orphan the care of parents; to the widows the care of husbands; to those of suitable age, marriage; to the artisan, work; to the disabled, sympathetic response; to travelers, a house; to the hungry, food; to the thirsty, drink; to the naked, clothing; to the sick, visitation; to the prisoner, help... to the young persons, assistance that they may learn a trade.¹⁰⁵

After Constantine’s Milan Edict in the year 313 A.D., and especially after the 325 A.D. Nicea Assembly, the period of *Christendom*¹⁰⁶ began. During this time, the Church started using all the mechanisms of the contemporary government and was able to greatly influence politics, economy, education, science and all social structures. Throughout this long period, the church slowly developed various areas of social assistance. The economic growth of cities and the strengthening of the nobility gave rise to the greater non-church part of

¹⁰⁵ Thomas C. Oden. *Pastoral Theology: Essentials of Ministry*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983. “A widely ranging social ethic and embryonic political theology were implicit in primitive Christian care for the poor, later to be explicitly developed ... The relief work for the poor was closely connected to the Supper; alms came through alms box in the church; tithes were received in sabbath worship.” pg. 270.

¹⁰⁶ In its broadest sense, this term is related to Christianity as a territorial phenomenon. *Christendom* has also political and social implications in terms of Christian theocracy, or as a rule that advocates and implements Christian principles using the force of law. The Latin term *corpus christianum* - the Christian body, that is connected to *Christendom* refers to the Western Christianity as *Western Christendom* or what we know today as the Western Civilisation. Finally, Evangelical Christian use of the term *Christendom* as a synonym for secular Christianity while an authentic Christianity is considered to be one composed of a community of believers accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior and Lord. See: David Bosch. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in the Theology of Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Press, 1996. pgs. 274 -277.

the society's participation in philanthropy and offering of social assistance, creating social politics.¹⁰⁷

The Reformation brought significant change and greater diversity in viewing the Church's social role/status. While Lutherans developed its two-kingdom theology according to which the state only temporarily rules within the reality of this world, the Calvin Reformed Church became deeply involved in politics and the economy so that later analysts of church history considered it the most blatant example of a contemporary theocracy.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, Anabaptists and some other groups radically advocated complete separation between the church and the state, expressing skeptical views in regards to the states' ability to endorse and promote Christian values, faith and morality. The debate between different political evangelical theologians is still on going.

Several names have prominent importance and are linked to great humanitarian efforts, such as William Willberforce (1759-1833), *morally one of the greatest in English public life*, who led together with other British Evangelicals strong campaigns against the slave trade, supported the anti-slavery movement and "prison reforms, fought against pornography and public immorality, and opened schools for poor children, organized biblical societies and mission organizations, and stood for justice, dignity and freedom of all."¹⁰⁹ He influenced

¹⁰⁷ Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) develops the concept of degrees of poverty, similar to the one held by Miamonides, which distinguished ordinary poverty, acute poverty, and destitution, or chronic extreme poverty. *Summa Theologica*. New York: Doubleday, 1955. pgs. 1320-1323. Also, Catholic church tradition teaches about corporal works of mercy: 1. To feed the hungry; 2 To give drink to the thirsty; 3. To clothe the naked; 4. To visit the prisoner; 5. To shelter the stranger; 6. To visit the sick; 7. To bury the dead, and spiritual works of mercy: 1. To correct the sinner; 2. To teach the ignorant; 3. To counsel the doubtful; 4. To comfort the sorrowful; 5. To bear wrongs patiently; 6. To forgive all injuries; 7. To pray for the quick and dead.

¹⁰⁸ Arnold B. Come. "Christian Charity." *New 20th-Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. James D. Douglas. (ed.) Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991. pgs. 165-166.

¹⁰⁹ Peter Kuzmic in his article "The Righteous Social Reformer" in *Glas Slavonije* on 26. 02. 2007. Pg. 6., further says that, "the hardest and most responsible was his fight against the immoral slave trade and slavery in general. The life of Willberforce demonstrates that politicians can be righteous, devoted and honest, that politics and spirituality can stand together, and that politicians can be honest

many other areas of British public life and society, acting as a promoter for ethnical implications of the Gospel “and was one of the bravest and most persistent reformers of the English life.”¹¹⁰

George Mueller (1805-1989) was famous for his work in the area of supporting parentless children in England, while George Whitefield (1714-1770) and John Wesley (1707-1788), the two leaders of the Methodist movement, established numerous orphanages and other social care organizations during the Great Awakening period (1720-1750) in England and contributed to a strong Christian influence throughout the industrial revolution. Dwight Lyman Moody was a particularly important figure in many areas of Christian service in America, though his involvement in founding organizations offering assistance to the needy was perhaps greatest contribution.¹¹¹ George Marsden discusses his work,

During 1880s these organizations founded scores of rescue missions, homes for fallen women, and relief programs, worked among immigrants, and sought of provided jobs for countless numbers of poor people. Preaching the Gospel was always their central aim, but social and evangelistic work went hand in hand. Uplifting the sinner, as well as saving his soul, was high among their priorities. Though they were dedicated first to saving souls, greatly occupied with personal piety, and held pessimistic social views, their record of Christian social service in an era when social reform was not popular, was as impressive as that of almost any group in the county.¹¹²

During the last century the battles between Protestant liberals and fundamentalists have increased and one of the targets was so-called Social Evangelism. These battles made both sides loose since the

people with high ideals, clean consciousness, clear mind and great courage”. On Willberforce see also, David Bebbington. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to 1980s*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989. Pgs. 69-72.

¹¹⁰ Peter Kuzmic, *ibid.* Pg. 6.

¹¹¹ One of the best books on this topic is Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work 1865-1920*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1977.

¹¹² George M. Marsden. *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism 1870-1926*. New York: Oxford Universty Press, 1980. Pg. 83.

idea of social responsibility for Christians was common to both, though formulated differently and given different prominence in the variety of Christian activities throughout the world. Having in mind the limitations of church resources, both financial and human, the practical need was to decide which of the areas should be done within the limitations: evangelization (saving the lost souls) or feeding the hungry. The majority of Evangelicals decided to go for preaching the Word instead of doing good.¹¹³

The reasons for the differences between theologians regarding the social responsibility of the church and its mission in the world are far more complex than a mere discussion on the available funds/resources. As time passed by, consciousness grew among Evangelical fundamentalists that the Church was responsible for both *social action* and *social service*, and that this responsibility was inseparable from preaching the Gospel. The contemporary *emerging generation*, according to Dan Kimball,

Wonders if what they have been taught about evangelization is really the right way to think about, and practice, sharing the gospel of Jesus. They are wondering if being a Christian and being 'saved' is more than just saying a prayer to get to heaven. They are asking why the church does not talk more often about the Kingdom of God and why most Christians don't take an interest in social justice.¹¹⁴

In spite of the disagreements, it seems that consciousness about Christian social responsibility has gradually grown. This can be seen in later texts, books and articles, as well as in how churches jointly address this issue. Even those churches that can be described as fundamental or radical, focus their social responsibility on *social action*,

¹¹³ Russell PG. Shedd. "Social Justice: Underlying Hermeneutical Issues," in *Biblical Interpretation and the Church: The Problem of Contextualization*, D.A. Carson.(ed.). Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2002. Pg. 195.

¹¹⁴ Dan Kimbel. *Emerging Worship: Creating Worship Gatherings for New Generations*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994. Pg. 12. On the other hand, there are authors such as D.A. Carson. *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church: Understanding a Movement and Its Implications*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, who talk about social justice focusing on the role of citizens and Christian responsibility. Read Bruce W. Winter, *Seek the Welfare of the City: Christians as Benefactors and Citizens*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

Many of the churches ... claim that evangelicals have not participated sufficiently in the alleviation of human needs. (...) For evangelicals, concentrating their medical, agricultural, and educational ministries in countries where the needs are most severe, have outstripped their counterpart in the mainline churches in worldwide mission endeavor. Indeed, on a per capita basis, evangelicals have done more than have liberal churches, and certainly much more than has the general populace.¹¹⁵

On the other hand, churches that are not supportive of the *liberal theology of the social Gospel* put the center of their social engagement in the activities related to *social service*, while attempting to assist change social structures. The social activities of different parts of *Christ's catholic (universal) church* result in the gradual change of social institutions and structures and in *social action*, or direct assistance to the needy. Our fallen and sinful world needs all the assistance it can get, and from all the sides.¹¹⁶ To paraphrase the Apostle Paul¹¹⁷ we can say *but what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether 'social service' or 'social action', the world needs our help. And because of this I rejoice.* Regardless of the fact that the world as we know it will soon disappear relinquishing its place to the Kingdom of God, the people that inhabit earth need hope and help, here and now. Or, quoting father Cyprian's address to the Christians while looking at the disintegration of the

¹¹⁵ Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. Pg. 1059. Also, Harold Lindsell, "The Missionary Retreat," *Christianity Today*, 9. November 1971. Pgs. 26-27. William Hordern, *New Directions in Theology Today*, vol. 1, *Introduction*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1966. Pgs 75-76.

¹¹⁶ On the social dimensions of sin and the strategies for overcoming sin see Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. "...evil is both individual/personal and societal in nature, it must be attacked by a combination of strategies rather than merely one. Because individual human hearts and personalities are corrupted, regeneration is necessary if a lasting change is to be effected. On the other hand, because there are structures of evil in the world, which transcend individual human wills, some means of renovating these structures must be pursued. (...) a combination of regeneration and non-violent reform would seem to provide the best hope for combating sin and evil in the world. Thus, call for emphasis upon evangelism, personal ethics, and social ethics. Pg. 641

¹¹⁷ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Phil. 1:15, 18.

Roman Empire: "Let us stand upright amid the ruins of the world, and not lie on the ground as those who have no hope."¹¹⁸

3.5. CHRISTIAN SOCIAL TEACHING AND CHRISTIAN RELIEF

Christian churches have studied the issue of social assistance throughout the centuries, especially after the great social changes at the end of eighteenth century (the Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, etc.) when the abrupt process of secularization began (liberalism, capitalism, socialism), and especially by the end of nineteenth century when workers' issues were articulated. In these historical and socio-economic contexts, many important social questions were opened and raised. These led, on one hand, to revolutions, such as the one in the Russian Kingdom which resulted in socialism (communism) or, on the other, to development of a new *Christian social science*.¹¹⁹ This was an attempt by Protestant and Catholic theologians to provide answers applicable to the new social circumstances, while at the same time trying to unify different theological concepts with traditional church activities in the area of social care. These efforts resulted in the development of new systematic teachings about the social implications of the Gospel, namely Christian social ethics¹²⁰ within Protestantism and Catholic social science within the Catholicism.¹²¹ These changes oc-

¹¹⁸ Melba Maggay. *Transforming Society*. Oxford: Regnum, 1994. Pg. 108.

¹¹⁹ "Krscanski socijalni nauk." *Opci Religijski Leksikon*. Adalbert Rebic (ed.) Zagreb: Leksikografski Zavod Miroslav Krleža, 2002. Pg. 485.

¹²⁰ D. W. Gill. "Social Ethics." In *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*. Elwell, A. Walter (ed). Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984. Pgs. 1023-1027. Also, Cotham, P.G.C. (ed.). *Christian Social Ethics: Perspectives and Problems*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979. C. F. H. Henry. *Aspects of Christian Social Ethics: Some Basic Questions*. Grand Rapids: Baker 1980. S. C. Mott. *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982. J.H. Yoder. *The Politics of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994.

¹²¹ Catholic social teaching tradition (lat. *doctrina socialis Ecclesias*) is especially developed after *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Mater et magistra* (1961), *Pacem in terris* (1963) *Populorum progressio* (1967), *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987) and *Centesimus Annus* (1991). For more information about the central areas of Catholic Social Science, solidarity, personalism and subsidiarity see, *Socijalni dokumenti crkve: Sto godina katolickog socijalnog nauka*. Zagreb: Krscanska Sadasnjost, 1991. Also, *Papinsko vijeće 'Iustitia et pax': Kompendij socijalnog nauka Crkve*. Zagreb: Krscanska sadasnjost, 2005. Also, Stjepan Baloban. *Socijalni Govor Crkve u Hrvatskoj*. Zagreb:

curred after the Second Vatican Council. Theological considerations and more general and practical approaches to the dilemmas related to Christian relief can be found in a number of authors.

One important book on this subject is *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*,¹²² in which different modalities for integrating and intertwining Christian relief and evangelization are presented. The research in this book is based upon comprehensive historical, theological, and anthropological aspects.

Also important, though at times controversial, is the work of Ronald J. Sider. This author, in his book *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*¹²³ debates with conservative theologians and liberal economists on the root causes of poverty and economic poverty. Sider stresses that poverty is an extremely complex phenomenon, and he offers biblical guidance on how Christians should deal with this issue. In his other book, *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel*,¹²⁴ Sider lists concrete ways of combining evangelization with Christian social concerns while questioning what is at the very center of Christian thought: securing both the bodily and spiritual needs of people facing life troubles. His aim is to secure,

a full blown biblical theology that affirms both personal and social sin, both personal conversion and structural change, both evangelism and social action, both personal and social salvation,

Krscanska Sadasnjost, 2004. Bono Z. Sagi. *Da Sol Ne Obljutavi: Krcanski Pistup Dstoenim Problemima* Zagreb: Krscanska sadasnjost, 1989.

¹²² Edgar J. Eliston (ed.) *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*. Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 1989.

¹²³ Ronald J. Sider. *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: Moving from Affluence to Generosity*. Nashville: World Publishing, 1997.

¹²⁴ Ronald J. Sider. *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. "The proper way to distinguish evangelism and social action is in terms of intention. Evangelism is that set of activities whose primary intention is inviting non-Christians to embrace the gospel of the kingdom, to believe in Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord, and join His new redeemed community. Social action is that set of activities whose primary goal is improving the physical, socioeconomic, and political well-being of people through relief, development, and structural change." pg. 163.

both Jesus as a moral example and Jesus as a vicarious substitute, both orthodox theology and ethical obedience.¹²⁵

In *Churches That Make a Difference*,¹²⁶ Sider with his co-authors continues working on the theme related to achieving a full and balanced preaching of the Gospel, offering numerous examples and case studies. In talking about holistic ministry, Sider stresses that the church can talk about holistic ministry if it:

[1] Focuses on ministries of personal spiritual transformation as a path to social change; [2] Focuses on social services ministries as a door to evangelism; [3] Focuses on ministries of reconciliation that witness to unity in Christ; [4] Focuses on community development to express God's love for whole persons and communities; [5] Focuses on justice ministries that embody the empowering message of the gospel; [6] Focuses on reaching skeptics by demonstrating that the church can and does make a difference in society.¹²⁷

Some other important books focus on humanitarian activities, such as *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*.¹²⁸ In this book, the author compares contemporary humanitarian crises and catastrophes from Bosnia and Rwanda to Afghanistan while considering the different political contexts and causes of their origin. Analysing the social dynamism among some refugee and displaced populations together with forms of accompanying social pathologies, these texts can be useful for under-

¹²⁵ Ronald J. Sider. *Good News and Good Works: A Theology for the Whole Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999. pg. 10.

¹²⁶ Ronald J. Sider (et. al.) *Churches That Make a Difference: Reaching Your Community with Good News and Good Works*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002.

¹²⁷ Ronald J. Sider (et. al.) *Churches That Make a Difference*. Ibid. Also, in his last book *The Scandal of the Evangelical Conscience Why Are Christians Living Just Like the Rest of the World?* Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, Sider severely criticizes the overwhelming materialism of contemporary American Christians finding no difference in their behaviour from that of non-Christians. In his argumentation, he stands strongly for the return to Jesus' teachings and the good deeds.

¹²⁸ Sara K. Lischer. *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*. Ithaca: Cornell University, 2005.

standing the context in which Christian humanitarian mission is to be incorporated and effective.

A similar comparative approach, although a distinctive theoretical one, is presented in the book titled *The Politics of International Humanitarian Aid Operations*,¹²⁹ which includes the experiences of Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia. The book by Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*,¹³⁰ provides research on an extremely important area of relief operations and discusses the practical, political, and moral aspects of the functioning of humanitarian organizations while collecting and distributing humanitarian aid. The emphasis is put on the bureaucratization of the humanitarian organization and its work, while the author analyzes phenomena that accompany this process. Waters stresses that if a humanitarian organization is to be efficient in its mission, it should improve the decision-making process.

Bryant Mayers, an experienced executive of World Vision International, in *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development*¹³¹ presents a synthesis of theology, spirituality and social work as he has experienced it. What differentiates this book from those previously mentioned is that Mayers investigates poverty and its different causes in different cultures. Mayers' rich experience, acquired through the years of humanitarian work in church organizations, is highly significant, and offers a good foundation for my thesis and thoughts.

Christian social teachings are the foundation for Christian relief service. One of the definitions of the term *Christian relief* can be that it is an urgent provision of resources to reduce suffering resulting from natural or human-made disasters. It is, in essence, immediate and temporary, prolonged only when self-reliance is impossible.¹³² What differ-

¹²⁹ Eric A. Belgrad and Nitza Nachamias (eds.) *The Politics of International Humanitarian Aid Operations*. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997.

¹³⁰ Toni Waters. *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan: The Limitations of Humanitarian Relief Operations*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001.

¹³¹ Bryant Mayers. *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practice of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll & Monrovia: Orbis & World Vision, 1999.

¹³² Byron D. Klaus. "Relief Work." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. pgs. 817-818. There are more than 250 Christian agencies only in the U.S.A., offering assistance throughout

entiate Christian relief is that its mission is to involve and care for the total human being with all his/her dimensions and manifestations, including spiritual, physical, social, and cultural, and introduce him/her to the new life of the Kingdom of God.

The six key objectives in the theology of relief are the following:

1. Engagement in disaster relief must be efficient and effective, meeting real needs in a God-honoring way.
2. Relief efforts must be done with genuine care, compassion, and respect for a people and their culture.
3. The lifestyle and manner of relief workers must evidence that the Good News is true.
4. There should not be any attempt to proselytize, capitalize on tragedy, or discriminate in distribution of supplies.
5. The presentation of the Christian message must be adapted to the degree of knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ in the context being served.
6. The long-term effect on the people in their journey with Jesus Christ should always be considered.¹³³

3.6. CONCLUSIONS

I would like to conclude this chapter with a personal reflection. I've often thought about the story of the good Samaritan who saved the life of a man who was half dead and took care of his healing (Luke

the world. They are different in terms of theology and especially in interpreting the word *relief*. "While relief seeks to salvage human life and prolong survival in crisis circumstances, development is a process that enables a community to provide for its own needs, above previous levels. Development must be indigenous, comprehensive, and aimed at improved self-reliance." Pg. 818. More about development see in Edgar J. Elliston. *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*. Dallas: Word Pub., 1989.

¹³³ Byron D. Klaus "Relief Work." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pg. 818. Also, see, *Nineteen Christian Relief and Development Agencies in the Twenty First Century: Consultation Report June 1996*, in Vianey Samuel and Chris Sugden. *Mission as Transformation: Theology of the Whole Gospel*. Oxford: Regnum, 1999. Pgs. 392-409.

10:29-37). That is social work, worthy of praise, because without it that man would surely have died. However, I was particularly curious about what could have happened later on in the life of the man to whom the merciful help was offered. Did that man remember the injustice done to him, so that he spent the rest of his life in hatred and bitterness, unconsciously hurting himself and others around him? Or did the mercy of the good Samaritan and remembrance of that goodness, make out of him a merciful man, who helped others in their distress? There is no way to conclude what happened in the life of that man, only speculation.

However, I am certain that after that important event, which marked the life of that man and in some way was his turning point, he could have not stayed the same person. He had to make a decision of what he would become and stay for the rest of his life – an abuser or a merciful person. We cannot find out what his decision was, but we can be certain that at one point in his life he had to choose when he faced an obvious situation in which good and evil were mixed, as well as justice and injustice, violence and mercy.

There is one delusion among Christians, and that is that if we do not actively do some evil, we are spared from it. To the contrary, if we are the witnesses to some evil, and we do not react with opposition, we gradually become a part of it. We may decide only to do no evil, but while the evil and its consequences are around us and we decide to stay aside and to not get involved in solving the consequences of evil, we have not fulfilled Christ's teaching and our call in its fullness. Wartime conditions and being surrounded by social poverty and misery can show this quite clearly: all who miss out on doing deeds of mercy become a part of the general evil – whether they want to or not. No one is free from personal social responsibility, and everyone is forced to choose between evil and good. We have the freedom to choose between good or evil, but we simply do not have the freedom not to choose. Often it is said that the who suffers evil, will most probably do evil tomorrow, but it is also said that he who experienced a good today, can do good tomorrow. For that reason, the good deed of a Good Samaritan can have that social dynamic and the dimension of repetition. That is why Jesus concludes his story with a message to his contemporaries and us: *Go and do the same.*

Similar existential dynamics were played out in all of those who in some way were taking part in the war, whether in the army or as civilians. Moreover, all those who faced the violence, in one way or another, in personal crimes or a series of moral judgments, made their own decisions. No one could stay on the sidelines, especially not the church or believers. In those storms, brother-killing wars, general disasters, robberies, rapes and murders, believers and Christ's followers could not separate themselves from the victims and their cries for relevant answers. Offering material, emotional, spiritual and every other kind of humanitarian help to people and families in need, believers defined themselves as authentic followers of Christ, as salt and light, and as doers of the Word, putting themselves on the side of justice and mercy, on the side of truth and grace. And only then could the message of the Gospel fall on fertile ground, be accepted, grow and make its fruits, changing the lives of people and those around them.

In this real life, horrible situation what was the response of little groups of Evangelical Christians to the human suffering and material disasters after the outbreak of so many inter-ethnic wars and armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia? What did they decide to do? Did they simply pray for peace and the end of armed fights, blessing their enemies? Did they preach the Gospel to those willing to listen? Or did they offer only material assistance? And how? With whom, and with what?

4. THE MODEL OF THE EVANGELICAL HUMANITARIAN AID ORGANIZATION AGAPE

I think that today everybody has to give (up) a small portion of his/herself for the good society. I have been personally convinced in the efficiency of the quiet solidarity and impressive network that exists within society, being so diverse because it is built up not only of young idealists and grownups that desire to do something for the other one though have nothing too much to offer, but also of prominent businessman and industrial magnates with a great deal of money. This colorful and diverse variety is connected by shared enthusiasm for truthful/ honest activism through which they will be assisting the ones who need their assistance the most.¹³⁴

Building a model for an Evangelical humanitarian aid organization that will provide effective responses to the needs of the surrounding society and yet remain an authentic manifestation of the Christian culture from which it grew, demands knowledge and experience, though also effort and time. At the beginning of this chapter, the basic for maintaining the quality of work within the twelve areas of a not-for-profit organization are presented.

1. Planning for Quality: The organization defines clearly for its stakeholders its long-term purpose, and it plans for the medium and short term. It sets clear priorities and targets for its activities that are designed to meet the needs and expectations of its stakeholders and it reviews its progress.

2. Governance: The organization governs itself effectively and responsibly. It demonstrates accountability to the appropriate people and bodies, and the Board of Trustees has the skills and information it needs to achieve its mission.

3. Management: The management of a quality organization is appropriate to the organization's needs. Managers carry out all legal and financial responsibilities and are accountable to the organization's funders and other stakeholders. Managers carefully plan the development of the organization and promote effective communication.

¹³⁴ Juan Arias, *Paolo Coelho – Ispovijest Hodocasnika*. Zagreb: VBZ, 2001.

4. User-centered Service: The organization recognizes and values its users, and builds good relationships with them. It includes them in designing, delivering, reviewing, and assessing services in order to meet their needs. Users are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the organization.

5. Staff and Volunteers: The organization recruits and manages the right people to work as staff and volunteers, to the benefit of the organization and its users. The organization values its staff and volunteers and the contribution they make towards achieving the organization's aims.

6. Training and Development: Trustees, staff and volunteers are supported in gaining appropriate skills and knowledge to meet their responsibilities. Training and other learning opportunities are seen as an essential part of individual and organizational development. Training and development supports the organization in achieving its objectives.

7. Managing Money: The organization systematically attracts and generates money to support its work, and manages its funds effectively and prudently. It exercises financial control, and accounts for all its money within a framework of law and good practice.

8. Managing Resources: The organization manages its resources effectively, efficiently and ethically. Managers ensure there are enough resources for the planned level of activities. Premises and information resources are managed so that targeted users have the best possible access to services.

9. Managing Activities: The organization identifies its core activities, and develops appropriate processes and standards to deliver and improve them. Staff and volunteers are well informed about the processes and standards.

10. Networking and Partnership: The organization works with other organizations in a variety of ways, locally and nationally. It is more effective through sharing information, providing complementary services, joint working, and influencing change.

11. Monitoring and Evaluation: The organization collects and analyzes relevant information appropriately and systematically and uses it to help trustees, managers and staff to evaluate and improve the organization and its activities.

12. Results: The organization achieves its planned results, and learns from its experiences. Its results show improvements over time and compare well with those of similar organizations, providing value for money for users and other stakeholders.¹³⁵

4.1. FOUNDING THE ORGANIZATION

Founding humanitarian¹³⁶ organizations, especially religious ones, and their public action during the time of the former Yugoslavia was not possible. Organized forms of philanthropy,¹³⁷ regardless whether private or corporative, found no grounds for existence. However, after the Croatian War for Independence (1991 - 1995) a great majority of citizens showed enormous solidarity and readiness to assist the victims of war. Founding humanitarian organizations in war circumstances was more a response to the immense and sudden needs of the newly established Croatian state,¹³⁸ than a result of the natural

¹³⁵ *The System for Securing the Quality of Not-for-Profit Organizations*. Morana Smodlaka and Ivet Curlin (eds.) Zagreb: AED, 2005. According to PQASSO Charities Evaluation Services. Available online, <http://www.ces-vol.org.uk/> (Feb 14, 2007).

¹³⁶ *Humanitarian* - who promotes doing the good, who attempts to ease the life of the others by charity. Vladimir Anic and Ivo Goldstein. *Rjecnik Stranij Rijeci*. Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2002. Pg. 571.

¹³⁷ *Philanthropy* - practical effort that does good for others such as volunteer activities, foundations, charities, etc. *Rjecnik Stranij Rijeci*. Ibid. Pg. 430. This paper is dealing with those forms of individual and group philanthropy, which eliminate suffering and improve the general quality life.

¹³⁸ After the democratic changes in Croatia, humanitarian work became known in the public mainly due to the numerous actions for gathering humanitarian assistance. There were no theoretical debates on the role and the meaning of the caritative work, and there was no interdisciplinary dialogue either on theoretical or practical levels between social policy and social work. Stjepan Baloban "Karitativan rad Katolicke Crkve kao ishodiste socijalnog rada u Hrvatskoj." *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, XII, 3-4, Zagreb, 2005. Pg. 276.

growth and development of the civilian consciousness and the civil society, or the so-called *third sector (development)*.¹³⁹

The initiative to found a humanitarian, not-for-profit and non-denominational organization was given by Peter Kuzmic, former President of the Evangelical Church in the former Yugoslavia and then President of the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia.¹⁴⁰ On December 15th 1991, the Main Presbytery of the Evangelical Church held a meeting and adopted the Decision for Establishing an Organization for Offering Humanitarian Assistance, with a title of *Agape*. Having in mind that in those days Croatia was in a war with the Yugoslav Army, lacking a third of its territory and on the edge of humanitarian catastrophe, the Main Presbytery sent an appeal seeking urgent humanitarian assistance. The appeal was sent throughout the world to many churches, Christian organizations, and denominations that were in contact with the Evangelical Church, and contained a request to be sent even further:

The Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia, sympathizing with the pains and sufferings of an innocent population and the destruction of the Croatian economy and cultural heritage, with gratefulness to God for freedom and democracy, and in the light of the evangelical message of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ, with a deep sense for moral and spiritual responsibility, at the extended meeting of the Main Presbytery held in Zagreb on December 15, 1991, took the following decision:

- The Main Presbytery of the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia will send a call for prayer for peace to all evangelical and other churches in Croatia, as well as to other republics of the former Yugoslavia and around the

¹³⁹ Contrary to the market economy sector, and the public or state sector, the third sector is composed of not-for-profit and non-governmental (civil society) organizations, religious organizations, unions and different institutions and organizations founded by/through civil initiatives. Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier. "In Search of the Not-for-profit Sector. I: The Problem of Classification", *Voluntas*, 3, 1992, Pgs. 267-309.

¹⁴⁰ Peter Kuzmic, former pastor of two churches, is a founder and Director of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Croatia, and Paul E. Toms Distinguished Professor of World Missions and European Studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

world. The call for prayer will include information about the aggression on Croatia, the victims and other consequences of war, and ask for solidarity and widespread assistance.

- With gratitude to all that our churches, institutions, and believers have done so far, our social and charitable mission and deeds of love need improved organizational management and more efficient coordinates. Therefore, the management of this service will be confided to the newly elected Board for Coordination¹⁴¹ that will function under the name *Agape*, the humanitarian activity of the evangelical churches in the Republic of Croatia.¹⁴²

The so-called operational duties of the elected Board for Coordination were as follows:

1. To determine regional centres for collecting relevant information about the needs, and manage efficient distribution of humanitarian assistance;
2. To appoint coordinators for the regional centres and supervise their work;
3. To coordinate and synchronise the humanitarian activities with similar doings of other Christian, social and state institutions in order to hasten humanitarian actions;
4. To maintain regular communication with churches and other institutions abroad as well as with potential donors as to insure a regular inflow of humanitarian assistance;
5. To investigate other types and possibilities for Christian contributions to the humanitarian assistance and renewal of the Homeland.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ The *Board for Coordination of Agape* consisted of the following elected representatives: Peter Kuzmic (President), Franjo Prem, Zdravko Klescik (Vice Presidents), Adam Spis, Pavao Mogus, Bozo Marsanic (Secretaries), and Zeljko Karnicnik, Damir Spoljaric, Mihael Jonke, Milan Spoljaric, Olga Ullen and Stanko Jambrek (members). See: Decision of the EC in Croatia Presidency, *ibid.*, Pg. 1.

¹⁴² The decision of the Expanded Presidency of the Evangelical Church for founding *Agape*, December 15, 1991, Archives of *Agape* in Osijeku. Pg. 1.

¹⁴³ The Decision, *ibid.* Pgs. 1-2.

This Decision also recognized the basic principle along which the activities were to be conducted:

All these humanitarian activities will be conducted based on the Christian principles of love, truth and justice, in happy obedience to Christ's Command to *love your neighbor as yourself* and the Holy Bible's imperative to *do good to all*.¹⁴⁴

The first *Agape* appeal for humanitarian assistance included the following lines,

The need here is colossal. One third of Croatian territory has been brutally seized, and the population subjected to terrible atrocities. Villages and towns have been destroyed, and their inhabitants massacred. More than 250,000 homes have been destroyed. The number of refugees is now nearing the million mark. Help is desperately and urgently needed. In particular, we wish to draw your attention to the plight of our brothers and sisters in Christ whose homes and churches have been destroyed in this unprecedented aggression. Please give your support both in prayer and in giving to those who have lost their homes, their jobs, their income, their possessions, their loved ones. After consulting with Croatian authorities and other humanitarian organizations, it has become evident that help of all kinds is requested.¹⁴⁵

Although *Agape* grew within one Christian denomination, high representatives of different churches within the Reformed sphere were present at *Agape's* founding meeting such as Pentecostals and representatives of the Brethren Church. Later on, the meetings also included the Church of God in Croatia, the Christian Reformed Church and other independent local churches. With this, *Agape* from its very begin-

¹⁴⁴ The Decision, *ibid.* Pg. 2.

¹⁴⁵ However, the following items were especially urgent: (1) Foodstuffs not prone to decay. Powdered milk, oil, flour, rice, cereals, tinned foods; (2) Medicine of all kinds but especially anesthetics, analgetics, antibiotics, and material for dressing wounds; (3) Bedding, blankets, sleeping bags; (4) Various toiletries, sanitary napkins, disposable diapers, detergents, various detergents; (5) Warm underwear; (6) Some problems (eg. providing firewood for refugees without heating) can be solved only with money. *Agapea* document from December 1991 written in Zagreb, *Agapea* Archive in Osijek. Pgs. 1 i 2.

ning started nourishing its evangelical foundations and ecumenical openness. It was a bright example of inter-church cooperation and collectiveness, which was so far unknown within our church community and outside of it. Time will show how important this decision was and what were its long-term consequences.

An excerpt from the *Agape* newsletter reads,

The word *Agape* is used by many groups around the world, but in the former Yugoslavia, its meaning is particularly appropriate. In a place where killing your neighbor because of his difference has become a way of life, offering help and hope to people of all nationalities and religions grabs attention. We find that feeding Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in the same room makes people ask why. In addition, there we seize the chance to share how our Christian God is different and why He tells us to do good to all people. For many of us as we look at what is going on in that part of that world, we can feel very hopeless. Nevertheless, we serve a God of the impossible.¹⁴⁶

4.2. LEGAL PROVISIONS REGULATING HUMANITARIAN WORK

Finding the right form and legal framework for registering the *Agape* humanitarian organization was extremely important for its continued stable operation and management, as well as for crisis and damage management and the new registration that was required later on. Choosing the model for registering was also very important because the status of *Agape* was to be in the complex social and political context of one specific social environment.¹⁴⁷ There are three characteristics of this social and political ambience that are significant to mention here. The first is related to the functioning of the state ap-

¹⁴⁶ Joana Mocker, *Friend of World Vision*, in Rowell, J. *Magnify Your Vision for the Small Church*. Atlanta: Northside Community Church, 1988. Pgs. 61-62.

¹⁴⁷ About the relationship within the triangle of church-state-society and the integration of the church in the third sector, see: Sinisa Zriscak. "Religija, Crkva i treći sektor u srednjoj i istočnoj Europi." *Revija za socijalnu politiku*, II, no. 4. 1995, Zagreb, pgs. 305-314. Zriscak stands for the thesis that "the future social role of religion and church, and the process of inter-religious change can be best viewed through the relationship with the continuously growing and developing third sector in Central and Eastern Europe." Pg. 306.

paratus (governance), which kept both the characteristics and the mentality of the old Communist bureaucratic regime. Secondly, the Catholic Church and its institutions represented the majority of the Croatian populace, and from the very beginning of the functioning of the new state were favoured by official politics and governance. Thirdly, a significant portion of the Catholic Church hierarchy was overly suspicious of the Protestant churches considering them *a splinter in Croatia's national tissue*. The excessive quantity of humanitarian assistance sent throughout the years to Croatia by numerous Protestant churches and humanitarian organizations mostly from western countries generated an additional skepticism among the Catholic Church hierarchy. At times, they would label the Protestants in a well-known old Communist manner, as *foreign elements* and *pro-western agents*. This image was strengthened even more by the frequent public appearances of *Agape* in the media. On the other hand, the media exposure and public presence allowed the greater participation of Protestants in changing the laws which regulated the organization and functioning of religious communities, such as introducing religious teaching in the public education system, regulating social and humanitarian work, regulating churches' media activities, implementing tax relief and exemptions, registration procedures, and media and public activities of religious communities.

Since 1991, there were three periods and three forms of legal regulations affecting *Agape's* humanitarian work. During the first period, the Directorate for Expelees, Returnees and Refugees of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, based upon the Notification of the Central Bureau of Statistics,¹⁴⁸ issued an approval, which permitted *Agape* to ease import restrictions and distribute humanitarian assistance. This period did not last long – pressured by the war circumstances and having in mind the increase in the number of humanitarian organizations within the country, the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia issued in a short period of time the well-prepared *Law on Humanitarian Assistance*¹⁴⁹ with an aim to legally regulate this important

¹⁴⁸ Central Bureau of Statistics based upon the *Information on the Classifications of the Business Operators/Subjects according to the NKD* included aligned *Agape* within the activities of the religious communities and assigned it the registration number 1501348. *Agape* Archive in Osijek, Pg. 1.

¹⁴⁹ "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine"), 83/92.

area that had begun suffering different abuses. The Law placed the humanitarian activities¹⁵⁰ of religious communities under a separate category and proscribed different rules for registration compared to other organizations. During December 1992 and in the statutory term according to the Law, *Agape* informed the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare about its program and plan and was able to continue with its humanitarian activities. This opportunity was also used to register the humanitarian activities of different distribution centers throughout Croatia.¹⁵¹

Legal regulations on the work and the process of registering religious organizations in Croatia were an important step. Until the *Law on the Legal Position of the Religious Communities*¹⁵² was issued in 2002, the functioning of religious communities in the newly founded state of Croatia was regulated through the old, and in many instances, backward, partial and generally considered poor *Law on the Legal Position of the Religious Communities*¹⁵³ from 1978, from the time of Communism. Until 2003 there was no adequate registry for religious communities and their organizational units (sub-organizations); they had their legal status only *de facto*, not *de jure*.¹⁵⁴ This problem of defining the legal personality and characteristics of religious communities had become even more complex with the addition of a law that covered defining the le-

¹⁵⁰ Humanitarian assistance according to this Law includes material and financial goods that are aimed for war invalids and civil invalids of the Croatian War for Independence and their families, then for refugees, the displaced and persons in need of social and health care due to natural or other disasters, and for other users of social welfare regulated by special provisions. Article 1, the *Law on Humanitarian Assistance* ("People's Gazette" 83/92) from December 27, 1992.

¹⁵¹ A memo from the Ministry of health and Social Welfare from January 5, 1993 states, "On December 22nd 1992 the Ministry has received information about the humanitarian activities of your organization related to collecting and distribution of humanitarian assistance. Since your organization has acted in accordance to the Law, the Ministry is informing you that you can continue with your humanitarian activities." *Agape Archive in Osijek*, Pg.1.

¹⁵² "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine"), 83/02.

¹⁵³ "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine"), 14/78 and 52/88.

¹⁵⁴ This frequently led to property related problems, problems in regards to opening a checking account in the bank, entering into an agreement to hire a warehouse, or buying groceries for distribution, even on installing telephone connections, etc.

gal personalities of an organizational unit within religious communities and regulating the conditions for their functioning.¹⁵⁵ In this context, the legal position, legal personality and functioning of *Agape* as an organizational and autonomous part of the Evangelical Church remained undefined similar to *Caritas*, the humanitarian organization of the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia. Due to these circumstances, the legal solutions that were used by *Caritas* were at times used by the *Agape* Board of Directors.¹⁵⁶

The new *Law on the Legal Position of Religious Communities* partially abated the discrepancy between the legal provisions for the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and the rest of the religious communities. Namely, the Holy See and the Republic of Croatia stipulated four international agreements that regulated several areas: legal issues, economic issues, education and culture, and care for Catholic believers in the army and police forces.¹⁵⁷ Today in Croatia, there are four levels in the law regulating church registration. The first level belongs to the Roman Catholic Church, which enjoys the privileges of the international agreement and other social privileges; on the second level are those religious communities that have signed an agreement with the Croatian government on issues of joint interest;¹⁵⁸ the third level belongs to those that have no agreement with the government but are registered within the Register of Religious Communities; and on the fourth level are those religious communities registering at first as civil society organizations and entering the Register of Religious Commu-

¹⁵⁵ At times, there were attempts to resolve the poor quality of this Law by voluntary arbitration by the Commission on relations with religious Communities, though with no significant impact. Even more, the Commission's beneficent intervention would be at times counterproductive.

¹⁵⁶ In different departments of the Ministry of health and Social Welfare, *Agape* was occasionally called the *Protestants' Caritas*.

¹⁵⁷ "People's Gazette - International Agreements" ("Narodne novine - Međunarodni ugovori"), 2/97; 32/97; 18/98.

¹⁵⁸ The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Evangelical (pentecostal) Church in the Republic of Croatia, the Christian Adventist Church in the Republic of Croatia, and the Union of Baptist Churches in the Republic of Croatia on Issues of Joint Interest. "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine") no. 196 (December 15, 2003).

nalities after five years, when the number of their believers has increased to five hundred.

The third period of legal regulation of *Agape* work began when the new *Law on Humanitarian Assistance*¹⁵⁹ was enacted and when the Central State Administrative Office of the Republic of Croatia registered *Agape* at first as an organizational part of the Evangelical (Pentecostal) Church in the Republic of Croatia in its Register of Religious Communities of the Republic of Croatia.¹⁶⁰ After that, the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare approved *Agape* activities in the area of humanitarian aid.¹⁶¹ According to this Law, the definition of humanitarian assistance was improved and more full in scale than the previous one,

The Law deems humanitarian assistance as gathering material and financial goods, professional and profound psychosocial assistance (psychological assistance and assistance in social adjustment) and other services aimed for the socially handicapped regulated with special provisions, the victims of natural and other disasters, as well as to persons whose income is below the national poverty level. Humanitarian assistance will be free of charge.¹⁶²

What was completely new within this Law was that it offered special legal status to the humanitarian organizations. The Law also required that the government provide humanitarian organizations with information relevant to their activities and that the government cooperate with these organizations on matters of common interest.

The Law deems humanitarian organizations as those granting humanitarian assistance with an aim to protect the health of the citizens; secure and improve their quality of living especially in regards to food and lodging; securing conditions for education and offering assistance to restore housing, public and other con-

¹⁵⁹ "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine"), 96/03.

¹⁶⁰ The Decision of the Central State Administrative Office, May 24, 2004. Record no. 7.55. Archive of *Agape*, Osijek, Pg. 1-2.

¹⁶¹ The Decision of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, April 30, 2004. Archive of *Agape*, Osijek, Pg. 1-2.

¹⁶² Article 1, The Law on Humanitarian Assistance, "People's Gazette" ("Narodne novine") 96/03.

struction; gathering and organizing activities with children and youth, and with people with special needs, organizations whose assistance to either of the target groups/activities is conditioned by their membership, who are working for the common good and as such have a special legal status.¹⁶³

The Law also proscribes the obligation for keeping official records about the work/activities of the humanitarian organizations as well as an obligation for regular reporting to the relevant Ministry. These records and reports are related to the gathered humanitarian assistance (both material and financial), the offered psychosocial assistance and services, and the target groups receiving the donations/assistance.¹⁶⁴ These data are certainly not sufficient and represent the minimum data required for successful management of the organizations. On this issue read more in Chapter 4.5.

4.3. THE PARADIGMS OF THE ORGANIZATION

4.3.1. SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN WORK – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

In this Chapter, a briefly look at the similarities and differences in the terms social work and humanitarian engagement will be presented. As in many other areas of social sciences and the humanities there are variations and disagreements in defining certain terms, as it is in this case. However, one of the internationally accepted definitions for social work is the following,

The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social workers intervene at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ Clanak 3, *Zakona o Humanitarnoj Pomoci*, "Narodne novine", 96/03.

¹⁶⁴ *Manual on Models and Types for Handling Humanitarian Assistance Evidence*, "Narodne novine," 39/04.

¹⁶⁵ Definition by IASSW (International Association of Schools of Social Work) and ICSW (International Council of Social Welfare), accessed online at: <http://www.iassw-aiets.org/en/>, Feb 10, 2007.

Having in mind that all definitions (in one way or another) carry within themselves certain weaknesses, the definition from above is limited in that it fails to mention categories such as social stability in unpredictable/unstable historical and political contexts, harmony of interhuman relationships, respect for traditions and cultures of different ethnic groups, and so forth. Lorenz may be the best in expressing the variety of doubts, tensions, and contradictions of this profession.¹⁶⁶

Although there are some similarities between the humanitarian work of some organizations and social work, there are also great differences. The focus of the humanitarian work of humanitarian organizations, regardless of whether they work alone or in alliances, is on the persons who find themselves in circumstances of humanitarian disaster or catastrophe, and it is to,

... initiate, organize and implement or participate in the regular or extraordinary activities of solidarity assisting persons in need and the victims of great natural, ecological and other disasters, to deal with the consequences of mass sufferings, epidemics and armed conflicts in the country and abroad, securing a certain amount of material goods for covering those needs.¹⁶⁷

The main difference between humanitarian assistance and the activities undertaken by the offices/institutions for social work is in mobilizing a large number of volunteers for coordinating different humanitarian programs and projects. Humanitarian organizations also organize long-term education and training projects for citizens to participate in services and activities, and raise their consciousness about the need for solidarity and activism towards those that have found themselves in need suddenly, due to a natural disaster or on a long-term basis, such as for handicapped. Apart from this, humanitarian organizations are dealing with all those activities (unlike social welfare

¹⁶⁶ "It is its paradigmatic openness that gives this profession the chance to engage with very specific (and constantly changing) historical and political contexts while at the same time striving for a degree of universality, scientific reliability, professional autonomy and moral accountability. Lorenz, W. "Social Work in Europe - Portrait of a Diverse Professional Group." In, Sven Hesse (ed.) *International Standard Setting of Higher Social Work Education*. Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2001. Pg. 21.

¹⁶⁷ Article 3. point 7, *The Statute of the Red Cross of Croatia*, ("Narodne novine," 68, 2002).

organizations) that contribute to the social processes towards reconciliation, building a culture of peace, nonviolence, coexistence and tolerance, or in general, assisting humanization and harmonization of human relations.

According to this, the differences between the social and humanitarian work are related not only to certain aspects in the areas of their engagement, but also in the strongly accentuated volunteer component, or the mass citizens' participation in the humanitarian activities. In addition to this, we can add the sources of income, international networking, size of the projects, the level of professionalism and training, etc. In addition, humanitarian organizations are mainly non-governmental in nature while social welfare institutions are mostly state-owned, private or in collective (state plus private) ownership.

4.3.2. VISION, MISSION, VALUES

The areas in which profit organizations differ from the not-for-profit ones is in their vision¹⁶⁸ and mission.¹⁶⁹ While the profit-oriented organizations are primarily motivated by generating profits, the not-for-profits are led by their vision and mission that stresses the very reason for their foundation and the purpose of their work. This is why it is crucial that both the vision and the mission are clearly defined and known by everybody – the members of the organization as well as the members of the Board, the employees and the volunteers. In addition, what is especially important is that all of them want to accomplish the vision and mission of their humanitarian organization with passion.

¹⁶⁸ A good example about what vision is can be found in Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Wisdom of the Sands*. "If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to gather wood, give orders, and divide the work. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."

¹⁶⁹ "Mission, as a feeling, is an emotional reaction to questions related to what people do, why they do it, what are they proud of, and what they believe in". Adrew Campbell and Kiran Tawady. *Mission and Business Philosophy: Winning Employee Commitment*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1990. The Ashridge 'model' of defining mission is composed of four components: the *purpose* (why that organization exists), the *values* (what does the organization believe in), *organizational strategy* (directionality of the activities), and *standards of behaviour* (organizational culture and management style). Ralph D. Stacey. *Strateški menendžment i organizacijska dinamika*, Zagreb: Mate, 1993. Pg. 212.

Passion is of a key importance for raising the chance for completing the organization's tasks, though it is not the only one. The success of not-for-profit organizations is conditioned by their vision, clearly defined mission and value system, and of course by their strong will and devoted hard labour.

