

THE CHIANG MAI *Declaration*

Join 500 representatives of the Global Church from 70 nations of the world in signing the Chiang Mai Declaration online:

<https://www.worldwithoutorphans.org/declaration>

As participants in the **Global Forum for a World Without Orphans**, Chiang Mai, Thailand, Oct. 24-27, 2019, and in the humility and love of Christ, **we invite all Christ-followers to hereby affirm:**

A commitment to pursuing a world where every child is cared for in a safe and loving family, and where every child reaches their God-given potential.

We believe...

- **Children are created by God and made in God's image**, with inherent value and human rights.
- **God's design is family:** God placed his only Son as a baby in a family to be loved and nurtured while here on earth; God's desire is for every person on earth to be a part of His family.¹
- **Children belong and thrive in safe and loving families.** God wants each of us to reflect His heart for the family and orphaned and vulnerable children. Science also shows that children develop and thrive best in safe, stable, and nurturing families, with the greatest opportunity to reach their full potential.
- **The Church worldwide is uniquely positioned to advance collaboration across government, business, faiths, and other spheres of influence towards the vision of a world without orphaned and vulnerable children**, motivated by the love of our Heavenly Father, empowered by the Holy Spirit and prayer², and guided by the wisdom of Christ as revealed in Scripture.
- **Jesus cares about every child**, as He says, "Let the little children come to Me" (Matthew 19:14). Therefore, we also care about every orphaned and vulnerable child. This includes:
 - **Each child who is a social orphan**, as he/she has living parents unable to care for him/her and so lives in an orphanage or institution
 - **