As a not-for-profit and civil society organization *Agape* was also founded with its own objective – a mission aimed to fulfill certain individual or group needs. *Agape's* mission was based upon the biblical principles of love for our neighbors, Christian social ethics, and the social responsibilities of the Church. Organizing humanitarian relief was initiated by the expectation for the near arrival of the Kingdom of God and the hope for a better world, a world without violence, wars, discrimination, impatience, injustice, inhuman poverty, and suffering. *Agape* aims at building a world that is permeated with Christian values, governed by peace, forgiveness and trust, justice, righteousness and freedom, prosperity, solidarity and social responsibility and equal opportunities for all.

The rest of the values included in the *Agape* vision are shared responsibility and respect for all participants within the humanitarian work process, publicity and transparency, respect for differences and ecumenical and interreligious tolerance. In accordance to that mentioned above, *Agape's mission* was defined as follows,

Agape is a humanitarian relief agency of the Evangelical Church and other cooperative religious bodies in the Republic of Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its mission is to provide humanitarian relief in response to the suffering of refugees and other victims of the war in the former Yugoslavia by alleviating human suffering and promoting interethnic and interreligious reconciliation. In addition, *Agape* endeavors to demonstrate in a nonsectarian way an understanding of Christian principles as it actively and holistically helps people in serving the physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of life.¹⁷⁰

This way mission became a fundamental for *Agape* decision-making, past and future, and *Agape* programs and projects, by offering a direction and a motivating message for different target audiences, in-

¹⁷⁰ Mission Statement, *Agape* Archive Osijek. Pg. 1.

cluding the donors, users, volunteers, the media, and of course – the Board.¹⁷¹

4.3.3. STATEMENT OF FAITH

Christian para-church not-for-profit organizations, as opposed to civil ones, apart from their mission have a statement of faith, denominational or non-denominational, based upon the *Holy Scripture*. While vision is directed towards the future and the changes that will occur in some of the areas of interest to the organization, mission is associated with the present and involves what the organization is currently doing to achieve its vision.

The system of values defines the worldview and is the basis on which both the vision and the mission stand as well as the ambience in which they operate. The statement of faith, however, talks about the deeper motives for founding the organization and advocates realization of its mission. That is why the success in fulfilling vision and mission is frequently connected with the religious zeal, spiritual growth and maturity of the ones that lead and are active in the Christian not-for-profit organization.

As its statement of faith, *Agape* accepted the *Apostle's Creed*, the *Nicean Creed* and the *Lausanne Covenant*. The fifth chapter of the *Lausanne Covenant*, titled *Christian Social Responsibility*, is especially important for the *Agape* mission.¹⁷² Equally important is the fourth chap-

¹⁷¹ "The various ethnic relief agencies tend to look after their own kind, but the emphasis to *Agape* workers was that they were to look after *all* kinds. Gradually *Agape* all-volunteer relief agency gained the reputation for rectitude and even-handedness, as well as the inspired, selfless love that its title embodied. This *agape* love began to draw people of all three ethnic groups to the place where the workers worshiped." David Manuel. *Bosnia: Hope in the Ashes*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 1996. Pg. 89.

¹⁷² "The *Lausanne Covenant*." John Stott (ed.) *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. pg. 24. See also: Jacob Thomas. *From Lausanne to Manila: Evangelical Social Thought. Models of Mission and Social Relevance of the Gospel*. Delhi: ISPCCK, 2003. Harold W. Fuller. *People of the Mandate: The Story of the World Evangelical Fellowship*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988.

ter of the *The Gospel and Social Responsibility* within the *Manila Manifesto*.¹⁷³

While both vision and mission are related to the present, the statement of faith belongs to eternity. It provides the organization with the dimension of spirituality and transcendent character needed to give a deeper sense of its existence. The statement of faith, individual, and corporate provides the basic eschatological hope that all our visions, missions and deeds, here and now, but also there and always, have a meaning and lead to eternity.

4.3.4. AIMS, TASKS, AND PROGRAMS

Every not-for-profit organization, apart from its vision and mission, should also clearly define its aims, tasks and programs.¹⁷⁴ *Agape* defined its organizational long-term and strategic goals related to the areas of social action and social compassion as follows,

- Offering humanitarian assistance to persons having a status of refugees, exiles or returnees regardless of their religious, national, racial, sex, age, political or other affiliation;
- Offering humanitarian assistance to persons that have a right to social welfare;
- Offering humanitarian assistance to neglected, abused, abandoned or children who lack parental care;
- Developing interchurch and interreligious cooperation, exchanging information, networking, developing ecumenical

¹⁷³ "Manila Manifesto: An Elaboration of The Lausanne Covenant 15 years later." John Stott (ed.) *Making Christ Known: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. Pgs. 236-237.

¹⁷⁴ The difference between *project*, *program*, and *initiative* is in their timeframe and the complexity of their organization. A program assumes long-term participation in a certain activity and represents a more lasting commitment of the organization. A project is shorter, a few months up to a year, and is less complex and frequently subject to a change. An initiative is a short-term and simple action, which never lasts longer than a few months.

and interreligious dialogue, supporting joined initiatives in building the culture of peace;

- Promoting intersectorial cooperation and cooperation between different civil society organizations;
- Launching joint initiatives for promoting the social welfare system;
- Developing and maintaining *Agape* capacities and human resources;
- Promoting Christian religious teachings and Christian spiritual culture;
- Developing consciousness about social responsibility to all imperiled categories of citizens, supporting and including the believers and other active citizens in humanitarian projects and programs;
- Promoting Evangelical values, spiritual renewal and active Christian love between the people;
- Initiating a foundation for other humanitarian and social organizations in the country and abroad.¹⁷⁵

The concrete tasks through which *Agape* fulfill's its long-term strategic goals are,

- Gathering material and financial goods aimed for socially imperiled persons and distributing them in accordance with special regulations, e.g., to persons whose income is below the national poverty level;
- Offering professional psychosocial care, individually or jointly with the local government and self-government departments responsible for social welfare;
- Organizing cultural philanthropic events;

¹⁷⁵ The Decision for Changing and Amending the *Agape* Statute, article 2 from March 18, 2004, *Agape* Archive Osijek.

- Participating in advertising activities aiming at gathering humanitarian assistance;
- Finding donors in the country and abroad for the purpose of implementing goals and activities;
- Visiting patients in hospitals and prisoners in jails;
- Implementing other related social and humanitarian activities.¹⁷⁶

Agape implements its humanitarian programs through different forms of assistance such as distributing relief through materials or medicine, or through social, psychological, spiritual, educational, and other assistance.

- Material relief: food, dry food (family packages) or cooked food (public kitchens), clothing and shoes, providing means for hygiene, or furniture, bedding and cooking pots.
- Financial assistance: one-time assistance for overhead expenses, purchasing medications or covering the costs for medical treatment;
- Medical assistance: medications and medical materials, orthopedic apparatus/aid;
- Social assistance: orphanages, nursing homes, prisons, centers for drug addicts and former alcoholics, social and legal advice;
- Psychological assistance: psychological counselling centers, summer camps for children and grownups, publishing popular literature and targeted distribution;
- Spiritual assistance: worship in refugee camps, social welfare institutions, prisons and churches, publishing Christian literature and its targeted distribution, Christian program video and audio production;

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., article 3.

- Assistance in education: in regular education (tuition, books, accessories), supplementary education for psychological counsellors, social welfare workers, pedagogists and psychologists, publishing professional psychological literature and targeted distribution;
- Social advocacy and peace building: organizing public events on topics of interest (round tables, public forums, public lectures, book promotions, concerts), participating in public debates (new laws, different social phenomena which have an ethical dimension, etc.);
- Renewal projects: assistance in moving the returnees and their families, building and renewal of family homes;
- Economic development projects related to the returnees: agricultural tools, seeds, construction materials, animal feed, small business economy renewal, lending small amounts without interest for launching small businesses;
- Different initiatives: delivering Christmas packages (Operation Christmas Child organized by the Samaritan's Purse, etc.)¹⁷⁷

4.3.5. TARGET GROUPS

The target groups to which *Agape* offers its assistance are determined in two ways: the groups that are targeted due to law and the groups that the Board of Directors decides to target. Their common denominator is that the persons in both groups have suffered great material losses or they are socially marginalized and in hardship/ poverty.¹⁷⁸ According to conducted inquiries, the most socially endangered

¹⁷⁷ According to the *Agape Progress Report 1991-1995 and Program for 1996*. February, 1996. *Agape* Archive, Osijek. Pgs. 16-26. On programs and projects management, see Chapter 7 of this research.

¹⁷⁸ Poverty can be manifested in different ways such as the lack of income and means necessary to ensure their existence, hunger and famine, lack of health services, limited or lack of education access and other basic services, high mortality, diseases, homelessness and lack of proper living conditions, unsecure environment, social discrimination, and isolation. Non-participation in the decision-making processes on a civil, social, and cultural level is also characterized

categories are the following: children, displaced persons, the so-called social cases, elderly with low pensions, women, the socially abandoned, persons with disabilities, victims of war, returnees, minorities, refugees, asylum seekers, gypsies, the uneducated, persons from rural or poor areas, and the unemployed.¹⁷⁹ The members of the listed groups have an opportunity to receive humanitarian assistance regardless of whether they became destitute due to the war or because of unemployment, an inadequate state system for social care, lack of education, disabilities, or age.

Agape defined the following target groups,

- Children and youth that need assistance in accommodation, education and health care due to their social status;
- Persons who survived natural or other disasters and are in need for social assistance;
- Social welfare users as proscribed by the law;
- Families of disabled military or civilian veterans of war;
- Exiles and refugees;
- Persons with handicap and their families;
- The elderly and the sick;
- Persons in need of social services and health care as decided by the *Agape* Board of Directors.¹⁸⁰

At the beginning, the users were mainly refugees and expelled persons in need of food and shelter, unaware of their war stress and

by the lack of human rights. The complexity of poverty can also be defined as a constant or chronic lack of resources, abilities/capacities, choices security, and power needed to achieve the necessary standards of living and realization of civil, economical, political, cultural, and social rights. According to *The Second Draft of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for B&H*, Extract: Poverty Profile for BiH. Accessed online <http://www.esiweb.org> (February 10, 2007). Pg. 21.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 24-27.

¹⁸⁰ *Agape* Program regarding humanitarian assistance from March 18, 2004.

possible emotional traumas. But, as their refugee experience¹⁸¹ broadened (extended) and they were faced with the multifaceted process of adjustment to new surroundings, these were multiplied with social, psychological, educational and spiritual needs which were, typically, more complex and harder to fulfill'. Although there is no research on the post-war adjustments of refugees/displaced people or returnees in Croatia, experiences from other areas of the world are showing that after the first period of adjustment within the new social, cultural and economic circumstances, which usually lasts three to four years, the persons experience late reactions from the traumas and stress-related situations experienced earlier. This was the main reason to offer them a full spectrum of new forms of assistance, especially the children, adolescents and the long-term endangered categories of users.

After ten years, the humanitarian assistance focus has shifted from supporting the immediate causes of war devastation and social disintegration toward activities that eliminate their causes. This approach gradually turned to a new form of work focused on social rehabilitation so the endangered target groups would be assisted in becoming equal parts of the society.¹⁸²

4.4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

There are at least two basic factors, which significantly influenced the establishment of *Agape* and its functioning. First were the fundamental and founding documents as already quoted from the Decision on Founding *Agape* and the Statute created in accordance with

¹⁸¹ Keller divided the refugee experiences in ten continuous phases: perception of being threatened, decision about the escape, period of extreme danger and fleeing, reaching safety, the stay in the refugee camp, repatriation, permanent settling in another country, early and late phases of settling in, adjustment and acculturation, residual phases and changes in behaviors caused by these experiences. Available online, <http://www.seeran.org/expanded/?id=00094> (February 10, 2007).

¹⁸² This approach to humanitarian work that has been described above "harmoniously corresponds to the tendency of the official social welfare policy to delegate authority on the local level leaving the centralized approach in resolving social issues and becoming the motivating factor and support in decision-making, financing and undertaking measures for resolving social policy issues." *Final Proposal of the Law on Humanitarian Assistance*, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, Zagreb, February 2003, Pg. 11.

the regulations and customs of the business community of that time. The second and more important factor was the organizational structure of the Evangelical Church, the founder of *Agape*. Almost all elements of the organizational structure of the Church and its culture transferred swiftly to the newly established humanitarian organization. It should be said that the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia (ECRC) is a loose alliance/union of interlinked local churches and institutions enjoying full autonomy within their areas of operation. The alliance functions on a level of sharing joint functions and serves as a point for mutual coordination, while operatively every church continues working autonomously and in accordance with the decisions of their local church Boards.¹⁸³ This is one of the three modalities used for establishing a hybrid interchurch alliance: Episcopal, Presbyterian and Congregationalist.¹⁸⁴ They all have their own advantages and disadvantages. By taking elements from each of the models and building them within the new church alliance model, we might expect to create the best organizational solution. On the other hand, instead of the anticipated synergy of positive elements, by this step we might get a synergy of negative ones, which will put in jeopardy either the organization as a whole or some of its parts and functions.

The *Agape* Board of Directors as the main management body was responsible for the everyday managerial functions such as planning, organizing, and supervision of the activities of the humanitarian organization. The Board regularly reported to the Main Presbytery of the ECRC. These reports were later presented before and adopted by the ECRC Assembly. This way the Assembly was acting as a regulatory body while the National Presbytery of ECRC was responsible for coordinating the church activities between the two Assembly meet-

¹⁸³ For instance mission development, publishing, theological higher education, relationships with the state and local authorities, ecumenical activities, pastoral work with children and youth, humanitarian assistance, cooperation with local and international churches, building churches, theological and doctrine-related issues, and so forth.

¹⁸⁴ The difference between the various models is in the level of centralization and hierarchy in the decision-making process. Traditional ecclesiology distinguishes between the Episcopal, Presbyterian, Congregational, and non-governmental models, although only the Episcopal and Congregational might be considered as *real* models. See, Millard J. Erickson. *Christian Theology*, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995. Pgs. 1070-1083.

ings.¹⁸⁵ The coordination between the National Presbytery and the Board of Directors was facilitated by the fact that several members of both bodies were the same and administering/performing identical or similar tasks/functions.¹⁸⁶ *Agape* had a Director that was responsible for the everyday operative and legal management of the organization. He was directly responsible to the Board of Directors, the Main Presbytery, and the Assembly of the ECRC. This system allowed *Agape* to maintain a solid organizational structure functioning on two levels using all necessary managerial mechanisms.

Agape's relatively centralized structure could not be kept for long because fairly soon (in only a year from the organization's founding) different local evangelical churches throughout Croatia undertook their own humanitarian activities,¹⁸⁷ hence the necessity to expand the existing organizational and management concept by introducing new solutions. Some of them were 'discovered' when *Agape* had to adjust to the regulations of the first Law on Humanitarian Assistance. By the end of December 1992, the *Agape* secretariat registered its active branch-offices at the Directorate for Expelees, Returnees, and Refugees and by that; they gained legal status affiliated with the local Evangelical churches. The management issue was then resolved by stating that a representative/president of each of local church board would be a part of the Board of Directors of *Agape*. At the beginning, local church pastors and their deputies acted as coordinators for the humanitarian activities, but soon the church board appointed a sepa-

¹⁸⁵ The members of the Board of Directors carry out different functions such as gathering funds, maintaining the relationship with the foreign donors, taking care of the financial and material management, conducting humanitarian programs and projects, but also doing the secretarial work, etc.

¹⁸⁶ For instance, the President, or the Vice President, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the *Agape* Board of Directors were at the same time members of the Main Presbytery.

¹⁸⁷ After the first year of operation, (1992) *Agape* moved its head office from Zagreb to Osijek, not only because Osijek was a center for the ECRC, but also because it was in the war zone, surrounded with enemies. With this decision, the leadership of *Agape* sent a strong message both to the domestic and foreign public and especially to the donors that it wanted to be in the very center of the humanitarian need. By the end of the year, *Agape* already had a dozen branch-offices offering everyday humanitarian assistance to the needy.

rate person – a *coordinator* with all the rights, duties, and responsibilities of an organization's Executive Director.

This way the branch-offices became independent, and by being part of the Osijek head office remained part of the activities coordinated on a broader level. The *Agape* head office in Osijek administered the inter-office coordination offering material, logistical, professional, and moral support; it also linked them with potential donors, proposed and set standards and procedures regarding the organizations' operation and documentation, and assisted in resolving problems when needed.¹⁸⁸ The network of autonomous though interlinked organizations with joint vision, mission, values, and methods of work was put in place. There was no subordination towards the head office in a classical way. The branch offices accepted the authority of the head office in Osijek in a way that allowed the center to coordinate to some extent and assist their work. The Osijek head office developed stable and mature partner-relationships with the network of branch offices sharing the responsibility for the work. This was especially important when difficult decisions were to be taken.¹⁸⁹ This subsidiary relationship¹⁹⁰ promoted the greater growth of the branch offices because they were not waiting for instructions coming from *above*, and were able to decide and resolve operational, organizational, and development-related issues on their own. If some of the issues could not be resolved, they asked for and received assistance from the *Agape* head office. The head office maintained constant communication with the branch offices (through the phone or directly visiting the offices) and organized

¹⁸⁸ One must keep in mind that *Agape* began as a humanitarian organization gathering a group of volunteers, which besides their enthusiasm and tremendous working energy lacked professional skills and knowledge in the not-for-profit and humanitarian relief area.

¹⁸⁹ This approach is in accordance with the Jesus' teaching that *If anyone wants to be the first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.* (Mk 9:35). On a first glance, these words are not in accordance with contemporary organizational management, but the results can be surprising if they are appropriately implemented especially by newly born Christians and in all their levels of work.

¹⁹⁰ A principle in social organization: functions, which subordinate or local organizations perform effectively, belong more properly to them than to a dominant central organization. See *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*, <http://www.mw.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=subsidiarity> (Feb 11, 2007).

occasional joint meetings. The strategy behind this kind of networking structure gave the best results on a long-term basis in terms of efficacy and particularly low operation costs, as well as in terms of mutual satisfaction and joint achievements of both the coordinator and the many volunteers.¹⁹¹ This approach made it also possible to avoid the consequences of creating an alienating and destructive bureaucratic structure as the one that would quickly destroy the gentle tissue of the new organization.¹⁹² Following this pattern, *Agape* gradually developed inner mechanisms for self-organizing its humanitarian mission in a relatively vast area and with completely new war circumstances.¹⁹³ Although formally there was an organizational structure, *Agape* branch offices were autonomous – this way of management was the only one that could have been applied while facing such complex and unpredictable situations, which were at times quite conflicting and frustrating. When a particular branch office succeeded in overcoming a certain difficult problem, those results and experience would be adopted by others and applied in their surroundings.

In 1993, the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia launched its humanitarian activities in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina applying similar organizational patterns. The increased number of branch offices in many other areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina operating outside the borders of Croatia and facing greater military and political complexities (including the issue of Croatian Army engagement

¹⁹¹ The experiences of network management of profit organizations can be creatively adopted in the social entrepreneurship area as well. About the network organizations, their advantages and weaknesses see, Robert K. Mueller. *Corporate Networking: Building Channels for Information and Influence*. New York: The Free Press, 1986. Ram Charan. "How Networks Reshape Organizations – for Results." *Harvard Business Review*, Vol. 69, No. 5. 1991. Pgs. 104-115.

¹⁹² Unfortunately, the process of bureaucratization did not avoid the church organizations. Even more, due to different reasons it seems that they are keener to it than some secular organizations. Parachurch organizations suffering from bureaucratization are close to the legalistic description in the New Testament, something Apostle Paul objected to completely. For more on the issue see, Kenneth A. Thompson. *Bureaucracy and Church Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970.

¹⁹³ The concept of self-organizing is different from the concepts of democracy and self-government, which are socio-political concepts. However successful self-organizing requires effective humanitarian network, and in this context the experiences of the former Yugoslavia system of self-government are quite useful.

in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina) created the need for building certain organizational forms and operative solutions for more effective functioning of *Agape*. Launching *Agape* in Western Mostar¹⁹⁴ was considered a starting point of the new period in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a period marked by a constant increase in the number of organizations throughout the country. The same relationship *Agape* Osijek had with the *Agape* branch offices within Croatia was kept with the branch offices in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 1998, the Assembly of the ECRC passed a decision to have the network of local Evangelistic churches throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina becomes part of a separate alliance/union of *Agape* organizations for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly set a period of four years for the new EC Bosnia and Herzegovina as the transition period for gradual organizational separation and gaining functional independence. The organizational solutions that were related to the ECRC were adopted and applied by the EC Bosnia and Herzegovina - the same was done for the networks of *Agape* in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

One of the reasons for the great success of this organization was how these bodies functioned, regardless of whether there was main/central, regional or local boards. Namely, the members of the bodies were expected to undertake concrete tasks on an everyday basis, which is not the case with many other not-for-profit organizations where, for instance, the President or the members of the Board of Directors only *manage* and *supervise* the organization while the others do the *work*. That was not the case in *Agape* - the head office in Osijek was not only an *initiative generator*, but also the team that carried out the activities and worked on the organization's development plan. In this process, everyone was involved, including the President, the members of the Board of Directors, up to the Business Manager/Secretary General. This management style was successfully applied to regional

¹⁹⁴ The registration was formally over by submitting the Decision on Founding the Organization, its Statute and Program of Humanitarian Activities to the authorized state office of the then Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia though *Agape* Mostar continued with its close cooperation with *Agape* in Osijek.

branch offices and, later on, to the *Agape* network in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁹⁵

There were numerous volunteers working in different *Agape* offices; they were highly motivated for fulfilling their tasks regardless of whether they were believers or not, and no matter what the function(s) they were to perform, either as warehouse managers, truck drivers, unloading goods or cooking in the public kitchens, they were all inspired by the passion for assisting in the *Agape* humanitarian mission, offering help to those that were in need. That no one was paid increased everyone's enthusiasm. Receiving no fees for their everyday work, the members of the boards or *Agape* volunteers found their satisfaction in the efficiency of the services and in the success of the mission.

4.5. THE ORGANIZATION'S RESOURCE GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

After an organization was registered, its mission set and the structure systematized, resources' governance and management was the next on the list of priorities.¹⁹⁶ Good governance links the mission with the success and efficiency of its work performance and contributes to an organization's long-term sustainability. According to this, one of the key tasks of the stewardship/board/directorate is to manage well all resources including financial, material, and human ones. One of the definitions for Christian stewardship states that,

¹⁹⁵ The members of the boards were not receiving any fees for their work – even more, they were themselves contributing financially to the needs of *Agape*, expressing their devotion to the organization's mission and the authenticity of their Christian faith.

¹⁹⁶ Governance is usually related to the mandate to pass key decisions within the organization, while management is related to task implementation and performance. According to Marilyn Wyatt. *A Handbook of NOG Governance*. Budapest: European Center for Non-Profit Law, 2004. Pg. 1. Having in mind that these two functions are often entwined, in this research we will use the term "management". Also, see, Mike Hudson. *Managing Without Profit: The Art of Managing Third-sector Organizations*. London: Directory of Social Change, 2002. Don Cousins; Leith Anderson and Arthur DeKruyter. *Mastering Church Management*. Portland: Multnomah, 1990. Sharon M. Oster *Strategic Management for Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Christian stewardship is man's grateful and obedient response to God's redeeming love, expressed by the use of all resources for the fulfillment of Christ's mission in the world. (...) Christian stewardship is practical implementation of the fundamental concepts of Christian faith.¹⁹⁷

4.5.1. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Managing the finances of a not-for-profit organization is an important issue especially if the organization is dealing with humanitarian work and has a Christian background. Even more, the significance is even greater if the organization is receiving financial donations from different international sources, governmental organizations, agencies for humanitarian assistance and development, churches, church denominations, or individuals. Managing such financial resources requires great responsibility and consistency. Promoting the highest professional and moral standards, the organization becomes an example for ethical behavior to other entrepreneurs in its own surroundings. Respecting the laws and international bookkeeping standards is the minimum requirement for such an organization. Much more is required from Christian and para-church organizations in regards to financial and other operations than is the case for non-Christian organizations.¹⁹⁸ A broader definition of financial resources states that,

Financial resources include the money, the knowledge, the skills, the attitudes, the commitment, which help make available those

¹⁹⁷ Lloyd M. Perry. *Getting the Church on Target*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1981. Pg. 145. For additional reading see, Lyle E. Schaller and Charles A. Tidwell. *Creative Church Administration*, Nashville: Abingdon, 1975. John Carver. *Boards That Make a Difference: A New Design for Leadership in Nonprofit and Public Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997. M. Mayers. *Managing the Business Affairs of the Church*. Nashville: Convention Press, 1981. Gray M. Gray. *Managing the Church*. Vol. I and II. Enid: The Philips University Press, 1971.

¹⁹⁸ There is a vast literature on financial management such as, Jea K. Shim and Joel Siegel. *Financial Management for Nonprofits: The Complete Guide to Maximizing Resources and Managing Assets*. McGraw-Hill, 1977. James C. Van Horne. *Financijsko upravljanje i politika*, Zagreb: Mate, 1993. Robert C. Higgins. *Analysis for Financial Management*, 7th ed., New York: McGraw Hill, 2004.

human and physical resources needed to implement the ministry of a church.¹⁹⁹

Financial resources are managed in a way that the managing board prepares an annual financial plan and a monthly program/project profit and loss plan. Then the adoption of the plan follows a thorough discussion. During the business year, the board responsible for an organization's financial operation will supervise/check the resources and whether are they spent in accordance with the activities and procedures that were approved, and in amounts included in the annual budget.²⁰⁰ The board will then confirm whether the costs were appropriate and reasonable and whether the accounting documentation on those financial transactions is acceptable. The board will also follow the income flow and will be regularly informed of the organization's financial situation. Several key indicators are usually kept track of in such cases, for instance the funds in the organization's account and in the cash desk, solvency projections, incomes and expenditures (profits and losses), the planned and actual budget, planned reserves balance, etc. These activities belong to the *budgeting process* that is similar in most of the not-for-profit organizations. If this process is to function well, the board should pay due attention to the bookkeeping service requiring professionalization in accordance with the existing regulations. The board should also require the relevant information and business analyses needed to take strategic and operative decisions. The bookkeeping department should be organized following the dual bookkeeping system and should periodically (every three months, for instance) submit a financial statement to the board that will include information on cash flow, balance sheets, balance analysis together with the bookkeeping notes and explanations. An efficient bookkeeping service should be organized for providing necessary management information, protecting the organization's financial assets

¹⁹⁹ Charles A. Tidwell. *Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministers*. Nashville, Broadman Press, 1985. Pg. 159.

²⁰⁰ While planning the costs, there is the so-called *golden rule* for not-for-profit organizations that is related to gifts/donations regardless of whether they are financial or other. The rule states that the donations are to be distributed in accordance with the purpose they were sent for by the donors. See "The Power and Responsibility of the Donor," in Wesley K. Willmer with David J. Smith and Martyn Smith. *Money for Ministries*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989. Pgs. 15-93.

and for the information needed for taxes and other state institutions; finally yet importantly, it is needed for the donors who provide the finances.²⁰¹ In accordance with the bookkeeping volume, the board should also decide whether the work will be done by a professional on a full-time or part-time basis, or simply require those services from a public bookkeeper (CPA).

Another very important segment of the financial management of a humanitarian organization is financial supervision and revision. These are carried out in two ways: internally, when the financial records are regularly checked by an appointed commission, and externally, when the control/supervision and audit are done by a qualified auditor with public authority or by a licenced auditing company.²⁰² Although the costs for employing a public auditing company are often quite high and legislation in many countries has no such requirements for humanitarian organizations, a clear auditor's statement is proof to donors about the organization's financial reliability. During all these years *Agape* in Osijek regularly asked for financial audits; the organization also had visits by different state directorates supervising its work as well as by foreign donors, one of which was a foreign gov-

²⁰¹ *Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)* has developed *The Donor's Bill of Rights*: Know how the funds of an organization are being spent. Know what the programs you support are accomplishing. Know that the organization complies with federal, state, and municipal laws. Restrict or designate your gifts to a particular project within the organization's mission objectives. A timely and courteous response to your inquiries about finances and programs. Visit office and program sites of an organization to talk personally with the staff. Give cheerfully without being pressured by the organization. Obtain a copy of the organization's most recent audited financial statements. Know that there is a responsible governing board providing oversight to the organization's mission. Know that all appeals for funds are truthful and accurate. Available online <http://www.ecfa.org> (Feb 12, 2007).

²⁰² The difference between internal and external auditing is in the area of attention. While the external one follows the bookkeeping records and their compatibility with national and international bookkeeping standards and the internal bookkeeping rulebook, the internal is dealing with the contents of the financial transactions. Namely, the internal audit of the financial operations looks for internal reserves, suggests effective resource allocations and brings forward conclusions about the qualitative success of the financial operation of one organization.

ernmental organization.²⁰³ The auditor evaluated the *Agape* financial reports and recommended improvements for the general financial operation. After the auditor prepared its own report, the *Agape* Board of Directors would adopt the report at one of its regular meetings. Then, the audit report accompanied with the decision on its adoption by the Board of Directors would be sent to the donors and all those interested in receiving it.

Regular financial controls and supervision of financial operations contributes to a humanitarian organization's integrity, and donors trust that financial resources are spent correctly. Every church and para-church organization should adapt its financial operations to the standards of the *Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)*.²⁰⁴ Although the implementation of some of those standards might seem a hard task to fulfill especially if living in Eastern Europe, the experience of *Agape* confirms it can be accomplished. Even more, ECFA considers that its *seven standards of responsible stewardship, is only a starting point – an entry level – to operating a ministry with integrity*.²⁰⁵

There is much literature available on the topic of financial management in churches and Christian organizations, which should be

²⁰³ The *Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA)*, *Division for Cooperation with NGOs and Disaster Relief* and its partner organizations from Sweden,. PMU-Interlife PMU, Läkarmissionen LM, Hoppet Stjärna. See, Bjorn Mossber. Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. Pgs. 26-28, 33, 37-39.

²⁰⁴ ECFA is an accrediting agency dedicated to helping Christian ministries earn the public's trust through adherence to seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship. Founded in 1979, it is comprised of over 1,200 evangelical Christian organizations, which qualify for tax-exempt, nonprofit status and receive tax-deductible contributions to support their work. Available online <http://www.ecfa.org> (Feb 12, 2007).

²⁰⁵ ECFA standards include the following areas: (1) Doctrinal Statement; (2) Board of Directors and Audit Committee; (3) Audited Financial Statements; (4) Use of Resources; (5) Financial Disclosure; (5) Conflict of Interest; (7) Fund-raising. In addition to the Standards, *ECFA* has developed a series of best practices, which encourages member organizations to strive for the highest levels of excellence. *Ibid*.

regularly referred to because this area of administration is both important and very complex.²⁰⁶

4.5.2. MATERIAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

This area of management in the work of humanitarian organizations plays a significant role because the amount of humanitarian assistance in material goods is both large and diverse. The business logistics of humanitarian activities include several successive phases.²⁰⁷ First, if the donation comes from a foreign country there are customs regulations that must be followed to distribute the received goods to the end users. The second step is categorization or sorting the goods in types, while the third and the fourth are their warehouse storage and distribution. In all steps, there is a great necessity for material bookkeeping or keeping evidence about the quantities and types of goods that are stored in the warehouses and what has been taken out of the warehouses. During distribution, it is also important to keep evidence about the receivers/end users as well, including the quantity and the type of the goods that they have received. For special categories of donations such as medications, medical materials and orthopedic aids, procedures are more complex and require that before they are sent to Croatia written consent from the authorized Ministry of Health and the health institution (hospital) that is to receive the donation. After the consents are received, the humanitarian goods can be sent to the final destination/health institution.²⁰⁸ The procedure for donations of food is simpler though it requires supervision by the sanitary inspec-

²⁰⁶ For example, Richard L. Bergstrom; Gary Fenton and Wayne A. Pohl. *Mastering Church Finances*. Portland: Multnomah, 1992. Also: Kate Sayer. *A Practical Guide to Financial Management for Charities & Voluntary Organizations*. London: Directory of Social Change, 2000.

²⁰⁷ For more details see, Hans-Christian Pfohl. *Logistik Management*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1994. Zvonko Zecevic. *Logisticki Menadzment*. Rijeka: Glosa, 2000.

²⁰⁸ During the first few years, donations of medications and medical materials were received following special procedures. Consequently, the quantity of materials that were received increased and their validity expired. The costs for the ecological removal of this type of toxic waste were enormous.

tors for validity check, toxicity and whether the food products are linked to some veterinary or other risks.²⁰⁹

The custom procedures are relatively simple if the documents sent by the donors are in accordance with custom's instructions provided in advance, if the consignment contains no goods whose import is not allowed and if the shipment corridors as well as the border crossing point are in accordance with the custom's instructions. A few days are needed to properly learn the custom procedures though learning how to manage complications with customs can require up to several years. Here is one example; the Italian humanitarian organization sent a container with canned nutriments (food) for *Agape* in Sarajevo. However, the customs in Orasje, the border crossing point to Bosnia and Herzegovina did not let the consignment through for almost ten days, allegedly because one palette of beef meat produced in Argentina stated on the specification that Great Britain was the country of origin. The beef from Great Britain was in those days under special monitoring due to mad cow or GSE disease. The problem was even bigger because Croatian customs did not allow the shipment to be returned to the donor through its territory because the Hungarian importer had no documents for that step. Even more, communication with the Hungarian driver was almost impossible since he spoke only the Hungarian language. The problem was resolved in a way that the *Agape* office in Osijek together with the office in Sarajevo, the Italian donor and the custom offices in Zagreb and Osijek, redirected the consignment to Croatia. The shipment was then cleared through customs and unloaded in Osijek.²¹⁰

If the humanitarian goods are proven liable for customs duty, the next step is to unload and sort them for distribution; this task is done

²⁰⁹ For instance, spongiformic encefalopatya in cattle (GSE), pig's plague, and the alike. *Agape* had a few unpleasant experiences regarding sanitary supervision. In one of the cases, the inspection required the consignment to be returned to the donor after it was already unloaded. The reason was that the chocolate produced in Great Britain included cow milk! The absurdity of the whole case was in the fact that the same goods could be found in the market!

²¹⁰ Making a right choice regarding an experienced customs broker proved to be of a key importance to resolve sudden and complicated custom matters. *Agape* in Osijek cooperated with a freight forwarder giving its services to *Agape* for ten years - *pro bono*.

by volunteers coming from the local church or elsewhere. Storing the goods should also be done in accordance with special regulations such as those regarding fire or sanitary regulations, especially if the shipment is food. Selecting the appropriate warehouse is thus very important, having in mind the place's accessibility for trucks and other heavy vehicles, its micro-location in the area, and many safety-related issues. This phase is considered over when the humanitarian goods are put into the warehouse evidence book.

Registering donations is important for efficient management of the surplus of stocks, especially concerning food articles and the subsequent reports to donors or for custom services inspections. Managing the stocks is crucial when a humanitarian organization is obliged to deliver the *family food package* to a certain number of end users and in accordance with an agreement with the Social Service Unit in the town or in the region.²¹¹ The users were expected to choose the humanitarian organization from which they would receive continuous assistance, so that they could not get support from another organization at the same time. This step was introduced to prevent the misuse of available assistance, thwart any harm to be done to others in need and avoid collecting a surplus of food in individual homes.

The *Agape* policy was to use its warehouse premises *pro bono* – there were, however, a few exceptions to this rule when some of the cities/areas where the humanitarian activities were initiated were not supportive enough. In those cases, hiring/renting premises was done on a temporary basis until *Agape* gained some trust. Then, the activities could be moved to the area for which no payment was required. While being in Zagreb *Agape* used a hall of Zagreb International Fair free of charge; after moving to Osijek, the organization used in the same way several different warehouses through which it distributed goods to the regional *Agape* offices throughout the country and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That was the pattern used by all *Agape* offices regardless of whether they were in Croatia or in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

²¹¹ The quantity of food and hygiene products in the monthly family packages was a standard one, following Croatian standards and taking into the account the types and quantity of needed products and the number of members within a family. Ultimately all humanitarian organizations in Croatia used the same standards to avoid competitiveness and assist as much of the populace as possible.

The distribution usually had two main forms: the goods were distributed either to the other *Agape* offices and then to the end users, or to a third humanitarian organization. The second modality was used from time to time when *Agape* warehouses were congested and the other humanitarian organizations lacked goods, or the structure of the one they had was not suitable for further distribution.²¹² The logistics related to distribution to the end users was as follows: the week would be divided into days for distributing food articles/goods and days for distributing non-food articles/goods. The users would arrive in small groups of ten to fifteen and during a certain period of the day, in fifteen-minute sequences; this helped avoid unnecessary crowding and frustrations.

The redistribution to the *Agape* offices was done with *Agape* heavy vehicles and by using the so-called *return (back) transport* services of local enterprises, free of charge.²¹³ *Agape* frequently offered this kind of free services to other international humanitarian organizations charging only the costs for gasoline and oil/lubricant.²¹⁴ Foreign donors would secure the transport of donated goods to the destinations that were considered safe both for the driver and for the truck. The goods were re-loaded and transported further to their final destinations and the end users who usually lived in the war zones. Transporting goods in such places included great risks and required good knowledge of the local conditions and some special skills.²¹⁵ The truck

²¹² Time has shown that these kinds of gestures, giving some of the humanitarian goods over to other organizations such as the Catholic *Caritas* for example, contributed to building good relationships between the two organizations and opened the door for future cooperation in other areas.

²¹³ To use the so-called *return transport* means that *Agape* used the services of the vehicles employed for commercial transport, which after finishing their task would be coming back empty to their point of departure.

²¹⁴ "The small NGOs, Läkarmissionen and PMU, seemed to be very efficient at getting good deals and monitoring distributions to the final beneficiary. They both receive free local transport and distribution through NRC in Metković and *Agape* in Osijek." Bjorn Mossber; Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. Pg. 41.

²¹⁵ "Commercial transport costs less than international convoys, but it cannot function if there is open war. The appropriate transport method depends on the

drivers that would drive the goods to these areas showed a great deal of courage and hardiness – often this task was completed by the members of the *Agape* Board of Directors themselves.

A personal example of this kind of courage is Nikola Skrinjaric, President of *Agape* in Bosnia and Herzegovina for a number of years. On numerous occasions, he would drive the truck throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina through the war zones of the Western and Eastern Mostar, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Bihac, Jajce and so forth. Or Anti Tepponen, a Finnish missionary from the *Finnish Free Foreign Mission (FFFM)*, an organization that was at that time based in Osijek. With his truck, he transported goods and Christian literature from Osijek, using subsidiary roads through Mostar or impassable paths through the Bosnian mountains, driving sometimes up to 2,000 km per day to reach the final destination – Tuzla. It is easy to conclude how much he drove if we just know that Tuzla is actually only 150 km from Osijek, but at that time, the only possible entry to the city was controlled by the Bosnian Serb Army. Today Anti Tepponen lives with his family in Tuzla and still works for the *FFFM*.

4.5.3. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The crucial and perhaps most demanding management task within an organization is to provide and organize capable human resources with the necessary skills to perform the organization's tasks. The next step is to have them additionally trained and motivated (professional development training) to achieve the results that are in accordance with the organization's vision and mission.²¹⁶ Human resources are the most important segment of an organization, since the need is to have at least ten and sometimes more years to build a high quality and

state of the conflict and the relations between the transport organization and local authorities. *SRSB* (Belgrade to Srebrenica) and *Agape* (Split to Mostar) were remarkably successful in reaching areas that other agencies could not enter." Bjorn Mossber; Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. Pg. 41.

²¹⁶ According to many experts, the best Croatian book on this topic is Fihreta Bahtijarevic-Siber. *Management Ljudskih Potencijala*. Zagreb: Golden Marketing, 1999.

successful team and working environment. Human resources have proven to be the most meaningful/worthwhile investment in an organization, thus human rights management is considered of primary importance, not the structural investments such as finances, book-keeping, warehouse, logistics, etc., which are considered secondary. The *hardest* and *most complex problems* are related to people/employees and volunteers since they cannot be controlled under *simple definitions for optimal solutions* as the so-called technical problems.²¹⁷

During the time when *Agape* built its human resources two criteria were used by the management. The first one was that all those in higher places and with greater responsibilities should have a clear knowledge of their spiritual call for the service they were performing. Spiritual conversion, a Christian worldview and membership in a church community of newborn believers was a basic requirement. The other (second) criterion was to have both *general* and *specific* professional competencies for performing the assigned tasks. The associates/co-workers were expected to have general knowledge and skills, for instance to know the English and Croatian languages, or how to use computers, or to have a minimal understanding of theological issues, a driving licence B-category, etc. They were also expected to work overtime, under pressure, on jobs that were not included within the job description or in a cross-cultural ambience which included lifelong learning in the area of their professional engagement. Special professional competencies and working experience were required for some of the posts.

4.5.3.1. BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

Building a biblical leadership style is a process that requires time and effort, both intellectual and emotional, and ongoing practice. This particular style can be recognized by its Christian character, behavioural consistency, responsibility towards others and accountability to the service and the people they lead. In a word, a biblical leadership style consists of developed and clear Christian leadership integrity and

²¹⁷ Quinn D. Mills. *Labor-Management Relations*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1978, Pg. 20.

the ability to humbly lead others.²¹⁸ If the Christian leader develops these stated characteristics than it is less important what type of leadership style he/she chooses, democratic or totalitarian, consultative, or charismatic, delegating or directing,²¹⁹ because that style is a reflection of his other personality. What is of key importance is that the leadership style should reflect the image of Christ and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. According to this, the Christian leader's priority is to maintain Christian focus on:

1. Preserving a clear understanding of the Gospel;
2. Serving the humanitarian mission with a right motivation;
3. Developing a personal spirituality;
4. Being alert not to develop the *burnout* syndrome and other sorts of work overload related trauma, and
- finally 5. Building leadership service on healthy theological grounds.²²⁰

Well-constructed, professionally efficient, and socially integrated working teams are not unprompted. To build an integrated working team, both in the sociological and working/professional senses require competence, effort, and time. Here is one of the approaches that can be found in the literature about the process of building a working team and team improvement during performing certain task,

The first level is when the team is approaching a new task in which the team members have no experience, but are filled with enthusiasm and desire for learning.

²¹⁸ According to, Kenneth O. Gangel. *Feeding and Leading a Practical Handbook on Administration in Churches and Christian Organizations*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989. Pg. 54. On the same page Gangel quotes a Chinese philosopher from 500 B.C., "A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worse when they despise him. Fail to honor people, they fail to honor you; but of a good leader, who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say, 'We did this ourselves'." See also reflections on leadership in essay style, Charles H. Dyer and Roy B. Zuck (eds.). *Integrity of Heart, Skillfulness of Hands: Biblical and Leadership Studies in Honor of Donald K. Campbell*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994.

²¹⁹ NVO *Prirucnik*, Zagreb: AED – Academy for Educational Development, 1999. Pg. 29.

²²⁰ According to, Calvin C. Ratz. "Maintaning a Christian Focus." James D. Barkley (ed.). *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach and Care*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994. Pgs. 142-143.

The second level is reached when the group starts to implement the tasks. The tasks are often more difficult than it was optimistically planned or it can be less interesting than supposed. Then the level of interest within the working group decreases.

The third level is when in spite of assistance in planning and organizing around the tasks, some of the team members start to seriously doubt their competences to take over the challenges and risks. Their personal attitudes will oscillate between enthusiasm, insecurity, and withdrawal.

The fourth level is reached when the team members are capable to fulfill their tasks professionally and competently and the level of their devotion is high.²²¹

These levels of development could be traced down both in the *Agape* head office and the branch offices developmental dynamics. The interchange at different levels would be higher at the beginning of the *Agape* humanitarian activities, especially during the years of war, though this social dynamic would slow down later on. The leadership type that was predominant in *Agape* was the so-called *situational leadership*. This approach is based on the assumption that there is no single best leadership way appropriate for all situations, and that the leadership style should be adjusted to the concrete circumstances. It is also related to many factors such as the relationship inside the working group, the relationship to the leader, the complexity of the tasks that should be fulfilled, professional and other competences of the group representatives, their devotion and readiness to undertake responsibilities, the degree of the group's development and much more. Different combinations of support and direction result in different styles of situational leadership,

Supporting style (strong support – weak guidance) – the leader makes decisions together with the members of the

²²¹ *NVO Prirucnik*, Zagreb: AED – Academy for Educational Development, 1999. pg. 32 The structure that explains different levels of development of an organization related to tasks is similar to the levels of general development found in working groups (the phases of orientation, dissatisfaction, solution and production).

group being responsible for their implementation; he/she also hears the group and expresses support, offers possible solutions and assists coordination of the activities.

Leading style (strong support – strong guidance) – the leader explains the goals and expectations of the group members, and supervises the implementation. He/she leaves room for their opinions and attitudes, and listens to their suggestions in regard to the tasks.

Delegating style (weak support – weak guidance) – the leader transfers the responsibilities to the group both for making decisions and implementing activities; the group is responsible to support its members in their activities.

Directing style (weak support – strong guidance) – the leader defines both the aims and the roles, prepares detailed directions, and supervises the implementation of the activities.²²²

Agape represents different *situational* styles conditioned by different factors such as the level of operational leadership, sociological aspects within different *Agape* offices or regions, the psychological profile of the leader and his/her associates, culturological aspects of the surroundings, etc. These styles actually never had a strict form/shape as described in the literature, but they were usually combined.

During the years spent in the area of humanitarian assistance, *Agape* offices slowly developed what is known in the literature as an *organizational culture*.²²³ The vision, basic beliefs, and values were gradually integrated and intertwined with the behavior, attitudes, and

²²² NVO *Prirucnik*, Zagreb: AED – Academy for Educational Development, 1999. Pg. 32.

²²³ “An organizational culture is a model composed of basic assumptions that were created, discovered or developed by a certain group in their teachings with an aim to overcome the problems related to either their external adjustment or internal integration, and which were showing to function well and that can be considered efficient and transferred to the new members as a right way of perceiving, thinking and feeling about those problems.” Edgar H. Shein. “Coming to a New Awareness of Organizational Culture.” in Edgar H. Schein (ed.). *The Art of Managing of Human Resources*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. Pgs. 261-295, 262.

customs of individual *Agape* associates, which became the source for the organizational behaviour for *Agape* with recognizable Christian characteristics. Having in mind that *Agape* directly contacted humanitarian assistance end users, this form of non-verbal Gospel announcement/preaching was found efficient especially within surroundings that had long-rooted prejudices toward Christians in general such as in Bosnia, or in Croatia in the attitude of the Serbs toward the non-Orthodox Christian population. After decreasing the level of prejudice, the users became more open to the preaching, which came later, and some of them would even decide to convert.

On the other hand, a well-developed and Christian organizational structure contributes to the business success and stability of the organization as well as the satisfaction of its members. Equally important is that in Christian organizations the main attention is on the tasks and results, and not on the formal structures and stated regulations, which is the key for their success and development. To achieve this, an organization needs to pass all phases of its development, including the phase where the formal structures and regulations are the focus of attention. Some of the phases simply cannot be overlooked.²²⁴

4.5.3.2. THE VOLUNTEERISM OF THE HUMANITARIAN WORK

Agape can thank its volunteers for their work and efforts, for all its accomplishments in different programs and projects. The volunteers were part of the *Agape* boards and its active/working structures, they were in high places as Presidents and associates, and drivers and workers that were loading and unloading, dividing and distributing the humanitarian assistance. The role and value of the volunteers in the church and in para-church Christian organizations is crucial though not always recognized as such, motivated, and supported.²²⁵

²²⁴ For additional reading, see, Peter Kuzmic, "Twelve Theses on Kingdom Servanthood for Post-Communist Europe." Paper presented at Evandeoski Teoloski Fakultet, Osijek, Croatia, 1-5 September 1998. *Transformation*, January - March 1999.

²²⁵ Although Peter F. Drucker in his book *Managing for the Future*, New York: Truman Talley Books, 1990, claims that volunteerism is a *unique American achievement and the most significant American contribution* (to the world), Pg. 206, actually Christianity created the culture of volunteerism cultivating the monks specializing in

The European Charter on Volunteerism states that volunteerism is in the interest of the people, unmotivated with financial interests, conducted on the local and national level, voluntary, peaceful and based on personal motivation and the freedom of choice, enhances active participation of the citizens for the wellbeing of the community, supports development of human resources and improves the quality of living based upon solidarity, seeks for a secure future, supports the use of entrepreneurship opportunities, creates a base for building partnerships between the actors of prosperity, enhancing people's self-organization while resolving their problems.²²⁶

The economic value of the volunteers' work measured by the number of working hours is enormous, thus organizations who use volunteers must better manage their resources than other organizations.²²⁷ Volunteers are a great resource for talent; introducing their own energy and skills, they assist organizations in realizing vision and mission. They also supplement the work of paid personnel and allow more to be done by using the same budget, regardless of whether the organization is governmental, private, in the area of education, science, media, in the non-for-profit sector or elsewhere. The importance of this area was stressed by the decision of the United Nations to proclaim the

different services, beginning with servicing the poor, moving to education, science, etc. Applying these century-long experiences within the area of the third (not-for-profit) sector is something else. It is worth reading Drucker's other book also, *Managing the Non-Profit Organizations: Principles and Practices*. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1990.

²²⁶ *O Volonterskom Radu*. Slobodan Skopelja; Nives Ivelja and Duska Milinković (eds.). Split: Udruga Mi-Split, 2004. Pg. 8.

²²⁷ According to articles 3 and 8 of the Draft Proposal for the Law on Volunteerism, Ministry of Family, Veteran's Affairs and Intergeneration Solidarity of the Republic of Croatia, volunteerism is defined as voluntary investment of private time, effort and skills to perform services and activities for the wellbeing of another person or the common good, without any financial pay/fee or other ownership interest for the volunteer's work. The organizers are obliged to treat the volunteer in accordance with the equal opportunity policy regardless of his/her race, skin color, language, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, political or other convictions, education, social or property/ownership status, marital status and commitments, membership in a political party, organization or union, physical and mental difficulties or diseases or other personal characteristics, etc. Available online <http://www.vlada.hr/Download/2006/10/12/> (February 15, 2007).

year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers. This decision was taken with an aim to *recognize, support, network, and promote* the work of volunteers.²²⁸ Volunteerism in Croatia is underdeveloped compared to the economic and social level of development. According to the quoted report on volunteerism, it is considered underappreciated and unsupported by society, and these are the main reasons for the lack of this activity in Croatia.

Agape built its organizational structures by following the already existing traditions of volunteerism within the Evangelical Church in the Republic of Croatia. Numerous pastors, preachers, missionaries, religious teachers, deacons and others conducted their Christian mission without any fees for years.²²⁹ Even more, from the salaries they received for their everyday work they gave one tenth and other contributions covering different costs related to their spiritual service.

Agape was finding its volunteers in the following areas:

- Local churches in the country and abroad;²³⁰
- Church alliances/unions and denominations;²³¹
- Church organizations in the country and abroad;²³²

²²⁸ *Biti Volonter/Volonterka: Istrazivanje Ukljucenosti Gradana u Civilne Inicijative u Zajednici Kroz Volonterski Rad*. Rijeka: Smart, Udruga za Razvoj Civilnog Drustva, 2001. pg 5. At the 16th World Conference of IAVE (*The International Association for Volunteer Effort*) in 1991, the Universal Declaration on Volunteering was adopted and the Global Plan for Empowering Volunteerism was presented.

²²⁹ Church activities were based, since the earliest days, on the work of volunteers. Paid service was an exception, never the rule. With the increase in the number of churches and believers, and the founding of new churches and organizations dealing with missionary work, theological education, publishing, social work etc., the number of persons receiving fees for their activities increased as well.

²³⁰ Mostly from the U.S.A., but also from other states such as Canada, Great Britain, Austria, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, and Korea. Foreign missionaries actually cannot be considered as volunteers since they receive fees for their work from their churches or agencies.

²³¹ For example, the Evangelical Church, the Union of Baptist Churches, the Church of God, the Christian Reformed Church, the Lutheran Church, all from Croatia as well as the Assemblies of God; the Presbyterian Church (PC USA); Church of God; First Congregational Church in Hamilton MA, etc.

- Groups receiving humanitarian assistance;
- Individuals from the broader community, recommended by our professors, students, and associates.

The biggest number of *Agape* volunteers was engaged on a long-term basis, which contributed to strengthening their professionalism and efficiency, and to better social integration within the working environment.²³³ Some of the volunteers would come to assist for only a few hours, for instance to unload the aid from the trucks and store it into the warehouse, or something else. Consequently, it is difficult to be precise about the exact number of volunteers working for *Agape* because they could be working from a few days up to several years, and there was no volunteer registration. On the other hand, the *Agape* leaders' calculations on the amount of activities in different regions are helpful because it also roughly shows the number of volunteer personnel. According to these estimates, the number of volunteering personnel included in *Agape* activities during 1991 – 2006 was 900 to 1100 in total.

Some interesting statistics: (1) the volunteers belonged to different age groups, ranging between 16 to 85, (2) they were from both genders; (3) according to their working status they included employees, highschoolers, students, unemployed and retired persons; (4) according to the education level among the volunteers varied from high including doctors of science to low in persons with no education at all; (5) some of the volunteers were fairly wealthy while others extremely poor; (6) they were living in the areas close to the *Agape* offices, though at times they would come from another area or even another country to volunteer.²³⁴ According to our fifteen year experience with volunteerism in *Agape*,

- Volunteers are more satisfied with themselves than those who do not volunteer.

²³² For example, the New Europe Vision, Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, the Royal Rangers – Christian Scouts, etc.

²³³ Art. 3 line 2 from the *Law on Volunteers*, long-term volunteerism is defined as a volunteerism in which the volunteer works at least 20 hours per week for a period that lasts at least 3 months without any break.

²³⁴ *Agape* Archive in Osijek, Documentation on Volunteers, 1993-2006.

- The work of the volunteers is very useful and no project or program could be launched or implemented without them. Even though they were not paid for their services, they were considered an equal part of the team.
- Their work should also be supervised as the work of the paid personnel; during the process of supervision management representatives develop relationships with the volunteers and their surroundings.
- Although volunteers do not receive any salary for their work, the organization gives them valuables such as practical working experience, training programs, interviews, supervision of their work, recruitment procedures, etc.
- Serving the needs of others is a good way to spend one's free time.
- Volunteers may also perform complex and responsible tasks during a longer period.
- Through the process of volunteering they increase their knowledge, develop additional skills and create working habits which are found useful later on, especially in regards to finding and keeping jobs (if they were unemployed for instance).
- Volunteering assists in developing one's own personality as well, raising the level of confidence, self-respect and self-consciousness, or self-actualization.
- Volunteers are also persons who have almost no free time.
- Apart from the employees, volunteers are an important factor in building the quality organizational culture within the organization and a necessary condition for effective work and realization of its mission.

Management of the volunteers is no different from the management of the human resources, although there are some specific issues that should be stressed such as: (1) Planning volunteerism; (2) Seeking and recruiting the volunteers; (3) Orientation and training of the vol-

unteers; (4) Coordination and motivation of the volunteers' work, and (5) Supervision and evaluation of their work.²³⁵

During the process of planning the volunteerism, several areas should be defined such as volunteers' job descriptions, the necessary qualifications for performing the tasks, and a coordinator for the volunteers. Every volunteer should receive a written job description to know what tasks are expected of him/her and for which kind of work he/she is directly responsible. Well-structured job descriptions that include all the necessary elements are an extremely important step in managing the volunteers, although frequently neglected. The volunteer's coordinator is a person that implements the operative management of the volunteers including the phases of planning, recruitment, selection, orientation, and introduction to the work, then the training, coordination with other members of the team, supervision, rewarding, and evaluation of the volunteer's work. The volunteer's coordinator is also the person that proposes the volunteer development programs in front of the Board of Directors of the organization, and implements the program upon the adoption. To manage volunteers is a complex job/task and the coordinators should be qualified and experienced in that area.

Finding volunteers and their later selection to be included in the work of the organization is based upon the organization's publicity and public relations, topics that will be elaborated later on. The process of recruitment and selection is an important one since many problems, which can occur in a later stage, can be avoided during this process. This step includes concrete formal procedures such as going through the volunteer's application form, references, and resume, and conducting an interview. This interactive phase is multifaceted since both the candidate for volunteering and the organization are checking each other's capacities, the possibilities for cooperation and the prospects for realizing the organization's vision and mission. If both sides are satisfied, they sign a contract for volunteering, and then the volunteer

²³⁵ In accordance with, Dijana Topcic (ed.) *Prirucnik za Rad s Volonterima*. Split: Udruga MI-Split i Volonterski Centar Split, 2001. And, *O Volonterskom Radu*, Split: Udruga MI-Split i Volonterski Centar Split, 2004. Also: Steve McCuley and Rick Lynch. *Volunteer Management: Mobilizing All the Resources of the Community*. Downers Grove: Heritage Arts Publishing, 1996.

is directed to the work place becoming a member of the team. With this, the process of recruitment of the volunteer is over.²³⁶

The next phase is orientation and includes introducing the volunteer to the working environment and the basic rules/procedures, the employees and the organization's culture. Training the volunteers is done through a special program, but also through different forms of continuous education. This phase is significant because when it is well performed it influences the duration a volunteer stays within the organization.

Coordinating the volunteer's work (volunteer leadership) consists of establishing logistical support for the work, organizing his/her daily tasks, taking care of the necessary documentation and finally, supervision. The volunteer should know to what job he/she is assigned and what the organization's expectations are. It is also necessary to continuously inform the volunteer about the results of the work so that he/she can feel the importance of the tasks performed. Although there are time limits and performance requirements, their autonomy is greater in arranging their tasks. They should also have access to the organization's resources such as vehicles, means for communication, etc. Whenever possible their level of responsibility should be checked by assigning them different tasks, which is an acknowledgement of their work. Volunteers tend to remain in well-structured and functioning organizations.

Proper motivating of the volunteer means that the organization can use his/her best resources and keep them within the organization. Although they do not receive any financial reimbursement for their work, their motivation can be found in different ways and areas of work. Regardless of the number of volunteers and the complexity of their motives, it is important to recognize what is the key motivator for a volunteer's work. That is what should be stressed, such as through praise for the work well done, stressing the volunteer's belonging to the organization, giving them the opportunity to participate in the organization's achievements, or involving the volunteer in some levels of

²³⁶ For more on this process see, Susan J. Ellis. *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*. Philadelphia: Energize, 1994. Lovett H. Weems Jr. *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture and Integrity*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.

the decision-making process, educating others, gathering funds/ donations, leading some programs or projects, etc.²³⁷

Supervision includes a structured interview with the volunteer of work and his/her view on the organization. During the interview that is conceptualized as the volunteer's evaluation, the key focus is on possible differences in viewing the expectations in regards to the volunteer and the organization. This is a good opportunity to improve inter-relationships, resolve possible problems or misunderstandings, and share information. It is most important to see if there is a change in the volunteer's motivation and in what form. If that is the case, then new approaches and preferences should be taken into consideration, and adjusted to the needs of the organization so that the volunteer could be kept working. Supervision should always end up with a reward for the volunteer in that he/she is praised for their performance; compassion is shown for their family or other problems, support for their professional development (education or training), or advancement within the organization.²³⁸

4.5.3.3. SPECIFIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AGAPE VOLUNTEERISM

One of the specifics of *Agape's* volunteerism is related to the number of volunteers included in its activities, both Christians and non-Christians. The ratio between the two groups is considered irrele-

²³⁷ "Some volunteers volunteer because they have free time, others to reciprocate for something, or as an example for the children, an opportunity to meet other persons, for the purpose of fun or reaching a concrete goal in life, to improve some skills or because he/she has been asked to volunteer; volunteers do that because of a family tragedy, or a belief that they could change society, or to save money, for a traditional or religious Christian conviction they uphold, to avoid loneliness, for the guilt of their consciousness, or looking for an opportunity for a new job, or simply because others do it too, and he/she would like to be seen as human person, etc." Susan J. Ellis. *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*. Philadelphia: Energize, 1994. Pg. 23.

²³⁸ For more on this matter see "Supervision and Evaluating Volunteers" in Kenneth O. Gangel. *Feeding and Leading: A Practical Handbook on Administration in Churches and Christian Organizations*. Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989. Pgs. 290-306. Also: Jarene Lee Frances. *What We Learned (the Hard Way) About Supervising Volunteers: An Action Guide for Making Your Job Easier*. Philadelphia: Energize, 1999.

vant as long as the Christian worldview and Evangelical community spirit are maintained. In another words, as long as the Christian culture and religious atmosphere is dominant, the number of non-Christian volunteers and members can be increased.

Another specific characteristic of *Agape* is the respect for the procedures stressed above, such as volunteers' recruitment, orientation, training, and supervision. The working day in a humanitarian organization is often fairly long and highly stressful, especially in regards to the delivery of goods or other related activities and the high pressure from the end users/donation's receivers – due to the humanitarian war catastrophe. These were all part of the reason for not having a clear volunteer structure in a proscribed way. Decisions concerning the work of volunteers were at times taken in a hurry and *ad hoc*. They often proved to be good, but there were some exceptions.

The following specifics are related to the duration of the volunteerism. Namely, volunteers that were ready to work for a short amount of time for some of the *Agape* programs were more in number than the ones that were ready to commit for a longer period.²³⁹ Every organization is more interested in long-term volunteers, although the *Agape* case was specific in this regard too. *Agape* volunteers were coming from different countries – overseas, traveling great distances and in groups that were sometimes including more than seventy volunteers; they were fairly young and inexperienced, without foreign language knowledge but with a *strong will to work and assist the refugees*. Their hosts would provide a place for their stay for a usual period of two weeks, which at times caused some logistical problems,²⁴⁰ although at the end *Agape* would gain positive points. These somewhat *tourist*

²³⁹ Long-term volunteers are by the rule more devoted to the mission and emotionally closer to the organization. They are also more active and perform complex tasks, being devoted to their work, creative in their approach and more motivated. They bring in other volunteers, friends, and acquaintances equally valuable in their own areas of professional competence.

²⁴⁰ For instance organizing transportation of a bigger group of volunteers from the airport to the final destination and back, registration of their stay in the Police department, securing their food and lodging, communication with the host family, local transport to the area of work, translation services, health insurance, evening visits to the local churches, and occasional tourist visits to the neighboring countries or cities such as Belgrade, Budapest, Sarajevo or Zagreb, etc.

groups besides covering all their expenses and performing useful tasks, would also bring valuable gifts with them sent by their churches or organizations, and sometimes some of them would come back and stay with *Agape* longer, for two, three even up to five years, covering complex matters such as financial operations or developing *Agape* relationships with foreign donors, leading projects, etc.

In addition, the last though not least, specific characteristic of *Agape* volunteerism which should be stressed is the one that often became a challenge while working, namely the multinational and multicultural dimension of the *Agape* volunteerism. For instance, volunteers in some *Agape* offices of that period would have been representatives of the sides in the conflict, Croats, Serbs, and Muslims. This was a characteristic making *Agape* different from the other traditional Christian church organizations. The end users/donations' receivers also belonged to different nationalities/ethnic groups. The work of the volunteers and their activities, the obvious warm relationship between the members of the teams demonstrated to all the possibilities of Christian reconciliation, togetherness, and coexistence. Their efforts, skills and team spirit led to building self-sustained structures organized around a common goal - assisting the ones in need.

One of the greatest challenges in the *Agape* work was the mixing of different cultures and sub-cultures. Believers who volunteered in the *Agape* offices with their Christian culture came into touch with people and groups whose culture and religion were different, such as the Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, or the so-called *post-communist atheists*. In many areas and in all levels, different cultures mixed creating a variety of cultural combinations, and many other specifics such as urban or rural cultures, etc. This situation was even harder with the presence of the international volunteers. To understand and accept differences in viewing the work, cultural values or norms of behaviour of each other required a growth in the level of tolerance and communication within the organization. Although there were no cross-cultural workshops or other types of informal cross-cultural education, the process of improved understanding of cultural differences gradually improved. This topic was also discussed at the *Agape* Board of Directors' meetings, which positively influenced the general level of cultural sensitivity and tolerance of differences. The greatest emphasis

was put on training the personnel working on fundraising to be better acquainted with their partners and to develop specific communication skills, in order to make their work more efficient.²⁴¹

The priority in our cross-cultural efforts was placed upon the change of the general and basic attitudes towards the members of other cultural groups (especially the prejudices about *the other* and classical stereotypes, etc.). What was achieved in regards to appreciating and managing differences is *Agape's* greatest advantage in comparison to other humanitarian organizations.²⁴²

4.6. FUNDRAISING MANAGEMENT

4.6.1. BASIC IDEA OF FUNDRAISING

Fundraising for humanitarian programs and projects from private sources / donors in our country is considered a new area.²⁴³ Lack of a culture of philanthropy and operators, institutions and foundations as well as an underdeveloped economic system, in addition to the lack of developed market mechanisms did not favor further progress in this area. In the future, later stages of development of the post-communist countries and after certain legal and institutional conditions are created, fundraising will perhaps become an important activity for non-governmental organizations. Linking the first and the third sector will then become a main lever for developing the not-for-profit sector by securing the means necessary for its operation, fostering the

²⁴¹ Rosalie L. Tung. "Selection and Training Procedures of US, European and Japanese Multinationals." *California Management Review*, 24, 1982. The phases of the cross-cultural training: 1) short orientation and introduction to the culture; 2) learning the language; 3) sensitivity training for increasing the flexibility of the attitudes; 4) avoiding the mistakes of one's own projections, etc. Pg. 65.

²⁴² For more details see: Philip R. Harris and Robert T. Moran. *Managing Cultural Differences*, Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1991, Pg. 9.

²⁴³ There is no common definition acceptable to all for the fundraising term. The majority of authors agree that gathering funds or fundraising is not a science but an added, sum of different skills and practices.

inter-sector relationships between the profit and not-for-profit services, and enhancing the general acceleration of economic growth.²⁴⁴

On the other hand, fundraising in the U.S.A., the country where these activities have reached their highest levels of development and where they are systematically researched, is not at all easy. Quite the opposite,

For many nonprofits, fundraising is the most troublesome aspect of management. Competition in the area has increased substantially in the last decade in part, as fundraisers struggle to deal with the depressing effects of tax code changes on charitable giving. Few directors of nonprofits and even board members enjoy fundraising with its image of an outstretched hand, turned up. Moreover, fundraising often brings to the fore struggles over mission and future direction of organization.²⁴⁵

The potential donors to humanitarian organizations are diverse by their nature/area of work, their way of communication and the relationships they establish with the organization and the receivers of the donation. They can be grouped in the following categories:

- Local congregations;
- Denominations (church unions/alliances);
- Churches and para-church organizations;
- Economy operators (national, foreign, international);
- State administration organs and state organizations/ agencies;²⁴⁶
- International para-state organizations and institutions (such as, EU, UN, UNHCR, IRC, etc.);

²⁴⁴ The direct cooperation between the first and the third sector without the mitigation of the government results in more effective allocation and use of funds. More careful than the government, private donors approve required amounts while at the same time closely monitoring the ways they are used, and analyzing in greater detail the effects of their donations.

²⁴⁵ Sharon S. Oster. *Strategic Management for Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Cases*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1995. Pg. 121.

²⁴⁶ For example, the American USAID, Canadian CIDA, Swedish SIDA, Norwegian NORAD, Holland MARTA, Danish DANIDA, etc.

- Local government and local self-government organs and organizations;
- Donor organizations (for instance the Lions/Rotary clubs, etc.);
- National and international foundations;²⁴⁷
- Civil associations (such as, the Association of Priests, etc.);
- Specialized organizations and associations that deal with fundraising (national, foreign, international);
- Individual donors and their friends (from the country and abroad);
- Former, current, and future business partners.²⁴⁸

These can be further grouped into five general categories of donors: foundations, corporations, governments, governmental organizations, and individual donors.

In particular, foundations, corporations, and governments will look for indicators that the nonprofit has a clear mission, careful controls, experienced staff, and a track record of achievement. ... Individual donors go through these stages over their donation history. The early years involve regular small gifts. The middle years provide opportunities for nonprofits to secure major gifts, and the later years provide opportunities for planned giving.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ The foundations have their own basic property/assets for disposal, and then work on gathering additional needed funds. In the U.S.A. alone there are more than sixty thousand foundations registered, ranging from the so-called big organizations to small, almost by one family managed ones, with a great diversity of programs, policies and areas of interest. There is a general opinion that foundations contribute on a long-term basis to the economic development of the country. In Croatia, there are only a few organizations of this kind – in the registry of organizations there are less than a hundred foundations with small personal assets.

²⁴⁸ There are the so-called Internet browsers for searching for potential donors, such as Funders Online, www.fundersonline.org; The Foundation Centre/grantmakerweb-sites: <http://foundationcenter.org/funders/granmaker/index.html>; The Grantmanship Center: www.tgci.com; The Foundations and Funds Online: www.fundsnetsservices.com/index3.htm., etc.

²⁴⁹ Philip Kotler and Alan R. Andreasen. *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*. Fifth Ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1995. Pg. 269. Also: Sharon S. Oster. *Strategic Management for Nonprofit Organizations: Theory and Cases*. New York,

Experts distinguish three basic characteristics that should be recognized and developed so we can determine and increase the likelihood for receiving assistance:²⁵⁰

- Commitment, an emotional relationship that a potential donor already has with a certain humanitarian organization, which can often be the strongest factor in determining the likelihood for a donation;
- Concern, as a relationship between a potential donor and a humanitarian organization's mission; in here, the probability is related to sharing common values and not to personal, emotional relations; and,
- Capacity, representing the financial and other capacities of a potential donor.

The motives of individual donors can differ highly from expressing personal gratitude or from a feeling of duty, to articulating worries or fears (such as, diseases), etc. Some donors offer their means for humanitarian and other high causes due to their moral or religious reasons, others to ease their conscience from certain business steps, which they consider dubious. Certain benefactors use these opportunities as an acknowledgement for their generosity, while others give because of the pressure of their business surroundings and the expectation that they should be part of a particular humanitarian activity. The motivation of believers can also be different, as stated by Cunningham,

- 1) Giving as a response to God's grace;
- 2) Giving as a response to human need;
- 3) Giving as an expression of thanksgiving to God;
- 4) Giving as a way of symbolizing commitment of all of one's re-

Oxford University Press, 1995. Furthermore, she says that with the individual donors, "charitable giving increases with the increase of their income, education, age, and number of children. Women also have a higher propensity to give, as do people in moderate-sized cities." Pg. 115.

²⁵⁰ According to, Nenad Vakanjac. *Prirucnik o Prikupljanju Sredstava*, Split: Smart, Udruga za Razvoj Civilnog Drustva, 2002. Pg. 15.

sources to the service of God and humanity; 5) Giving as a concrete proof of love.²⁵¹

Some donors offer their donations alone, while others use a completely different approach. Tax relief is not the primary motive, though it stimulates the donors. Understanding donors' motives is always a key for obtaining funds regardless of whether these are spiritual or psychological in nature, socially related or a combination. Whether the donations are to be received from an individual or through a corporation, the decision on the matter is always reached by individuals, acting independently or in groups. Secular classification of possible donor motives or a combination of motives is as follows,

The basic donor motive is most often a clear altruism that can be subdivided into the following categories of motives: (1) The need to build a value system that will be based on self-respect and a positive personal image (as opposed to a sense of shame and guilt); (2) The need to differentiate from other people; (3) The fear of facing the basic problem; (4) Donating due to a habit or because that is something others do too; (5) Donating with an aim to avoid discomfort related to other people; (6) Donating under a certain form of coercion, for instance under the influence of the employer at the work place; (7) Donating under certain induced conditions like substitution: offering a donation as a way of fighting against cancer, instead of placing a wreath on the grave; (8) Due to the feeling of collectiveness and solidarity; (9) Out of moral commitment.²⁵²

4.6.2. ELEMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF FUNDRAISING

Usually there are ten basic principles that are recommended for a humanitarian organization to follow so that its fundraising will be efficient.

²⁵¹ Richard B. Cunningham. *Creative Stewardship*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979.

²⁵² Marcel Meler. *Neprofitni Marketing*, Osijek: Ekonomski Fakultet u Osijeku, 2003. Pg. 158. In *Prirucnik o Prikupljanju Sredstava*, the author states other motives too, for instance a desire to be trendy, goals that overlap, getting rid of noncompetitive reserves, recognizing the quality, accomplishing unfulfilled dreams, then culture, tradition, money, power, etc., *ibid.*, Pg. 15.

1. The humanitarian organization's vision, mission and goals should be clearly defined;
2. Fundraising goals should be based on a clear vision and mission, and goals that are adjusted to the humanitarian organization;
3. The type of donation (annual giving, major gifts, planned giving) and the type of program/project should correlate and be interdependent;
4. Donor market segmentation is the most important step in planning;²⁵³
5. A humanitarian organization should begin with the fundraising from/through its immediate and closest partners;
6. The aim behind offering a donation to a humanitarian organization and some of its projects must be very important;
7. The management, employees and volunteers should be active donors themselves too, within their own possibilities;
8. Being realistic and mindful is often critical while choosing a donor;
9. Maintaining a long-term relationship with the donors is the key for success;
10. The means (donations) can be received only if all stated fundraising principles are cumulatively applied.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ "Donors with limited potential will be solicited by direct mail or other low-cost techniques. Those with greater potential might receive telephone solicitations, whereas major donors are subject to in-person solicitation that lasts over several weeks. Actual solicitation...will take place after volunteers have had extensive training. Training should ensure that volunteers develop a customer mind-set and understand how to translate nonprofit needs into benefits for the donor. Effective annual campaigns have clear timetables, accountability, and recognition for both, donors and volunteers." Philip Kotler and Alan R. Andreasen. *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*. Fifth Ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1995. Pg 270.

²⁵⁴ According to, Thomas E. Broce: *Fundraising*. University of Oklahoma Press, 1980, Pgs. 17-24. See also, Henry A. Rosso. *Achieving Excellence in Fundraising: A*

Long-term sustainability is reached mostly through developing the totality of relationships, notably close ones between donors and the humanitarian organization. The best results however are achieved when the donors became the organization's partners, building an emotional relationship between the funder and the organization's programs and projects, and finally to the organization itself by developing a consciousness that a certain activity is as much *theirs* as it is *ours* (belonging to the *organization*).²⁵⁵

Some authors believe the approach of *selling* projects to donors through using traditional marketing techniques is counterproductive especially in terms of an organization's long-term sustainability, since it reduces the relationship between the donor and the organization to a level of commercial transaction. Thus, developing a partner relationship with the donor as a direct marketing tool should be based on mutual trust, anticipating donor's suggestions and opinions on certain aspects of the work of the organization or in regards to the concrete program or project, and cultivating this relationship with great care.

A large number of books covering this relatively new marketing area stress its significance. In spite that, many entrepreneurs in Croatia still restrain from donating their funds for humanitarian and other purposes or for the common good. The reasons are related not only to the lack of philanthropic tradition, but also to the fact that they are rarely asked them to give, or at least not asked in the right way. For a humanitarian organization to receive donations on a long-term basis, it needs to be aware of donor-organization, its structure, way of operating, the so-called internal communication structure, or how donor representatives consult or exchange information, and how they think, deduce, and make decisions, and finally which persons have key influ-

Comprehensive Guide to Principles, Strategies and Methods. San Francisco: JosseyBass Publishers, 1991. Edward J. Hales and Alan J. Youngren. *Your Money/Their Ministry: A Guide to Responsible Christian Giving*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.

²⁵⁵ Ken Burnett. *Relationship Fundraising: A Donor-Based Approach to the Business of Raising Money*. New York: Heights International, 1996. See: Betty J. Barnett. *Friend Raising-Building a Missionary Support Team That Lasts*. Seattle: YWAM Publishing, 1991. "Using the term *friend-raising* rather than *fundraising* captures the essence of support raising. It broadens its meaning and promotes the richness in relationship God wants us to build." Pg. 21.

ence in the decision-making process. The strategy then should be adjusted to these data, starting with writing the project proposal, working on the necessary project documentation, to advocacy and lobbying.

It seems that donors give more easily when they are presented with the possibility of the huge impact their donation may have on someone's life, rather than by using the classical techniques of corporate marketing. For instance, offering a name and surname, photograph and the short story of single poor student coming from a remote and underdeveloped area, accompanied with his/her resume and academic and other records may have a better impact than numerous statistical and bookkeeping data about the organization. On the other hand, these two approaches do not exclude each other, and potential donors should be offered information about everything that might assist their decision-making process, although in an appropriate quantity, plan, and timing.²⁵⁶

Quality public relations and well-managed publicity are always useful in the long run, since an organization's sound image assists potential donors in their decision-making. For instance, offering copies of letters or thank notes from different public persons, business representatives or state administrative bodies, including brief bookkeeping records with the audit's report may positively impact key donor representatives and contribute to a positive final decision.

Building a long-term relationship with donors is always in the center of humanitarian work's attention. The road from first contact to donation is usually long and uncertain. This effort will be abundantly rewarded if the donor continues with his or her activities, and especially if the donor's business partners become involved too. The following steps are most important if this relationship should continue: *thank you* letter – it is always a great gesture to thank the donor(s) in written form for their donation(s), explaining what the organization used the funds for; regular financial and other reports are also impor-

²⁵⁶ Useful books on grantsmanship are Raymond Knudsten. *New Models for Financing the Local Church*, Wilton: Morehouse-Barlow, 1985. Tom Emswiles. *Money for Your Campus Ministry, Church, or Other Non-profit Organization*. Norman: The Wesley Foundation, 1981. Carol Kurzid. *Foundation Fundamentals: A Guide for Grantseekers*. New York: Foundation Center, 1981. James M. Greenfield. *Fundraising Fundamentals* Somerset: John Wiley & Sons, 1994.

tant as well as sending them the organization's plans for the future, asking for the donor's opinions and suggestions, and inviting donors to regularly visit the organization strengthens the emotional relationship between the donor and the organization, especially if there is a possibility to organize a joint meeting with volunteers and the end users/direct donation receivers.

The person that is responsible for *fundraising* activities should develop the following capabilities, which are similar to direct marketing activities:²⁵⁷

1. Personal devotion to the objectives of the work and belief in the importance of the program/project;
2. Persuasion, negotiation and communication skills with the potential donors;
3. Direct communication skills and fundraising skills (he/she should not feel discomfort while looking for donations for a certain cause, regardless of whether that is to be done in writing, in person or by the phone);
4. Capacity to accept the first rejection and transform/change it into a success;
5. Lack of self-consciousness and the ability to accept repeated rejections;
6. Creativity and imaginativeness as well as skills for their application are indispensable;
7. Developed social skills (confidence, patience, punctuality);
8. Organizational skills, especially in regards to human resources and maintaining regular correspondence;
9. Persistence in using every opportunity for fundraising;
10. A sense for developing new acquaintances and social networking skills.

²⁵⁷ Antal Balog. *Marketing Teoloskih Obrazovnih Ustanova*, Magistarski Rad, Osijek: Ekonomski Fakultet, 2001. Pg. 154.

4.6.3. AGAPE FUNDRAISING EXPERIENCES

The specifics of *Agape's* fund-raising activities are related to the assistance gathered for the *Agape* branch offices network, which operated mostly during the armed conflict and humanitarian catastrophes in this part of the world. The biggest media agencies were providing live reporting about the political situation in the former Yugoslavia and the growth of human suffering. The audience that was following this news on their TVs, although with a lack of deep understanding about the historical, political and social background of the conflict, found it easy to identify with ordinary peoples' suffering, those that found themselves in the labyrinth of war, in confusion and insecurity, losing their close ones, their homes and their work, and often all of their belongings. Motivating them to offer their assistance and organizing effective logistics for gathering and transporting the goods was not complicated.²⁵⁸

The majority of first donations arrived through the big humanitarian organizations such as *World Vision*, *Word Relief*, and *Samaritan's Purse*, although sometime later others joined as well (churches and church alliances, etc.). The greater part of the fundraising 'burden' and continuous information flow about the humanitarian needs was provided by the *Agape* President, Peter Kuzmic. During his frequent visits to Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in South Hamilton, Massachusetts, where he was teaching theology, he also visited other areas in the U.S.A., talking to different groups of people and explaining the needs for emergency assistance. He also talked to the media, and his appeals were considered equally important for fundraising as his speeches in public. Dr. Kuzmic succeeded in motivating a significant number of prominent people – church representatives, governmental and humanitarian representatives, journalists and

²⁵⁸ In his newest film *Babel* (2006) the Director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu talks about the impossibility of communication between people; this problem is especially significant in the 21st century. The film discusses both language and technology as a means for communication. In spite of the fact that different people in different cultures celebrate different things/moments, they are all connected by love and suffering. That is how the TV audience following the CNN reports on the war in the former Yugoslavia responded – by showing their compassion and readiness to offer assistance.

others – to visit the areas of conflict, become introduced to the needs of the people, and decide on sending aid in this part of the world. While visiting some areas they would talk to governmental and non-governmental representatives, refugees and exiles, visit the war zones and frequently expose their own lives to danger. These visits were proven highly efficient since their main purpose was to initiate and maintain long-term partnerships with different organizations.

During these years, *Agape* was acting as a local humanitarian organization distributing humanitarian assistance directly to the needy. After a while, *Agape* went through a phenomenon that is known to other humanitarian organizations as *donor fatigue* or exhaustion, and which occurs especially among those organizations that raise funds from individual donors. This trend was followed by media tiredness, which resulted in a lowering of assistance. In this situation *Agape* launched its' own *Newsletter* targeting the Christian public and seeking their continuous support. This method had some though a limited effect compared to the needs of the suffering populace.

As time passed by and the war operations calmed down, the need decreased for emergency relief to eliminate the immediate threat of starvation or poverty that endangered the populace's existence. Its activities then became focused in three areas: assisting returning refugees, assistance in restoring their emotional health, and building peace and tolerance toward the former members of all sides in the conflict. In this context, *Agape* launched special programs and projects covering this area.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁹ For additional reading see, Redmon Mullin. *Fundraising Strategy*. London: Charities Aid Foundation, West Malling/Institute for Charity Fundraising Managers, 1997. Redmon Mullin. *Foundations for Fundraising*. Hemel Hempstead: ICSA Publishing Limited, 1995. Richard Holloway. *Toward Financial Self-Reliance*. London and Starling, VA: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 2001. Karen Gilchrist and Margo Horsley. *Fundraising from Grant-making Trusts and Foundations*. London: Directory for Social Change, 2000. Valerie Morton. *Corporate Fundraising*. London: Charities Aid Foundation, West Malling/ Institute for Charity Fundraising Managers, 1999. Christy Duyvelaar and Jeroen Kupier. *Trends in Funding*. Amsterdam: Regional Environmental Centre, Szentendre/ Milieukontakt Oost-Europa, 1998.

4.7. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY

How does Christ's command to conduct acts of charity in privacy relate to the frequent practice of Christian humanitarian organizations discussing their activities in public, sometimes even in an improper way?²⁶⁰ Although small in number, these organizations promote their activities too boisterously and without any hesitation in presenting the misery of those receiving their humanitarian assistance. Their goal even if unintentional might be to emotionally manipulate donors and thus encourage them to do what they might not otherwise do, if the emotional impact was less. On the other hand, the great majority of humanitarian organizations talk in public in an appropriate manner motivated by the desire to keep present and attract new donors for their programs and projects, while preserving the human dignity of those in need. Having this in mind the conclusion might be that proper development of a humanitarian organization's public relations and raising of public interest is important and benefits both the individuals and groups that find themselves in humanitarian need.

One of the definitions of public relations is that,

Public relations as a promotion activity is an assembly/group of different actions of a certain non-profit organization directed toward stakeholders, real and potential users, purchasers, banks, scientific institutions, local councils, state authorities, local and regional self-government and the general public, for the purpose of building trust, positive opinion and perception about the work and activities of the stated organization as a social subject.²⁶¹

According to this definition, public relations is an activity that influences the creation of positive public opinion about the humanitarian organization and its programs and projects related to different direct or indirect target groups. In this context public opinion can be influ-

²⁶⁰ The command to conduct acts of charity in privacy/secretly is more related to individual acts because that way the donor improves him/herself both spiritually and emotionally, by being protected from the temptations of pride, self-admiration, and arrogance.

²⁶¹ Marcel Meler. *Neprofitni Marketing*. Osijek: Ekonomski Fakultet u Osijeku, 2003. Pg. 265.

enced and shaped or changed to what it is desired to be; it can be created if there is none so far; its impact can be increased when considered too weak, or in a particular moment of importance.²⁶²

A humanitarian organization should identify and recognize its *public*, the groups to which it directs its activities, regardless of whether they are considered as internal target groups (volunteers, program or project leaders, employees, etc.) or external. The external public/target groups can be defined as the aid users, donors, churches, organizations, and associations dealing with similar activities, or media representatives, governmental organizations, local administration and local self-government, citizens, suppliers, etc, respectively. Toward all these groups, the organization should develop special types of relationships. When talking about the church humanitarian organization as in this case, then it is especially important to anticipate and recognize the so-called local and international *church public* and the variety of interactions with and influences they have on other target groups gravitating around the organization. The eminent Croatian publicist Sagi Bono discusses the issue of the church public by raising three questions: (1) Is there a church public and what is its influence on the church community in a pluralistic society? (2) To what extent does the church participate in forming the public secular opinion, and how much and in what way is it present in the media? (3) What is the role and the quality of church information mechanisms in the context of general information competition?²⁶³

²⁶² According to Philip Kotler, the public relations strategy planning process has seven stages: 1) Identify the organization's relevant publics; 2) Measure images and attitudes of the relevant publics toward the organization; 3) Establish image and attitude goals for the key publics; 4) Develop cost-effective public relations strategies; 5) Prepare for a public relation crisis; 6) Choose specific public relations tools; 7) Implement actions and evaluate results. Philip Kotler and Alan R. Andreasen. *Strategic Marketing for Nonprofit Organizations*. Fifth Ed. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1995. Pg. 544.

²⁶³ Zvonimir Bono Sagi. *Laici i Svjetovna Dimenzija Crkve*. Krscanska Sadasnjost, Zagreb 1995. Pg. 218. See also, *Pastoralna uputa nadolaskom novog doba "Aetatis novae" o društvenoj komunikaciji dvadeset godina nakon "Communio et progression."* Papinski savjet za sredstva javnog priopćavanja, Zagreb: Krscanska Sadasnjost, 1992. "The media influence is so strong and their role so powerful that they become the main source of information and education, for leadership and advising for individual, family and social behavior". Pg. 6.

The importance of successful public relations management for religious communities increases and becomes more complex if it is considered small or belonging to a minority. On the other hand, the public perception related to a particular church or church alliance is usually transferred to the organization that is established by or works under that umbrella. Consequently to work on building a positive public image about a church humanitarian organization means to work on building a positive public opinion about the church behind that organization, and finally, for the evangelical and other worldview messages that are announced by that particular church to the same public.²⁶⁴ Since evangelical messages aim at a thorough change in listeners' attitudes and behaviors, the conclusion could be that building and maintaining positive public relations is an important and complex activity – often with unpredictable outcomes.

On the other hand, if a church or its humanitarian organization has the desire to correct and upgrade certain public standpoints and situations by participating in the improvement process of public structures through social advocacy and lobbying, they will first need to build an effective public relations strategy, especially with the media.²⁶⁵

4.7.1. SOCIAL ADVOCACY AND LOBBYING

Although the goals for developing public relations are related to building positive public opinion and the organizational *image*, the underlying purpose for launching this process is the intention to influence certain aspects of an audience's behavior, regardless of whether they are individuals and groups. To achieve these goals, the humani-

²⁶⁴ The American communication expert Vincent Price states that *public opinion – regardless of whether it is perceived within the philosophical, political, sociological or psychological framework – remains basically a communication problem*. Vincent Price. *Public Opinion*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1992. p 91.; Lamza-Posavec believes that the term public opinion includes (1) *the social issues or public opinion objects/goals*; (2) *the public or the public opinion subjects/actors*; (3) *the communication processes or interactions inside the public*; and (4) *the opinion or the communication processes products*. Vesna Lamza-Posavec. *Javno Mnijenje: Teorije i Istrazivanje*, Zagreb: Alineja, 1995. Pg. 36.

²⁶⁵ For more details see, Seymour H. Fine. *Marketing of Ideas and Social Issues*. New York, Praeger Publishers, 1981. Pg. 116.

tarian organization should use a series of marketing instruments while developing social advocacy and lobbying skills²⁶⁶ to attempt change in the area of social structures. For example,

The public (social) advocacy aims at changing the society and its power structures, as well as changing the mentality or the way of thinking. Advocacy is a tool we use to influence people, change their views on certain situations, and create mutual understanding. It also offers possibilities for alternatives and goes beyond the narrow individual or group interests. Social advocacy's mission is creating a more just and fair society.²⁶⁷

Sometimes smaller religious communities believe that advocating for social change or public benefits are outside their area of interest, thus limiting their participation. By promoting no involvement, these churches omit to practice their mission to become the *yeast* of transformation and the *salt* and *light* of the world by neglecting the society/surroundings they inhabit. If, for instance, they do not participate in public debates on issues of relevance to Christians, the world will not know what Christian values they stand and live for, and which the foundation for our western civilization are. By participating in the processes of social change by standing for the values, they believe in, Christians interact and change both society and themselves.

The time and energy spent by the church and church organizations in building their public relations, Christian *image*, and the organization's identity, allows them to be better recognized in public and supports their spiritual authenticity in representing relevant social is-

²⁶⁶ NVO *Prirucnik*, *ibid.*, defines social advocacy as series of organized and demanding actions that implement tools of democratization to achieve or implement laws and policies that will create a more just and unbiased society. Advocacy is an action that is aimed at changing policies, statuses, or programs inside an organization or institution. Advocacy includes different strategies and techniques (lobbying, social marketing, direct actions, advertising and information campaigns, etc.) created with an aim to influence at the local, regional, national, and international level. Pg. 161.

²⁶⁷ Slavica Bradvic and Damir Alic. *Javno Zagovaranje*. Tuzla: BOSPO, 2001. pg. 13. Also, Michael Pertschuk; Phillip Wilbur and Anne Marie O'Keefe. *Media Advocacy: Reframing Public Debate*. Washington, D.C.: The Benton Foundation, 1991. Also, *Media Advocacy Workbook*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001.

sues. Through these activities, the church as a social organization will be able to influence the public, public views and behavior and influence their more general social surroundings to the extent that the church's views and opinions are respected by these public circles. To influence change in attitudes and behaviors of people, be they an individual or a group, requires time and energy. Investment in social efforts by the church in its surroundings creates a social atmosphere that is conducive to evangelization and might bring expected results though in a certain amount of time. The motivation that is behind these efforts for social advocacy is the desire to do good for the whole community.

Consequently, the long-lasting question about whether the church and its organizations should become involved in social processes by building their public relations and participating in social advocacy should be considered old and already answered by the Gospel. The right questions would be how to identify the problem(s), find appropriate solutions, define the goals of social advocacy, and lobbying, choose partners and create coalitions, and determine appropriate strategies for reaching these goals.²⁶⁸

According to the professional literature, the dynamism of the advocacy process has five stages:²⁶⁹ (1) identifying the problem that is to be resolved; (2) selecting the most acceptable solution(s); (3) generating political will or political support (in this phase through networking that builds partnerships and coalitions, and transmitting messages, organizational meetings with decision-makers and influencing public opinion); (4) problems, solutions and politics will create a fertile ground for political activism; and finally (5) generating an assessment or estimate about political influences and effects. Social advocates should know well the organizational structures of competent decision-

²⁶⁸ Social advocacy requires continuous upgrading of competencies, patience throughout this long process, team work, good communication skills, openness towards changes, capacities for negotiation and lobbying, and active participation/social activism. Frequently, a great deal of energy is invested, and the results are limited. This is often incredibly laborious, long, and slow process sometimes with no support, understanding, or recognition from others regardless of whether they belong to the outer or internal church audience/public.

²⁶⁹ According to, Slavica Bradvic and Damir Alic. *Javno Zagovaranje*. Tuzla: BOSPO, 2001. Pgs. 21-22.

making authorities, their legal competencies, formal and procedural connections and informal ties, different influences on the decision-making process, what the limits are, and what is the nature of these influences in making the decision about a certain question. Equally important is persuasion skill in lobbying, especially if held by opinion leaders who are gravitating around the organization's primary target groups, the ones responsible for the decision-making. Seymoure Fine makes a distinction between the groups for social advocacy and pressure groups, stating that their activities while lobbying are directed toward different goals. According to Seymoure *advocacy groups* operate "top-down" compared to the *pressure groups* that work "bottom-up" creating a two-way pressure for reaching decisions in the best interest for the organization.²⁷⁰

The importance of social advocacy was felt/can be confirmed by *Agape* during the last fifteen years of its work; when using this technique and supported by its partners, *Agape* successfully influenced different areas of social life in Croatia and abroad.

4.7.2. AGAPE AND ITS EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Agape operated in such a way that it gathered humanitarian assistance from different organizations coming mostly from the U.S.A., but also from Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, Korea, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand and distributed it to its end-users in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Numerous churches, church alliances, Christian organizations, and foundations wanted to reduce the human suffering in the former Yugoslavia with their donations and gifts. This is *Agape's* dominant approach - to turn towards foreign donors for support due to the lack of local ones and due to the general absence of the culture of philanthropy, which lasts until today.

²⁷⁰ Seymour H. Fine. *Marketing Public Sector*. London: Transaction Publishers, 1992. Pg. 124. Pressure and advocacy groups are alike in that each is organized to foster some cause benefiting the special concerns of its members or of constituents that the group has been chose to represent. They differ principally in the direction their respective efforts take. Pressure groups are macro in nature because they seek to bring about social change, whereas advocacy is a micro-process in which ideas are transmitted to individuals.

According to this, *Agape* had two essential target audiences (public groups), the foreign and local one, which were very different from each other: (1) the foreign donors group belonged to church circles and was relatively homogenous in its character, while (2) the local public was heterogeneous and diverse, and under the influence of the socio-political situation. Toward both of them, *Agape*, during its years of service, developed appropriate media relations, which included targeted press conferences, separate press releases related to variety of *Agape* activities, such as concerts, anniversaries or other public events.²⁷¹ These activities would be appropriately presented in the media²⁷², and then used for creating additional information for foreign donors, the church, and the broader, local public. For the needs of foreign donors, *Agape* published (usually on an annual basis) circular letters and newsletters as well as short brochures related to the humanitarian activities and achievements of particular *Agape* offices in the region.

The majority of *Agape* promotional activities were directed to the existing and new, potential foreign donors creating (to use marketing terms) an appropriate promotion mix. The focus of these activities was not on *Agape*, although 'marketing' the organization was also a part of it, but on promoting particular programs or projects.²⁷³ This approach

²⁷¹ For example, there would be an event organized once or twice a month: a round table on a topic of social relevance, a book presentation or review from an area of theology or other social and liberal studies, exhibitions of Christian books during the *Week of Reformation*, an international art colony for Christian artists, seminars targeting social welfare, pedagogy, psychology (organized together with representatives of the Croatian Ministry for Social Welfare, etc.), lectures by professors and experts from the country or abroad, etc.

²⁷² The most frequently used media for communicating *Agape* messages were the printed media or the local dailies (such as, *Glas Slavonije*, *Vecernji list*, *Jutarnji list*, *Vjesnik i t. sl.*), magazines (*Izvori*, *Radost*, *Duhovna vrela*, *Feral Tribune*), the local TV station (*Televizija Slavonije i Baranje*) and national TV networks (*HRT 1 and 2*, *TV Nova*, *RTL*), and also different UHF/UKV radio broadcasters (*Hrvatski radio*, *Radio postaja Osijek*; *Slavonski radio*, *Radio Dakovo*, *Radio Bjelovar*, *Radio Garesnica*, *Radio Daruvar*, *Radio in Tuzla - Kameleon*, itd.), as well as foreign newspapers and magazines (*Pentecostal Evangel*, *Ristin Voitto*, *World Pentecost*, *Lake Oslo Review*), and specialized bulletins (*Glasnik* - a bulleting of the Directorate for Expellers, Returnees and Refugees in Zagreb, *World Pulse*, *Evangelism and missions Information Service*).

²⁷³ Although the donors still require synthetic and numerical reports, to include within them simple life story of a particular humanitarian assistance end-user can be a great marketing success point. Equally important can be to provide a donor

proved to be successful because *Agape* functioned well covering all the areas for which the organization had goals. Even more, *Agape's* growth was obvious both in regards to its programs as much as to its territory, covering almost the whole of Croatia and continuing to spread to the neighboring countries such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later on to Kosovo and Macedonia.

4.7.3. AGAPE'S EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL ADVOCACY

Agape's successful and continuous media exposure, constant public presence, and recognition contributed to the creation of an appropriate social environment for developing social (public) advocacy regarding particular social issues that were of interest to the Reformation heritage and for common good. This is an example that even religious communities (which may be considered in some countries as too minor and marginal) can use social advocacy methods and create a significant social impact. Well-synchronized, coordinated, and planned joint activities may serve as a great substitute for the small number of believers and related small social impact. In other words, resolute and courageous appearance can be a good substitute for smallness in numbers.

One example is the attempt to legally regulate the legal status of the religious communities in Croatia by the Draft Law of 1992. Joined together, different Reformed church representatives including members of various protestant humanitarian organizations blocked the proposed Draft Law even prior to its first reading. Their activities were focused on using public appearances and arguments to dispute the proposed concept of the Law especially some of its provisions, and to propose other solutions. At the same time, they used lobbying with the state's hierarchy to attempt to persuade them that the proposed Draft Law was appalling and did harm to both local religious communities and the Croatian state in general. The success of this action (which was unthinkable in the previous communist system) increased the level of

with description(s) about the activities of a certain *Agape* branch office related to its opening or publishing and distribution of Christian books to the end-users, about organized transport of humanitarian assistance through the war zones by presenting details that can assist the donor in understanding the situation on the ground – all these steps contribute to improve an organization's perception.

collective self-confidence, which became essential for the success of activities related to social advocacy, which followed.

Another example of social advocacy was the joint action to introduce religious teaching in the public schools, at first in the elementary schools and then at the secondary level. Although the majority Roman Catholic Church tried to bypass the opinions of other religious representatives and use a quiet coalition with the government to magnify their influence, the reformed churches succeeded in equalizing their influence.

The *Protestant Evangelical Board* (PEB)²⁷⁴ also played a significant role in this matter by linking different protestant and evangelical churches, church alliances and organizations.

Example 1.

This process of social advocacy was somewhat more complex than the previous one since it required that each church community develop a certain level of religious teaching infrastructure.

- (1) They had to create a curriculum (educational plan and program) for the elementary school children in accordance with the set (national) pedagogical standards²⁷⁵ that in the later stage were to be approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Croatia;
- (2) They had to develop and publish religious teaching books in accordance with the educational plan and program, and the pedagogical standards, and they needed to educate religious teachers and professors.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ The *Protestant Evangelical Board* in the Republic of Croatia is a community of evangelical and protestant churches and alliances was founded in 1993 and is part of the European Evangelical Alliance (EEA). For more details see, *Evandeoski Pokret: Zbornik Radova sa Znanstvenog Skupa Protestantsko-evandeoskog Vijeca Povodom 150. Obljetnice Evandeoske Alijanse*, 28.-30. listopada 1996. Stanko Jambrek (ed.), PEV, Zagreb, 1996.

²⁷⁵ Later on, these programs were successfully adjusted/harmonized with the new pedagogical standards or the so-called Croatian National Education Standard (*Hrvatskim nacionalnim obrazovnim standardom*).

²⁷⁶ The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek established a separate unit, the Institute for Christian Pedagogy and Culture, for educating religious teachers and professors.

The religious curriculum for the elementary school children was then directed and designed by the *Religious Teaching Board* of the PEB and approved by the authorized Ministry for further use. The publishing was done through the Society of Friends of the Bible – organization in Zagreb,²⁷⁷ while the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Osijek was responsible for educating the teachers and professors by creating a separate Institute for Christian Pedagogy and Culture. Classes were held in the local churches by certified religious teachers while the marks were put in school certificates.²⁷⁸

Coordinated activities of a relatively small number of believers and their efficient cooperation is a proof that a minority church may successfully use social advocacy and lobbying accomplishing great results at the same level as the majority church. It is beyond any doubt that these kind of social successes contribute to raising the collective self-consciousness and to building the collective identity of believers belonging to evangelical and protestant church alliances.²⁷⁹

Example 2.

This example is even more complex than the previous one, not only by its content but also by the number of participants involved in it. The activity in question happened during the public debate about the Draft Law on the legal status of religious communities. The process of public advocacy and lobbying lasted for months, on all church, social and political levels, as well as on the local, regional, and national

²⁷⁷ The Society of Friends of the Bible (Drustvo prijatelja Biblije) was founded in 1992 as a *not-for-profit and beyond-confessional association of citizens serving churches by publishing materials for religious education and by educating professionals to work with children and youth, as well as an organization for Christian gatherings for all age groups in Severin-na-Kupi*. Available online, <http://www.dpb.hr/> (Feb 20, 2007). The Society of Friends of the Bible is a branch of the international *Scripture Union* organization from Great Britain. See online <http://www.scriptureunion.org.uk/> Feb 20, 2007.

²⁷⁸ The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek was founded in 1972. The Faculty created an Education Plan and Program that received a positive opinion by the National Board for Higher Education (or the Agency for Science and Higher Education, as it is called today), and was approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports.

²⁷⁹ Members of church unions are those local churches that are connected in a network, including the para-church and church organizations and other Christian institutions.

levels, including different government commissions and bodies. Parallel to this, many complex and dynamic (at times even turbulent) internal processes for statutory and organizational adjustments of different protestant alliances and their members occurred. Finally, when the Parliament of the Republic of Croatia enacted the Law all parties in question were more or less satisfied,²⁸⁰ based on which the Government of the Republic of Croatia made an agreement (Contract) with a number of evangelical and protestant churches related to the questions of joint interests. Having all this in mind, this relatively small protestant community of believers in Croatia achieved great results, even in the European context. The state dignitaries are also to be praised for this success²⁸¹ for showing great patience during the negotiations that were going on for almost every single article of this Law, for the aftermath Contract and to their immense sensitivity for the specific historical and organizational differences between evangelical and protestant churches.

Although there are more successful examples on social advocacy and lobbying based on previously planned and efficiently implemented campaigns for public relations, I will mention the following one because it has an international dimension. During the war and the armed conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, it was considered useful to have foreign high political and state representatives with strong Christian backgrounds visit these areas and meet the political and state dignitaries in the states created after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia.

The organization and logistics for these visits that were private and never official were often in *Agape's* hands. During these visits, evangelical believers or newly born Christians from other countries had an opportunity to testify about their personal conversion to Christ and His teaching to particular politicians. In spite of the rigid nationalism, that was a frequent worldview during the years of war, the beneficial and appealing words of the Gospel, and its *sweet and joyful*

²⁸⁰ If we compare the legal framework for the protestant and evangelical churches in Croatia with the one in some other countries of the former Yugoslavia, we might see the positive impact of this process of social advocacy and lobbying.

²⁸¹ Goran Granic, President of the Croatian government's Commission for Relations with the Religious Communities is a name that should be mentioned here with gratitude and respect.

message, prayers and blessings contributed to peacemaking in this part of the world. The friendships that were initiated then were found to be useful for subsequent regional, informal meetings of political leaders and their spouses on neutral grounds. It was interesting to see the leaders of the sides in conflict sitting in the same room, by the same table, and openly discussing many issues, apart from the official policies of their governments.

Repeating these meetings either on regional levels or in a foreign overseas country, away from the war and conflict areas, in Christian ambience and joined by prayer, contributed to building better personal relationships and understanding between the participants. This was rather a slow and quiet method for peace building developed away from the media, political structure and other public, and with the assistance of evangelical believers from around the world. Even today, some of the former governmental hierarchy and participants state that those meetings were among *the brightest and most beautiful moments* in their mandates, when Christ's light shone through the darkness of their political realities.²⁸²

²⁸² I had a chance to be personally present at some of these unusual, special meetings, which never ended with press conferences or written press releases, but with proclaimed spiritual service to Christ, and where all sides in the conflict were suddenly and equally filled with the words of the Gospel and blessings. Sometimes they would be so surprised about themselves and by the power of these words that they would look around in the room looking for their assistant with astonishment about how they would react. These meetings always reminded me of a text from Acts 9:15, that these people were *chosen instruments to carry Christ's name before the kings*.

5. PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Agape structured its mission and concrete goals by organizing different humanitarian activities regardless of whether they were programs, projects or a combination. Their implementation was in accordance with contemporary entrepreneurship standards though at the same time included some specific characteristics of a Christian worldview organizational culture, the dominant role of volunteerism in *Agape's* everyday activities, and the general atmosphere during and after the war. The managerial approach in most cases was dependent on the situations, which were at times quite unpredictable.²⁸³

Coordination in this case was a key tool, which assisted the building of a relatively stable system around traditional management functions such as:²⁸⁴

- (1) Planning is a part of the decision-making process and is related to selecting the right direction while faced with numerous alternatives; this function is based on a limited amount of information. It includes planned decisions about routine situations that are decided by the operational management on the organization's lower levels; the so-called non-routine, unstructured problems are dealt with by the upper levels of the management.
- (2) Organizing is the balanced distribution of responsibilities to the organizational units and individuals for implementing the planned

²⁸³ The so-called *theory of contingency* analyzes the effects of proposed solutions on the models of behavior within the organization since it has been noticed that there is no single best way for deciding and implementing activities. It was hard to determine all factors (or at least their critical mass) and differentiate between their relationships within not-for profit entrepreneurship as they were considered too complex. Having in mind that diverse situations may significantly differ from each other, only the basic principles of work, mission and vision were to be sustained. Heinz Weinhrich and Harold Koontz. *Management: A Global Perspective*. (10th ed.) Zagreb: Mate, 1994. Pgs. 46-47.

²⁸⁴ According to Heinz Weinhrich and Harold Koontz. *Management: A Global Perspective*. (10th ed.) Zagreb: Mate, 1994. Pgs. 219; 259; 356; 491; 578. Besides the already mentioned organizational functions there are others, such as: creating, developing and integrating organizational structures; communications and implementation of information technologies; then, dynamics of group decision-making, strategic planning in unpredictable circumstances, non-formal networking, etc.

activities. This function includes identification and classification of the activities, and grouping and coordinating the assignments by using an efficient information system.

- (3) Personnel policy of employment is a management process that includes identifying the personnel needed to carry out the tasks, their selection, engagement, introduction to the jobs and integration into the working environment, organizing their promotions, evaluating the activities, creating a policy for rewards and stimulation, including them in life-long training, education and continuous professional and personal development.
- (4) Leadership represents the influence leadership has over the team, and the way they aim fulfill the organization's mission and its overall goals with self-confidence and enthusiasm (such as with passion, seriousness and intensity). The leader stands on the top of the organization serving as an example and inspiration to the team and coordinating their joint progress towards the set goals of the organization.²⁸⁵
- (5) Control is about measuring and correcting the organization's activities with an intention to secure realization of its goals and plans. The organization's system of control has three components: defining and setting the indicators of the organization's efficiency, measuring the efficiency of the organization and eliminating its deviations.²⁸⁶

²⁸⁵ In the Christian literature, there are numerous descriptions about leadership types, such as in Rodney L. Anderson (ed.). *Dying for Change: An Arresting Look at the New Realities Confronting Churches and Para-Church Ministries*. Minneapolis, Bethany House Publishers, 1990. Anderson in his book describes three types of leadership, (1) *Managerial* - one above others who manages from the top down. The priority is control over the leadership. Their focus is on the short term. (2) *Transactional* - one among many as a coach-enabler. The emphasis is on people. They are consensus builders and their focus is on the short term. (3) *Transformational* - a leader among leaders, a primary leader who is driven by vision. They win support for their vision. Transformational leaders empower others. Ch. 13.

²⁸⁶ The organizational control in church, para-church and Christian organizations is given little attention. The reasons vary and are sometimes related to the lack of parameters that would assist the organization in determining the church's or para-church organization's efficiency. This is a complex problem that is part of their spiritual mission - spiritual work cannot be measured only by using parameters of efficiency that are applicable to 'classical' organizations.

Before listing humanitarian programs and projects, this research will deal with their classification and categorization.

5.1. CLASSIFICATION OF HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TYPES

Their grouping and classification might be done in accordance with different criteria. One approach is to divide the humanitarian assistance in two basic categories: humanitarian programs and projects. The additional categorization (sub-divisions) might be done by the types of humanitarian assistance within these categories.

Humanitarian *programs* planned and led by *Agape* include the following assistance types and their descriptions:

Assistance types description

<u>Material:</u>	Food (both cooked and dry), clothes and footwear, different means for hygiene, furniture, house appliances, bedding and kitchen utensils, etc.
<u>Financial:</u>	Periodic assistance for covering the essential expenses such as overhead costs, heating, medicines, and costs related to medical treatments, education, etc.
<u>Social:</u>	Welfare for parentless children and elderly persons, organized care for former drug addicts or alcoholics, social counseling, nursing care, etc.
<u>Spiritual:</u>	Joint public worship, Christian gatherings and community-building, spiritual counseling and calls/invitations for conversion, Christian radio and video program production and broadcasting, distribution of Christian literature.
<u>Psychological:</u>	Psychological counseling, psychotherapy, supervision.

Humanitarian *projects* planned and implemented by *Agape* can be divided into:

Assistance types description

<u>Medical:</u>	Medicines, medical materials and appliances, orthopedic and other appliances.
<u>Education:</u>	Purchasing textbooks and school supplies, supplementary education for psychology counselors, psychotherapists, social workers, pedagogues, training in different skills and knowledge, such as foreign languages or self-help training programs, etc.
<u>Publishing:</u>	Preparing and printing books and magazines for free distribution, such as theological and psychological literature, books and magazines on Christian topics aiming at evangelization and pastoral care, etc.
<u>The returnees:</u>	Purchasing building/construction materials, renewing housing and business facilities, assistance in moving.
<u>Development:</u>	Assistance in renewing small and other businesses, purchasing seeds, tools, appliances, stock etc.
<u>Combined:</u>	Organizing summer camps for poor children, grown-ups and families, pastoral work for women, projects related to peace building, coexistence and tolerance, creative workshops and other types of free-time activities for children and youth.
<u>Other:</u>	Programs free distribution of Christian literature, Christmas, and New Year packages for children, assistance in building shelters for homeless and victims of violence and abuse, organizing small repairs in the homes for elderly, etc.

Although categorized and diversified, the humanitarian programs and projects that *Agape* initiated and implemented during all these years of work were always managed in such a way as to use the multiple assistance approach. Namely, *Agape* programs and projects constantly intertwine with each other combining different humanitarian assistance modalities and creating a comprehensive humanitarian service approach within one particular area. Respecting at the same time the principle of subsidiarity, each *Agape* branch office kept its own

unique organizational identity that was based upon its administrative independence.²⁸⁷

The strong autonomy of *Agape* branch offices played a role in developing local initiatives and a high level of enthusiasm, at the same time enhancing the processes of self-organization and self-sustainability. These steps contributed significantly to the greater use of their human, organizational and development resources. The responsibilities of the *Agape* central office (or the headquarters in Osijek) were thus focused on coordination and, only at times, a controlling role.

5.2. INITIATING PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The process of selecting concrete humanitarian programs or projects that in turn defined the *Agape* branch office's character involved several steps, which can serve as a model for similar humanitarian efforts in the future. The first one was to recognize the humanitarian needs and to classify them by using criteria of urgency.²⁸⁸ It was important to always keep in mind the *Agape* core value of serving the needs of others; *Agape* was not intending to work on satisfying anyone's personal desires or plans, or social ambitions, or working simply to gain public respect, etc.

The second step was to identify the target group to which to offer the humanitarian assistance while defining the criteria for ranking the levels of social risk with which they were faced. Determining these standards before starting the implementation of a humanitarian program is important because if there are no criteria or they are poorly defined, this can cause frustration or other problems among the humani-

²⁸⁷ The central role of the *Agape* main office in Osijek was to determine the type and the quantity of humanitarian assistance needed in a certain area or region, and to efficiently coordinate the donors and their preferences with the capabilities and operational capacities of different *Agape* branch offices in allocating humanitarian assistance. *Agape Progress Report 1991-1995 and Program for 1996*. Osijek, February 1996. Pg. 9.

²⁸⁸ Sometimes the international organizations would offer humanitarian assistance that was either inadequate or improper. For instance, some medications that were collected by households in foreign countries as leftovers were unsuitable for starting a long-term therapy due to the small/limited quantities in which they were provided, or glasses with diopters etc.

tarian aid users (such as spiteful gossiping, spreading rumors and disinformation, slander, etc.). On the other hand, there should be awareness that regardless of how well these criteria are set, they cannot provide answers to all complexities that an organization might face in its everyday work. Experience showed however, that well-defined standards of operation could be quite useful especially in dual situations where there is a need to distinguish legitimate needs from those that are either partially legitimate or false, particularly when dealing with individual cases of a person or a family. The key in these kinds of situations is in long-term professional experience.²⁸⁹

The third step was to determine the existent and currently available resources for humanitarian assistance, but also those that were planned and part of the organization's operational plans. These estimates can assist an organization in creating its long-term programs or projects.²⁹⁰ The preferences of donors and their areas of work should also be kept in mind when defining the organization's programs or projects. Sometimes local humanitarian organizations have to balance between the needs on the ground (the targeted groups they desire to assist) and the decisions made by the donors and their boards.

The fourth step was related to evangelization and the methods that were to be used when implementing a particular program or pro-

²⁸⁹ Some assistance seekers in time became 'professionals' in falsifying their data. Our experience showed numerous examples of how they could manipulate donors by providing original documents to substantiate their false claims, or by offering recommendation letters that could not be checked, or by stating semi-truths and appealing to donor's emotions by stressing the great urgency of their needs, while asking for full confidentiality of their conversations and creating a sense of guilt if anyone doubted the legitimacy of their statements. These 'assistance seekers' usually required cash, although they could also be found asking for other types of assistance too.

²⁹⁰ The *Agape* Sarajevo experience regarding the public kitchen is a good illustration /example. In one area of Sarajevo there were a number of single old citizens and married elderly couples that could not cook or find a way to come to the public kitchen. They lived without any electricity, gas or any other type of hard fuel/coal. Wishing to find a way to assist these people, the *Agape* Sarajevo leader Enver Redzic, decided they had all the necessary means to open a public kitchen for those that could come to the area, and enough volunteers willing to distribute the food to those unable to visit the kitchen, in spite of the great risk for the volunteers (to be attacked, injured etc.).

ject. During this phase, teams should expect to be faced with great or small obstacles and should be prepared for overcoming the problems in wise ways by keeping high moral standards in both decision-making and behavior.

One example: there were cases when donors explicitly demanded that their food packages should not include a New Testament or other type of Christian literature. Both donors' desires and evangelization as an aim were respected in a way that the packages would have remained with no Christian literature inside, but the humanitarian aid users could have had the opportunity to pick it up separately, being placed on a table next to the packages.

Or another example: there was an organization that for more than a century was dealing with distributing New Testaments in hotels and other institutions throughout the world. They were involved in a similar project in Croatia, but restricted *Agape* from distributing New Testaments to the refugee camp *Grasinci*, near the city of Djakovo by stating that *proposed activity is directly opposed to their regulations*. *Agape* succeeded in distributing the New Testaments by respecting the rules of the donor and following its regulations: *Agape* volunteers would enter each refugee tent or hut individually and place a copy next to the beds, as it would have been done in the hotels. The idea behind this step was to follow first and foremost higher priorities.²⁹¹

Finally, the fifth step was to set limits. Although having an organizational vision and setting limits might seem like a contradiction, this is not the case. Many humanitarian programs or projects ended before their deadlines (and some even never started) because

²⁹¹ Sometimes mission results were difficult to evaluate. For example, Myron Augsburg writes that, "In our outreach ministries, we often don't see the results of our efforts. We may not know what has happened to the family of six that come to the food pantry last month. We don't know what a pregnant teenager's family decided about the birth of her child. Sometimes we're tempted to give up because we see the needy taking advantage of the church's kindness." See "Planning and Operating Ministers of Social Compassion", in *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach and Care*. James D. Berkley (ed.) Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992. Pg. 155. Or, quoting Mother Theresa (aka Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu) "The good that you do tomorrow will be forgotten. Nevertheless, do good!" or "Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless."

their goals were too high and too broad, without any limits set in advance.

5.3. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

5.3.1. MATERIAL WELFARE

Every *Agape* branch office began almost as a rule with their activities by distributing dry food and hygiene products to their end-users, regardless of whether they were refugees or Internationally Displaced persons (IDPs),²⁹² and later on to the registered users of social welfare.

Having in mind that Croatia in the period between 1991-1995 had over six hundred thousand refugees, exiles and IDPs from the war areas of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is about 20% of Croatia's population) and that around two million people in total left Bosnia and Herzegovina (which is about 50% of their total populace) this kind of humanitarian assistance was considered a high priority. Apart from these categories of citizens, *Agape* was also aware of and respectful of the needs of social welfare users. Their number grew drastically during the years of war, thus the urgency to react to their needs as well and as promptly as possible.²⁹³

²⁹² According to international legislation and the first article of *The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951) "a refugee is a person owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail him/herself of the protection of that country." An internally displaced person (IDP) is someone who has been forced to leave their home for reasons such as religious or political persecution, war or natural disaster, but has not crossed an international border. The estimates are that there are more than 22 millions of refugees throughout the world. Available online: <http://www.unhcr.org.uk/> (March 20, 2007).

²⁹³ At the beginning, some donors insisted that the humanitarian assistance should not be distributed to social welfare users but only to refugees since in their opinion the Croatian government should have been responsible for the first ones. Our persistence in explaining and responding to these group' requests finally gave fruit. *Agape* explained that the stipulated limitation was not in accordance with our mission to have a good Christian testimony in public, so they withdraw. Our

Setting criteria for selecting humanitarian assistance users was conducted in cooperation with local centers for social care and the UNHCR regional representatives.²⁹⁴ *Agape* was consistent in the commitment to keep its target groups' structure similar to the ethnic structure of the refugee population in a region or a city. According to this criterion, *Agape* divided its humanitarian assistance equally to all ethnicities, regardless of whether they were Croats, Serbs or Bosnians (Muslims). For instance, the dynamism and quantity of assistance that was donated per family was determined during the consulting and coordinating meetings of the humanitarian organizations' representatives from the city or county. While determining the quantity and structure of groceries, *Agape* used the recommendations set by the Croatian government's office for refugees, which were based upon other countries' experiences.

The material assistance included the following types of humanitarian relief:

- 1) Distribution of dry food;
- 2) Distribution of cooked food (public kitchens);
- 3) Distribution of products for hygiene;
- 4) Garments and footwear;
- 5) Bedding and covers;
- 6) Home appliances, furniture, and plates.

1) Distribution of dry food. This type of material assistance was for families that had opportunity to cook their own meals, or in other words, those that had a stove and a form of energy to use (electricity, gas, wood, or coal). Upon receiving the monthly package of dry food, the beneficiary would be asked to provide his/her humanitarian assistance ID card. The storekeeper would then write on it a receipt, which prevented the end user from receiving additional packages from other humanitarian organizations. In time, different humanitarian or-

additional argument was related to the so-called *connected pots* – namely that humanitarian and social assistance cannot be divided, they are complementary.

²⁹⁴ UNHCR-United Nation High Commission for Refugees.

ganizations working in this area unified the quantities and types of groceries within a package, while the end users decided on a particular humanitarian organization they would regularly visit, usually with no objective reason behind their decision.²⁹⁵

When organizing a humanitarian assistance program, an organization should pay attention that the goods arrive regularly at the warehouses, both for continuity of their distribution to the users and for diversity of goods. Our experience showed that every now and then goods arrived in 'waves' leaving the warehouses either empty or too full to store all the goods; this forced the organization to urgently distribute the food before its expiration date. Therefore, food distribution should be organized in a continuous manner because only this kind of approach will keep the assistance program stable. Discontinuation of food distribution weakens the program especially in its organizational parts.²⁹⁶ Restarting the program after a longer period of break requires greater organizational effort than during the first program set up.

The issue of assortment was easier to resolve than the problem of the lack of continuity in assistance deliveries, although the level of variety of groceries was at times below the critical line. New users were especially sensitive to this phenomenon. The reasons were related to their new status, the period needed for adaptation, and the general lack of food.²⁹⁷ In these circumstances the problem was resolved either

²⁹⁵ In its first *Agape* Newsletter from Spring 1994, there is a paragraph about *Agape* activities stating, "In the last 12 months *Agape* has accomplished the following: 55,000 people received *Agape* aid each month in Croatia and Bosnia; approximately 19,000 tons of relief goods were delivered and distributed (10,000 tons of food and 9,000 tons of non-food and medical supplies); the hot kitchen in 12 months of operation has served half a million meals; evangelical programming has been broadcasted on 25 radio stations reaching all of Croatia." *Agape* Newsletter, Spring 1994, No. 1, *Agape* Archive, Osijek.

²⁹⁶ For example, volunteers tend to stop coming after a certain amount of time, in spite of the time and energy spent for their selection and the provided training. Some end users are also inclined to move to other organizations where they build more long-term relationships. Both categories use this approach to show their frustration with the situation.

²⁹⁷ For example, lack of employment, lack of vegetables during the winter season, lack of assistance provided by relatives and close friends, lack of other food stocks, etc.

by replacing a number of goods within a package (for example, a rice bag might be replaced with beans, etc.) or a certain amount of humanitarian assistance would be exchanged with another humanitarian organization by taking into consideration the quality, quantity and value of the exchanged goods.²⁹⁸

Table 5.1. A typical family package: monthly package for four persons²⁹⁹

Spaghetti	2 kg	Canned fish	1 kg	Salt	0,5 kg
Rice	2 kg	Canned vegetables	1 kg	Dry yeast	12 gr
Powdered milk	2 kg	Flour	3 kg	Dry fruit juice	1 kg
Corn flakes	1 kg	Sugar	2 kg	Tea/coffee	0.25 kg
Beans or lentils	1 kg	Cooking oil	2 lit	Chocolate	0.20 kg
Canned meat	1 kg	Dry soup	0.2 kg	Multivitamins	1 bott

This type of humanitarian assistance was implemented successfully on a volunteer basis and for a long period. Although from time to time there were signs of tiredness among the volunteers, these were never so strong to put in jeopardy the whole program. The volunteers, organized in working groups (teams), did not come only from circles within or close to the Evangelical church; they were also recruited from the humanitarian assistance end users, and our estimates are that they comprised around $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total number of volunteers. Volunteer fluctuation was considered a great problem in some *Agape* branch offices, while others had no problem at all. Nonetheless, they were all aiming to create a strong and stable work force core composed of $\frac{4}{5}$ of the total amount of volunteers.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ The exchange of goods with commercial organizations was not allowed due to inequality in the exchange process and a possible surplus in value.

²⁹⁹ The retail sale value of one food package with a total weight of about 20 kg, which was considered enough for satisfying the minimum needs of a four member family was estimated at around 25 USD (or about 20 Euros).

³⁰⁰ Volunteer fluctuation is a phenomenon which occurs when a group of volunteers is leaving the organization where they volunteered, while another group is coming. The experts consider a lower degree of work force fluctuation desirable.

2) Distribution of cooked food (public kitchen). This type of material assistance was aimed primarily to aid those in need who had no possibility of preparing meals for themselves because of the lack of some or all conditions necessary for this activity. The selection was done by using strict criteria and in cooperation with the Center for Social Care and the Directorate for Expellees and Refugees, or individually. The public kitchen users belonged as a rule, to the poorest categories of the populace.³⁰¹ Without exception, almost all end users of this type of assistance were at first put on the waiting lists. At the beginning, in December 1992, when Agape opened its first public kitchen in Osijek, a great number of users also had no accommodation due to their transition through Croatia to another foreign country, so the waiting lists were changing almost every day.

Agape in Osijek allows beneficiaries to choose each month to collect a hot meal per day or the usual food packet. The hot meals are cooked in an industrial kitchen that used to provide meals to factory workers, but most factories are now closed or working at partial capacity; the bread comes from a local bakery. The hot meal is meant for new refugees who may not have access to a kitchen or for people living with host families; it allows them to contribute a variation to the normal family meals.³⁰²

When the program began, people in need hesitated greatly to come to the public kitchen since this step was viewed as a *stigma* – a person or a family that would come and eat those hot meals felt like

³⁰¹ A similar story about the return of Jewish refugees in Osijek in 1945 after surviving years of exile and the death camps can be found in Zlata Zivakovic – Kerze book. She writes that “a majority of them were so poor, with no movable and fixed assets or any funds and possibilities to survive and buy the life essentials ... Their testimonies and requests for assistance are kept by the Osijek Jewish Community that organized public kitchens for assisting the poorest among them.” For more details see, *Stradanja i pamćenja: Holokaust u Osijeku i život koji se nastavlja (Prilozi za proučavanje povijesti židova u Osijeku)*. Slavonski Brod: Hrvatski institut za povijest – Podružnica za povijest Slavonije, Srijema i Baranje i Židovska općina Osijek. 2006, pg. 182.

³⁰² Bjorn Mossber; Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. Pg. 38.

they had reached the bottom.³⁰³ This view was easy to understand since before the outbreak of the war a large number of our users had been employed and lived in homes, and had dignity and hope. The sudden loss of their habitat and employment, and in many cases the loss of member(s) of their families, would always cause shock and disbelief about *how they should live now, depending on the mercy of others*. For that reason, the volunteers working at providing the hot meals were instructed in detail how to behave with the end users. It was especially important to train the volunteers, which were in direct contact with the humanitarian assistance recipients to respond and withstand humbly and patiently, with a smile, any unjustified claim, or emotionally distressed behavior.

The public kitchen organizational scheme was simple: the end user could come to collect a meal every day by showing the humanitarian assistance ID card containing precise data on the number of family members for whom the food was aimed. Upon taking the food, the date and number of meals would be written on the ID card and returned to the recipient; the same data would be then re-written in the organization's evidence book. The meals would be distributed in food containers that the user was obliged to bring him/herself and would be shared with the rest of the family in privacy.³⁰⁴ Some public kitchens served meals at their own premises, for instance *Agape* in Sarajevo, since their users had no other places to have their meals.³⁰⁵ For those persons who were immobile or could not come, free-of-charge delivery

³⁰³ It was interesting to see that at the beginning, the users of the hot kitchens would not appear themselves to pick up the food, but would send their young children, those age 12 or younger to wait in a line.

³⁰⁴ As the war prolonged, the humanitarian crisis deepened and poverty increased. According to our findings, some of the end users found ways to use the meals we have provided for more than a lunch: they would add additional products they could find, such as rice, potatoes or pastry, making also dinner for their families out of the same lunch.

³⁰⁵ The end users were often lonely and isolated from the rest of the world, and this kind of socialization proved good for them. In Osijek *Agape* some of them would come to pick their lunches even an hour in advance, just to have a time for a conversation with the others. That was one of the reasons that we placed chairs in the 'waiting room'. These spontaneous and informal gatherings sometimes grew into self-organized groups offering assistance to each other on different matters, but most frequently the psychological support.

service was organized on a regular basis. Often though, the end users themselves would offer to assist and bring the food to their immobile neighbors. Cooking the food was conducted in two basic ways: either by signing an agreement with a company having capacities for this kind of activity or by using the organization's personal resources and working in accordance with prescribed technical and hygienic standards. *Agape* used both ways, and both of them had their own advantages and weaknesses.³⁰⁶

During regular food distribution, the end users could take some of the Christian books or magazines displayed on the bulletin board. From time to time *Agape* also organized worship services for the assistance recipients that were used as an opportunity for gatherings.

3) Distribution of products for hygiene. This activity was equally important as the one related to food. Distribution of products for hygiene was set on a monthly basis, always during the second day of the first week of the month. This was done to avoid mixing various distribution activities and because the end users usually had no cars, they could use to collect a larger amount of donations/packages at the same time.

Table 5.2. Typical monthly family package of hygiene products for four persons

Laundry washing powder 2kg	Toothpaste 2 tubes	Tooth brush 1 pack
Dish detergent 1 liter	Soap 4 bars	Razors 2 packs
Toilet paper 4 packs	Shampoo 2 liters	Sanitary towels 2 packs

Our foreign donors were purchasing their donations in their own countries regardless of whether they were groceries or hygiene prod-

³⁰⁶ Regardless of the method used for preparing the meals, the price of a single meal could not be more than one American dollar. The meal for one person should always contain 0.5 liters of vegetable stock, at least 15 dkg meat, seasonal salad, and ¼ kg bread. This amount also included the overhead costs (including rent for the premises, transport costs, organization, etc.) The balance between what was received as a donation and the expense on the ground was easier to maintain when the number of meals was around 1200. However, as the number of donations started to decrease, the necessary balance was harder to preserve, especially when the dollar started to weaken in comparison to the Croatian Kuna.

ucts, and then organized their transport in containers. After some time, we proposed to them that they purchase their donations in Croatia, having in mind one basic prerequisite – that the prices were lower, both for the goods and for the transport. The first test was with the hygiene products; latter the donors included groceries and other articles as well. By using this approach, the logistical support for the whole project became simpler and easier. *Agape* was able to structure the assortment and plan the delivery better, the donors were liberated from organizing the purchasing, storage, transportation, dealing with customs and distribution, and Croatian factories kept their buyers.³⁰⁷

4) Garments and footwear. After loosing all their belongings, many end users needed clothes and shoes for their family members. Many humanitarian organizations, churches, and individuals responded to our calls and donated their used clothes and shoes. Especially critical were the winter months with their low temperatures.

Clothes and shoes are very appreciated by the recipients, especially children's garments. The problem is that they are very bulky, uneconomical to transport and require much work to sort. Only two organizations we met would welcome clothes. One was ODPR in Zagreb, and the other was *Agape*. *Agape* had volunteers who sorted clothes according to type and size. When the clothes are sorted, they are neatly folded and stacked on shelves like in a store. Swedish clothes are appreciated, because they are good quality and clean. *Agape* in Osijek says the need was greatest in Sarajevo, because people burned their clothes for heating last winter.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁷ Besides the logistical, organizational, and economic effects, this step was also appreciated by local entrepreneurs, as the former Yugoslav markets collapsed and there was a lack of demand for the produced goods. Even though the orders coming from the humanitarian organizations were not big, they contributed to our *image* of 'loving the country' (patriotism) which was especially important during the first transition years, when the biggest number of Croatian populace was caught by the 'need' to discover or renew their national (and in many instances, Catholic) identity.

³⁰⁸ Bjorn Mossber; Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. pg. 28. The Report further says that, "Agape received individual boxes of clothes from Swedish families through

During the years of our activities, we noticed that some end users got into a habit of piling up the humanitarian assistance they received without using it, although there were well-developed mechanisms for distribution and clear restrictions. Even more, we found out that in some cases humanitarian assistance would be sold, granted, or exchanged for other goods. On the other hand, in sending their used clothes and shoes, the foreign donors put pressure on the Croatian processing industry; they lost the former Yugoslav markets and were still unable to enter the new European and world market areas, and at the same time, faced a significant drop in demand within Croatia as well.

During the garment and footwear distribution, a big queue would be created in front of the *Agape* warehouse. The crowd would from time to time cause unneeded fights. Namely, the assistance recipients realized fairly soon that those among them who would be able to approach the shelves sooner, would also be able to select/find better clothes or shoes, so they would arrive hours in advance, and wait in lines in front of the warehouse. Besides, to make a right choice for one's self and for his/her family even in a well-organized shop can take hours. Imagine when one has to find a piece of clothing from a pile, check its size, and see if it fits according to the year season or gender, etc., and the 'search' is time-limited. What was important to have in mind was that the assistance recipients were people that already had their preferences set (the taste in wearing). The first shock of being a refugee usually makes an impact on the wearing preferences, but in time, they come back. In other words, the end users were often unwilling to be satisfied with the clothes that were offered, looking for something that would suit the preferences they had before.³⁰⁹

That problem was resolved in such a way that a few days before the donation(s) would arrive, the recipients would have to pick a piece of paper from a closed up box which would carry instructions about

Hoppets Stjärna, and tried to distribute them intact, but most of the packets came back because the clothes were not the right size for the recipients. All parcels are opened and sorted. Many items have Swedish labels, and recipients cannot read the instructions and may not know what a bottle or a tin contains." Pg. 28.

³⁰⁹ Many end users suffered significant losses and their self-respect was low. Appropriate and well-selected clothes played an important role in regaining their self-respect, especially in the teenage population.

what time the recipient should arrive at the warehouse and pick up his/her package.³¹⁰ The goods were sorted by their type in several parallel shelves and only a few people would be allowed to be present in the room at the same time. Using this approach, we increased the transparency regarding the goods that were on disposal and lessened the opportunities for taking unneeded goods out of the warehouse.

In 1995, the Government of the Republic of Croatia signed the tax-free (free trade) import regulation for humanitarian assistance though limiting the target groups to refugees, exiles and social cases under jurisdiction of the Social Welfare centers in Croatia. On the other hand, the religious humanitarian associations were allowed to distribute their assistance by also using their own criteria in determining the target groups of recipients.

Determine eligibility based on the level or source of income, identification, the reason for need, and how often people will be allowed to come for help. Devise a record-keeping and interviewing process. Make referrals to government-sponsored social agencies when appropriate. Through not only distributing food and clothes but also through relationships and counsel, your volunteers can discover the best way to help and restore hope in Christ's name to many in desperate situations.³¹¹

5) Bedding and covers. This type of humanitarian assistance is considered important during the first period of being a refugee, although not so much in the later stages. *Agape* preferred to donate this kind of assistance to the refugee camps directly, such as *Gasinci* near Dakovo or *Naselje prijateljstva* (the Friendship Settlement) in Cepin, near Osijek. This way bedding and covers went to the ones that needed it the most.

³¹⁰ For instance, if the warehouse capacities were a hundred users per day, the organization would consider the optimum of 20 recipients per day. The end users then had to pick a sheet 3x5 cm from a sealed box with instructions about the time when the recipient should come and how much time he/she had for selecting clothes (usually about fifteen minutes). This way each recipient was allowed to be at least once between the first ones to choose clothes and shoes.

³¹¹ David C. Hacker and Sheri L. Noah. "Food Pantries and Clothes Closets." James D. Berkley. *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach and Care*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. Pg. 158.

6) Home appliances, furniture, and plates, as humanitarian assistance were especially important as the time for refugees to return to their homes became closer. However, this type of aid was limited and by several reasons. First, because of the distance – the goods needed to travel a long way from different parts of Europe or the States, and second, because the value and weight of this assistance was greater too. Nevertheless, some foreign donors especially the ones that were closer to Croatia, such as Italy, Austria and Germany (donors from the southern and middle parts of the country) continued to send this type of assistance usually using so-called return-transport. The government of Croatia in the mean time issued many restrictive regulations regarding this type of assistance, limiting the tax-free option to hygiene products, food and used garments and footwear. Although the import of used furniture and electrical home appliances was possible, complex procedures and customs controls regarding possible misuses made the whole issue too complicated for the donors, though supportive for the local industry.

5.3.2. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Some humanitarian needs could only be resolved by cash donations. This kind of assistance was always limited and an object of special attention, decision-making and supervision.³¹² The basic principles to be applied in these cases were:

1. Every decision on donating financial means had to be based upon prescribed rules, criteria and procedures;
2. Potential assistance seekers must have provided original documentation, such as invoices, medical assessments, prescriptions for medicines, appropriate administrative decisions, etc.;
3. The decision on this kind of donations was required to be collective;

³¹² These are the so-called one-time donations for covering different expenses such as overhead costs or costs related to purchasing wood and coal for heating, for purchasing medicines or covering medical treatment costs, transport or travel costs, costs related to resolving civil status issues and issuing personal documents, education related costs, etc.

4. The control/supervision of an appropriate use of financial donations also had to be provided.

Another good approach in the case of financial donations is to set two limits: the maximum amount per single donation and the maximum number of financial donations in total, per person. A well-created list of purposes and requirements for applying for financial donations can be one more tool during the decision-making process. Our experience showed that it is good if the end user who receives a financial donation is involved in some kind of volunteer work; by this step his/her self-confidence is higher and the risk of self-pity and depression lower. If the funds are to be granted as a short-term loan, then it should be approved without requiring any interest.³¹³ Equally,

Benevolence funds should meet emergency rather than chronic needs, unless specified otherwise. Those with chronic financial need may have other problems that continued benevolence could aggravate rather than alleviate.³¹⁴

Whenever possible, the financial donations should be given to the end users in their bank accounts and not directly (in cash). If the organization can avoid even this kind of transfer the better, the payment then is to be done directly to the third party for the goods or the services required by the end user.³¹⁵

5.3.3. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The social assistance programs that *Agape* implemented were related to:

³¹³ Charging interest rates is a profitable financial activity that is not allowed for any not-for-profit, church, para-church or Christian institution.

³¹⁴ John Throop. "Emergency Benevolence for Church Members." James D. Berkley. *Leadership Handbooks of Practical Theology: Outreach and Care*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1995. Pg. 157.

³¹⁵ For example, if a family is to be assisted by paying their electricity bills, *Agape* accountancy would pay directly to the enterprise that is dealing with this kind of services, based upon a submitted request for a donation and other papers, and with the approval of the *Agape* Board. This step was used to avoid nondedicated spending and situations in which one applicant could apply with the same request to several organizations.

1. Offering assistance to parentless children;
2. Offering assistance to the elderly;
3. Offering assistance to former drug addicts and alcoholics;
4. Social counseling;
5. Medical care and service.

1) Offering assistance to parentless children. During the war years and because of many different circumstances, a significant number of children lost their parents, either through death or abandonment.³¹⁶ *Agape* supported initiatives coming from our churches and sought ways to help the orphans without a desire to use the situation and make them become church members.

Perhaps no other work in Christian missions has commanded so deep an emotional response to people as has care for children who have no place to call their home. (...) The word “strategy” and “missionary method” seem oddly out of place when speaking of orphanages in missionary work. Such terms appear crass and manipulative, giving the appearance of “using” pain and loss for the purposes of proselytism. Nor do such terms reflect the spirit of such efforts.³¹⁷

Humanitarian activities related to parentless children are highly sensitive so they must not carry the intention to convert them to Christ. Philanthropy in general should be a result of Christian convictions, the deep inner belief, and transformation that is due to a personal conversion, the experience of being born again and a mature Christian approach.

³¹⁶ More than a hundred children were cared for at *Oaza* so far, and each of them has his/her own life story. Some children are in *Oaza* because have no close relatives, others' mothers being drug addicts or prostitutes and wanderers, or living in extreme poverty etc.

³¹⁷ Thomas N. Wisely. “Orphanage Work in Christian Missions.” Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pg. 712.

The *Oaza* (Oasis) organization in Rovinj working with children without care is an example of successful long-term cooperation with *Agape*. *Oaza* launched its activities in 1993,

Offering temporary shelter for parentless children or those left without care and have no basic conditions for raising children. During their stay in *Oaza*, the *Oaza* personnel in cooperation with the local Center for Social Welfare is looking for securing permanent solutions for the future of these children, fore mostly through the system of foster family care. The *Oaza* mission and service are based on the biblical teaching about love for our neighbors and on the rules and principles of the social welfare system cooperating closely with the state authorities responsible for this area of service. The basic assistance offered through this organization is to create conditions for the children's physical, emotional, and spiritual recovery, and their gradual re-socialization and basic education. *Oaza* is financed through donations, gifts, and charities from church, organizations, and individuals. Numerous volunteers with different skills and specialties work in *Oaza*.³¹⁸

Oaza implements its activities through a variety of approaches. At the beginning, the abandoned children (that are literally taken from the streets) are taken through health, social and psychological checks. After the first period of adaptation and recovery which can last up to three years (and depends on each individual child), the children are placed on a more permanent basis in different Christian homes. The assistance that was offered through *Agape* was related to occasional food donations and legal, financial and organizational advice. What is especially encouraging is that in these last fourteen years some of the *Oaza* children have finished their education, become employed, and started living on their own.

Apart from these forms of assistance, *Agape* helped the families that would apply to take care of *Oaza* children too, whether financially or materially. *Agape* also assisted the children directly by finding places where they could live alone or together with other abandoned children from the state homes for parentless children and helped prepare them for their future lives. According to Croatian law when a

³¹⁸ Available online: <http://www.epc.hr/hr/oaza/oaza.html> (March 9, 2007).

child reaches 18 years of age he/she has to leave the state facility for parentless children and find ways to make it on their own. Having in mind the high unemployment rate in the country, the poor education of these children and their general life incompetence, they would soon find themselves in the same milieu as their parents: drugs, prostitution, crime or simply became homeless. Assistance offered to the non-governmental organizations helping children to have a place to live and continue with their lives in a better way is a long-term investment in preventing social deviation.

2) Offering assistance for the elderly.³¹⁹ During the years of war and in the period after, a number of elderly were abandoned by their children or relatives, or left without any property or funds.³²⁰ Almost as a rule, their health would be fairly or extremely poor and often combined with different psychological problems; so many of them were found in need of constant professional care. Many of them that *Agape* assisted did not intend to return to their homes and hometowns, since their houses were destroyed or they simply had nowhere and no one to return to. This situation, unfortunately, did not change many fifteen years after the war, as reported by the *Radio Free Europe*:

Although the Bosnian war has ended some time ago, there are still a great number of refugees living outside the country. Part of them has nowhere to return to due to their old age and the fact that they lost their relatives who might have assisted them. These people cannot be a part of the country reparation processes and survive without their close ones living anywhere in the world, alone and needy.³²¹

³¹⁹ Statistically a person is considered old when reaching 65 years.

³²⁰ In spring 1994, *Gasinici* refugee camp Director Branko Vukoja said that sometimes when he came early in the morning in his office, at the camp entry gate he would notice a couple waiting to be accommodated. In talking with them he would find out that their son who lives and works in Germany with his family and earns good money has no will "to have them in his home because they are old and stink."

³²¹ Drago Hedl interview with Branko Vukoja, Director of *Naselje prijateljstva* refugee camp in Cebin, titled "Cebin: Long Refugee Days" and broadcast on the Radio Free Europe at 22:27 on February 11, 2004.

Having these reasons in mind, *Agape* decided to assist *Ithus* from Pula, an organization that was working on a project for adapting and equipping a home for the elderly and sick. According to the set criteria, the right to be included in the project was only for those people with no possibility of returning to their homes due to destruction or who had no single relative to help them. *Agape* assisted the project in a number of ways and continued with the same activities in other parts of the country too, such as Osijek, Borovo, Cepin, etc.³²²

3) Offering assistance to former drug addicts and alcoholics. After the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, the newly founded states faced an increase in the numbers of drug addicts, especially in the larger urban areas. Some towns and regions such as Split and Dalmatia in general, than Pula, Istria, Zagreb, and the eastern parts of the country such as Dakovo, Vinkovci etc., were suffering greatly. In spite of the intensive activities by the police, judicial and social services and church organizations, it seems that this problem is not decreasing, and many countries such as Croatia treat this problem as their priority on a national level. The process of rehabilitation of former drug addicts is usually long and complex, and includes professionals from different areas, such as psychology, sociology, social sciences, medicine, law, criminology, etc. Organizations that were established with an aim to offer assistance to former drug addicts and their families are facing great challenges and complex circumstances. Experience also shows that the process of rehabilitating former addicts is demanding and exhausting for the teams working in the area leading them frequently to the phase/syndrome know as the *burnout*.

Agape offered its assistance to these programs and organizations regularly having in mind the duration of the process of rehabilitation and its complexity in regards to their subsequent adaptation and integration into society. Some of these programs were organized in the communities where former addicts would live together and go through work, social and psychological therapy for a number of

³²² The Pastor of the Pentecostal Church in Nasice, Andrija Sabo, was gathering funds from the Pentecostal churches and individuals within the former Yugoslavia with an aim to start building the Orahovica (Croatia) Christian home for elderly. The building was bought but due to many legal obstacles is now used by the local Evangelical-Pentecostal Church *Betany* serving as a center for summer and winter gatherings of children and youth for spiritual growth and fellowship.

years.³²³ The assistance would include material donations (food, means for hygiene, providing used furniture or appliances, clothes and shoes, etc.) and donations in Christian literature, but also support of projects aimed at prevention. Of special importance is *Agape's* help in the area of general and specific/professional education for program leaders and organizers, experts and volunteers involved in these activities.

4) Social counseling. *Agape* personnel frequently found themselves in situations to assist a people in need of advice or instruction on obtaining certain social or labor rights regarding employment, issuing personal documents, a right to social welfare, assistance in finding a missing member of the family or accommodation for someone who's homeless, etc. Lack of knowledge about legal procedures was considered an obstacle in fulfilling the end users rights and as a factor that contributed to prolonging the situation of high anxiety due to the war stresses and traumas. Thus *Agape* offered both legal and social assistance including help in writing their requests, complaints and other legal documents. In more complex situations, *Agape* would hire a law office that would assist the end users free of charge - *pro bono*.³²⁴ This kind of support was considered important for people in need or in crisis, who were unable to resolve the matter on their own.

Some situations proved to be so complex that required hiring teams of experienced practitioners, such as social workers, lawyers, psychotherapists, doctors, etc. Here is one example. A family with five children from Slovakia moved during the early 1990s to Croatia escaping from a neighboring country. When they were crossing the river Danube to enter the city of Ilok they needed no papers since the territory they moved from was in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the one to which they were going was under occupation of the Serbian military forces and 'belonged' to the so-called *Republic of Serpska Kra-*

³²³ *Teen Challenge* is one of the most famous world programs offering these services. The program for the countries of the former Yugoslavia consists of creating small communities in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia that are led by experienced representatives of *Reto Centers, Remars, Cenacolo, Susret*. The *Teen Challenge* program is considered to offer the best statistical results in this area so far.

³²⁴ Frequently this kind of free legal assistance would be provided by members of the Evangelical Church such as Duško Vukelic, a lawyer from Osijek.

jina.³²⁵ Several years later, when the area of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srijem would be returned to Croatia through the Erdut Agreement, they found themselves having no legal permission to remain in the country. In the mean time, the family had moved into an abandoned old house on the edge of the river Danube. They had no citizenship and no health or social insurance, surviving with occasional day laboring. The father was alcoholic and a smoker, an invalid and incapable of work; the mother was mentally retarded and deaf; the two oldest sons (15 and 16 years old) were working from time to time but had no education at all, and so were the other three children. They were all illiterate and without any desire to go to school. They lived in constant fear that the Danube might flood their house; they were on the edge of starvation and were frequently ill. How to help them and from where to begin?

5) Medical care and service. *Agape* occasionally organized this kind of assistance for those that were immobile and severely ill, usually with physical and mental problems, living in poor conditions and having no one to help them, and with no prospect of placement in homes for elderly. Their activities were organized in cooperation with the local medical care units whose nurses visited their homes and provided the necessary care.

Being overburdened with different activities regarding refugees and exiles the governmental institutions and non-governmental organizations overlooked this particular group of needy old men and women that were quietly dying at the edge of society. *Agape* noticed this particular phenomenon and tried to assist this target group as much as it was possible.

5.3.4. SPIRITUAL ASSISTANCE

When a humanitarian organization offers spiritual assistance apart from other services and when it is adjusted to the needs of the

³²⁵ After the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia disintegrated in 1991, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1991-2003) was created and led by Slobodan Milosevic as a union of two republics and two autonomous provinces: Serbia and Montenegro, and Vojvodina and Kosovo (becoming the UN Protectorate since 1999). After 2003, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was renamed Serbia and Montenegro, and with the Montenegro declaration of independence in 2006, this country became the Republic of Serbia.

end users, then spiritual assistance becomes one of the forms of humanitarian activity. Otherwise, this service is not a humanitarian activity *per se* but part of pastoral service to Christian believers.

With the democratic changes in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, many citizens rediscovered long forgotten or denied religious identities. In Croatia, this phenomenon was revealed through the process known as *spiritual renewal*,³²⁶ which included all layers of society, the priesthood/clergy, believers, and those who were (previously) nonbelievers, up to governmental institutions, the media, and ordinary citizens. Many attached different meanings to the term *spiritual renewal*, but at the end it became an echo of national or better, nationalistic awakening. Spiritual revival nonetheless occurred, when many started to go to the churches again (which were half-empty some years ago) by virtue of discovering their spiritual and national roots, others to substitute one hierarchical political system (the Communism) with another (religious system).³²⁷ The response was especially strong within the refugee and exile population, which is understandable given the emotional traumas and uncertainties they went through.

Spiritual assistance in this context included the following areas of pastoral service:

1. Joint public worship services;
2. Christian gatherings;
3. Spiritual counseling and appeals/calls for conversion;
4. Christian radio and video production and broadcasting;
5. Distribution of Christian literature.

The biggest group that was targeted for spiritual assistance was refugees and exiles,

In emotional and physical shock at having to leave their homes, refugees often have nothing more than the garments they wear.

³²⁶ See, Ante Pazanin. "Europeiziranje i duhovna izgradnja Hrvatske", and Pavao Barisic, "Filozofijski program duhovne obnove," *Zbornik savjetovanja Duhovna obnova Hrvatske*, Ante Bakovic (ed.) Zagreb: Vlada Republike Hrvatske and Agencija za obnovu, 1992.

³²⁷ The presence of political, state and business hierarchies during the church holidays was constant especially if the media were expected to be present too.

Typically, by the time they are forced to evacuate they have been witnesses to incredible atrocities committed against friends, neighbors, and immediate family members. Women and children are particularly vulnerable and are all too often the favored targets of attack.³²⁸

1) Joint public worship services. *Agape* offered to its end users three types of spiritual assistance related to worship. As some refugee groups remained in close contact after leaving the refugee camps, they expressed a desire to have a place for group gatherings and worship in the areas where they lived. *Agape* provided such premises with all necessary logistics, such as lighting, speakers, heating, music instruments, etc.³²⁹ *Agape* also used already existent sacral objects for worship and gatherings, or rented premises either on a daily basis or for the month. In some cases, the worship services were held in warehouses such as in Bjelovar that were normally used for distribution of humanitarian assistance.³³⁰ Worship services were organized in refugee camps too, in the so-called *collective accommodations* led by *Agape* volunteers trained for such a service, such as the students of the Evangelical Theological

³²⁸ Scott A. Moreau. "Refugee Mission Work." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pg. 816. Four mission organizations directly working among and on behalf of refugee populations today may be noted. Christian Aid, the World Council of Churches (the work has been decentralized among regional organizations, by Church Together, and the Church World Service, and denominational organizations, by the United Methodist Committee on Relief/Disaster Services, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, etc.), Refugee International, and World Relief as the relief arm of the National Association of Evangelicals.

³²⁹ For instance, the Christian Reformed Church from Baranja village composed of refugees has used the old Synagogue (today's Evangelical Pentecostal Church) in Osijek as their place for worship in the Hungarian language during the late Sunday afternoons for many years. This kind of assistance contributed to better collective integration of the refugees in their new surroundings, helped overcome stress and trauma from the war, but also helped them face the challenges of everyday refugee life.

³³⁰ "Due to lack of facilities for church services in some towns, we are meeting in warehouses. People lined up to receive food and garments in the mornings and come to Bible studies in the afternoons. In these large, cold buildings, the hearts of people who have lost everything are warmed by the good news of Jesus Christ." *Agape Newsletter*, Pg. 1, December 1994. *Agape Archive*, Osijek.

Faculty. The life in these camps was difficult because of the lack of living space; there were up to 12 people per thirty square meters.³³¹

The third form of worship was related to special occasions such as big religious holidays and other celebrations. Some worship services were then dedicated to special target groups for instance children of different ages, or women, etc.³³²

2) Christian gatherings. This activity was especially important when the refugees arrived, but also at the end of the whole process, when their return was considered definite and preparations were underway. During the exchange of information about interests for the refugees and exiles, these gatherings provided psychological support too. An informal and relaxed style with coffee, tea, and cookies played the role of *club/town meetings*, especially for those assistance seekers originating from the same area, city, or village. While discussing the problems that were bothering those, the refugees in sharing their experiences often found ways to easily overcome problems related to the process of integration into their new social surroundings. *Agape* organized such meetings for women and their children offering the women an opportunity to meet and be with each other, while their children were gathered in small playgroups with *Agape* volunteers.

3) Spiritual counseling and calls for conversion. In contrast to the other services, this one was organized mostly on an individual basis and rarely for families. During the last ten years, many people went through different forms of existential crises questioning their past and future lives. *Agape* offered its assistance and testimony of Christ's salvation in this and the next life. Many heard, understood, and accepted the evangelical message, making the decision to change their lives and converting to Christ and His teaching. These conversions to authentic Christianity and the spiritual experience of the new birth were quite frequent when the refugee crisis started, but declined during the later

³³¹ It was easier if the space was shared by only one family, but there were cases when two to three, sometimes even four families lived in such a small area. To secure minimum privacy, they would hang covers or bed sheets to serve as a barrier in between them.

³³² For example, during Christmas (in Croatia) or New Year's Eve (in Bosnia), *Operation Christmas Child* and *Samaritan's Purse* would donate Christmas packages for the refugee children and *Agape* would organize the worship for children by using puppets.

years. One of the reasons for this might be in the expectation of some converts for privileged access to church donations, which did not occur.³³³

4) Christian radio and video production and broadcasting. Although this activity was aimed at a broader audience, its program scheme often contained spiritual messages of hope and courage focused on the refugee population. Christian audio and video production was launched humbly with upgrading of the studio and media activities during the years to come; it became recognized and was listened to throughout Croatia and in some areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The production formula was simple. In the audio studio in Osijek (at the Evangelical Theological Seminary) the team would tape a twenty minute program composed of contemporary Christian music, short and efficient Evangelical messages related to everyday life and games with prizes. These tapes would then be distributed to the local radio networks, which would broadcast them for free within their regular daily programs.³³⁴ Besides radio production, *Agape* would also create Christian music albums aimed at a general audience and special target groups, such as children or youth. The Osijek studio distributed these materials free to the local and newly established radio stations promoting its Christian music culture.

A similar formula was used with video production and distribution with one slight difference: selected Christian films and other materials were first titled and then distributed to the local TV stations for free broadcast. *Agape* video production is considered a small contribution to the Christian film production of the western world.

³³³ "Some people did join the church for the wrong reasons. At the distribution center, if there there was a long line when they were handing out food parcels, a new member might say, "Now that I am a member of the church, may I stand first in the line?" "No," Nikola would tell him, "now that you are a member, you must stand at the end of the line. And when you get your parcel, you must share with someone else. Because, that's what Jesus would do." David Manuel. *Bosnia: Hope in the Ashes*. Brewster: Paraclete Press, 1996. Pg. 89.

³³⁴ *Agape* managed to distribute its materials to around 75% of the UKV radio stations in Croatia. The estimates about the reception/listening were between 100,000 and 120,000 listeners per week, or around 30% of the total radio program listeners. *Agape* received numerous letters and calls from the listeners supporting our activities. Those *shows* were among the first Christian ones broadcast through the local radio stations after the fall of the communism.

5) Distribution of Christian literature. Since its beginning, *Agape* regularly distributed Christian literature to its end users. This activity included both books and magazines, with an attempt to recuperate the long-term absence of Christian texts during the years of communism. All *Agape* branch offices while distributing humanitarian assistance offered Christian literature as well; these were materials useful for spiritual refreshment and strengthening of the faith, such as different editions of the New Testament, the Gospel of John, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke or Acts etc. The estimates are that *Agape* had a strong involvement in Christian literature distribution with more than three million different Christian titles.³³⁵

Table 5.3. Estimates on distribution

Title	Number
New Testament (different editions)	1,400,000
The Gospel of Mark (with photos of the Holy Land)	400,000
The Book of Life (I edition 100,000; II edition 100,000) ³³⁶	200,000
The Book of Life – the Book of Hope, III edition	300,000
To the Sources: the Gospel of Luke and the Acts	350,000
The Gospel of John	20,000
The Book on Christ (paraphrased translation of the NT)	50,000
My First Bible in Pictures	50,000
Jesus, our Faith	50,000
Total	2,820,000
Tracts and smaller brochures	500,000

³³⁵ *Agape* recognized the great demand for the New Testament in elementary and high schools throughout Croatia after the government introduced the Catechism within the curriculum as an optional subject. *Agape* donated to all elementary and high school principals and religious teachers New Testament samples with an instruction that they can obtain more copies for free. The response was enormous – *Agape* distributed more than a million books to all schools throughout Croatia, even to the most remote ones that were previously frequently neglected.

³³⁶ *The Book of Life* is a chronological presentation of the life of Jesus according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The first harmonization of the four Gospels is considered to be done by Tacijan, around 170 AD, known as the “detessaron”. *The Book of Life*, 2nd edition. Osijek: Izvori, 1993. Pg. 5.

Having in mind that the communist authorities during the last five decades did not allow any kind of Christian literature distribution, with these actions *Agape* tried to fulfill the existent gaps. Christian materials were also used as an accompanying element and where appropriate of course, to other *Agape* activities such as for instance distribution of Christmas presents for children. The distribution was done by *Agape* by using our own vehicles.

Agape also sent on a regular basis selected books and *Agape* magazines to the public libraries throughout Croatia. This project included all public and city libraries, elementary and high school libraries, libraries in the framework of the faculties and other academic and scientific institutions, hospital libraries, museum and archives, military and police libraries, etc.³³⁷ There were several *Agape* magazines published and distributed during this time: *Izvori (The Springs)*, a Christian magazine with a pastoral and theological profile, *Radost (The Joy)*, a Christian magazine for women, and *Latica (The Petal)*, a magazine for children.³³⁸ According to our findings, the magazines were read by approximately 110,000 persons.

This project was financed by a donor who would agree to buy a certain portion of the magazines, which would then be distributed to the libraries later on.³³⁹ During the last ten years, around seventy titles have entered the libraries throughout Croatia filling the gap that occurred during the former regime.

Agape also offered logistical support in importing and redistribution of Christian books that were printed in other countries due to the lower printing prices. For instance, the New Testament published by the *Gideons* organization was printed in Korea and Belarus. *Agape* assisted this process being familiar with Croatian customs and their import practices and procedures. As the legal procedures became more

³³⁷ Christian literature was occasionally sent to the editors of the dailies, radio and TV stations, city and county offices, libraries within the refugee camps, the Parliament and its members, and to different dignitaries and representatives of culture, politics, academic, and science.

³³⁸ *Latica* was distributed to kindergartens and elementary school libraries only.

³³⁹ Recently the Ministry of Culture of Bosnia and Herzegovina has bought a number of Christian books and distributed them to public libraries.

and more complex, especially regarding tax-free import, this service became more and more complicated.

From time to time, *Agape* sent Christian books to neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). The import custom regulations in Bosnia and Herzegovina were different though not simpler. Since sending larger quantities of books and materials was not allowed,³⁴⁰ every time someone from Osijek would travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina he/she would take two to three boxes of books in the vehicle and deliver them to a particular address.

This approach was tolerated by Bosnia and Herzegovina customs, and the estimates are that we distributed more than 250,000 books in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Many people were involved in these actions such as local and foreign missionaries, pastors, humanitarian workers, students, incidental travelers and tourists, Catholic priests, nuns, *Agape* business partners and friends, etc.³⁴¹

5.3.5. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

The psychological assistance program of *Agape* included the following areas:

- 1) Psychological counseling and psychotherapy;
- 2) Education of counselors and their supervision;
- 3) Publishing;
- 4) Cooperation with the community.

³⁴⁰ The Finnish Missionary Anti Tepponenu (that we mentioned already) managed at one point to transfer to Bosnia on his truck around 70,000 books (mostly *New Testaments, The Book of Life, My First Bible, the Gospels, etc.*). This step was considered the biggest single distribution that was done during that period. *Agape* driver Davor Bozic had an experience of waiting for several days at the Bosnia and Herzegovina border to be allowed to import the books – his patience finally paid off, and he entered Bosnia with the books.

³⁴¹ Today there are no obstacles in printing Christian books in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so the need to import them has decreased. There is a *Christian Printing House* in Zenica, donated by *Agape*, which is covering this area.

1) Psychological counseling and psychotherapy. Shortly after the outbreak of the war in the areas of former Yugoslavia, it became clear that many people – victims of the war – needed assistance in dealing with their emotional traumas. Any delay in this process proved to be harmful and damaging to the psychological health of these people because they would develop neuroses and other types of psychological and somatic diseases. These unresolved emotional problems were also transferred to their families destroying their functionality.

Having this mind, *Agape* launched a program for psychological assistance for people in need by organizing psychological and pastoral counseling at *Karis*, Osijek.³⁴²

The mission of the psychological and pastoral counseling service *Karis* is to promote spiritual health and offer psychological and pastoral assistance to people in need facing personal problems or difficulties in their surroundings which influence their mental, emotional and social wellbeing. Using different programs and offering a variety of services, *Karis* tends to act preventively, offering education for the problems related to the physical health. *Karis* also offers psychological assistance to people in stressful life situations, helps improve interpersonal relations, and fosters an integrated approach to the spiritual health of the people.³⁴³

The counseling organization offered different services, such as seminars for the education of parents, individual counseling for children, adolescents and grownups, premarital and marital counseling, counseling in family crises or for the elderly and group psychotherapy, etc. The services were available to all users regardless of their national or religious background, age, gender, physical or mental disability. The users could require assistance for variety of problems such as aggression, anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, fears, loneliness, sorrow and grief, posttraumatic stress, phobias, addictions, adolescent identity crises, developmental and sex-related problems, etc.³⁴⁴

³⁴² According to an interview with *Karis* director, Zoran Vargovic (March 12, 2007).

³⁴³ *The Report on Agape Humanitarian Activities for 2005* sent to the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of the Republic of Croatia, Pg. 3.

³⁴⁴ If the counselor sees that someone's emotional condition is more complex or that he/she requires other kinds of assistance that would be recommended.

Karis representatives use different therapy techniques in addition to the standard *conversation therapy*. They include art, psychodrama, music, dance, role-plays, and biblical counseling. They also use a broad spectrum of therapeutic approaches such as behavioral, cognitive, system and humanistic.

2) Education of counselors. *Karis* also offers practical training for the postgraduate students of theology at the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek. One part of their education includes pastoral counseling and special groups counseling. Furthermore, the cooperation between *Karis* and *ETS* often results in graduate and MA theses within the areas of psychological and pastoral counseling and other areas of humanitarian assistance. *Karis* offers professional psychosocial training seminars open to anyone interested in gaining such an education. These activities include organizing workshops, printing brochures, creating special radio programs and other publishing activities, and translations.³⁴⁵

3) Publishing. Being faced with a chronic lack of literature in this area, *Agape* launched translation and publication of books to assist the psychological counselors.³⁴⁶ Distribution to public libraries and organizations dealing with psychosocial assistance throughout the country was free of charge. According to the responses we have received, it was evident that this activity was well planned because it achieved the set goals.

4) Cooperation with the community. *Karis* is oriented to serving the community. Serving those in need and using professional skills

³⁴⁵ These programs, which were organized as seminars or conferences and on different topics, such as violence in the family, marital, and other disorders, posttraumatic stress, etc., would have been approved by the Ministry of Health, which urged its representatives and other professionals to be part of the activity. The programs were developed to serve social workers, pedagogues, educators, doctors, religious teachers, professors, and the general professional audience.

³⁴⁶ For example, in cooperation with the Presbyterian Church, USA, several books were translated and printed: Karen W. Saakvitne. *Prerasti Bol: Prirucnik o Sekundarnoj Traumatizaciji* [Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization]. Osijek: Izvori, 1998. Raymond B. Flannery, Jr. *Posttraumatski Stresni Poremecaji: Vodica za Zrtve: Lijecenje i Oporavak* [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders: The Victim's Guide to Healing and Recovery]. Osijek: Izvori, 1998.

and knowledge for the benefit of all, *Karis* promotes its Christian values and worldview without using propaganda. The end users may obtain the spiritual and psychological assistance they need or be asked to bring their problems to churches or other religious institutions, in accordance with their faith. The *Karis* team cooperates with professionals in many areas, psychiatrists, psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, educators and many more.

Foreign experts are assisting *Karis* as well, coming from the USA or other areas of the world as guest visitors or lecturers at ETS, Osijek psychological and pastoral counseling classes. *Karis* cooperates with local humanitarian organizations, schools, hospitals, and homes for parentless children, elderly etc., on different issues.³⁴⁷

5.4. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

These activities include assistance that is offered whenever and wherever needed; they may differ from case to case and be without any time continuity. The projects within this area that were organized and implemented by *Agape* were related to offering medical help, assistance in education, publishing, in different projects related to the return of refugees and other development projects.

5.4.1. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

This type of assistance was especially important at the beginning at the war because of numerous military and civilian casualties and the increased number of sick citizens. The stress caused by the war and exile caused emotional traumas which were reflected in an increased number of sick patients in need of proper therapies. Emergency deliveries of medicines and medical materials were highly appreciated.³⁴⁸ Foreign donors, mainly from Europe, donated to *Agape* assorted medical equipment and appliances, which were needed because of the de-

³⁴⁷ For instance, *Karis* in cooperation with the Center for Social Welfare in Osijek continuously organized supervision of families or adults.

³⁴⁸ *Agape* Vice President Damir Spoljaric, by the end of December 1991 had personally driven a donation a worth million dollars of medicines to the Osijek Clinical Hospital. The donation was provided by the *Assemblies of God*, a Pentecostal denomination from the USA.

struction of many hospitals and the increase in the number of patients to half a million (or about 20%). The need for orthopedic and other devices such as invalid chairs, crutches etc., was constant throughout all the years of war, and was always welcomed because of the war veterans, the civilian victims of war, and the increased number of handicapped persons. While distributing these devices we noticed that a number of persons who suffered from muscular dystrophy, cerebral paralysis, or were quadrapelgics, etc., lost their status and benefits due to the general war circumstances and increased state poverty level.

On the other hand, there was an uncontrolled flow into the area of expired medicines, many without specified generic names and with unknown characteristics, and frequently in quantities that were not sufficient to start and continue with the treatment; so *Agape* decided to opt for a targeted donors approach.³⁴⁹ That meant that we assisted in providing specific medicines included on the official lists to institutions, hospitals, and clinics.

5.4.2. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Agape occasionally sponsored purchasing schoolbooks and materials for families with children in elementary and secondary schools, and who could not buy them by themselves. This assistance was in accordance with the provided financial donations.

Another type of assistance was related to organizing English language courses (ESL - English as a Second Language) mostly for the younger generations. The courses were led by volunteers coming from the USA and Great Britain, but also from other countries of Europe. They were good occasions for additional socialization between course participants, and an opportunity for the churches to promote the Gospel. The volunteers would frequently use texts from the Bible to study the English language, its grammar, and conversation. Frequently the

³⁴⁹ Some foreign humanitarian organizations collected half empty bottles of medicines that we were unable to use. Another problem with that were the titles of the medicines were written in all European languages with no translation and explanation provided; this prevented Croatian doctors from using them. The Croatian government spent 20 million dollars to ecologically destroy two thousand tons of this highly toxic material.

discussions that would follow the classes were related to biblical topics.

Agape organized music workshops as well where the participants were taught to use various instruments such as guitars or synthesizers or to learn how to sing. These classes, similar to the classes English Language were organized when the schoolchildren were free during the summer periods because of the summer holidays.

Agape occasionally assisted individuals in difficult material situations by covering his/her education costs, when that person needed only few more months to finish his/her education and find employment that would assist the family. This kind of assistance was extremely rare, and the recipient was expected to provide proof that he/she was working after finishing his/her education. The person was also expected to return the financial assistance in allotments.

Finally, *Agape* sponsored poor students of theology coming from Eastern European countries who lacked finances to cover their study fees and the costs for their accommodation at the ETS. Time showed that many of them after finishing their education became respected Christian leaders in their own countries, founding churches, Bible schools, publishing houses and other Christian organizations. Some established humanitarian organizations, which followed the structure and, the way of working of the *Agape* organization since they had been introduced to and worked for *Agape* as volunteers while studying at ETS.³⁵⁰

5.4.3. PUBLISHING

Although *Agape* mostly engaged in distributing Christian books and magazines, this organization also had its own publishing activities financed by a foreign donor. The texts whose printing and publishing were organized by *Agape* were mostly translations from English lan-

³⁵⁰ ETS students were required to volunteer as part of their seminary ministry experience. Often they would participate in loading and unloading the goods or work in the warehouses. In time they started organizing different projects by themselves visiting refugee camps, spreading spiritual messages, and being part of other evangelical and church activities.

guage. The publishing management had a standard procedure for organizing this activity composed of preparing a detailed project budget with single and total costs that included translations, proof reading, editing, and preparations for publishing and distribution. After the books or magazines were printed, they would be distributed to their targeted readers. These titles were mostly aimed at general evangelization, but also at evangelizing specific target groups (children and youth, etc.) and included texts on psychosocial and pastoral services, etc.

5.4.4. DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

These projects were intended to assist individuals and families in developing their own resources and restarting the already existing ones with the aim of securing a more lasting and self-sustainable means for living.³⁵¹ This kind of humanitarian assistance is usually applied when the first crisis is over and the refugee populace is considered stabilized in the new surroundings. This type of assistance differs from one where an organization distributes goods or services. There are many reasons that make this type of development project more difficult for planning and implementation. For instance, managing these projects is far more demanding, and the relationship between the donors and the recipients is more complex, especially in the decision-making area.³⁵²

³⁵¹ "Smart aid - term is used for aid that uses small resources efficiently. It promotes local production and has a multiplying or development effect. It takes advantage of and supports existing structures and institutions in the society. It is cheaper and has local spin-offs, for example supplying materials and spare parts to re-start a local factory, instead of importing finished projects, or making resources available for people to produce and store their own food. Smart aid is easier logistically, and requires transporting smaller volumes." Bjorn Mossber, Annete A. Wong and Jonny Astrand. *Experience, Competence and Sustainability: A Follow-up of Swedish Humanitarian Aid to Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina*. Lund: Lund Centre for Habitat Studies, 1994. Pg. 37.

³⁵² The problem of harmonizing the relations between the donor and the recipient is less obvious at the beginning and gains in importance towards the end of the project. The donors are usually keen to adopt the principle that *the rules are set by the one who provides the finances*, which only temporarily decreases the tensions while in the long term this can put them in jeopardy and harm the project.

There is also a difference between humanitarian development projects and the projects related to economic development, namely entrepreneurship. The borderline between these two is in the use of the market, or the exclusion of the market from the process of production. When a family who has received development aid produces goods for their own use, to exchange with another family, or plans to use a small portion for market sale, then we are talking about a humanitarian development project. The projects whose products or services are produced to be offered on the market and which depend on market fluctuations belong to business entrepreneurship.

The debate and misunderstandings that we have already mentioned about whether or not church humanitarian organizations should engage in development assistance projects or should offer goods for saving lives, decrease suffering and secure the necessary minimums of food, clothing, shelter and the like is still ongoing.³⁵³ I believe that Christian churches and church organizations should offer development assistance too; this is based on both my long experience in the area of humanitarian work, and my business and public sector experience, namely:

- These projects prevent creating dependence on humanitarian assistance especially when the receiving relationship lasts for a long time and when it is too abundant. Dependence creates numerous problems such as losing some work habits, a significant drop in initiative to implement changes in life or in education (skills), health, entrepreneurship, free time, etc.;
- Development assistance decreases or eliminates defeatism which corrodes the self-respect of the humanitarian assistance recipient and nourishes wrong convictions that our lives are dependent upon the governments' decisions, foreign humanitarian organi-

³⁵³ "Although para-church organizations such as Food for the Hungry and World Vision have emerged largely to balance the church's mid-century denial of importance of the physical and social needs of people, especially with the the poor in underdeveloped regions, there is still no consensus on the place of development assistance within Christian missions." Ted Ward. "Development." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pg. 272.

zations' good will or other life conditions beyond reach/ influence;

- Most humanitarian development projects are in compliance with the needs of an average family and contribute to their stability and togetherness (especially in the later refugee stages when there is a greater probability that crises in the family might appear, situations sometimes followed by the disintegration of whole family);
- By being part of a supplementary production activity, the family interacts both with themselves and the business world, and this creates a possibility for full-time employment that will provide sufficient income for their everyday life and a possible significant increase of their family business at a later stage.

In my opinion Christian humanitarian organizations should restrain from participating in projects related to business entrepreneurship for the following reasons,

- These projects are by their nature and by the process of management complex and are realized in turbulent market conditions and business uncertainty;
- The relationship between the donor and the recipient are complex conducted in cross-cultural and other settings and were often burdened by accumulated and unresolved conflicts and misunderstandings;³⁵⁴
- The experiences of economic development show that initiatives related to business development should always come from the

³⁵⁴ The donor can perceive its relationship with the recipient as being on an equal/same level, while the recipient usually has an opposite, subordinate to leader relationship perception. This difference causes frustrations and often leads to misunderstandings and lack of communication, and finally to the fear of losing the donations. When frustrations reach their climax, the relationship can be weakened so much that it will put in jeopardy the whole process of development assistance.

development leader inside the organization and not to be imposed from outside.³⁵⁵

What program and project activities will be included in a humanitarian organization's mission depends on numerous factors. The mission can change and exceptions in the decision-making process can be effective and secure success in a certain area regardless of the type of the project.³⁵⁶ Consistency is a virtue as long as it does not turn into the master of the process; like when the organization is faced with a project that is formally unsuitable but can succeed and foster improvement of life conditions in a certain community or family. On the other hand, this kind of decision-making (from case to case) can represent *the road that is paved with good intentions, and yet leads to hell*. To make right and consistent decisions in accordance with the organization's mission and the life circumstances is a wisdom that cannot be reached easily or swiftly.³⁵⁷

There were several types of development humanitarian projects led and implemented by *Agape*: Agricultural seeds for fruits and truck farming for families;

- Farming and other tools for trade/crafts such as bricklayers, tin-smiths, plumbers, carpenters, wall painters, etc.
- Basic cattle/live stock funds, such as heifers, breeding sows, sheep, goats, hens and others;
- Construction materials for renewing or building small business facilities such as greenhouses, barns, corn houses, pigsties, hen-houses, etc.

³⁵⁵ Humanitarian assistance distribution requires a low level of the recipient's active participation, while development projects require a high level of cooperation. The donors often make a mistake by concluding that the level of a recipient's participation in development projects remains the same as in the other humanitarian projects. This can lead to wrong expectations and communication problems.

³⁵⁶ See, E. J. Elliston. *Christian Relief and Development: Developing Workers for Effective Ministry*. Dallas: Word Pub., 1989. J. M. Perkins, *Beyond the Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1993;

³⁵⁷ Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, the man who gains understanding. Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding. Pr 3,13a; 4,7.

Sometimes the development assistance recipients would grant a portion of their crop to other end users or to the church and parachurch organizations. These practices should be supported and encouraged because they contribute to creating culture of philanthropy, solidarity, and joint assistance.³⁵⁸

5.4.5. OTHER PROJECTS

Organizing free time. Planning and organizing free time for those spending most of their time in facilities for collective accommodation was considered extremely important especially at the beginning of the refugee crisis. If the refugees belonged to the younger generations, there would be no particular problem in motivating them to participate in these activities. However, if they belonged to the older categories, problems would be greater. The reasons were that older members of the refugee community never had enough free time since they usually originated from rural areas and had difficulties in adjusting to their new situations. Previously they were employed and working in the house or in the field and had no other interests and they were simply not ready for new ones. While living in the refugee camps they would spend endless days in long conversations about the war and the war traumas they suffered, discussing daily politics, rumors, and disinformation. An atmosphere, which lacked family privacy or a break future perspective, would bring them to emotional exhaustion and at times to clinical depression. The lack of employment and the every day routine work/activities led to other social pathologies such as small thefts, misconduct, conflicts and fights, illegal trade and prostitution.

Agape volunteers visited the refugee centers from time to time with an aim to organize their free time and organize drama plays, creative workshops, language classes, workshops for children, or simply to spend some time with the refugees, talking to them and offering

³⁵⁸ Launching agricultural or other activities are good examples of how a humanitarian organization can increase its funds or assortment of goods. Work itself is useful, both for the recipient (regardless of whether he/she is working as a volunteer or employee) as well as for the organizations.

counseling.³⁵⁹ Alternatively, they would build a basketball area, like *Agape* in eastern Mostar or a computer center for children and youth such as the one in Zenica. These and similar activities contributed to improving the quality of life of the refugees.

Renewal and return. Return to their homelands was coming at the end of the refugee period, although not always. Renewal of destroyed homes and business facilities, communal and social infrastructure, was a long-term process. Reconstruction related projects are usually too big to be fulfilled by small humanitarian organizations, and thus they would concentrate on taking over some of the activities in this area that were overlooked, accidentally or purposely by the state authorities.³⁶⁰ The return of refugees occurred a number of years after the conflict was over and *Agape* donors had stopped seeing photos of the destruction on their TVs – a factor that had been considered highly motivating for their donations. What happened was *donor fatigue*; the amount of donations decreased and only the most determined and devoted donors continued. That is one of the reasons why the renewal was conducted by local organizations whose financial sources were in Europe or were linked with EU dedicated/applied funds.

Through this project, *Agape* provided the refugees/returnees with a small amount of furniture and other house appliances that were received from the international donors, as well as with construction materials that would arrive only occasionally.

Collective vacations. *Agape* organized collective vacations for the poor children and their families on the seacoast and in other areas of the country. Many children that were born after the war grew up without the possibility of ever seeing the sea. They would be sent with the *Agape* volunteers on these trips. The children and youth, during their stay in the Opuzen camp or the *Life Center* in Crikvenica (both on the Adriatic sea coast) or in *Betanija* in Orahovica, would gain friends, listen to Gospel messages, watch biblical drama plays, swim and take

³⁵⁹ Sometimes the ETS students would organize visits of the refugee children and youth to the Osijek swimming pools or skating rink. These gatherings resulted in friendships and many other opportunities for witnessing the Gospel.

³⁶⁰ Organizations such as *LWF* and *Adra* were working on renewal of the destroyed houses including the houses that belonged to the Serb citizens living in Croatia before the war.

part in workshops, participate in sport activities, and what is also important, be fed well. Their return was always filled with joy – they had suntans and shared with their families and friends their new experiences. Often, their link with the volunteers would remain strong, and sometimes they would join the Evangelical church.

For instance, *Agape* sponsored group travel for Evangelical believers belonging to a young church in Bosnia for their vacation, togetherness, and collective spiritual growth.³⁶¹ They would spend time together, walking, talking, worshiping, in bigger or in smaller groups, learning songs, watching Christian movies, reading the Bible, studying, etc. After spending ten or more days together away from the ugly memories of the war, they would undergo a process of intensive socialization and integration into their small, Christian community. Upon their return, they would continue with joint activities and spiritual growth, while the social core that was created would act as a stronghold providing stability to the new church community.³⁶² This kind of approach to building the church community of believers was the key to the process of mutual connection and stronger integration of the evangelical churches in the denomination.

Christmas (New Year's) gifts for children. One of the most frequent and highly successful projects organized by *Agape* on a regular basis was related to children's gifts regardless of whether they would have been distributed on Christmas or New Year's Eve.³⁶³ Although these packages were small in their material value, they brought joy and happiness to the children and their parents, perhaps because they also reminded them of happier holidays and merrier times in their homes.

³⁶¹ The majority of the evangelical churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina were created and matured during the years of war, mostly from 1994 onwards. There were cases where churches had only several months experience, and believers did not know each other well. They lacked group cohesion and church identity, and many other sociological characteristics necessary for a community of believers to survive and grow stronger, which is typical for more mature churches.

³⁶² Even now and then, we can hear statements of our believers related to those vacations: "When we were in Crikvenica Life Center, we became a real church."

³⁶³ In 1992 the first Christmas and New Year gifts were donated and provided by *World Vision International* to the refugees and exiles from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina stationed in Croatia.

The basic idea was simple: the children and their parents from one country would pack and send Christmas gifts to the children and their parents of another country devastated by war.³⁶⁴ This idea was developed by the humanitarian organization *Samaritan's Purse*, through their program *Operation Christmas Child*. After the gifts would arrive, *Agape* volunteers would assign them while organizing a special Christmas program for the children and their parents.

The programs were usually held in the local churches but also in other places, such as kindergartens, schools, associations, etc. There would also be sermons and Christian books for the children and their parents.

5.5. CHANGE OF THE AGAPE MISSION PARADIGM

Faced with the end of the war, many local organizations found themselves in between two difficult strategic decisions. The first was whether they should cease to exist, while the other was to continue working although with a redefined mission and goals in accordance with the new social circumstances.³⁶⁵ *Agape* decided both ways. There were organizations in the *Agape* network which have chosen to stop their activities or only act from time to time, and from a case to case. Others decided to continue assisting the refugees and returnees during their return home, and participate in building democracy and civil society. They were especially active in the area of inter-religious and ecumenical cooperation³⁶⁶ with an aim to foster dialogue, tolerance,

³⁶⁴ The content of one box was standardized and contained toys, school supplies, hygiene products, some clothes such as gloves or hats, and a letter with a photo from the family sending the package. These letters were usually the beginning of long lasting friendships and visits. The gifts were divided in accordance with the childrens ages and genders (2-4, 5-9 and 10-14).

³⁶⁵ Research about the humanitarian organizations in Croatia show that after the end of the war many of them ceased to exist because they considered their work unimportant or unnecessary. Some of them started working in new areas such as assisting the returnees, resocialization, securing their existence, etc. See Natasa Renko and Jurica Pavicic. *Analiza humanitarnih organizacija u Hrvatskoj*, istrazivacki projekt za Ministarstvo razvitka i obnove Republike Hrvatske, Zagreb, 1998.

³⁶⁶ For example, ecumenical prayers for peace such as the *World Day of Women's Prayers in the Spirit of Ayisa*, or the *World Day of Prayers for Children in Need*, inter-ethnic forums on issues of peace and coexistence, etc.

and reconciliation. These *Agape* offices cooperated with local peace organizations, a process that helped improve cooperation and create new paradigms for *Agape*, paradigms related to building a culture of peace in the former war areas.

In many parts of the country where there are certain ethnic tensions, these peace-related activities and the presence of *Agape* and the Evangelical church are needed as much as the humanitarian assistance was before. The words calling for peace and coexistence gained their authenticity and life strength/force because they arose from the deeds of love. Evangelical and other protestant churches were sometimes the only places where these groups (the former war parties) would agree to meet and communicate.³⁶⁷

According to this, *Agape* mission's did not change nor is there a need for to remember the words of Jesus that *the poor you will always have with you, and you can help them any time you want (Mk 14,6)*. *Agape's* operative goals needed to be changed and adapted to both the concrete needs and the readiness of donors to offer their assistance. What has changed in these last fifteen years was the mission paradigm of the Evangelical church. We stopped waiting irresponsibly to be moved by the *Holy Spirit* to start evangelizing in some city or area; the youngsters have simply launched projects based on the Great Commitment of Jesus Christ who said - *Go!*

The wars and conflicts which entered our homes and dining rooms, the refugees that flowed like rivers in front of our eyes, all of that was needed to awake our consciousness for Christian compassion to change our basic views of humanitarian and social assistance to those in need, and to help us find our own place and the role of the church in the world. And to move us to action.

³⁶⁷ For the additional readings, consult standard works in the field of humanitarian relief related to ethnic crisis. See for example, Mary B. Anderson. *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War*. Boulder, Co, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1991. Jonathan Moore (ed.). *Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention*. Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham, 1998. Mary B. Anderson (ed.). *Options for Aid in Conflicts: Lessons from Field Experience*. Cambridge, MA: CDA, 2000. Deborah Eade and Suzanne Williams. *The Oxfam Handbook of Relief and Development*. Oxford, UK: Oxfam, 1995. Mark Janz (ed.). *Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Lessons from Practitioners*. Monrovia, CA: MARC Publications, 2000.

6. AGAPE REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The development of the humanitarian activities of *Agape* can be viewed from several angles related to the overall growth and diversification of its programs and projects, the quantities of assistance per area/region or territories covered with activities. In the context of *Agape* regional activities in this chapter, attention is paid to the territories covered by *Agape* by dividing it into five developmental stages. During the first period (1991 to 1992), *Agape* activities were focused on the city of Zagreb (Croatia's capital) and its surroundings, collecting assistance for further distribution through the evangelical churches in the area.

The second period (1992 to date) began when *Agape* moved its head office from Zagreb to Osijek (the eastern area of the country) and started creating the network of autonomous branch offices throughout Croatia. The third period (1993 to date) includes founding *Agape* in Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) and the spread of *Agape* activities and branch offices in this region. The fourth period (1999 to date) includes two sub-periods that started almost simultaneously by founding *Agape* offices in both Kosovo and Macedonia.³⁶⁸

As can be seen, the classification periods that used here do not replace each other successively (apart from the first one). Their beginnings are one after another, while their ends do not follow the same pattern because most of them continued operating until today. The way different *Agape* branch offices functioned was also asymmetrical. Their activities were mostly dependent on the dynamism of arrivals of the humanitarian assistance, some donors' preferences regarding humanitarian activities in certain areas, levels of enthusiasm on behalf of the *Agape* leaders and their motivation to achieve the set goals in the area of Christian humanitarian and not-for-profit activities, etc.

During the years of *Agape* activities throughout the mentioned areas of the former Yugoslavia, significant support especially the lo-

³⁶⁸ *Agape's* mission includes several areas that are mentioned by the Apostle Paul while taking his mission travels: *Croatia* or *Dalmatia*, the area on the Adriatic seacoast, *Macedonia* that includes parts of today's *Republic of Macedonia*, and *Iliria*, which in part covers the area of today's *Kosovo*.

gistical one came from the Evangelical Theological Seminary (ETS) in Osijek, Croatia³⁶⁹ - the ETS put all its resources, both material and human on disposal for the *Agape* activities. The assistance was particularly considerable in linking the *Agape* leadership from the countries in the region with potential foreign donors and international humanitarian organizations. Sometimes, because *Agape* leaders and members were fairly young or locally and internationally unknown, they also needed recommendations and references to launch their activities.

In this context the ETS, as an older and already internationally affirmed/recognized educational center assisted *Agape* greatly by using its network of contacts with both church and para-church organizations from the Protestant circle. Many great things can be found out about ETS; the following lines are only few examples on the issue,

Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek has trained most of the younger Christians leaders of various denominations and its graduates have pioneered in areas of university ministries, Christian publishing, prison ministries, and cross-cultural evangelism. Dozens of young Croats and other graduates of ETS have been sent as church-planting missionaries to Bosnia and to other post-communist nations.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ "The Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek is a prominent institution, training 80% of the Evangelical Christian workers serving in the former Yugoslavia. In the mid-1990s, after recovering from damage and temporary exile during the civil war, it was the largest residential Evangelical seminary in Eastern Europe. It has served as an important contact point for the many Evangelical and Pentecostal missions that have entered the country since the fall of Communism." David B. Barrett. (ed.). *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*. 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press 2001. vol. 1. pg. 223. Also see, Peter Kuzmic, "Croatian Evangelical Theological Seminary Celebrating 25 Years," *World Link*, July 1997.

³⁷⁰ Peter Kuzmic. "Croatia." Scott A. Moreau (ed.). *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pgs. 241-242. In addition, "The impact of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek has been great. From small beginnings in 1972 (under Communism), it has grown into an international, interdenominational school affecting much of Central Europe as well as Croatia. Many fruitful ministries have had their birth within it, and its graduates are serving in 27 countries." Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk. *Operation World*, 21st century ed. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001. Pg. 213.

6.1. CROATIA: RELIEF AND MISSIONS

Agape began its humanitarian mission in the Republic of Croatia in the early 1991 spreading rapidly its activities and its network during the following years.³⁷¹ It was relatively easier in the Croatian context to launch such a network, since there was already a network of evangelical churches and a tradition of Protestant Christianity active throughout the whole country.

The religious situation in today's Croatia is characterized by a revival of traditional Roman Catholicism, the influx of large numbers of Bosnian Muslims, and the sudden decrease of Serbian Orthodox Christians. All Protestants together constitute only 0.6 of population, and evangelicals only 0.2 percent. After years of stagnation Lutheran, Baptist, and Pentecostals churches in particular have begun to experience growth. Despite their small numbers, evangelicals have during the recent wars in Croatia and neighboring Bosnia made significant effort to assist refugees and displaced people, to maintain church unity across ethnic divides, and to participate in the peacemaking efforts within the country.³⁷²

The total period during which *Agape* branch offices were founded throughout Croatia is long and includes thirteen years, counting from the first *Agape* office established in 1991 in Zagreb up to the last one in 2004 in Podravska Slatina. The methodology of their establishment and operation followed a similar pattern and several successive phases: appointing the *Agape* branch office leader, finding an appropriate warehouse for the donations, registering the organization at the competent state authorities, informing the local government and self-government on the *Agape's* activities, transporting and unloading the humanitarian assistance, informing the general public and

³⁷¹ Croatia (2001 population: 4.437 mil.; 56.594 sq. km., capital Zagreb;) with provinces of Croatia proper, Dalmatia, Istria and Slavonia) is a crescent-shaped country bounded by Bosnia Herzegovina, Slovenia, Hungary, Serbia, Monte Negro and the Adriatic Sea. National structure 2001: Croats 89.63%, Serbs 4.54%, Bosnian 0.47%, and others 5.36%. Literacy 97.%, official language: Croatian; income/person: 5,056 USD (2002.) Religion (2001): Roman Catholics 87.8 %, Orthodox 4.42%, Muslims 1.28%, Protestants 0.60 %, others 5.90. *Statistical reports 2003*, Zagreb: Central Bureau of Statistics, 2004.

³⁷² Peter Kuzmic. "Croatia." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pgs. 241-242.

launching its activities. After these phases, the evidence and reporting procedures would be set both toward donors and toward local and state authorities. At the same time, the assistance recipients would start to gather in *Agape* offices – that process marked the beginning of their friendships and regular exchanges of information, which at times led to evangelization following some of the methods such as, preaching, one to one testimonies, organizing Bible teachings or foreign language lessons by using the texts from the Holy Scripture, etc.³⁷³

6.1.1. AGAPE BRANCH OFFICES

Since 1991, thirty-two *Agape* branch offices are operating in Croatia; some of them differ from each other in spite of the similarities in their humanitarian and social assistance activities. Having in mind the territorial shape of Croatia, these *Agape* offices in time created regional groups or regional networks that cooperate well with each other. These regional networks cover the following areas:

1. Zagreb region: Zagreb 1, Zagreb 2, Bjelovar, Sisak, Velika Gorica;
2. Eastern Croatia region covering Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srijem, and including Osijek, Vinkovci, Koska, Orahovica, Nasice, Belisce, Djakovo, Donji Miholjac, Vukovar, Beli Manastir, Laslovo, Borovo, Ilok, Zupanja;
3. Central Croatia region covering Western Slavonia and Daruvar, Slavonska Pozega, Slavonski Brod, Garesnica, Zrinska, Podravska Slatina;
4. Western Croatia region covering Istria and Kvarner and the cities of Rovinj, Pula, Rijeka; and
5. Dalmatia region with Zadar, Split, Ploce, Knin.

³⁷³ The *Alpha-course* proved tremendously effective for our cultural setting. The introduction in each course topic usually begins with a small breakfast and continues with short lectures on different issues of interest that last throughout the day (such as, *Who is Jesus and why did He die? Why and how should we read the Bible? Why and how should we pray? How is God leading us? How can I resist the evil? Does God heal even today?*), ending in small groups with talks and discussions.

The modalities of work of each of the *Agape* branch offices is describe below; chronologically from time they began operation with the specifics of their activities pointed out. Their humanitarian assistance programs and projects are listed along with brief descriptions.

It is important however, to have in mind that a number of humanitarian programs and projects were standard and common to all *Agape* branch offices such as, regular or occasional dry food distribution (the family packages), distribution of secondhand clothes and shoes, family packages with hygiene products, Christian literature distribution, occasional bedding, covers and home appliance distribution, Christmas gifts for children and Christmas programs, etc.

It is important to stress that those *Agape* branch offices while organizing their humanitarian activities did not pay for many business services (with certain exceptions) which were a significant contribution to the organizations' budgets. These free-of-charge services were related to using the warehouses and warehouse goods manipulation services, then freight forwarding or transport expenses related to railway and road transport including the pay-tolls, and the costs connected to broadcasting *Agape* audio and video programs on the local radio and TV stations, etc.

1. Zagreb,³⁷⁴ *Agape* branch office 1 (1991 population: 780,000). Besides the listed joint programs and projects, this office offered spiritual counseling assistance, medical assistance distribution³⁷⁵ and printing activities (books, magazines and preaches) in cooperation with the *Put Zivota* publishing house for free distribution to the refugees, IDPs and socially marginalized categories of citizens.

2. Zagreb, *Agape* branch office 2 (1991). The following assistance was added to the standard humanitarian 'package' listed above: spiritual counseling, distribution of medical assistance, worship services for

³⁷⁴ Having in mind the size of the city of Zagreb, there were two *Agape* offices established. Both of them began their activities in 1991, the first one on Ilica 200 in the Christ Pentecostal Church premises, while the second in Severinska 16 in the Evangelical Church *Radosne vijesti* premises.

³⁷⁵ In 1993, this branch office brought a donation that contained 15 full hospital units - with a total weight of 218 tons and 3.5 million US dollars value. See, *Agape Progress Report 1991.-1995*. Osijek: 1996. *Agape* Archive in Osijek.

particular target groups of refugees and IDPs (such as women), book and magazine publishing in cooperation with the Evangelical Church publishing house *Izvori* and free distribution of Christian literature to the needy. During 1992, the central *Agape* office was in Zagreb and the main distribution warehouse in one of the halls of the Zagreb International Fair.

3. Osijek (1992, population: 114,620). This branch office organized an exceptional range of humanitarian program and project activities during the fifteen years of its existence. Apart from the ones that are considered common to all *Agape* offices, *Agape* Osijek offered assistance in house furniture and appliances, hot meals through the public kitchen,³⁷⁶ medicines and medical materials distribution, orthopedic appliances for the handicapped and needy, book and magazine publishing, radio and video production and public broadcast, psychological, social, spiritual and legal assistance, supplementary education assistance, occasional cash donations, cooperation in peace and peace-building projects with the local NGOs, transport and distribution of Christmas and Easter gifts, organizing worship services and other programs for target groups, etc. The main distribution center was in the *Slavija* (former) cinema in Donji Grad, Osijek although many other facilities in the city and in the neighboring area were used too.³⁷⁷ *Agape* Osijek, also conducted development projects mainly focusing on the needs of the returnees, such as donating construction material and logistical assistance for moving, cattle, seeds, chemical fertilizers, agricultural tools and machines, etc. The biggest amount of humanitarian activities were conducted in Osijek, although in many occasions *Agape* Osijek used facilities and volunteers in the neighboring areas such as Cepin, Bizovac, Bilje, Gasinci, etc., for covering the needs in these areas. The Osijek office distributed humanitarian assistance to the war refugees that went to the neighboring countries such as Hungary,

³⁷⁶ Osijek public kitchen distributed hot meals in or at four locations in the city, one of them being in the premises of the Evangelical Church in Osijek, while the other three were in the local self-government premises. Occasionally hot meals were distributed to the refugee camp *Naselje prijateljstva* in Cepin. The donors for these activities were *World Vision*, the *Lutheran World Federation*, and *LKA*.

³⁷⁷ After a time and due to the process of denationalization, this place was returned to its owners. Then for many years, *Agape* Osijek as its point of distribution used one of the ETS buildings.

Yugoslavia/Serbia, B&H, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Ukraine, Romania, etc.

In time, *Agape* Osijek developed another role that would be important for the rest of the *Agape* branch offices throughout the Croatia and further. Namely, as part of the *Agape* network, the Osijek office became *primus inter pares* and fulfilled several additional functions that were at times fairly demanding, such as:

- Launching and participating in initiatives for establishing a new *Agape* office or a new humanitarian organization in certain area or town throughout the former Yugoslavia;
- Structuring and assisting in the operative work of the new *Agape* office and participating in launching some of the new programs or projects within that office;³⁷⁸
- Redistribution of humanitarian assistance from the central to the branch offices and their warehouses in Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially to the newly founded ones or those lacking contacts with international donors
- Offering organizational, logistical and advisory assistance to the *Agape* branch offices whenever and wherever needed;
- Networking and contacts between *Agape* offices and potential donors and international humanitarian organizations;
- Harmonizing the *Agape* offices' activities and functioning, especially regarding the offices in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁸ The Osijek *Agape* would frequently launch a humanitarian program or project initiative by itself, to offer it to the other offices in the network after organizing and testing it (for instance, the public kitchen program, or development aid program, etc.)

³⁷⁹ During the years of war, our experience showed that local humanitarian organizations should expect occasional sluggishness on behalf of the international humanitarian donors especially in terms of being introduced to new organizations for cooperation, or to new areas for humanitarian assistance. As the process of establishing the new *Agape* offices throughout the region was quick, from time to time we have requested that our donors should cooperate with the new *Agape* branch offices, having in mind the principle of equal distribution as well as the

4. Vinkovci (2001, population: 35.900). The *Agape* office Vinkovci developed special activities related to transport and distribution of humanitarian assistance to Orasje and its surroundings, a small town near the border, in the northern part of Bosnia.³⁸⁰ The distribution of the humanitarian assistance was conducted in cooperation with the local Islam community humanitarian organization *Merhamet*. This office occasionally distributed humanitarian assistance to the neighboring villages of both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and cooperated with different organizations and institutions working on repairing the hospitals. *Agape* Vinkovci also worked with the Christ Reformed Church whose main office is in Vinkovci assisting their believers (ethnic Hungarians) with humanitarian donations. Apart from these, *Agape* Vinkovci organized volunteer groups to renew devastated churches, organized transport for the refugee children while traveling on their summer vacation in Italy, donated heifers to the returnees and IDPs, etc.

5. Koska (2001, population: 4.400). The *Agape* office in Koska worked on donating agricultural seeds and seedlings, medicines and medical materials, life stock/cattle and female pigs to the returnees and IDPs, etc. In cooperation with the Red Cross Croatia, this office became the exclusive distributor of humanitarian assistance for the whole area. When the number of believers increased, and because the local church premises were used for so many years as a warehouse for humanitarian assistance, *Agape* Koska organized the renewal and adaptation of the church as well. This office's humanitarian activities were covering the following settlements of reaching refugees: Niza, Ledenik, Branimirovac, Normanci, Lug Suboticki, Podgorac, and Budimci.

6. Orahovica (2001 population: 5.800). *Agape* Orahovica, apart from the general humanitarian activities, assisted in donating furniture and home appliances, construction material, medicines and medical materials, bedding and covers, cattle and agricultural seeds to the returnees, participated in renewing the burned houses, assisted with

quantities and assortment of humanitarian assistance and the needs of the populace in those areas.

³⁸⁰ Orasje is the biggest settlement in a relatively small area called Posavski dzep (Posavski pocket) that was crowded with refugees, mostly Bosnians. The area was for a certain time under Bosnian Croat control and titled *Herceg-Bosna*.

cash donations, legal and other civil assistance, transport assistance for the moving families, sponsorships for supplementary professional education, etc. Their humanitarian activities covered the following areas: Zdenci, Cacinci, Rastovac, Humljani, Slatina, Kutjevo and the refugee camp *Milanovac*. One of the key specifics of *Agape* Orahovica was that they organized summer Christian camps for children (age 7-12), teenagers (12-17), youth (18-24) and families.³⁸¹ This office also organized public Christian rock and pop concerts, hosted evangelization programs on the local radio, and organized home prayer groups in the surrounding areas.

7. Nasice (2001, population: 17.320). This *Agape* office conducted their humanitarian activities in accordance with the joint programs and projects. Occasionally the office would organize annual pastoral conferences for the spiritual renewal of *Agape* members, associates, and volunteers.

8. Belisce (2001, population: 11.800). *Agape* office Belisce offered the regular palette of humanitarian activities and worked on occasional distribution of agricultural seeds. This office's humanitarian service covered the following cities and villages: Valpovo, Zelcin, Harkanovci and Ladimirevci.

9. Djakovo (2001 population: 30.100). Apart from the regular humanitarian assistance, the *Agape* Dakovo office leader with his volunteer team produced regular Christian radio programs and distributed them to the local radio stations throughout Croatia for free broadcast. Because the Evangelical Church and the parish quarters were used for a long time as the premises for the *Agape* office warehouse, they were recently renewed.

10. Pozega (2001 population: 28.200). The *Agape* office in Pozega conducted the regular humanitarian activities as listed above, mainly focusing on the programs and projects related to refugees. Its key spe-

³⁸¹ The Orahovica premises were small for all the activities this team organized during all these years. In 2006, they launched a reconstruction project for the Youth Center in Orahovica, doubling the office's capacities both for the intensive summer activities and for organizing pastoral services for youth during the winter holidays.

cific was in the long-term cooperation with the humanitarian mission of the Baptist Church *Moj Bliznji*.

11. Donji Miholjac (2001 population: 10.270). This *Agape* office mainly served the refugees and IDPs through the joint humanitarian assistance programs and projects. The believers were gathering as a home group for number for years. When their number increased which correlated to the beginning of the *Agape* office services, they could purchase appropriate space for Christian worship and service. With the aftermath reconstructions and adaptations, the church facilities were used for different activities such as worships, Sunday school, parish quarters and as a warehouse for the *Agape* humanitarian activities. *Agape* humanitarian activities included several small-scale developmental projects such as donating cattle or agricultural seeds, etc.

12. Bjelovar (2001 population: 41.900). Apart from the joint programs and projects, *Agape* Bjelovar office donated construction material, furniture and home appliances, then agricultural seeds and plant health products, as well as cattle for the returnees and IDPs, offering at the same time basic psychological and spiritual assistance. This *Agape* branch office cooperated with the local Center for Rehabilitation of the former drug addicts (located in the village of Marinkovac), provided in-jail services and sent regular Christian-oriented texts in the local weekly (*Bjelovarski list*). The office leader regularly participated in the local radio program spreading the evangelistic message. These activities in return assisted the establishment of the local Evangelical Church which for years used the local warehouse premises for their meetings.³⁸² Apart from Bjelovar, *Agape* humanitarian services were conducted in: Veliko Trojstvo, Ljudovac, Rovisce, Tuk, Veliki Grdevac, Pisanica, Nove Plavnice, Stare Plavnice, Lipovo Brdo, Patkovac and Nova Raca.

13. Daruvar (2001 population: 13.250). *Agape* Daruvar offered the regular humanitarian assistance package, occasionally offering help to the returnees in the area by donating cattle or bees and hens. Their

³⁸² To establish a new church means to have certain number of baptized believers (ten or more), a pastor who is appointed by the National Presbytery and confirmed by the Evangelical Church Assembly, and regular communion and meeting premises, rented or owned.

humanitarian service contributed to the increase in the number of believers and the creation of the new, local Evangelical Church. The Daruvar group managed to buy off the former synagogue, and reconstruct and adapt the premises for their own use.

14. Garesnica (2001 population: 11.630). This office offered the standard and regular humanitarian assistance to the refugees in the areas, including occasional developmental aid through donating bees and heifers to the returnees and IDPs. Their humanitarian activities also included organizing regular evangelistic preaching on the local radio including questions on the air on different spiritual topics; these activities contributed to the increase in the number of believers. The process, which followed, was similar to those described above: after a time they established their local church and purchased premises for worship services. A part of it was used as a warehouse for the *Agape* Garesnica humanitarian activities.

15. Zrinska (2001 population: 1000). The *Agape* office in Zrinska worked in very difficult circumstances. The village was destroyed and almost 4/5 of the houses were burned to the ground by explosions. *Agape* activities included donating humanitarian assistance to the survivors, Christian books, and evangelization services.

16. Rovinj (2001 population: 14.230). Apart from the regular humanitarian program and project assistance, *Agape* Rovinj founded a Center for Social Welfare of the Parentless called *Oaza*. This Center occasionally offered assistance also to children whose parents were in particularly difficult social situations (drug addicts, alcoholism, heavy mental problems, prostitution, etc.). Since 1994, three organizations that are more similar were founded in Krnica, Pula and Vodnjan. These four centers created a network for assistance and exchange of information, and cooperate regularly with international donors and national (state) services for social welfare, as well as with the local governments. The small evangelical Christian community that was growing up in Rovinj during the last decade recently got its church building for its worship services.

17. Pula (2001 population: 58.600). *Agape* Pula cooperated with the local Christian association *Iktus* in the social welfare program for elderly and ill refugees and exilers who had nowhere to return after

the end of the war. *Agape* Pula was active in gathering funds from donors in Italy, eastern France, Austria and southern Germany for *Oaza* in Rovinj. In many ways, they also assisted the male and female *Teen Challenge* centers for former drug addicts in Pula. At the beginning of the 1990s, this *Agape* office took part in adapting the building of the Evangelical Church in Pula.

18. Rijeka (2001 population: 140.050). *Agape* in Rijeka participated in the regular humanitarian activities and took part in donating beddings and covers, furniture, home appliances, medicines and medical materials to both refugees and exilers in the two neighboring camps *Karaula* and *Ucka*. Their humanitarian activities contributed to the growth of the number of believers and building the first Evangelical Church in Rijeka at the beginning of 1990s. The building was used for worship services and as a warehouse for humanitarian assistance. As the number of believers continued to increase, another Evangelical church was created on the other part of the town. The decision to have two churches was agreed having in mind the small size of the space within the first church, the increased number of believers and the architectural plan of the city. The humanitarian assistance conducted by *Agape* included: Rijeka, Opatija, Lovran, Fuzine, Delnice, Hreljin and Kostrena.

19. Zadar (2001 population: 72.700). Humanitarian activities undertaken by *Agape* Zadar were in accordance with the general humanitarian programs and projects. It covered a vast area known as the Zadarska region (which includes some of the islands too) and similarly like the other *Agape* offices, contributed to the increase in the number of believers and consequently - the creation of the Evangelical Church *Bethesda*.

20. Split (2001 population: 188.700). *Agape* Split organized and implemented the general humanitarian program and project activities and a range of particular activities related to rehabilitation of former drug addicts in cooperation with the *Teen Challenge* program. The Split office accommodated the former drug addicts in the rehabilitation center in the village of *Marinkovac* and in other international *Teen Challenge* centers in Spain, Portugal, and Italy. *Agape* occasionally provided logistical support to the humanitarian transports organized for the

Mostar and Livno war zones in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All these efforts contributed the growth of the community of believers as well. *Agape* Split also assisted the building of the church for worship services and many other humanitarian and social activities, and the growth of many other evangelical community groups throughout the city, making Split the center for evangelization for the whole Dalmatia region, with a strong influence on the neighboring B&H.

21. Ploce (2001 population: 10.830). *Agape* Ploce offered all general types of humanitarian assistance though its main characteristic is its close cooperation with *Agape* in Mostar. During the years of war, this organization symbolized a refuge safe heaven, a place where many foreign donors and international humanitarian organizations would arrive with their goods as their final destination before being redistributed to Bosnia and Herzegovina. This organization provided a good platform for cooperation between different *Agape* branch offices for joint meetings and Christian camps (some of them were called *Rio* and were stationed in the delta of the river Neretve, close to the Adriatic coast). These camps were hosted by different *Agape* offices from Bosnia and Herzegovina, assisted by many volunteers, and sponsored by the *Novi Most International*, an organization founded in the UK.³⁸³ The camp participants would take part in one of the ten camps organized for different age groups and in accordance to some other criteria.

22. Slavonski Brod (2001 population: 64.600). Both activities, humanitarian and evangelistic coincided as in the other mentioned cases - the growth in believers and founding the new Evangelical Church in Slavonski Brod contributed to the growth of the *Agape* office and its humanitarian activities. Through the local branch office, they assisted the B&H citizens in nearby war areas of Posavina. Their specific activities were related to the evangelization of the local Roma (Gypsy) populace inhabiting the city of Slavonski Brod and its surrounding areas.

³⁸³ *Novi Most International*, a Christian charitable organization that works with young people in Bosnia Herzegovina, began in 1993, through Spring Harvest when Christians in the UK raised money to help a young Croatian couple take aid to people in the city of Mostar, Bosnia Herzegovina, at the height of the 1992-95 war. This organization is still active. Available online, <http://www.novimost.org/> (March 19, 2007).

23. Vukovar (2001 population: 31670). The following five *Agape* offices were established after the so-called *Erdut Agreement*³⁸⁴ was signed – the Agreement that made it possible to enter and assist the formerly occupied areas of Croatia. *Agape* Vukovar was the first one and assisted well to both the returnees and those that stayed in the city of Vukovar during the years of occupation. Besides offering the standard package of humanitarian assistance, *Agape* Vukovar founded the public kitchen for those that having no opportunity to cook food for them. The organization provided used furniture and kitchen appliances, construction material, agricultural seeds, seedlings, organized worship services and Christian gatherings. The Christian books published by this branch office were freely distributed throughout Croatia and abroad. As the group of believers increased in number, the Evangelical Church was built – the premises were after that used for spiritual and humanitarian activities. With its work and devotion, *Agape* Vukovar soon became a leader in this part of Croatia.

24. Beli Manastir (2001 population: 10.990). During the years of occupation, the building that was previously used by the Evangelical Church was first a disco-bar and later on completely devastated, just before the UN troops entered the area. After the Erdut Agreement, this space was renewed and used for the *Agape* Beli Manastir humanitarian activities directed mostly to the returnees. *Agape* projects were standard although at times included providing cattle, agricultural seeds, used furniture etc. With the return of the IDPs and exiles, and by the way of local populace conversions, the number of believers increased significantly and the local Evangelical Church could be reestablished. New premises for worship were soon purchased and many other Christian religious activities took place, using one part of the space as a warehouse. While writing this text, the church is undergoing reconstruction and extension.

25. Laslovo (2001 population: 2.220). The Church building in Laslovo suffered the most damage from the war – only the walls were there to remain of the former Church facilities, so many believers were

³⁸⁴ The *Erdut Agreement*, signed at November 12, 1995, brought a peaceful reintegration of eastern Slavonia, Baranja and western Srijem to Croatia, under the auspices of the UN troops. This area was under occupation of the Serbian military forces for around four years.

required to build completely new premises for future worship services. The humanitarian activities were also expanded and included distribution of clothes, shoes, and Christian literature to the returnees. *Agape* Laslovo organized workshops and playgroups for children and youth, and special worships for the returnees and other interested.³⁸⁵

26. Borovo (2001 population: 5.360). The public kitchen of *Agape* Borovo used one of the rooms within the uncompleted/unfinished building that was bought for launching the humanitarian activities in this area. After a certain time *Agape* launched other activities as well, such as English language classes, music classes, psychological counseling, etc. In a later stage, the new church community was established and the reconstruction and expansion of the building was finished. The premises were now used for worship services and humanitarian activities.

27. Ilok (2001 population: 8.350). The humanitarian activities in this town were mostly focused on its local populace who remained in it during the years of occupation. They were economically devastated due to the unemployment and the war. *Agape* Ilok offered food packages, assistance in hygiene products, used clothes and shoes, and occasional developmental assistance such as laying poultries, female pigs, ships, and heifers. Especially effective was the youth pastoral service when youth from different Ilok protestant churches gathered for worship.

28. Sisak (2001. population: 52.240). Besides offering the regular humanitarian assistance, this *Agape* office organized in-jail services and assisted the Association of Blind, helped with donations that included bedding and covers, furniture and kitchen appliances, with occasional assistance in cattle mainly to the Serbian returnees. The increased number of believers contributed to creating the new Evangelical Church. New premises were soon bought, adapted, and used for worship services and further expansion of humanitarian and spiritual as-

³⁸⁵ The Evangelical Church in Laslovo has a long and interesting history in the development of Pentecostalism in these areas. As many local evangelical churches had no baptistery, they were baptized in the Laslovo Church - thus for many, the destruction of this small church and a later reconstruction had deeper emotional significance.

sistance in both Sisak and the neighboring Banija villages: Sunja, Petrinja, Petrinjci, Komarevo, Hrvatska Kostajnica and Novoselci.

29. Velika Gorica (2001. population: 63.500). Humanitarian activities and evangelization were the necessary stimulus for increasing the number of believers in Velika Gorica and establishing the local Evangelical Church. The cooperation between *Agape* Velika Gorica and *Agape* offices in Sisak and Zagreb contributed to further expansion of their activities and efficiency.

30. Knin (2001 population: 15.190). The extreme poverty of the Knin area combined with the enormous level of unemployment throughout the years of the war and occupation were key characteristics that shaped the *Agape* Knin activities. By offering the regular package of assistance, *Agape* Knin contributed to the increase of the number of believers and actively participated in building the local Evangelical Church with premises suitable for worship services and humanitarian activities.

31. Zupanja (2001 population: 16.380). Although this town suffered no destruction or refugee crises, *Agape* launched its activities in Zupanja with an aim to give a hand to those needing social assistance. Soon after a space was rented for collection and distribution of humanitarian goods, new converts gathered and established the local Evangelical Church. Shortly after, the Zupanja Church building for worship, evangelization, and humanitarian assistance was purchased, adapted, and put to use.

32. Podravska Slatina (2001 population: 14.820). This is the youngest *Agape* branch office, which started its humanitarian activities only three years ago. *Agape* Podravska Slatina receives its spiritual and moral support from the nearby Orahovica Evangelical Church; although in the mean time, the number of believers in Podravska Slatina has grown as well, so that they could establish their own little church in rented premises. Their humanitarian activities continue and include distribution of goods as well as evangelization and worship services.

6.1.2. OUTCOMES

The results of the fifteen years of *Agape's* humanitarian activities throughout Croatia can be summarized in the following way. *Agape* has been able to:

1. Continuously offer plentiful and diverse humanitarian assistance to the needy with an aim to decrease their suffering.
2. Continuously evangelize different target groups and with different methods, covering almost all of the Croatian territory.
3. Make Christian mission effective in those parts of the country that were insofar left uncovered.
4. Encourage the launching, offer support in establishing and work directly to establish new evangelical churches throughout the country.
5. Encourage and participate in establishing different church or para-church organizations to cover the specific Christian services in other countries, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina (such as evangelization, mission, biblical and theological education, pastoral work with different target groups, publishing activities, media promotion, etc.).
6. Encourage the increase in, and assist in spreading and organizing humanitarian activities in other countries.
7. Encourage and launch evangelization and Christian missions in other countries (by sending missionaries, offering logistical, professional, moral, and spiritual assistance).
8. Support and participate in establishing new evangelical churches in other countries.
9. Support and assist in structuring the evangelical denomination in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
10. Develop and enrich inner- and inter-religious relationships, especially considering the different social and political settings in the region.

6.2. BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: CHARITY AND CHURCH PLANTING

Pars fuit Illyrici, quam nunc vocat incola Bosnam, Dura, sed argenti munere dives humus. Non illic virides spacioso margine campi, Nec sata qui multo foenore reddat ager. Sed rigidi montes, sed saxa minantia coleo, Castella et summis imposita alta jugis.

Ianus Pannonius

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H) is settled on the west of the Balkan Peninsula between Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. It was one of the six republics of the former Yugoslav federation.³⁸⁶ Generally, Bosnia and Herzegovina is considered a unique melting pot of different ethnicities, religions, and cultures that emerged during the years of its rich history dating from the Roman Empire. Geographically, the area is between the East and the West, a constant target and victim of military and political interests and ambitions of almost all European and world powers, such as Russia, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Holy See, Turkey, the USA, and little Serbia and until recently, Croatia. Bosnia was always considered as a supplemental weight when looking for balance in political relations, regardless of whether this balance was sought for the relations between the Turkish Kingdom and Christian Europe, or between the European states and their traditional divisions. After the disintegration of the former USSR, the establishment of the new world geostrategic and political balances was burdened with a strong economy and an oil-related interest especially of the USA, the Islamic world and the Jewish state. In this new chaos, Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself again in the middle of the contemporary political turbulences.

Bosnia straddles the cultural divide between east and west. It became separated from Serbia in 960, and during the 500-year Turkish occupation, many Bosnians became Muslims. The recent break-up of Yugoslavia led to a Croat-Muslim alliance in support of independence in March 1992, which was immediately militarily contested by the Serb minority. The tragic three-sided war

³⁸⁶ Bosnia-Herzegovina, est. 2000 population: 4,025 mil. (48% Slavic Muslims; 37.1% Serbs - predominantly Orthodox Christians; 14.3% Croats - mainly Catholics; 0.6% others); 51,129 sq. km.; capital Sarajevo.

between Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims caused immense damage, loss of life and partition of Bosnia. The war ended in 1995 with the country almost equally divided between Serbs in the Serb Republic and the Croat-Muslim Federation. An uneasy peace is maintained by NATO armies.³⁸⁷

Although Protestantism arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of the nineteenth century, it never grew deep roots; thus the Bosnian Muslims prior to this last war (1992-1995) were considered one of the last unevangelized people in Europe.³⁸⁸

Agape launched its humanitarian activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the city of Mostar, a beautiful old town situated on the river Neretva. The activities were launched at first in its western part that was under the military command of the Bosnian Croats and then spread and included the city's eastern areas, which were under Muslim control. The remnant of the old Evangelical Church was in the eastern part of the city; that church was burnt to the ground during the Croat-Muslim fighting.

Agape continued with its activities by including other cities and areas in B&H, such as Tuzla, where we received an appeal for assistance from the Croats living in the village of Soli, and continued to Bi-hac, Sarajevo, Jajce, Banja Luka, Capljina, Zenica, Kakanj, Breza and Sanski Most, reaching the number of eleven *Agape* offices in total.³⁸⁹

6.2.1. AGAPE BRANCH ORGANIZATIONS

1. Mostar – west. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 64.301) This *Agape* branch for humanitarian work in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the same as the Osijek branch was for Croatia. The Mostar branch led the same wide range of humanitarian programs and projects during the long period

³⁸⁷ Patrick Johnstone and Jason Mandryk. *Operation World*, 21st century ed., Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001. Pg. 115.

³⁸⁸ The miniscule evangelical witness has grown since 1991. Then there were only two congregations, but this had grown to 29 in 2000 with 700 people attending services. Evangelicals have gained credibility as the only ones to bridge the gulf between ethnic groups. Ibid. Pg. 116.

³⁸⁹ Peter Kuzmic. "Savings Lives and Souls in the Balkans." *World Link*, August 1995, pg. 5. Also, "Bosnia's Bitter Truths." *Christianity Today*, 4 March 1996, pg. 7.

starting in 1993 and lasting until today. Other than the already mentioned programs and projects this branch was involved in offering the following help: distribution of furniture, household utensils, medication, sanitary material, and orthopedic apparatus, as well as offering social, spiritual and legal counsel, help by giving additional education, offering temporary financial support, delivering, redistributing and organizing the distribution of Christmas and Easter presents, and organizing occasional programs and services.

Upon the completion of the war and the signing of *Dayton's agreement*, this branch dealt with the organization and implementation of various development projects meant for the help of the returning families, for example, donating seeds and seedlings, chemical fertilizer, beginning a herd foundation (cows, sheep and chicken), donating agricultural machines and tools, building materials, offering the logistic services of moving, and building houses for refugees from Kosovo, as well as other activities.

Other than the operational leadership of the above-mentioned humanitarian actions for the needy residents of the city and surrounding area, the Mostar *Agape* branch performed additional organizational activities:

- Redistributed the humanitarian aid articles from the central warehouse in Mostar to the warehouses in other sub-regions, especially those newly founded and those insufficiently connected with foreign donors.
- Founded and trained new *Agape* branches in some cities and later on assured the continuity of its work.
- Participated in starting, training, and maintaining new humanitarian programs and projects.
- Offered organizational, logistical, and professional counseling help, whenever an *Agape* branch was in need.
- Provided an internal network and harmonized the work of *Agape* branches within the country.
- Connected potential donors and international humanitarian organizations with various *Agape* branches.

2. Mostar - east. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 64,301). Humanitarian work in the eastern, Muslim side of the city began in cooperation with the organization *Red Crescent* in such a fashion that it would continue independently. *Agape* distributed the usual humanitarian aid to all who came for it, while it simultaneously came back to and rebuilt its destroyed and burnt church building. On the east side of the city, almost no buildings were left untouched by the artillery attacks from the Croatian side. It was initially unusual for the Muslim citizens to accept humanitarian help from the *Protestants*, or *Evangelicals*, as they called the *Agape* volunteers, when they were being simultaneously heavily shelled by the *Catholics*. However, through persistent distribution of humanitarian help and the constant words of blessing, mutual trust was built and soon the first conversion took place. It was a Roma - gypsies are people who have lived in this area for centuries and who meant nothing to the constitutive people of the country Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Because of the division of Mostar, the evangelical churches were founded on either side of the Neretva River. The evangelical church on the west, the Croatian side of Mostar, bought an appropriate building with land and began to build a new building for maintaining regular church services and other pastoral and humanitarian work. The evangelical church *Brankovac* located on the east side of Mostar was established mainly by the converted users of the humanitarian help; they restored the church building, which was destroyed during the war using large amounts of help from foreign donors and Christian organizations.

The project of renovating the building extended itself into building a center, which in itself contained room for a biblical school for the theological education of students from the whole country, the denominational headquarters of the Evangelical Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a student dormitory, sport fields, a kitchen and more. Upon the completion of the church building, with the help of *Novi Most (New Bridge)*, a basketball court was built in the backyard at which the youth from the neighborhood started gathering and playing sports. Some of them converted, and after them, some of their parents. Today at that location, which was recently a war-zone, is now a growing congregation of evangelical believers, a Bible school, the headquarters of the Evangelical Church in Bosnia Herzegovina, and a student dormitory.

3. Tuzla. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 88,521) Our humanitarian work in this city started with the occasional distribution of humanitarian articles in September 1994. However, time showed that it was necessary to find a permanent warehouse for distributing the aid. Soon after the opening of the *Agape* branch and the start of humanitarian work, a group of believers began who rented a special place for church services. About these beginnings, *Izvori* (*Sources*) writes the following:

Approximately forty evangelical believers meet regularly weekly at church services and everyday for morning prayers. During a visit to Tuzla, our delegation met with the mayor of Tuzla and the leader of the city office for social work, concerning an operational deal about our future cooperation. Then we visited the main office of the *Red Crescent* to offer six months of help to refugees from Srebrenica and Zepce.³⁹⁰ After that, we made an agreement with Radio Tuzla to broadcast the Christian radio program *Izvori Vjere* (Source of Faith) which we produced in Osijek. We visited the mother of Osijek's imam to whom we gave an *Agape* food package. At the end of our visit to Tuzla, we met with the Pentecostal missionary and humanitarian worker from Finland, A. Tepponen, who was just finishing the restoration of twenty destroyed houses in Gradacac.³⁹¹

As the religious group grew larger, they founded with foreign assistance a local Evangelical church which bought two family houses with spacious land intending to build there a large church building. In the mean time, the Evangelical church in Tuzla founded a licensed school of English as a Second Language (ESL) called *Svjetionik* (Lighthouse) as a self-supporting project, which contributed to the recognition and reputation of evangelical Christianity in the town.³⁹² Other

³⁹⁰ This was a regular tour of the Bosnian branches by *Agape* vice president Damir Spoljaric, *Agape* president for Bosnia and Herzegovina Nikola Skrinjaric, and *Agape* executive secretary Antal Balog. In the delegation that visited the mayor were co-workers from the *Agape* branch in Tuzla Nenad Jambrovic and Klaus Domke.

³⁹¹ Antal Balog. "Bog cuva svoj narod" [God guards his people]. *Izvori*, journal for spiritual life, Osijek: 1-2, 1996. Pg. 27.

³⁹² Available online: <http://www.svjetionik-lighthouse.org/index.html> (March 23, 2007). Upon completion of the program, participants can take the exam in Sarajevo or Zagreb and receive a Cambridge Certificate for knowledge of English language.

then that, the humanitarian help that the church gave to the needy for years, especially to refugees from Srebrenica, built a strong Christian testimony on all social levels, from the mayor's office to the sub-rural regions. The *Agape* branch still performs its humanitarian mission distributing humanitarian help to the needy. One special program started was the renowned *Community Health Education*, which guaranteed a minimum education to the Roma village near Kiseljak because nearly 90% of the children from that village did not attend elementary school. The provision of a basic education to children created mutual trust, which opened many doors for the entry of the *Good News* into those Roma homes. *Agape* also has maintained for a long time friendly relations with *Lotus*, an association of handicapped people in Tuzla, helping their work through donations of food, clothing, wheel chairs and other equipment.

4. Bihac (2005 Estimate, pop.: 31,195). Among the first civilians who entered on August 5, 1995, after the 1200-day Serbian siege on the Muslim city of Bihac, was Nikola Skrinjaric, the president of the Bosnian-Herzegovina *Agape*. Soon after, he opened a warehouse to store the humanitarian aid, which started to arrive and continued to be distributed over the following years. An article in *Izvori* describes the situation:

Nikola Skrinjaric rented an appropriate warehouse in the center of the city, and settled all the formalities for registering an *Agape* branch. In Bihac, two were involved: Vanja Bule from Ploce, a future student of theology at ETF in Osijek, and Silva Krulj, a music teacher from the Mostar evangelical church. They spent their vacation time there, filling empty positions in the organization and the soon transfer of the German volunteer from Tuzla's *Agape* branch, Klaus Domke.³⁹³

A few years after that modest beginning, the small community of evangelical believers shone, and the church was founded, which continued to evangelize in the town and its surroundings. In cooperation with the international organization *Operation Mobilization*, which sent one of its teams to Bihac, the Christian ministry received a starting

³⁹³ Antal Balog. "Bog Cuva Svoj Narod." *Izvori*, Journal for Spiritual Life, Osijek: 3-4, 1996. Pg. 26.

wave and diversity.³⁹⁴ In Bihac, even today, regular humanitarian aid is distributed, but other projects exist as well, for example, providing fire wood to poor families, broadcasting a Christian radio program, and distributing New Testaments, as well as organizing short children's and youth summer camps.

5. Sarajevo. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 298,000). Small groups of believers, which gathered in houses for church services, grew into two Evangelical churches and several Christian works, of which one does humanitarian aid – *Agape*. In spite of there being the longest siege in modern history, the small group of believers grew in stages.³⁹⁵

When we came to Sarajevo, under siege, we met believers at evening prayer, studying the Word. The following day we looked at the *Agape* warehouse, documentation concerning the registration of the Evangelical church, and we saw some of the houses, which we could buy for our future church and humanitarian work. Several church members got up early that morning to wait in line for water in order to get enough for the planned baptism that evening. We bought a bag of wood so that we could heat the water at least a little bit. We baptized several people of varying nationalities in that city without electricity, water or gas, hearing from time to time gun fire and in the distance canon fire. In a Sarajevo completely darkened spiritually, Christ's light and love flashed into the hearts of these people, and has kept on shining to date.³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ *Operation Mobilization*. Since 1998, OM has been ministering in Bosnia-Herzegovina, first in Bihac, and then adding a second team in Sarajevo, the capital. OM's teams focus on church planting along with the national evangelical church through friendship evangelism: teaching language (English, German), computer, guitar, and crafts classes (with the goal of beginning evangelistic Bible studies); humanitarian aid distribution; personal visits; one-on-one discipleship with believers; sports activities; and children and youth ministries. Available online, <http://www.om.org> (March 20, 2007).

³⁹⁵ The siege of Sarajevo lasted from April 5, 1992 to February 29, 1996, 1,425 days in total.

³⁹⁶ Antal Balog. "Bog Cuva Svoj Narod." *Izvori*, Journal for Spiritual Life, Osijek: 3-4, 1996. Pg. 26.

After some time, an appropriate building was bought and rebuilt for the needs of church services and pastoral and humanitarian work, and after several years, a church building was completed in the existing yard. Other than the distribution of the usual articles of humanitarian aid, the *Agape* branch in Sarajevo offered spiritual help, including counseling, to theological education, organizing various gatherings for children and youth in Sarajevo, men and women, church camps, festivals of Christian music, and spiritual conferences, etc. The creativity of the young believers of that church was always active, especially when searching for appropriate methods of evangelization.³⁹⁷ The branch started a public kitchen program in Sarajevo's *Stup* neighborhood, in such a way that volunteers from the evangelical churches cooked and served in the dining areas were their own rooms, after which there was socializing, talking and witnessing.³⁹⁸

6. Jajce. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 24,383). Following the occasional and sparse distribution of humanitarian aid, an *Agape* branch was opened which ministered regularly in the town; this is the turn in which at the end of November 1943 during the second world war the National Antifascist Board for Freeing Yugoslavia (AVNOJ) founded the *New Yugoslavia*. During this war (1992-1995), the city of Jajce was occupied several times, and the complete populations of different na-

³⁹⁷ For example, they would pass out coupons randomly on the street to the elderly, who based on that could hire various craftsmen in their homes. After that, young people would go in a tour and inspect the performed job. They would stay to talk to the hosts and testify to them about their faith in Christ and conversion to His teaching. Bosnian hospitality and the chronic loneliness of these elderly people and women, was on their side.

³⁹⁸ The leader of the Sarajevo *Agape* branch, Dragan Nedic, writes about the beginning of the work of public kitchen. "We are welcomed in a very hostile fashion from the side of refugees from east Bosnia who inhabited that part of the city. Especially one man, very influential among them, did not spare words of threat, which included that, as soon as the kitchen started to work, he would burn everything to the ground, and kill the one who is leading all this. People did not want Christians nearby. Yet, in spite of that, we started to work. After a relatively short time serving, the humble attitude of our brothers changed their opinion about us. The man, who threatened us, started to work in the kitchen as a volunteer and became one of our best friends, defending our agape service and preaching the Gospel." *The survey about the humanitarian work of Agape*, March 3, 2007, *Agape* in Sarajevo. The *Agape* archive in Osijek, Pg. 8.

tionalities left or came back from exile, depending on which army was present. The beginning of our humanitarian work and evangelization was not well received either by the leadership of the local catholic church, or by the representatives of the city council. However, in spite of that, a group of believers gathered who later on founded an evangelical church and bought an appropriate building, adapting it to fill their needs for church services, pastoral work; they continued their humanitarian services and preaching of the gospel in the town and region. In their humanitarian ministry, they offered the needy the usual material help and additionally occasionally donated cows, sheep, goats, roosters and egg-laying hens to returning families.

7. Zeneca. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 127,700). In this primarily Muslim city, sometimes extremely so, it was not easy to start missionary work. However, the then leader of the *Agape* branch in Sarajevo who is today the pastor of the Evangelical church in Zeneca, Enver Redzic, a Bosnian Muslim who converted during the war, started humanitarian work in this city with his wife and after some time a house group appeared, and soon after the evangelical church. Considering that he is by profession a graphic artist, he used a donated printing press from Switzerland and founded the first Christian publishing house in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stana Redzic speaks to reporters from the daily newspaper *Glas Slavonije* about his current humanitarian work in Zenica, started eight years ago,

In Zenica, it is still hard to live, as there are still people, who are starving. *Agape* came to be with the evangelical church, because we cannot give only the Gospel to the hungry, naked and shoeless man. Church services are held in one movie theater, and humanitarian aid consists of, besides family food packages, the help of a public kitchen, meat, and deserts. However, it is not important only to feed these people, rather also make it possible for them to sit at nicely served tables where they have a tablecloth, silverware, and napkins. We want to show these people, which at one moment of their life were violently tossed around, that they are loved, and that God loves them.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ Ljerka Bobalic. "Agape – Radosna Vijest u Tuznim Vremenima," *Glas Slavonije*, January 1, 2007. Pg. 13.

8. Kakanj. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 19,100). The humanitarian and evangelical mission from Zenica continued on its way to Kakanj, a small town in the center of Bosnia with a long mining tradition. The sequence of events was the same, from the house-group gatherings, to the founding of the evangelical church. The emphasis here was on helping the needy while preaching the gospel.

9. Capljina. (2005 Estimate, pop.: 6,200). Although several believers from the surroundings of this little town in Herzegovina faithfully prayed for decades for spiritual revival in Bosnia and for the congregation of believers in Capljina, it was only after *Agape* started its humanitarian and missionary activity that the number of believers and churches in this country started to multiply. In Capljina, the *Agape* branch offered the usual forms of humanitarian help to the needy.

After some time evangelizing and personal testimonies about the Christian faith, the fellowship of believers grew in number and became strong enough to rent a place for church services. The church continued to grow and with foreign financial help bought itself an appropriate house on the shores of the Neretva River, which they then reconstructed to meet the needs of the church. The church was very active in evangelization in Capljina and the surrounding region; this occasionally created violent reactions from Croatian nationalist extremists, who damaged the church building with rocks at night.⁴⁰⁰ This was not an isolated case as there are similar nightly stoning, combined with the writing of graffiti by the Serbian nationals in Serbia with the passive approval of their police. Examples are the stoning of the Evangelical church in Backa Palanka and the burning of the church with explosive cocktails.

9. Banja Luka. (2005 Estimate pop.: 195,000). This second largest city in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the capital of the Republic of Serbs, an

⁴⁰⁰ *Fena*, April 24th, 2006. The Evangelical church in Capljina was again stoned on the nights of the 22nd and 23rd of April, pastor Bernard Mikulic confirmed. He said in the statement for *Fena* how on Sunday when they came to celebrate the service they found broken windows, so they informed the police of it. He said that this was not the first time that the church is stoned, but rather the tenth time in the last two years, and that the police do nothing. "It's not clear to us how the police won't do anything to protect the church, so we decided to inform the media", said Mikulic. Available online, <http://www.bljesak.info/> (March 22, 2007).

entity that received less humanitarian aid during the previous war, started receiving *Agape* aid relatively late. The branch offered the usual forms of humanitarian aid, with constant evangelization and the distribution of Christian literature. An Evangelical church was founded which continued its Christian mission in that city and to the surrounding area

10. Breza. (2005 Estimation pop.: 15,000). The humanitarian service of *Agape* in this town in the center of Bosnia helped many families who stayed poor after the war. Evangelization and the sharing of Christian testimonies, produced spiritual fruit, and so a small community of believers was formed, who traveled to Sarajevo for services and Christian fellowship for years. When the group became too large for such weekly travels, they formed the Evangelical church in their town; they bought an appropriate building and arranged it for church services. Also, *Vrata Nade (The Door of Hope)*, a male rehabilitation center for ex-addicts of heavy drugs, moved from Sarajevo and found a generally much better ambiance for its programs in Breza.

11. Sanski Most. (2005 Estimate pop.: 17,144). A group of refugees, which had to leave their homes because of wartime operations in 2001, became evangelical believers, during its temporary stay in Prijedor. At the end of the war, they decided to return to Sanski Most. When they returned, they started to meet regularly for mutual prayer and reading of the Word. At the same time, the Christian organization *Agrinas* from the Netherlands wanted to gather believers for fellowship. They connected and from that spiritual fellowship, the Evangelical church in Sanski Most was formed. Believers called it *Stijena (Rock)*. Believers continued with humanitarian work, but they expanded their activity with various other evangelization projects, for example, organizing a children's and youth club called *Otkrivaci (Seekers)*, starting *Alpha courses*, and other. The Evangelical church, which today is well accepted and socially integrated in Sanski Most, prays for its city and its citizens, caring for the needs of poor and preaching the Gospel to all.

Also humanitarian work occasionally, took place in areas of the Brcko district, with the distribution of humanitarian articles, which were brought by volunteers from Belgrade or other Yugoslavian

churches or by some former members of that church who live or work western European countries.

6.2.2. OUTCOMES

Results of the long-lasting humanitarian mission of *Agape* in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be summarized into the following areas:

1. Humanitarian work to the needy in reducing their pain;
2. The evangelization of and Christian mission to Bosnian regions;
3. The foundation of new Evangelical churches in the country;
4. The foundation and encouragement of various church and para-church organizations for specific Christian ministries (evangelization, mission, biblical and theological education, pastoral work with special groups, editing, media work, etc.);
5. The foundation and direction of the Evangelical denomination in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
6. Encouraging and making special contributions to found various para-church and church organizations for various ministries, (for example, evangelization, mission, biblical and theological education, pastoral work with special groups, editing, media work, etc) in the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
7. The development and enrichment of mutual relationships between religious communities and their surroundings – church, social, political, within the country, and abroad.

In addition, at the end of this chapter, it is necessary to emphasize some especially significant programs and projects, which were developed and were kept under the protection of the leadership of the Evangelical Church in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁰¹ Observing them as a

⁴⁰¹ The formal process of connecting local evangelical churches into an independent and structured denomination was completed by organizing executive and administrative bodies of church administration and spiritual leadership, resulting in organization of a Council and the main presbytery. In the previous years, the Evangelical church in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its leadership,

unit, they leave an impression of thorough planning: church founding, theological education and equipping, editing, various occasional gatherings (camps for various age groups, counsels and conferences for spiritual leaders, church elders and deacons), pastoral work with children, youth, and women, social work for former addicts, humanitarian work for refugees, exiles and those returning, etc.

The mission of the *Bible School* in Mostar is education and equipping spiritual workers who will continue founding churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina and abroad and contribute to spiritual growth of communities of believers.⁴⁰² The teaching plan and program has an evangelical profile with a particular emphasis on the practical aspects of theological studies. The current form of classes in which students attend two-week classes, four times a year, makes it possible for the students to continue to be involved in church services. The academic administration of the *Bible school* in Mostar hopes to soon begin a residential program of theological studies, which lasts for a completely academic year.

For several years now, Christian summer camps have been organized at the Boracko Lake near the Konjic neighborhood; these are like traditional camps that are being held in Orahovica, Croatia. Camps gather various age groups, children, youth, and families in the beautiful ambiance of a future national park, for evangelization, Christian discipleship, and socializing. Organizational experiences, which were gained during the summer camps *Rio* on the Adriatic coast near Opuzen, can easily be applied to this new ambiance. The difference, when compared to previous camps, is the possibility of camping and building Christian fellowship with certain local evangelical churches.

The organization *Vrata Nade (The Door of Hope)*, was founded by the Evangelical church in Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for the

showed spiritual maturity and organizational stability, by being capable to form, start, and keep various programs and projects intended for the growth of the denomination, discipleship and the Christian growth of religious congregations.

⁴⁰² Three North American Christian denominations gave large contributions to its foundation and profiling; these were: the Assemblies of God, the Evangelical Free Church in America, and the Christian and Missionary Alliance. To date, over a hundred students have completed some of the various programs of theological education offered, and now actively perform various spiritual services on the mission field within the country.

rehabilitation of former addicts of heavy drugs using the well tested and effective programs of *Teen Challenge* and *Lp* from Sweden which have four phases, including prevention, help, rehabilitation and reintroduction into the society. While it was still in Sarajevo, before its move to its own and much more appropriate space in Breza, the Office for social care of the city of Sarajevo, evaluated *Vrata Nade's* involvement in drug prevention as very good.⁴⁰³

The Evangelical church in Bosnia and Herzegovina started its own publishing house, which was directed to publish theological articles in the area of Christian discipleship and spiritual growth, intended mainly for new believers. With that, they occasionally published certain titles whose purpose was the evangelization of those who did not hear of the *Good news*. Some publishing items, mainly the shorter ones and graphically less demanding were published in the church's publishing house in Zenica.⁴⁰⁴

This chapter ends with a quote from Peter Kuzmic, the founder of *Agape*, its president and the starter of many programs and projects, who encouraged and inspired many of his coworkers and students to humanitarian and evangelization service.

During the war the Croatian evangelical humanitarian organization *Agape*, along with several others agencies and international partners, become intensely involved in the wholistic ministry of

⁴⁰³ The Office for Work, Social Questions, Health, Refugees, and the Social Activities of the City of Sarajevo, in the information published 2006 concerning the current state of the area for culture, declares that the Evangelical Church of Sarajevo, located on Maruliceva 18, "continuously works on the project against drug addiction and rehabilitation." Pg. 12.

⁴⁰⁴ Protestant inter-church cooperation continues to advance. The *Biblical Society in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, headquartered in Sarajevo has a vision to raise the level of knowledge concerning the Bible in the general culture, and organizes the translation, publishing, and distribution of texts of Holy Scripture. The *Evangelical Association of Students in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (EUSDBIH) gathers students for fellowship, deepening and strengthening their spiritual lives, with the goal that they become pillars on which their churches may stand, to learn how to effectively spread the gospel and show God's love towards one's neighbors, especially to other students. The EUSDBIH is a member of IDES which was founded in 1947 and currently has groups 145 national student associations from around the world which independently work in their own countries.

alleviating human suffering and bringing the message of hope and life to thousand of Bosnian refugees and other victims of the war. This ministry of Christian relief workers and missionaries, mostly from Croatia, and associated with the outreach of *Agape* and the Evangelical Theological Seminary from Osijek, led to establishment of more than a dozen evangelical congregations, mostly Evangelical/Pentecostal and a few Baptist in various urban centers of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1997, the first evangelical Bible School in the country opened its classes in Mostar. Evangelical congregations are the only active interethnic communities in the country and are recognized as sign of hope and instruments of reconciliation in a land marked by violence largely based on ethnic and religious animosities.⁴⁰⁵

6.3. MACEDONIA: ASSOCIATION FOR GENEROSITY AND ACTIVE PROMOTION OF EMPATHY (ΑΓΑΠΗ)

6.3.1. INTRODUCTION

The Republic of Macedonia (25.713 sq. km., capital Skopje) is one of the republics of the former Yugoslavia located in the center of the Balkans, between Albania, Serbia, Greece, and Bulgaria.⁴⁰⁶ Because of the conflict about name with the neighbor Greece, today it is internationally recognized under the name of the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia (FYRM). The resources of the land are extremely poor, with the economy mainly oriented towards agriculture, mining, and trade, with a high rate of unemployment around 40%. However, the private business sector is becoming stronger especially in the urban regions.

The Macedonian Orthodox Church (MOC), founded as the Ohrid Archbishopric in late 9th century AD, at the first Macedonian National Church Assembly held in Skopje, March 4-5, 1945, unanimously

⁴⁰⁵ Kuzmic, Peter. "Bosnia-Herzegovina." Scott A. Moreau (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of World Missions*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2000. Pg. 141.

⁴⁰⁶ Population (2003 Estimate) 2.022 million; national structure: Macedonian 64.2%; Albanians: 25.2%, Turks 3.9%, Roma 2.7%, Serbs 1.7%, Bosnians 0.8% and 1.5% other. Some consider that the percentages of the minorities are larger than what the government in Skopje claim.

passed a resolution for the future position of the Church in the liberated part of Macedonia. The Resolution's first point stated, "The Archbishopric of Ohrid is to be re-established as an autocephalous church, not subject to any other church."⁴⁰⁷ At a meeting held in September of the same year, the Synod of the Serbian Orthodox Church declared that it could not recognize the independence of the Macedonian Orthodox Church claiming church jurisdiction over the territory of Macedonia and full subjugation of the Orthodox Macedonians, as it had been in the period between the two World Wars. The conflict between the two churches reflects the question of the unrecognized Macedonian national identity, and it lasts until today. Having in mind the rich history and variety of religious, educational, political, cultural, and other activities that MOC organized during all these centuries, it considers itself as a main defender of the Macedonian national identity. In spite of that is the fact that the majority of the approximately 1100 churches were empty and that the number of approximately 150 priests was insufficient for national spiritual and pastoral service. Although Macedonia can be considered as a part of that Christian body, over a fourth of the population, Albanian and Turkish, belong to Islam, with a high birth rate.

Macedonia is surrounded by countries that openly express their territorial pretensions, and in some of them radical parliamentary parties loudly disclaim the general existence of the Macedonian nation, claiming that Macedonians belong to their national body. Inner politics are based on a multi-party democracy, but the political parties are fragmented along the line of ethnic and national lines. Ethnic diversity, and especially strong demands from the Albanian minority located in the western part of the county, along the border with Albania and Kosovo, dominates the social and political life of the country. The number of Albanians is rapidly growing not only because of a higher birth rate compared to the remainder of Macedonia, but also because of the large number of Albanian refugees, which came from Kosovo. That brought on the military conflicts between the Macedonian army and the police with Albanian militants in western Macedonia in 2001. Besides Albanians, there is a large Roma (Gypsy) community, whose population is estimated at approximately 9%, with almost 180 thousand living in Skopje, the largest number of Roma living in one place

⁴⁰⁷ For more details, see online: <http://www.m-p-c.org/> (March 23, 2007).

anywhere in the world. Besides them, in the Macedonian region of Debra, there live approximately 100,000 Turkish Muslims.

The presence of evangelical believers is small, but growing: Methodist, Baptist, Congregational and Evangelical Churches and a line of Pentecostal and charismatic churches, who are gradually growing and expanding around the world. In addition various Christian organizations have recently been involved, for example, the *Bible Society*, which distributes two Macedonian translations of the Bible, and the *Christian Cultural Center* in Skopje, which provides a Christian library. Various missionary movements, for example, showing the movie *Jesus* on public television and movie theaters in the Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, and Romi languages contribute to the evangelization of Macedonia. There are also missionaries present in Macedonia from various foreign Christian organizations⁴⁰⁸ which don't take the ministry of evangelization and Christian service for granted in this country, but consider it very demanding.

6.3.2. HUMANITARIAN AID MINISTRY

At the beginning of this chapter, it would be interesting to mention that the history of humanitarian ministry in Macedonia starts at the end of 19th century when foreign protestant missions and individual missionaries sporadically delivered humanitarian relief to Macedonians that were in great need of help. Dragan Velsanov writes about that in his recently published work:

Protestant missionary stations in Bitola and Solun, having assessed the Macedonian economic position, decided that, besides the establishment of schools and the evangelization of prisoners, it was also necessary to develop humanitarian mission efforts believing it to be the most important of them all. Missionaries knew that, no matter how often people listen about Jesus, until those words are acted upon, there would be no results.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ For example, *World Share*, *IMB-SBC*, *Pioneers*, *Frontiers* and *Partners International* which act independently or in cooperation with local churches or local *Balkan mission* organization.

⁴⁰⁹ Velsanov, Dragan. *Protestantizam u Makedoniji 1868 -1922*. Zagreb: Bogoslovni institut, 2007. pg. 80. The author also states that the then Macedonian inhabitants,

The best-known humanitarian project in Macedonia that had the biggest impact among not only Macedonian Protestants but also in wider Macedonian population was the organization of humanitarian relief after the Ilinden Uprising.⁴¹⁰ The Bitola missionary station, back then the most prominent in humanitarian work, provided regular relief service for approximately 60,000 persons and founded the *Ecari orphanage* for the children who lost their parents in the Ilinden Uprising.⁴¹¹ The chapter on humanitarian work in Macedonia at the beginning of 20th century ends with these words:

The main objective of this protestant mission was not to increase the number of its supporters but to accomplish God's will and help others to survive the harsh reality of life on the Balkans. The call for repentance and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Savior came secondary to that goal.⁴¹²

The modern humanitarian service started by the Evangelical Church in Macedonia was a result of the escalation of military conflict in the territory of neighboring Kosovo. During 1999, the open war between the Yugoslav (Serbian) National Army and the para-military Kosovo Albanian OVK (KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army) reached its highest point and caused the mass exodus of Kosovo Albanians to neighboring countries, one of which was Macedonia. According to some estimates, their number was as high as 830,000. It was then that NATO intervened and air-raided military, economic and communication targets in Serbia forcing the Serbian army to retreat from Kosovo and to stop fighting with the OVK and other Albanian para-military groups. The signing of the *Technical plan* in Kumanovo, Macedonia, a

mostly peasants, lived in the Ottoman Empire in extreme poverty and survived only thanks to the primitive manufacture of goods on their family farms.

⁴¹⁰ On August 12, 1903, the Macedonians were brutally defeated when they rebelled against the Ottoman Empire. Turks burnt down hundreds of thousands of settlements, and many people were killed or at least lost their homes and/or became refugees. Dragan Velesanov. *Protestantizam u Makedoniji 1868 -1922*. Zagreb: Bogoslovni Institut, 2007. Pg. 81.

⁴¹¹ Ivan Grozdanov, *Nasata Vera vo Gospoda*. Skopje: Narodna i Univerzitetaska Bibiloteka Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2001. Pg. 106.

⁴¹² Velesanov, Dragan. *Protestantizam u Makedoniji 1868 -1922*. Zagreb: Bogoslovni Institut, 2007. Pg. 106.

peace treaty between the Yugoslav army and NATO, was followed by the arrival of the UN peace force (KFOR).⁴¹³

Macedonia opened its borders and consequently ended up with more than 300,000 Albanian refugees from Kosovo who needed urgent humanitarian relief, primarily in the form of food, clothing, footwear, and items for personal hygiene. That was why the evangelical church in Macedonia registered *Agape* and started helping those in need.⁴¹⁴ Their mission statement is given below:

Agape is dedicated to alleviating human suffering among refugees and other people in need. Our aim is to restore human dignity through social projects, and to build friendship by expressing the love of God in a tangible ways, thus leading those in need to Jesus Christ.⁴¹⁵

Humanitarian help in the form of food, clothing, footwear, money and other forms was received by various international organizations such as:

PMU-InterLife (Sweden), OJC, Zentrum, Diakonia (Germany), The Evangelical Christian Alliance, World Concern, Assemblies of God, Times Square Church, NEEFC, International Fellowship

⁴¹³ For more details, see: Matjaz Klemencic. "Typology of Armed Conflicts in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia in the 1990's" *Polemos - Casopis za Interdisciplinarna Istrazivanja Rata i Mira*, Vol. V No. 9-10, Zagreb: Hrvatsko Sociolosko Društvo and Naklada Jesenski i Turk, 2002.

⁴¹⁴ *The Agape Gazette*, on this topic: "The Evangelical Church in Macedonia has established AGAPE (Association for Generosity and Active Promotion of Empathy) in order to minister to some of the thousands of refugees who arrived in Macedonia during the eleven-week crisis. Three graduates of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek, Mirce Andreev, Kosta Milkov, and Marino Mojtic, are leading this new ministry. Agape is caring for refugees in the area of Skopje, taking primary concern for those hosted in houses. Many of these people live in unbelievably crowded conditions, often 40 people in a house intended for 12. As for this writing, they are serving approximately 26,000 people. Prepackaged parcels containing food, hygiene items and children's needs are distributed to the families to cover a two-week time. Included in the initial package are a New Testament and other Christian literature." *Agape Gazette*, summer 1999, Osijek. Pg. 2. *Agape Archives* in Osijek.

⁴¹⁵ *Agape Macedonia Annual Report*, April 21, 2001. Pg. 2. *Agape Archives* in Osijek.

of Evangelical Students, World Missions New York, Christ's Church - Grand Rapids, In His Fields, Mission Assist, The Mustard Seed Foundation, PI & CAMA Service (USA), World in Need, East-West, Euro-Evangelism, Word Share, London Bible College (United Kingdom), Ancient World Outreaches, Nehemiah (Switzerland), *Agape-Osijek*, Baptist Church-Osijek (Croatia).⁴¹⁶

The Macedonian *Agape* developed six strong branches in Skopje, Strumica, Kočani, Stip, Kumanovo and Negotin. The Skopje branch coordinated the activities of the others and served as the central organization. From time to time, *Agape* served as well in the following Macedonian settlements: Volkovo, Tetovo, Sveti Nikola, Kratovo, Veles, Sredno Konjare, Cerkeze, Momin Potok, Kavadarci, Pelelishte, Marvinci, Romanovce, and Lubodrag and also cooperated with other associations in Macedonia.⁴¹⁷

The Macedonian *Agape* started several humanitarian programs and projects. The most important program was, definitely, distribution of food to refugees that were placed with foster families; that form of help was given regularly to 18,000 people in Skopje, 5,000 in Tetovo and about 1,000 in Kumanovo, Sredno Konjarevo, Romanovci and Cerkeze.

Apart from refugees and displaced persons, the Macedonian *Agape* took care of approximately 500 families that needed social support and whose standard of living drastically deteriorated with the beginning of political and military crisis. *Agape*, with its humanitarian relief, literally saved the lives of some of them. To illustrate, we supply one of the true stories from that time:

Barie is a young Turk from Skopje, married to a Roma man and mother of four, two of which are both physically and mentally challenged. She has to provide even for her unemployed husband. *Agape* helped by providing wood for heating, paid some

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., Pg 2.

⁴¹⁷ For example, Association of Handicapped People, Association of Blind People, Association of Deaf People, Association of Serbian Women in Macedonia, the humanitarian organization Blagovestie, Single parents Association, from Stip, Red Cross from Kratovo, Association of Single Mother "Svetlina," from Bitola, and many others. Ibid. Pg.1.

bills for power and water. Later Agape built for them one room and that became their home. Barie is illiterate, and one of her daughters reads the Bible to her.⁴¹⁸

The *Agape* branches were organized in those places where Evangelical church already existed and this helped make all the logistics easier. Besides regular humanitarian work, those branches initiated some other new programs. That is how *Agape* in Strumica specialized in helping the handicapped and in Kocani organized a soup kitchen that offered one meal per day, five days a week. In the town of Stip *Agape* cooperated with numerous associations of citizens helping their members in need, and particular attention was given to the development of humanitarian and evangelistic service among the Roma people. As a result, Sunday mornings were reserved for a children's service that attracted over 200 children. Besides that, the children also received humanitarian help and were taught how to read and write. In Kumanovo *Agape* helped the senior citizens from the Centre for the Old and Helpless in various ways as well as other organizations that included Albanian and Roma women. It was evident that this contributed to the upholding of the peace and better understanding among members of the various nationalities. Equally efficient was *Agape* in the small town of Rost, in the municipality of Dolna Reka, in western Macedonia where Christmas gifts were distributed. In Volkovo *Agape* bought a small house that the local Protestants refurbished for the worship services, and backyard housed a huge storage area for humanitarian supplies, thereby helping to avoid paying rent for the storage of the goods somewhere else.⁴¹⁹

Agape received from the Macedonian government substantial financial support that was intended for the existential needs of displaced persons and refugees. The support was supposed to be used in the way that agricultural products were to be purchased from Macedonian farmers and distributed among the needy according to certain criteria. This had the two-prong effect of helping Macedonian farmers because they finally found again their market that was lost when the war broke out in some of the republics of former Yugoslavia, and the refugees received fresh fruit and vegetables. In this way, *Agape* purchased thou-

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., Pg. 4,

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., Pg. 5.

sands of tons of various agricultural products (mostly potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers, peppers and watermelons) and distributed them to the needy either directly or through other humanitarian organizations and associations. This project in particular helped raise the reputation of the Evangelical Church in Macedonia as a community of believers that look after the common good.⁴²⁰

There were also individual projects organized by *Agape* that deserve our attention. In the Roma settlements of Momin potok and Cicino selo near Skopje, besides *Agape's* regular activities of food and water, clothing and footwear distribution, a school was organized where children were taught how to read and write. *Agape* provided all the books and teaching equipment. Children were instructed by a member of the Skopje Evangelical Church who was also a trained teacher so success was guaranteed. All the students managed to master the basics of reading and writing; their favorite reading material was the *Children's Bible*.

The next *Agape* program worth mentioning was the ongoing professional development of nurses in Skopje, organized in cooperation with a foreign organization, *CAMA-service*. Besides the obvious benefit for the nurses' professional development, common excursions and later Bible study groups within the premises of the Evangelical church were organized for smaller groups of those nurses.

A teenage project entitled *Sex, Lies and the Truth* was organized and managed, again in cooperation with *CAMA-service*, and with *Focus of the Family*, which focused on family education. The program proved to be very successful and was afterwards offered to the system of Macedonian public education system.

A married couple decided to visit all handicapped persons in Skopje in order to help with what they needed; this turned out to be a full-time job. They visited in that way more than 1,000 families bringing them food, clothes, orthopedic supplies, or some other articles that they needed badly. Some of them even started going to church.

An extremely popular project among the children of Macedonia and Kosovo was a *Dream Day*. Creators of this project intended to fulfill one special dream of every child in a group. The project included

⁴²⁰ Ibid. Pg. 5.

many art and creative workshops, play dates and free plays, but also a level of evangelization appropriate for children. *Dream Day* was loved everywhere and by everyone, not only because everyone had fun but also because children made many new friends. Children always looked with anticipation forward to the new *Dream Day*.⁴²¹

As a conclusion, we will describe an *Agape* humanitarian project of particular importance entitled *Metanoia*, targeted at University students and professors. An internet cafe attracted students who could read assorted religious literature as well as participate in discussions on provocative topics, such as, *Who are my enemies and how should I love them?* Attendance was always very good, topics interesting, and it was not uncommon that some of the moderators of the discussions were consequently invited to national television to explain the Evangelical position on topics such as forgiveness, reconciliation, coexistence, and tolerance.

Apart from the Macedonian settlements already mentioned here, *Agape*, through its humanitarian projects, provided service to Kosovo and even Serbia.⁴²²

Kosovo. *Agape* developed its service in the place named Kacanik, but it occasionally cooperated with a number of various other organizations, some of which were Caritas in Janjevo, the Hospital in Gnjilane, Well of Life in Pristine, the Baptist church in Pec, Action of Love in Fus, and the Red Cross in Strpce. Cooperation was later spread to other *Agape* branch in Pristine and the network of Kosovo *Agape* organizations.

In the village of Kacanik, inhabited primarily by an Albanian population, the Macedonian *Agape*, in cooperation with a Swedish Pentecostal humanitarian organization, organized several capital projects, such as, renovation of hundreds of houses, and water supply and drainage systems in the nearby villages. *Agape* also started some minor programs of micro-enterprise credit for women who, received no-interest loans to produce and sell their handicrafts (e.g. embroideries). Occasional English language instruction (ESL) with the help of biblical texts was also extremely successful, especially among women.

⁴²¹ Ibid. Pg. 5.

⁴²² Ibid. Pg. 6.

In the little town of Strpce, populated mainly by Serbs, *Agape* started its activities with the opening of a small library of Christian literature, in spite of the opposition of the local orthodox minister. The key person responsible for this success was the director of the local Red Cross, who came across *Agape's* work in Skopje two months before and was greatly impressed. Humanitarian relief later spread to include the distribution of clothing, footwear, medicine and 40 tons of agricultural seed (distributed among farmers in the whole region that encompassed 12 settlements).⁴²³

Some volunteers from the Macedonian *Agape*, e.g. from the CAMA-service organization in the Kosovo town of Urosevac (Ferizaju), cooperated with volunteers of other humanitarian organizations spreading the evangelistic message among recipients of the relief.

In Macedonia, *Agape* provided humanitarian and spiritual assistance to all those in need, regardless of their national or ethnic origin. This continued in the year 2000 when Macedonians and Albanians living in Macedonia became direct enemies, which erupted, in military conflict in Western Macedonia. Despite that, the Evangelical church in Macedonia continued building peace, trust, tolerance and coexistence in a way that enabled it to persist in providing humanitarian relief to all the Albanians in need, regardless of whether they came from Macedonia or Kosovo. Mirco Andreev, president of the Macedonian *Agape* and the Evangelical Church in Macedonia reports,

At the time of greatest food scarcity, we sent hundreds of tons of food to some of the Tetovo region's Albanian villages. This was acknowledged by all the Albanian-language papers with great gratitude, and was shown as an example of building mutual trust. In crisis or not, the church of Christ should always play its prophetic role with both deeds and words. This means that it should always distinguish justice from injustice regardless of the price that has to be paid. No matter what might be said against it, it should never compromise with evil. It should always speak the words of God, and not the words that would please people in

⁴²³ "Easter Report" of Mirce Andreev, the president of *Agape*. E-mail message, April 18, 2000. *Agape* Archives in Osijek. Pg. 2.

order to *win* their favor. The greater the crisis, the greater the responsibility for the church to be *vox Dei*, and not *vox populi*.⁴²⁴

Through its dedication to help those in need in the past eight years the Macedonian *Agape* has received and distributed, with the help of more than 300 volunteers from Macedonia and abroad, several thousand tons of various articles of humanitarian relief (food – cooked and uncooked, clothing and footwear, medicine, medical supplies, orthopedic supplies, building materials, agricultural seed, Christian literature, etc.) providing in that way for the material, emotional and spiritual needs of more than 30,000 families.

The Macedonian *Agape* fulfilled its mission very successfully, harmonizing its humanitarian work in the whole territory and balancing various programs and projects for the benefit of all the participants, regardless of their nationalities.

6.4. KOSOVO: CUSHION OF LOVE

6.4.1. INTRODUCTION

Kosovo is an autonomous region in the southern part of the Republic of Serbia, but since the year 1999, it is considered an entity un-

⁴²⁴ Dimitrije Popadic. "Living the Gospel of Peace in the War-Torn Balkans." *Overcoming War Legacies in Former Yugoslavia*. Acron: Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office Publication, January-March, 2004, Vol. 34, no. 1. Mirce Andreev says in this article: "During the crisis in 1999, when Macedonia overflowed with refugees, we were organized by means of our humanitarian ministry so that we were able to show our compassion and God's love toward those people. Over 50,000 refugees were aided with food, clothing, hygiene articles, and medical assistance. Some of them were even provided with housing. During that time, several other projects took place, from which the Albanian side benefited. One of the most symbolic examples was the building of an 80-meter bridge across the river Pynja in the village of Srednjo Konjari near Skopje, which is inhabited by a predominantly Albanian (Muslim) population. It was a much bigger step building the mutual trust than the length of the bridge itself." Pg. 9. See also on reconciliation, Peter Kuzmic, "Former Yugoslavia: A Journey toward Reconciliation, *Mountain Movers*." February 1997. Peter Kuzmic, "On the Way to Peace in the Balkans." *Christian Century*, February 21, 1996

der the temporary international direction of the United Nations.⁴²⁵ It is located in the Balkans, situated between Macedonia in the southeast, central Serbia in the northeast, Albania in the southwest, and the Black Sea in the northwest.

The history of armed conflict between Kosovo Albanians and the Yugoslavian (Serbian) government dates back to the middle of the 20th century when during a police action under Aleksandar Rankovic, the then communist minister of the Serbian police, over a hundred people died. In April 1981, a year after Tito's death, this resulted in a rebellion of Albanians from Kosovo, Western Macedonia, and Montenegro, under the slogan *Republic of Kosovo*; the Albanian inhabitants tried to free Kosovo from being under the Serbian government. In spite of a significant number of dead, (the Albanians claim 1,600), the future development of Albanian-Serbian relations was settled in the *Memorandum* by the Serbian academy of science and arts.⁴²⁶ It is generally considered that the operation of great-Serbian politics, which was supported by the Serbian Orthodox Church, started at the time of the Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic; through methods such as massive meetings like the "antibureaucratic revolution," the unreliable leadership of the communistic governments of Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro was taken down. The final stage of political and national homogenization was a gathering of a million Serbs in Gazimestan on the anniversary of their loss in the fight against the Turks five centuries earlier; it took place a few kilometers from Pristine, where the possibility of using arms to create a great Serbia and "defend Serbian interests" was verbalized.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁵ Kosovo has a surface area of 10,887 square km, with Pristine as its capital. Considering the large exodus of almost all of its citizens in 1999, we only have the UN's 2002 estimation available about the population: 1.8 million as follows: 90% Albanians, 5% Serbs, 3% Bosnians, 2% Romas, and 1% Turks. Modern historians still debate about Albania's heritage, but the general opinion is that modern Albanians are descendants of the Illyrian people, which inhabited the northeastern mountains of Albania and western Kosovo, in the time of the Roman empire.

⁴²⁶ Bozo Covic (ed.) *Izvori Velikosrpske Agresije*. Zagreb: Skolska Knjiga, 1991. Pgs. 256-300

⁴²⁷ For more details, Sabrina P. Ramet. *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991*. 2nd (ed.) Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1992. Also: Laura Silber and Allan Little. *Yugoslavia. Death of a Nation*. New York, London: Penguin Book/BBC Books, 1996.

In the outbreak of open war between the Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo in 1999, almost a million Kosovo citizens fled from the fighting to neighboring countries. After the consequent NATO air strikes on targets all over Serbia, the return of refugees as well as the installation of an international leadership helped by the KFOR forces, the destiny of Kosovo remained uncertain. Despite all the larger possibilities of independence from Serbia as of 2007, the future of this country remains dark.⁴²⁸

Kosovo is a country which is completely impoverished, and whose economy is destroyed, where the unemployment levels are reaching a catastrophic 40%, and the GNP is the lowest in all of Europe.⁴²⁹ Kosovo does not have a well-developed civilian transportation infrastructure; it has one of the highest birth rates in the world, a population consisting of uneducated rurally minded people, no industrial and working traditions, an atrophied democracy, and clan conflicts as well as deeply ingrained political and infrastructural corruption.

The citizens of Kosovo were not affected by either the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, nor the Reformation; rather it is a country that lives its isolated bony life with sometimes cruel patriarchal traditions, under the heavy weight of its history and collective memory of numerous wars and conflicts.

6.4.2. HUMANITARIAN MINISTRY IN KOSOVO

Before 1999, there were only a few evangelical congregations of believers in the region, with a modest number of members. Having in mind the radical, long-lasting atheism in communist Albania, which

⁴²⁸ Peter Kuzmic. "Bridging Kosovo's Deep Divisions." *Christianity Today*, February 8, 1999.

⁴²⁹ In an email circulated on January 31, on the *International Day of Prayer and Fasting for Kosovo* from January 26, 2007, sent by the Fellowship of the Lords People from Pristine, Kosovo, states the following: "In addition to the political uncertainty that surrounds us, Kosovo society is struggling under terrible economic conditions. The economy going into 2007 is in a worse state than in 2005-6. 17% of Kosovars live in extreme poverty surviving on less than \$1 per day. The rate of unemployment stands at 70% which means that most people live on the support that their relatives aboard send home." *Agape* archives in Osijek. Pg. 1.

forced the closing of all religious institutions and criminalized all expressions of faith, the founding of the evangelical Church of the last century in the 80s among the Albanians in Pristine was the work of God's providence.⁴³⁰ In the years that followed, this church became the backbone of Christian missions, in other words, the evangelization and humanitarian work as well as founding evangelical churches all over Kosovo.

The initiative for starting the *Agape* relief in Kosovo came from the founder and president of *Agape* Croatia, Peter Kuzmic, who was among the first ones to visit Pristine and other cities (Pec, Djakovica, and Prizren) in the summer of 1999, and who met with other spiritual leaders encouraging them to start this service. At the same time, he recommended and connected them to foreign donors and international humanitarian organizations, additionally creating an international program of humanitarian help, called *Cushion of Love around Kosovo*, intended for all Kosovo refugees who were spread throughout the region, Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia.

The crisis in Kosovo prompted Christians worldwide to pray and seek practical ways to help the greatest humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. The Evangelical Churches in the Balkans, in conjunction with *Agape International*, are in a unique position to network in the region to bring practical and spiritual help to the hundreds of thousands of refugees. *Agape International* has been a credible humanitarian ministry of love having ministered during this decade to hundreds of thousands of displaced people and refugees in Croatia and other Balkans countries. Our strategic plan in responding to the vast new needs established a *Cushion of Love* in the countries around Kosovo, which received refugees.⁴³¹

⁴³⁰ The Congregation of the Lord's people in Pristine (Bashkesia e Popullit te Zotit - Fellowship of the Lord's People) was at that time the first evangelical Albanian church founded in the world. For more details, see: <http://www.kosovachurch.org/> Accessible online, March 20, 2007.

⁴³¹ *Agape Gazette*, Osijek: summer, 1999. pg. 1. Archive *Agapea* in Osijek. Also, *World Pulse*, in an interview with Peter Kuzmic, says: "Christians in countries surrounding Kosovo and working with *Agape International* are reaching out to alleviate human suffering and bring the word of hope and life to thousands of people among

The evangelical church in Kosovo organized humanitarian action in eight *Agape* branches: Pristine, Vucitrn Kosovska Mitrovica, Pec, Djakovica, Prizren, and Gnjilane. Other than that, humanitarian work in Serbian enclaves in Kosovo, for example Kacanik and Strpce was performed by the Macedonian *Agape*. The branches in Kosovo were located in a circle, while the Pristine *Agape* branch was empowered by its location to take on an effective role in the coordination of work and harmonization of the distribution of humanitarian articles.

Humanitarian programs and projects that were executed by *Agape* branches in Kosovo included the usual distributions as in other countries: food, clothing, medications, and sanitary materials, beddings, dishes and other articles. *Agape* in Pristine occasionally organized three-month public kitchens for those coming from the lowest levels of the society.

With the distribution of family packs of food and other humanitarian articles, believers from the Evangelical Church and *Agape* volunteers distributed Christian literature to all who wished to receive it, for example: *The Book of Life*, *The Book of Hope*, *My First Bible in Pictures*, *Children's Bible*, *New Testament*, and similar items. The distribution was done wherever there was an opportunity, especially in *Agape* branches, schools, and in Evangelical and other churches. From time to time, certain *Agape* organizers would respond to calls they would receive from the office of local radio stations and would participate in some live radio shows, discussing current social topics or some problem, which had ethical or religious connotations.

Each year during the month of April, *Agape* would organize for a team of doctors to come, which would visit various villages in Kosovo, offering medical care to the needy. Certain patients, mainly children, who suffered from some of the more difficult diseases, would be taken and operated on in some of the American hospitals.

Kosovo Albanian refugees who are engulfed in despair and facing death. *Agape* has a proven record of accomplishment of saving lives and souls in Croatia and Bosnia, and has a ministry and spiritual infrastructure in place for Kosovo Albanians. The project *Cushion of Love* is a partnership with *Agape*, evangelical churches in the region, and Evangelical Theological Seminary, who have students and graduates from and in all of these countries." "Balkan Beacons," April 16, 1999, Vol. 34, No. 8. Pg. 2.

During the summer, *Agape* would organize weekly camps for younger children who would then spend time together, do sports and listen to the Gospel message. Such forms of child evangelization had the largest effects, because it contributed to easier conversion of their parents.

Kosovo's Protestant Evangelical Church in Pristine and the humanitarian activity of *Agape* led to the informal alliance of about 40 local protestant churches in the political process of social advocacy, while legal regulations for future religious life in the region were being formulated. The formulating and writing of the law to give a legal status to religious congregations is still not complete; therefore, these young religious congregations, with young inexperienced religious leaders, along with a young religious population, according to their age and spiritual growth, face a very demanding task.

6.4.3. HUMANITARIAN WORK TO KOSOVARS OUTSIDE OF KOSOVO

Running from the war, Kosovo refugees found shelter temporarily, some permanently, in many countries of the world, mostly in countries, which embraced the program of humanitarian work *Cushion of Love around Kosovo*. *Agape* in each of these countries found an appropriate way of occasionally offering them temporary or permanent humanitarian aid.

Shocked, grieving, and empty-handed, Kosovo Albanian refugees have been arriving in camps and homes surrounding Kosovo for more than three months. Many have lost family, belongings, home, and country. They have few resources, and often no identification papers, with which to start a new life. They languish in hot, crowded quarters wondering what there is left to live for or return to. Most do not know Jesus Christ and the hope that only He can bring in the midst of suffering. In the midst of this crisis, there is an unprecedented open window to preach the Gospel.⁴³²

⁴³² Ibid. Pg. 2.

Croatia. Albanian refugees from Kosovo were located in the refugee camp next to Gasinci, a village located forty kilometers from Osijek. Bosnian refugees, who were still at that time in that camp, were moved to another location, in order that the Kosovars could be settled in their huts. *Agape* from Osijek started a project to renovate the huts of that camp, so that it would be in a much better condition when welcoming its new inhabitants. Besides that, new beds, mattresses, bedding, blankets and furniture (closets, tables, and chairs) were bought. Some remaining supplies, necessary food, especially for babies, and hygienic materials were provided.

Students of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek and members of local Evangelical churches visited the camp, in order to distribute New Testaments, Christian literature and preach the Good news. A significant number of refugees went to services that were held in a special room of the camp designed for the gatherings. The multimedia center of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Osijek produced Christian radio programs in Albanian called *The Source of Faith*, which were broadcast on some radio stations in Albania.⁴³³ Besides that, they recorded programs on audio cassettes, which were distributed among the Kosovo refugees in the refugee camps in all the countries embraced by the project *Cushion of Love*.

Bosnia and Herzegovina. The city of Mostar, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is very much alive with physical and spiritual activities to help those in need whether in or out of the church. *Agape* is caring for numerous Kosovars refugees by assisting with housing, food and other basic needs. Church workers are busy ministering to families' spiritual needs with the love of God, Bibles, and Bible study. Ministry in a container village of refugees is also a part of *Agape's* humanitarian aid in Mostar. Bible study groups are now in progress and many people are hungry for God's Word of life. Special summer activities including outdoor sports are planned for the youth to show God's love

⁴³³ This production has been significantly easier since generations of Albanian students from Kosovo and Albania have studied at ETS. One of these students even wrote and read his sermons, which together with Christian music, was the main part of produced radio shows.

to them, which is another great door to reach the hearts of the suffering with the hope of Gospel.⁴³⁴

Serbia. *Agape* in Macedonia successfully delivered humanitarian aid to Kosovars and other refugees in the regions of Serbia, for example Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sremska Mitrovica, and other places. As well, the Macedonian *Agape* cooperated with the *Red Cross* from Vrnjacka Banja, and several other protestant humanitarian organizations, for example, *The Bread of Life* from Belgrade, *Jerusalim*, and *Tabita* from Novi Sad.⁴³⁵

Albania. Brett McMichael, a missionary who spent some ten years at an *Agape* branch, a licensed expert in humanitarian work and organizing psychosocial care, spent six months in Albanian refugee camps, organizing the distribution of humanitarian help. During that period of big crisis, he helped in easing pain, especially for children. Considering his area of expertise in psychosocial work and experience, he obtained a long-lasting position in *Karis, Osijek*, where he organized the rapid training of numerous groups of volunteers who came to Albania from many countries, with the goal of offering needed psychological help to refugee children. The basic purpose of these trainings, which included therapeutic games, psychodramas and expression through art, was to ease the trauma from the pains of war and loss in children.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Ibid. Pg. 2. As well, the Bosnian *Agape* in cooperation with foreign donors built a special smaller region for the temporary accommodation of Kosovar refugees very close to Mostar. It continually cared for them with food and other humanitarian supplies. Finally, those who received Christ as their Savior and Lord were given transportation to the local Evangelical churches.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. Pg. 1.

⁴³⁶ The *Agape* branch in Osijek offered a temporary visit to Albania to its coworker, and a later student of applied theology, Susan Sutter, who offered spiritual care to refugee women for several months on a volunteer basis. She obtained the experience for such a service by living for several months in the *Nylon settlement* near the Tuzla airport, during the winter of 1995/96, with Muslim refugees from Srebrenica, east Bosnia, after the army of Bosnian Serbs entered the region, which was under the UNPROFOR protection and killed almost all men.

6.5. EPILOGUE

At the end of this chapter, we can ask the following question: which factors make it possible for the effects of evangelical humanitarian work in a country to become permanent?⁴³⁷ The possible permanent missiological effects might include the following: forming local churches, their becoming interconnected, founding a stable Christian denomination,⁴³⁸ or forming permanent activities of some other parachurch organizations and Christian institutions. We can answer that question drawing from our fifteen years' of *Agape* experience, and from the history of the growth experienced in the Macedonian congregational church, from the beginning of the 20th century, through humanitarian, educational, and other church work.

In order for humanitarian work to leave permanent effects, it must necessarily fulfill the following conditions:

1. Critical volume. Humanitarian work should have a critical volume in a certain country. In other words, humanitarian aid should be of such a volume that it would cover a certain number of humanitarian needs for a significant part of the affected population.

2. Critical continuity. In order for the mission to have an effect, the humanitarian activities need to last long enough. According to this research, the critical length of time is not less than one decade.

⁴³⁷ We distinguish the missionary effects of humanitarian work (conversions, forming religious congregations, local churches, church allegiances or denominations, forming parachurch and other Christian institutions), from the general effects of humanitarian work (saved lives, decreasing of existential pain, improving extreme poverty and similar).

⁴³⁸ Here we will not discuss those characteristics with which we distinguish older churches from younger ones or the affiliated religious groups in some church. But, it's necessary to mention that there are different levels of development and age in churches and its leadership where the most important factors are time, the number of believers and their average age and educational background, the level of their urbanization, and the factors of their religious growth in spirituality, discipleship (wholeness in knowing the teachings of the Holy Scripture), and daily application of Christian principles.

3. Ecclesiastic infrastructure marks the sufficient existence of all those components, which secure the stability, and inner growth of a religious congregation, local and denominational, such as teaching faith, an organizational system, smooth social sub-structures and their multi-lateral communication. It is important to set a critical moment of independence or the beginning of a transitional period of independence for the newly formed church alliance or Christian denomination from their until-then partner, whether it is a foreign church, denomination or Christian organization. The moment of independence cannot be too early, because it can lead to a row of unwanted consequences (for example, organizational atrophy, doctrinal deviancy, breaks and separations, etc.), nor too late, because it can create organizational dependence or consequential organizational infantilism, unwanted transfers of foreign cultural elements, and all in all an accordingly significant deficit in ecclesiastical and mission development. Besides that, if the optimal moment of independence is missed, over time it becomes more difficult and uncertain.

4. The enculturation of humanitarian, and later ecclesiastic service, represent the necessary conditions for the long lasting survival of a church congregation in some environment. Cultural adjustment has reached its critical point when most of the inner and external viewers can claim with certainty that certain church allegiances or church denominations became part of the cultural tissue of a certain social region.

5. Evangelical identity represents the collective conscience of a religious congregation that provides a self-confident and self-aware approach to all the social interactions in which it enters with its environment, performing its Christian mission and church mandate. Ecclesiastic identity is slowly built over decades, when its own written history and collective memory is needed for its identity roots. However, in the interest of survival from the rudiments of mission in some country, it is necessary to create its entity, which would gradually grow and develop itself.

6. Cumulative effect. All of the above-mentioned factors should be cumulatively realized. Without one of them, the permanent missionary effects of humanitarian work could be brought into question.

7. CONCLUSIONS

At the outset of this dissertation, the aim was to research and analyze the response of the church to the devastation caused by conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The project researched and considered topics related to offering church humanitarian assistance to neighbors who were close by and others in need due to displacement and the effects of war.

This research has shown that Church humanitarian assistance is biblically founded, and it can be conducted through separate and specialized organizations founded for that purpose. Further, these organizations should be guided in accordance with contemporary management principles, both in the way they define mission and in how they manage their activities.

Additional conclusions are presented below in thirteen points:

1. Context. Following the democratic changes that occurred at the beginning of the twentieth century in the countries that were created after the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, churches, church organizations, Christian institutions, and Christian humanitarian organizations found themselves in a new social and political setting offering many more possibilities than before. Many churches and church institutions that were traditional and conservative in their structure, as well as inflexible, found that surviving and responding appropriately to these changes was a new and demanding challenge that brought differing results to different actors. After a decade in social isolation some churches and church organizations were unable to manage well, while others showed an ability to recognize the opportunities, learn fast, accept new skills, and adapt to the new circumstances, becoming very efficient in implementing their mission. *Agape* implemented its double mission, evangelistic and humanitarian, in extremely different social, political, religious, and cultural contexts. Croatia for instance, is economically well developed and mostly Catholic in its religious conviction; in contrast Bosnia and Herzegovina are both religiously and ethnically mixed with painful (inherited) historical memories. Kosovo, on the other hand, is poor and destroyed by years of Milosevic's regime and the aftermath of the conflict; it has a dominant Muslim population. Macedonia is politically unstable and economically devastated by the

Bosnian and Kosovo refugee crises and the war, it is surrounded by neighboring countries that openly claim their territorial aspirations and where Macedonian nationalists, Christian Orthodox in their religion, face difficulties with Albanian, Muslim nationalism and irredentism.

2. Theological foundations. For both believers and their church communities doing acts of mercy on an individual or collective basis is not a question of a free choice based on their personal or collective preferences which are part of their Christian worldview but an act of obedience to the biblical teachings and Christ's commands. Acts of mercy toward neighbors regardless of whether they are our friends or enemies, near or far away, are the basic principles of faith *per se* and of the same importance as prayer, fasting, liturgy, or worship, preaching the Gospel or religious teaching. The lack of this element from personal Christian experience and the collective testimony of the community of believers reveal formalism in religion, religiosity without the Spirit, spirituality without strength and a weak devotion to the *Way*. Acts of Christian mercy, preaching the Gospel and religious teachings are the three foundations that reveal sincere worship and lead to an authentically Christian life.

3. Mission statement. While deciding on establishing a humanitarian or any other para-church organization within the framework of the church, the important issue is to define its mission statement in a clear and compact manner. The statement should be deeply rooted in Holy Scripture and well known to the members of the organization to serve as a motivating factor. In spite of the changes in socio-economical and political circumstances both in close and global surroundings, the organization's mission should always be based on Holy Scripture as the source/spring leading to all our belief, the tranquility of the spirit devoted to prayer and the envisioning of potential strategic decisions, even the mission itself. The mistakes that occur while composing the mission statement may produce later difficulties and cause consequences for the organization's survival. Past and contemporary experiences show that there are temptations to gradually move away from the main course or mission statement and its goals. Thus the need to create both a structural and organizational core (from the very beginning, when the organization is establishing, itself) that

will be based upon the following aims: (a) to set strict rules about regular check ups on the fulfillment of the mission, (b) to set clear parameters that will be used by the management bodies in measuring possible deviations, (c) to define possible deviation degrees of in accordance with the parameters, and (d) to create effective a corrective mechanism when the measurement of a certain parameter shows a critical level of deviation.

4. Dominant programs and projects. During this research, the following activities were dominant in *Agape*: (1) Programs related to material humanitarian assistance; (2) Social assistance; (3) Spiritual assistance, (4) Projects related to distribution of Christian literature; (5) Development projects; (6) Psychological assistance; (7) Christmas gifts and other Christian programs. The general conclusion is that those humanitarian programs that were combined while covering their most important and most urgent existential needs achieved the best evangelistic effects for the recipients. Second on the list were programs during which *Agape* volunteers and recipients spent the most time together; the evangelistic message in the context of our culture is best shared through friendships. For instance, churches would be founded where the warehouses stayed longest and people continued to gather and spend time together, interacting. If the humanitarian assistance were distributed irregularly and through a temporary warehouse facility, the probability of having a new church there would be smaller.

5. Main challenges. During the years of its activities *Agape* branch offices faced some problems that could be considered typical or mutual, and which are ranked in accordance with their level of difficulty: (1) Logistical problems (storage, transport, lack of volunteers, lack of equipment, etc.); (2) Irregularity of humanitarian assistance; (3) Inequality of humanitarian assistance and lack of assortments; (4) Inadequate volunteer performance (lack of training, volunteer fluctuation, frequent absences, unreliability, conflicts etc.); (5) Lack of internal communication; (6) Lack of outside support in managing organizational difficulties; (7) Lack of assistance, contact and communication with the main *Agape* office. This research also showed that each branch office considered the level of importance of each of these problems differently, and that their resolutions were rarely similar, but often quite

diverse. Regardless of how different resolutions might have been, the totality of *Agape* organizational results would remain on a high level.

6. Interactions with the surroundings. *Agape* and its offices and local churches during their activities frequently got in touch with various institutions and organizations. According to research there were several typical types of interaction with surroundings that were ranked in accordance to their importance: (1) Foreign humanitarian and other organizations, including international churches and organizations; (2) Churches, para-church organizations and Christian institutions from other denominations (including the majority religious community); (3) Other churches, para-church organizations and Christian institutions from our own denomination; (4) The media, local, regional and national; (5) Nongovernmental organizations and associations in the country and abroad; (6) Public and private entrepreneurs (the business sector); (7) State administration bodies, the units of local government and self-government. Research showed that *Agape* cooperated with the stated institutions and that the quality and success of that cooperation in the majority of cases was satisfactory though at times would vary from *satisfactory* to *excellent* according to different factors. This multilevel and long-term cooperation significantly contributed to *Agape's* and the church's integration with their surroundings, and the result was more effective inculturation of the evangelical message.

7. Organizational structure. Humanitarian assistance functioned within the *Agape* network system; *Agape* offices were linked with each other in a partnership although keeping a great deal of their administrative autonomy. This organizational network was a reflection of the system that already existed between the autonomous local evangelical churches. Having in mind the conditions that defined this kind of organizational system, especially the range of humanitarian activities, the conclusion is that it was optimal, at least for the circumstances for which it was created and functioning. Whether there would be different effects and results if the *Agape* organizations within the system were less independent is hard to say. However, what is certain is that in the strengthening of the system's administrative structure by reducing the level of autonomy of the *Agape* branch offices, the basic vitality of the local units and their initiativeness would decrease. The

model that was implemented is thus considered optimal in reducing weaknesses and faults and in maximizing the advantages of different *Agape* network partners.

8. Regional characteristics. This research has analyzed the main characteristics of *Agape* humanitarian activities in several different areas of the former Yugoslavia, their vision, mission statement, goals, type of assistance they have provided, target groups, sources for donations and organizational management. One of the conclusions points out that there are no significant differences in the activities of the *Agape* branch offices throughout the region. The high level of similarity is based on several factors: they all share the Christian worldview, their mission statements are similar, and there is a resemblance (although only in general terms) in the socio-economic processes of transition as well as in military and political developments. *Agape* organizations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Macedonia were established in a successive manner and not simultaneously, following the political crises and wars as they were occurring in the region, and this accounts for the high similarity both in the organizational model and in the applied activities.

9. Synergy. The research also showed that *Agape* generated/created a number of church and para-church activities, which in turn acted as a catalyst/accelerant to the other. The most important non-humanitarian effects were in the area of evangelization and mission, and founding (new) churches, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina where the network of newly founded evangelical churches created a new denomination. Other areas of the so-called catalyst effect were publishing and production, pastoral, social and rehabilitation activities with different target groups, theological education, etc. Summing the results of the humanitarian and non-humanitarian activities of *Agape*, the conclusion might be that there was a high degree of synergy between them. In another words, evangelization brought spirituality, life and soul to the humanitarian activities, while humanitarian assistance provided Christian authenticity to the evangelistic activity. Supporting and intermingling with each other, these two services are like two sides of the same coin resulting in high synergy.

10. Interaction between humanitarian service and spiritual growth. *Agape* branch offices confirmed the hypothesis that churches and their believers went through a certain amount of spiritual growth by participating in humanitarian activities. However, the estimates of whether this growth was sufficient-good-very good-or excellent level vary greatly. Lesser variation is noticed in the area of learning about humanitarian and social activities and the importance of such engagement for the churches. Namely, the majority of *Agape* members think that this kind of learning and awareness is not present enough. Their opinion is equal concerning the attitudes of the churches about whether they can have an influence in resolving the social problems of their local communities and that this engagement is a basis for the church's authenticity. On the other hand, *Agape* examinees that participated in the research concluded almost unanimously that these activities exhaust church members more than other activities. In spite of that, there is no significant agreement regarding the question of whether the evangelistic and mission effects would have been greater if the time and energy spent on the humanitarian activities and social service would have been spent on evangelization and mission. On the contrary, the attitude that the church as a community of believers inevitably cooperates with its local community in resolving issues of common interest is affirmative and clear. Both the believers and the church should conduct this activity according to their material and financial possibilities. At the end, the general conclusion was almost a consensus among research examinees. That the level of humanitarian assistance that was needed during the war is no longer required, and yet the service should remain in the form and range that are suitable to the new circumstances, having in mind that not all our believers are able to sponsor such self-sustainable humanitarian, and social work on the local level.

11. *Agape's* value and its impact on humanitarian assistance. *Agape* was the last link in the long chain of humanitarian assistance as the one who distributed the goods, which had come as a donation from international humanitarian and church organizations. In spite of that, *Agape* cannot be considered as barely the distribution organization with only one function in the relatively long and complex organizational process. *Agape* not only functioned *de facto* on an equal partnership level with the bigger international humanitarian organizations,

but it also contributed significantly by raising the effect of the humanitarian assistance by securing warehouses and volunteers for all additional activities from receiving the donation to its final distribution. *Agape* also prepared analytical reports for each donation. The total value of this contribution can be estimated as one sixth of the total value of the humanitarian donations. If we add to this calculation the other *Agape* values the total will amount to one fifth of the value of the distributed goods. Alternatively, pictorially speaking, out of five containers with goods, one was an *Agape* donation.

12. Founding churches. In, writing about the contributions and effects that *Agape's* service had in establishing new evangelical churches, it is possible to conclude that their number has grown significantly. For instance, during 1990, there were around twenty local evangelical churches in Croatia, and by the end of 2006, that number more than doubled (now there are fifty evangelical churches throughout Croatia). Actually, one of the conclusions might be that the number of churches in all covered areas almost doubled regardless of whether they were created under the direct influence of the humanitarian assistance or become some local churches of Pentecostal orientation, which joined the alliance of evangelical churches. In the last decade and half, the growth of evangelical churches in Croatia is the greatest ever. Their social and spiritual influence on the broader and immediate surroundings is immense. The same conclusion can be drawn for the churches in Bosnia and Herzegovina where at the beginning of the 1990s there were two evangelical churches and several prayer groups. Today there are fifteen, or five times as many, and fifteen homes (cell) prayer groups that will become churches with their own premises. The situation is similar in Macedonia and Kosovo especially if we have in mind the long period of stagnation. At the end, it is important to stress that the increase in the number of churches is related to one additional factor: their dispersion throughout the whole country and (especially) the big cities, leaving space for further expansion, multiplication, and growth.

13. The estimate about the mission. It can be stated with a great level of certainty that during its fifteen years of activity *Agape* fulfilled its dual mission quite successfully, namely to provide humanitarian and social assistance and to offer the Gospel message at the same time.

Agape's devoted and permanent work in conditions of social and other trouble and suffering contributed to the rise in the reputation of the local evangelical churches in their immediate surroundings and on a regional and national level. The very reason for such an outcome is in the fact that *Agape* was impartial in its humanitarian activities and unconditionally distributed assistance to all that were in need. Having in mind some of the key parameters such as the relatively small number of believers that served as a basis for recruiting the volunteers, than their lack of education, skills and former experience in similar activities, the large amount of assistance and the great diversity of humanitarian programs and projects, as well as the duration of the refugee crisis, the war and the after-war circumstances in which *Agape* operated, a logical conclusion is that *Agape* workers and volunteers were successful in conducting this extremely difficult and complex task and left an indelible mark on the histories of the peoples in this part of the world.

At the end of this research, it should be stressed that *Agape* was not only a mere sum of individual and successive events and different programs and projects related to the humanitarian assistance coordinated by the Evangelical Church in a chronological manner throughout all these years. *Agape* was much more than that. *Agape* was a new spiritual pilgrimage for the Evangelical Church communities and their growth and maturity, gathered around the new and at the same time old spiritual mission. *Agape* is the people: the men and women, young and old, rich and poor, all those who came forward to fulfill the command of our Teacher and preach the Gospel to all the people, taking care at the same time about the needs of the neighbors that were in trouble.

We needed to have the wars and conflicts, accidents and troubles, enter our own dining rooms and courtyards, to see in front of our eyes rivers of millions of refugees and exiles, to be shaken well by all of that, and to be hurt to the bottom of our souls in order to have our consciousness raised and find Christian compassion for the suffering. Only then we were able to turn from our known, comfortable Christian paths and change the attitudes about acts of mercy toward our neighbors, and about the role and mission of our church here and in the world. And only then, when we saw and experienced, did we have the power to move and act, although only in our own surroundings.

We stopped here and did not continue further, while the world is still full with the kind of pain we recognized once.

Watching the vast troubles and sufferings that occurred in our near surroundings, we forgot that we are Christians of this world called with our lives and service to contribute to the good of humankind anywhere in the world.⁴³⁹ The focus and the center of our attention should be humans as individuals, but also the peoples, nations, tribes and languages, especially if they belong to the category of the economically underdeveloped areas of the world. The inhabitants of these regions are frequently victims of a multitude of social and natural disasters, living their lives on the margins of our world. The hungry man has hard times in thinking about the other life and the destiny of his/her soul when facing existential troubles and fighting to survive every single day.

Today almost one billion of the world's population is facing extreme poverty. In this world, 30,000 children die of hunger every single day. Can any one of them understand the metaphors about *the bread coming down from Heaven* and *the living water that is streaming to eternal life* being preached by educated and well-intended servants of the Gospel? It is true that Christ's authentic teaching is calling us to preach the Gospel, but He also calls us on open our own treasures and warehouses and to empty our bank accounts and use our resources and reserves to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, dress the naked and preach the Good News to the poor, that the Kingdom of God is here. Only then, will the Gospel gain its power to lead to spiritual and social transformation.

⁴³⁹ According to Antal Balog. "The World We Live In". *Pentekostna Vijest*, XXI, No. 12, 1978, Pgs. 11-13.

APPENDIX

**SURVEY ABOUT THE WORK OF THE HUMANITARIAN AGENCY
*AGAPE***

RECORDS – REPORTS ABOUT HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

DOCUMENTS

**EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – AN
EVANGELICAL COMMITMENT**

**TRANSFORMATION: THE CHURCH IN RESPONSE TO
HUMAN NEED (THE WHEATON '83 STATEMENT)**

**1. SURVEY ABOUT THE WORK OF
THE HUMANITARIAN AGENCY *AGAPE***

(Questionnaire for various *Agape* associates – (branch manager/coordinator; project manager/coordinator; board member/central administration; partner /key volunteer, ect.)

**Survey about the work of the humanitarian agency *Agape*
in _____**
(Name of the city and country)

Date the survey is filled out: _____ 2007.

1. Background information about the surveyed person:

Name: _____ Family name: _____ Year of birth: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____ Cell-phone: _____

Completed education: (please put a check mark in the one square corresponding to your answer).

None Elementary school High school College

Baccalaureate Masters Doctorate:

Profession: _____

(If you are retired, please write the profession you practiced during your working years)

2. Your role in the work of *Agape*: (please put a check mark in the one or more boxes corresponding to your answer)

Branch manager / coordinator

Project manager / coordinator (community kitchen, counseling, radio/video production, etc.)

Partner / Volunteer (driver, storekeeper, cook, administrator, secretary, translator, etc.)

Board member / central administration

Other, (please describe: _____)

3. *Agape* started its work in your city as of: _____
(Month and year)

4. *Agape* worked in your city until: _____
(month and year, or 'ongoing')

5. Please list, by name and family name (and when possible, their role) the members of the founding board:

6. Please list, by name and family name, the members who have participated in the work of your board

7. Please list, to the best of your knowledge, all surrounding locations in which your local *Agape* branch has conducted humanitarian (continuous or occasional) actions:

8. Do you believe that *Agape*, during its fifteen years of action, has successfully fulfilled its two-fold mission: humanitarian-social work while, at the same time, proclaiming the Gospel?

Please answer by circling the number above the answer, which describes best your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5
Grade means	No, not at all	Not sufficiently	Yes, satisfactorily	Yes, very satisfactorily	Completely

Why? _____

9. Do you believe that the Evangelical church in your city, or location, during its many years of service through *Agape* has resulted in a greater reputation in its immediate surroundings?

Please answer by circling the number above the answer, best which describes your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5
Grade means	No, not at all	Not sufficiently	Yes, satisfactorily	Yes, very satisfactorily	Completely

Why? _____

10a. In the following table, please rank from 1 to 7 the following seven suggestions as to the main difficulties in humanitarian work, describe the appropriate rank for each difficulty in the first column.

Then, grade their impact on the effectiveness of the work of your *Agape* branch, using values 1 through 5. (Circle the appropriate number, based on the following meanings: 1 - *no impact*; 2 - *a weak impact*; 3 - *some/moderate*; 4 - *a considerable impact*; 5 - *a very big impact*)

Rank	Description of the difficulty	Grade				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Logistical problems of humanitarian work (storage, transportation, lack of people, lack of equipment, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
	Irregular deliveries of humanitarian aid materials	1	2	3	4	5
	Inadequate quantities of humanitarian aid materials and their lack of selection.	1	2	3	4	5
	Inadequate work from volunteers (untrained, fluctuating, often not showing up, unreliable, conflicts in the group, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
	Lack of internal inter-personal communications	1	2	3	4	5

	Lack of help from, and communication with the central office	1	2	3	4	5
	Lack of external support in solving organizational difficulties	1	2	3	4	5

10b. If you have noticed other difficulties which are not mentioned in the above table, please list them in the order of their difficulty in solving, as well as grading them on a scale of 1 to 5 as to their impact on your work

8.		1	2	3	4	5
9.		1	2	3	4	5
10.		1	2	3	4	5

11. Do you believe that the humanitarian and social work of *Agape* was the founding or catalyzing agent of other church activities (for example: missionary, evangelistic, publishing, or similar)?

Yes No

If your answer is *Yes*, what are those activities? Please put a check mark in front of the following suggestions which you consider correct (and/or write your answer on the empty lines)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publishing activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Pastoral conferences |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Production activities (audio & video) | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's and/or youth meetings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Founding new churches | <input type="checkbox"/> Theological education |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rehabilitation center | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special evangelistic services | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Missions in other cities | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

12. Please state your opinions about the humanitarian and social work which evangelical churches implement in their entirety; please use the values 1 through 5 to grade.

(Circle the appropriate number, based on the following meanings: 1-No, I do not agree; 2-Not to a sufficient extent; 3-I can't grade that; 4-Yes, to a satisfactory extent; 5-Yes, I completely agree).

With its humanitarian and social work the church can contribute to solving the social problems of its local congregation	1	2	3	4	5
Long term (or many-year) humanitarian and social services are more exhausting than other services	1	2	3	4	5
The humanitarian and social work of <i>Agape</i> was necessary and appropriate during the war, but is no longer needed at the same level (volume)	1	2	3	4	5
The church should continue to maintain or participate in some social or humanitarian work, as to help the needy in its immediate surroundings, appropriate to its material and financial capabilities	1	2	3	4	5
The church could obtain better results from evangelical and missionary efforts if it were to transfer the time and energy which it spends on humanitarian and social work to mission and evangelization	1	2	3	4	5
The church needs to permanently cooperate with its local social group in dealing with the various issues about the general good	1	2	3	4	5
The members of our churches are themselves poor and because of that there is no domestic source on which to base permanent self supporting humanitarian and social services	1	2	3	4	5
The members of our churches, out of various reasons, aren't very interested in humanitarian and social work in their local social environment	1	2	3	4	5
The humanitarian and social work of local churches can significantly contribute to evangelical actions, in other words, spreading the Gospel	1	2	3	4	5
In churches there exists no appropriate professional training programs for this kind of work	1	2	3	4	5

The humanitarian and social work of churches can significantly improve the public perception of their Christian authenticity; in other words, it can build its public Christian testimony*	1	2	3	4	5
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* Or, the question put in other words, can the church through its social engagements decrease some of the public's often-held opinions that the church teaches one thing, and some of its believers sometimes act differently. (For example, the church teaches doing acts of mercy towards neighbors in trouble, but some churches are self-sufficiently turned towards themselves).

13. How would you, in your own words, describe the work of the church-based humanitarian organization *Agape* over its many years?

14. What were, in your opinion, the positive characteristics of the work of the *Agape* branch in your city/region/country?

15. What were, in your opinion, the negative characteristics of the work of the *Agape* branch in your city/region/country?

16. How do you grade the cooperation of *Agape* with the below-listed institutions and organizations? Answer by circling a number on the scale of 1 to 5.

(With the following meanings: 1-*no cooperation*; 2-*weak cooperation*; 3-*irregular cooperation*; 4 - *regular cooperation*; 5 - *very good cooperation*)

With relevant state body authorities, as well as local authorities and self-governance units	1	2	3	4	5
With churches, para-church organizations and Christian institutions from other denominations (including the majority-holding religious congregations)	1	2	3	4	5

With foreign humanitarian and other organizations, including foreign church denominations and various international organizations	1	2	3	4	5
With public media (local, regional and national)	1	2	3	4	5
With other churches, para-church organizations and Christian institutions even with the believers from the majority-holding denomination	1	2	3	4	5
With non-governmental associations and organizations in the country and abroad	1	2	3	4	5
With public and private entrepreneurs (so called business sector)	1	2	3	4	5

17. List all forms of humanitarian work, which were represented in your *Agape* branch for each year (this table should only be filled out by branch managers).

(Please put a check mark in all squares where the humanitarian action described was performed in that year by your *Agape* branch).

Description of the humanitarian aid	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
1. Articles of dried food																
2. Hot meals (community kitchen)																
3. Second hand clothing and shoes																
4. Hygiene articles																
5. Blankets																
6. Furniture, dishes and appliances																
7. Medications and medical materials																

8. Construction material																		
9. Cattle and cattle food																		
10. Seeds and material to protect plants																		
11. Agricultural equipment and tools																		
12. Occasional financial help																		
13. Distribution of Christian literature																		
14. Giving out books and magazines																		
15. Producing a radio program																		
16. Psychological help - counseling																		
17. Spiritual help-Services																		
18. Christian camps and gatherings																		
19. Legal and social counseling																		
20. Various additional education																		
21. Various development projects																		
22. Renovating and constructing houses																		
23. House repairs																		
24. Work with ex-addicts																		
25. Help to orphans																		
26. Help to the elderly																		

27. Spiritual care in prisons																	
28. Peace and tolerance projects																	
29. Various creative workshops																	
30. Christmas packages & programs																	
31. Other:																	

18. From the above table, select and rearrange, based on the importance towards completing the mission of *Agape*, seven forms of humanitarian and social work, which you believe are the most meaningful. After that, grade the effectiveness of *Agape* in their execution, using the values 1 through 5 (this table should be filled in by all surveyed!)

(Circle the appropriate number, based on the following meanings: 1 - *weak*; 2 - *sufficient*; 3 - *good*, 4 - *very good*, and 5 - *excellent*)

Rank	Description	Effectiveness grade				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.		1	2	3	4	5
2.		1	2	3	4	5
3.		1	2	3	4	5
4.		1	2	3	4	5
5.		1	2	3	4	5
6.		1	2	3	4	5
7.		1	2	3	4	5

If you have any additional comments, please list them: _____

19. Please enter information about the volunteers, those who received help, the help they received and surface area used in your *Agape* branch, for each year (this table should only be filled out by branch managers).

Description - indicator	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Average number of workers and volunteers ¹																
Total, people who received help ²																
Total, humanitarian aid received ³																
Total, surface area used ⁴																

¹ Average number of workers and volunteers: enter your *closest estimate* as to the average number of workers and volunteers for each year individually.

² Total, people who received help: enter your *closest estimate* as to the total number of receivers of humanitarian help, counted by the thousands (Meaning, in a cell of the table, you would enter 5 rather than 5,000)

³ Total, humanitarian aid received: enter your *closest estimate* as to the total quantity of received humanitarian aid for each year individually, counted by the ton.

⁴ Total, surface area used: enter your *closest estimate* as to the surface area your *Agape* branch used (offices, storage, space for services, etc), counted in square meters.

20. Do you believe that in our evangelical churches that the spiritual and social importance of humanitarian and social work is enough taught and emphasized?

Please answer by circling the number above the answer, which describes best your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5
Grade means	No, not at all	Not sufficiently	Yes, satisfactorily	Yes, very satisfactorily	Completely

Why? _____

21. Do you believe that the church and believers, in their work in *Agape*, accomplished spiritual growth?

Please answer by circling the number above the answer, which describes best your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5
Grade means	No, not at all	Not sufficiently	Yes, satisfactorily	Yes, very satisfactorily	Completely

Why? _____

22. Please, list some of your most meaningful donors, along with their title and country of origin (this question should only be answered by *Agape* branch managers).

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

23. Please, provide a significant testimonial that you have heard from an *Agape* humanitarian assistance user and describe briefly the conditions related to the statement.

24. Please, write in brief about your personal experience(s) related to your *Agape* service.

26. In the end, please give us your comments on the subject of this survey (something that you believe important in the work of your *Agape* branch, or in general about the work of the humanitarian organization *Agape*, and to which this survey did not pay enough attention. Also possible is anything in general about the work of humanitarian organizations in the framework of churches).

Thank you for your cooperation. We constantly wish you Christ's mercy and peace. ☺

2. RECORDS – REPORTS ABOUT HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

Form no. 1

Humanitarian organization:

Agape, humanitarian agency of the
Evangelical Pentecostal Church -
Osijek, Cvjetkova 32.

(Name and place)

Date of filling the form:

(Day, month and year)

**Record – report about
collected materials and
financial humanitarian relief**

For the month: _____, year: _____

Ord. no.	The kind of humanitarian help	Quantity of humanitarian help expressed in measurable units					Value expressed in	
		kg	pieces	palette	boxes	other	Kn	€
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	Material help							
1	Food							
2	Clothes							
3	Shoes							
4	Furniture							
5	Hygienic supplies							
6	Sanitary material							
7	House appliances							
8	Construction material							
9	Fuel							
10	Technical equipment							
11	Vehicle/automobile							
12	Other							
B.	Financial help							
C.	Total							

(M.P.)

Signature of responsible person

Form no. 2

Humanitarian organization:

Agape, humanitarian agency of the
Evangelical Pentecostal Church -
Osijek, Cvjetkova 32.

(Name and place)

Date of filling the form:

(Day, month and year)

**Record - report about offered
psychosocial relief and services**

For the months: _____ year: _____

Ord. no.	Kind of psy- chosocial help & ser- vices	Psychosocial professional/lay help (content & means)	User group & number	Service (content & means)	User group & number	Total number of users	
						M	F
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

(M.P.)

Signature of responsible person

Form no. 3

Humanitarian organization:

Agape, humanitarian agency of the
Evangelical Pentecostal Church -
Osijek, Cvjetkova 32.

(Name and place)

Date of filling the form:

(Day, month and year)

**Record - reports about groups of
users of humanitarian relief**

For the month: _____ year: _____

Ord. no.	Humanitarian help recipient group (according to arti- cle 1, <i>the Law on humanitarian help</i>)	Number of Users		Kind of humanitarian help offered					
				Material (article title)	Financial		Psychosocial		Ser- vices (kind of ser- vice)
		M	F		Kn	€	Profes- sional	Lay	
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

(M.P.)

Signature of responsible person

Form no. 3a

Humanitarian organization:

Agape, humanitarian agency of the
Evangelical Pentecostal Church -
Osijek, Cvjetkova 32.

(Name and place)

Date of filling the form:

(Day, month and year)

**Records users of
humanitarian relief**

For the month: _____, year: _____

Ord. No.	Name & family name of the user	Perma- nent or tempo- rary ad- dress of the user	User group	Kind of humanitar- ian help				Personal document identity number	Signature of the user or recipi- ent of the humani- tarian help
				Material (value)		Financial (value)			
				Kn	€	Kn	€		
0	1	2		4	5	6	7	8	9

(M.P.)

Signature of responsible person

NOTE: Record no.3a is not delivered to the Ministry of health and social care,
it's staying with the humanitarian organization.

3. DOCUMENTS

3.1. EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY – AN EVANGELICAL COMMITMENT

3.1.1. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY⁴⁴⁰

3.1.1.1. THREE KINDS OF RELATIONSHIP

Having seen that both particular situations and specialist callings can legitimately separate our evangelistic and social responsibilities, we are now ready to consider how in general they relate to one another. What has emerged from our discussion is that there is no one relationship in which they are joined, but that there are at least three equally valid relationships.

First, social activity is a consequence of evangelism. That is, evangelism is the means by which God brings people to new birth, and their new life manifests itself in the service of others. Paul wrote that "faith works through love" (Gal. 5:6), James that "I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18), and John that God's love within us will overflow in serving our needy brothers and sisters (1 John 3:16-18). As Robert E. Speer wrote about the Gospel in 1900: "wherever it goes, it plants in the hearts of men forces that produce new lives; it plants in communities of men forces that create new social combinations. " We have heard of evangelists in our own day who, during their missions or crusades, actively encourage Christians (including new converts) to become involved in programs to meet specific local, human needs. This effectively highlights the serving dimension of Christian conversion and commitment.

We can go further than this, however. Social responsibility is more than the consequence of evangelism; it is also one of its principal

⁴⁴⁰ John Stott. *Making Christ Know: Historic Mission Documents from the Lausanne Movement, 1974-1989*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997. "The Grand Rapids Report on Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment." *The International Consultation on the Relationship between Evangelism and Social Responsibility*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 19-25 June 1982. Pgs. 181-183

aims. For Christ gave himself for us not only "to redeem us from all iniquity" but also "to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Tit. 2:14). Similarly, through the gospel we are "created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2: 10). Good works cannot save, but they are an indispensable evidence of salvation (James 2:14-26).

In saying this, we are not claiming that compassionate service is an automatic consequence of evangelism or of conversion, however. Social responsibility, like evangelism, should therefore be included in the teaching ministry of the church. For we have to confess the inconsistencies in our own lives and the dismal record of evangelical failure, often as a result of the cultural blind spots to which we have already referred. This has grave consequences. When we do not allow the Word of God to transform us in all areas of our personal and social life, we seem to validate the Marxist criticism of religion.

Secondly, social activity can be a bridge to evangelism. It can break down prejudice and suspicion, open closed doors, and gain a hearing for the Gospel. Jesus himself sometimes performed works of mercy before proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom. In more recent times, we were reminded, the construction of dams by the Basel missionaries in Northern Ghana opened a way for the gospel, and much missionary medical, agricultural, nutritional, and educational work has had a similar effect. To add a contemporary Western example, a recent crusade in an American city was preceded and accompanied by a "Love in Action" programme, with the evangelist's encouragement. Several "social uplift" groups cooperated and were able to extend their ministries to the inner city poor. As a result, we were told, a number of people came under the sound of the gospel who would not otherwise have come to the crusade.

Further, by seeking to serve people, it is possible to move from their "felt needs" to their deeper need concerning their relationship with God. Whereas, as another participant put it, "if we turn a blind eye to the suffering, the social oppression, the alienation and loneliness of people, let us not be surprised if they turn a deaf ear to our message of eternal salvation." We are aware of the danger of making "rice Christians", that is, of securing converts only because of the physical benefits we offer. But we have to take this risk, so long as we retain our

own integrity and serve people out of genuine love and not with an ulterior motive. Then our actions will be "not bribes but bridges — bridges of love to the world."

Thirdly, social activity not only follows evangelism as its consequence and aim, and precedes it as its bridge, but also accompanies it as its partner. They are like the two blades of a pair of scissors or the two wings of a bird. This partnership is clearly seen in the public ministry of Jesus, who not only preached the gospel but fed the hungry and healed the sick. In his ministry, kerygma (proclamation) and diakonia (service) went hand in hand. His words explained his works, and his works dramatized his words. Both were expressions of his compassion for people, and both should be of ours. Both also issue from the lordship of Jesus, for he sends us out into the world both to preach and to serve. If we proclaim the Good News of God's love, we must manifest his love in caring for the needy. Indeed, so close is this link between proclaiming and serving, that they actually overlap.

This is not to say that they should be identified with each other, for evangelism is not social responsibility, nor is social responsibility evangelism. Yet, each involves the other.

To proclaim Jesus as Lord and Saviour (evangelism) has social implications, since it summons people to repent of social as well as personal sins, and to live a new life of righteousness and peace in the new society which challenges the old.

To give food to the hungry (social responsibility) has evangelistic implications, since good works of love, if done in the name of Christ, are a demonstration and commendation of the gospel.

It has been said, therefore, that evangelism, even when it does not have a primarily social intention, nevertheless has a social dimension, while social responsibility, even when it does not have a primarily evangelistic intention, nevertheless has an evangelistic dimension.

Thus, evangelism and social responsibility, while distinct from one another, are integrally related in our proclamation of and obedience to the gospel. The partnership is, in reality, a marriage.

3.1.1.2. THE QUESTION OF PRIMACY

This brings us to the question whether the partnership between evangelism and social responsibility is equal or unequal, that is, whether they are of identical importance or whether one takes precedence over the other. The Lausanne Covenant affirms that "in the church's mission of sacrificial service evangelism is primary" (Paragraph 6). Although some of us have felt uncomfortable about this phrase, lest by it we should be breaking the partnership, yet we are able to endorse and explain it in two ways, in addition to the particular situations and callings already mentioned.

First, evangelism has a certain priority. We are not referring to an invariable temporal priority, because in some situations a social ministry will take precedence, but to a logical one. The very fact of Christian social responsibility presupposes socially responsible Christians, and it can only be by evangelism and discipling that they have become such. If social activity is a consequence and aim of evangelism (as we have asserted), then evangelism must precede it. In addition, social progress is being hindered in some countries by the prevailing religious culture; only evangelism can change this.

Secondly, evangelism relates to people's eternal destiny, and in bringing them Good News of salvation, Christians are doing what nobody else can do. Seldom if ever should we have to choose between satisfying physical hunger and spiritual hunger, or between healing bodies and saving souls, since an authentic love for our neighbour will lead us to serve him or her as a whole person. Nevertheless, if we must choose, then we have to say that the supreme and ultimate need of all humankind is the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and that therefore a person's eternal, spiritual salvation is of greater importance than his or her temporal and material well-being (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16-18). As the Thailand Statement expressed it, "of all the tragic needs of human beings none is greater than their alienation from their Creator and the terrible reality of eternal death for those who refuse to repent and believe." Yet this fact must not make us indifferent to the degradations of human poverty and oppression. The choice, we believe, is largely conceptual. In practice, as in the public ministry of Jesus, the two are inseparable, at least in open societies. Rather than competing with each other, they

mutually support and strengthen each other in an upward spiral of increased concern for both.

3.1.2. GUIDELINES FOR ACTION⁴⁴¹

3.1.2.1. FORMS OF EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

We have all been familiar for years with different forms of evangelism (personal evangelism, local church evangelism, mass evangelism, cross-cultural evangelism, etc.). But we have been less clear about the different forms in which our social concern should be manifested. Throughout our Consultation we have spoken of "social responsibility", "social ministries", "social assistance", "social service", "social action", "social justice", and (as in the Lausanne Covenant) "socio-political activity". We believe that a failure to define these terms has contributed to the continuing suspicion which surrounds every Christian activity described as "social". It may be easiest to divide our Christian social responsibility into two kinds, which for simplicity's sake we will call "social service" and "social action", and which can be distinguished from each other in several ways:

<u><i>Social service</i></u>	<u><i>Social action</i></u>
Relieving human need	Removing the causes of human need
Philanthropic activity	Political and economic activity
Seeking to minister to individuals and families	Seeking to transform the structures of society
Works of mercy	The quest for justice

In making this necessary functional distinction, we recognize that in practice it is not as neat as it looks. On the one hand, social action of a political kind lacks integrity if it is not supported by a personal commitment to social service. On the other, some works of mercy have inescapably political implications—for example, teaching the oppressed to read and write, visiting a banned person in South Africa, or sending food to Poland or North Vietnam.

⁴⁴¹ Ibid., Pgs. 196-200.

1. Social Service and Evangelism

The first of these two kinds of social ministry is universally accepted as a Christian obligation; there is nothing controversial about it. Just as we are called to personal evangelism, so we are called to personal service. Jesus, we are told, both "went about ... preaching and bringing the Good News", and "went about doing good" (Luke 8:1; Acts 10:38).

All Christians should follow his example – although, to be sure, our way of sharing the Good News may not be only by preaching. Both personal evangelism and personal service are expressions of compassion. Both are forms of witness to Jesus Christ. And both should be sensitive responses to human need. The evangelist seeks to discover the principal point of felt need – for example, a sense of guilt or shame or fear, moral failure, personal loneliness, a lack of self-worth or significance, domestic unhappiness, a hunger for transcendence, lack of education, social repression, or demon activity. Similarly, a person's social needs may range from the physical (food, clothing, shelter or health care), through the psychological (anxiety, alienation, emotional unbalance) to the economic (poverty, illiteracy, unemployment). We will come to political needs later. Even in welfare states there are always areas of human need which government and voluntary agencies do not fully cover, and which Christians can take the initiative to meet.

"Development" could be put into a separate category, but it probably should be bracketed with philanthropic service, even though some community development projects embrace a whole village, town or district. It is very welcome that many welfare agencies have expanded their emphasis in recent years from aid to development, and many medical missions from curative medicine to community health. To help people learn to help themselves not only makes better sense economically, but it is also more conducive to human dignity. It is important, therefore, to ensure that self-help programmes genuinely enable people to stand on their own feet and are not devious paternalistic ploys to reinforce dependence, even subservience.

If Christian people are to get involved in humanitarian work, whether in the form of helping a neighbour or of sharing in an aid or development project, considerable sacrifices in time, energy and money will be needed. Authentic personal evangelism is equally

costly. We see Christ's call to service, both evangelistic and social, as an important challenge to our self-centred, self-loving "me generation".

2. Social Action and Evangelism

The other kind of social responsibility is the quest for justice. It looks beyond persons to structures, beyond the rehabilitation of prison inmates to the reform of the prison system, beyond improving factory conditions to securing a more participatory role for the workers, beyond caring for the poor to improving—and when necessary transforming—the economic system (whatever it may be) and the political system (again, whatever it may be), until it facilitates their liberation from poverty and oppression. Such social changes often necessitate political action (for politics is about power), and some evangelicals fear it because they imagine it will entail civil strife and even revolution. But this is not what we mean by "socio-political involvement". We are thinking rather of political processes which are consistent with biblical principles—such as the rights of the individual and of minorities, respect for civil authority, the welfare of the whole community, and justice for the oppressed.

The Bible lays great emphasis on both justice (or righteousness) and peace. For God is the author of both, and both are essential characteristics of his kingdom. We, therefore, who claim to be members of his kingdom, must not only seek justice for others but must also "do justice" ourselves (Mic. 6:8), in relation to our family, our fellow workers, and any servants or employees we may have. In the same way, it is not enough to "seek peace and pursue it"; we must also ourselves, so far as it depends on us, "live peaceably with all" (1 Pet. 3:11; Rom. 12:18). This applies to churches as well as individual Christians. If discrimination and disunity are tolerated in the church, how can we denounce them in the nation? Conversely, it is churches which visibly demonstrate the righteousness and peace of the kingdom which will make the greatest evangelistic and social impact on the world. The salt must retain its saltiness, Jesus said; otherwise, it is good for nothing (Matt. 5:13).

3.1.2.2. AGENTS OF EVANGELISM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

One of the points of tension emerging during the Consultation has concerned the allocation of responsibilities. Granted that evangelism

and social service/action are Christian responsibilities, who is responsible for what? What should be undertaken by individual Christians, what by groups, and in particular what is to be the role of the church as church?

1. Evangelism and Social Service

We all agree that alongside personal evangelism there should be personal social service. Individual Christians should be involved in both, according to their opportunities, gifts and callings.

The parallel is similar in the local church. Just as each local church has an inescapable responsibility before God to bring the gospel to all the people who reside and work in its neighbourhood, so the social needs of the neighbourhood should be a special concern of the local church.

There is also an important place for both church groups and parachurch groups. We shall have more to say about the former when we come to our section on "The Local Church in a Free Society". Parachurch organizations, both for evangelism and for social responsibility, have an indispensable part to play in Christian outreach, especially if they specialize in kinds of ministry which no church can manage on its own, and provided that they accept a measure of responsibility to the churches.

2. Evangelism and Social Action

What about social action of a political kind, in distinction to social service of a philanthropic kind? Does social action belong to the mission of the church as church, or is it the prerogative of individual believers who make up the church, and of groups?

We have no doubt about individuals and groups. The church should encourage its members to become conscientious citizens, to take the initiative to found and operate social programmes, to inform themselves about political issues, and to advocate or dissent according to their conscience.

Since individual action is usually limited in its effects, however, Christians should also be encouraged to form or join groups and movements which concern themselves with specific needs in society, undertake research into social issues, and organize appropriate action. We welcome the existence and activity of such groups, for they sup-

plement the church's work in many important areas. Christians should also be encouraged to participate responsibly in the political party of their choice, their labour union(s) or business association(s), and similar movements. Whenever possible, they should form a Christian group within them, and/or start or join a Christian party, union or movement, in order to develop specifically Christian policies.

From the activity of individuals and groups, we come back to the church. Should the church get involved in politics, or keep out? Some argue that churches which engage in socio-political action, especially on controversial issues, lose members and missionaries, because the action stirs up controversy. Others counter that different factors like theological liberalism and loss of confidence in the gospel are the real cause of dwindling numbers.

This issue is not only pragmatic, however; it is essentially theological. Behind the debate lie our differing ecclesiologies and, in particular, our differing understandings of the relationship between church and state, between the kingdom of God and what has been called the "kingdom of Caesar." At least three traditions on Christian political involvement, all deriving from the European Protestant Reformation, have been represented in our Consultation. All agree that the kingdom of God is distinct from the political realm. One sees the kingdom as opposed to that realm, and pleads for a Christian community witness independent of political institutions. A second tradition sees the kingdom as separate from the political realm, though parallel to it, and urges that Christians participate in that realm, though as citizens (not as church members) guided by Christian moral principles. The third tradition sees the kingdom of God as penetrating and transforming the political realm; it argues that political involvement belongs to the witness not only of Christian individuals and groups but also of churches.

This discussion is far from being irrelevant to evangelism. People's hearts are often opened to the gospel when they see that we genuinely care for them as persons rather than merely as souls. When they perceive that the Gospel is about the mercy and justice of God which were reconciled at Christ's cross, and see his mercy and justice still active in the situation today, they are likely to be the more ready to come to Christ.

3.2. TRANSFORMATION: THE CHURCH IN RESPONSE TO HUMAN NEED (THE WHEATON '83 STATEMENT)⁴⁴²

3.2.1. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND MERCY

26. Our time together enabled us to see that poverty is not a necessary evil but often the result of social, economic, political, and religious systems marked by injustice, exploitation, and oppression. Approximately eight hundred million people in the world are destitute, and their plight is often maintained by the rich and powerful. Evil is not only in the human heart but also in social structures. Because God is just and merciful, hating evil and loving righteousness, there is an urgent need for Christians in the present circumstances to commit ourselves to acting in mercy and seeking justice. The mission of the church includes both the proclamations of the Gospel and its demonstration. We must therefore evangelize, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation. The means we use, however, must be consistent with the end we desire.

27. As we thought of the task before us, we considered Jesus' attitude toward the power structures of His time. He was neither a Zealot nor a passive spectator of the oppression of His people. Rather, moved by compassion, He identified Himself with the poor, whom He saw as "harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matt 9:36). Though His act mercy, teaching, and lifestyle, He exposed the injustices in society and condemned the self-righteousness of its leaders (Matt. 23:25; Luke 6:37-42). His was prophetic compassion and it resulted in the formation of a community which accepted the values of the Kingdom of God and stood in contrast to the Roman and Jewish establishment. We were challenged to follow Jesus' footsteps, remembering that His compassion led Him to death (John 13:12-17; Phil. 2:6-8; 1 John 3:11-18).

28. We are aware that a Christlike identification with the poor, whether at home or abroad, in the North, South, East, or West, is always costly and may lead us also to persecution and even death. Therefore, we humbly ask God to make us willing to risk our comfort, even our lives,

⁴⁴² Vinay Samuel and Chris Sugden (eds.) *The Church in Response to Human Need*. Oxford: Regnum, 1987. (260-261; 263-264)

for the sake of the Gospel, knowing that “everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12)

29. Sometimes in our ministry among the poor we face a serious dilemma: to limit ourselves to acts of mercy to improve their lot, or to go beyond that and seek to rectify the injustice that makes such acts of mercy necessary. This step in turn may put at risk the freedom we need to continue our ministry. No rule of thumb can be given, but from a biblical perspective it is clear that justice and mercy belong together (Isa 11:1-5; Ps. 113:5-9). We must therefore make every possible effort to combine both in our ministry and be willing to suffer the consequences. We must also remember that acts of mercy highlight the injustices of the social, economic, and political structures and relationships; whether we like it or not, they may therefore lead us into confrontation with those who hold power (Acts 4:5-22). For the same reason, we must stand together with those who suffer for the sake of justice (Heb. 13:3).

30. Our ministry of justice and healing is not limited to fellow Christians. Our love and commitment must extend to the stranger (Matt. 5:43-48). Our involvement with strangers is not only through charity, but also through economic policies toward the poor. Our economic and political action is inseparable from evangelism.

31. Injustice in the modern world has reached global proportions. Many of us come from countries dominated by international business corporations and some from those whose political systems are not accountable to the people. We witness to the damaging effects that these economic and political institutions are having on people, especially on the poorest of the poor. We call on our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ to study seriously this situation and to seek ways to bring about change in favor of the oppressed. “The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern” (Prov. 29:7).

3.2.2. CHRISTIAN AID AGENCIES AND TRANSFORMATION

41. In reflection upon the Christian to human need, we have recognized the central place of the local church as the vehicle for communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ both in word and deed. Churches around the world have throughout history displayed active concern

for the needs around them and countries to serve the needy. We call upon the aid agencies to see their role as one of facilitating the churches in the fulfillment of their mission.

42. We recognize the progress, which in recent years has been made, in our understanding of the Gospel and its social and political implications. We also recognize, however, the deficiencies in our witness and affirm our desire for a fuller understanding of the biblical basis for our ministry.

43. We acknowledge that the constituency of the aid agencies is generally concerned with human suffering, hunger, and need. However, we recognize that this concern is not consistently expressed with integrity. In efforts to raise funds, the plight of the poor is often exploited in order to meet donor needs and expectations. Fund-raising activities must be in accordance with the Gospel. A stewardship responsibility of agencies is to reduce significantly their overheads in order to maximize the resource for the ministry.

44. We are challenged to implement in our organizations a positive transformation demonstrating the values of Christ and His Kingdom, which we wish to share with others. We must, for example, avoid competition with others involved in the same ministry and a success mentality that forgets God's special concern for the weak and "unsuccessful" (Gal. 2:10; Ps. 147:6). We should continually review our actions to ensure biblical integrity and genuine partnership with churches and other agencies. Decisions on ministry policy, including how resources are to be used, need to be made in consultation with the people to be served.

45. We need to ensure that our promotional efforts describe what we are actually doing. We accept the responsibility of educating our donors in the full implications of the way Christian transformation is experienced in the field. The Holy Spirit has led us to this ministry. In accepting the responsibility of education we recognize the process may cause some to question our approach. We will strive to educate with a sense of humility, patience, and courage.

46. In all of our programs and actions we should remember that God in His sovereignty and love is already active in the communities we seek to serve (Acts 14:17; 17:23; Rom. 2:9-15). Agencies, therefore, should give adequate priority to listening sensitively to the concerns of these

communities, facilitating a two-way process in communication and local ownership of programs. The guiding principle is equitable partnership in which local people and Western agencies cooperate together. Many models for development have originated in the Two-Thirds World. Christian aid agencies should in every way encourage these local initiatives to succeed. In this way the redeemed community of the Kingdom will be able to experiment with a number of models of transformation.

47. The agencies' legitimate need for accountability to donors often results in the imposition of Western management systems on local communities. This assumes that Western planning and control systems are the only ones which can ensure accountability. Since the communities these agencies seek to serve are often part of a different culture, this imposition can restrict and inhabit the sensitive process of social transformation. We call on development agencies to establish a dialogue with those they serve in order to permit the creation of systems accountability with respect to both cultures. Our ministry must always reflect our mutual interdependence in the Kingdom (Rom. 14:17-18; 1 Cor. 12).

48. In focusing on the apparently conflicting requirements of our action as Christian agencies, we are conscious of our sin and compromise. In a call to repentance we include a renunciation of inconsistency and extravagance in our personal and institutional lifestyle. We ask the Spirit of truth to lead us and make us agents of transformation (Acts 1:8).

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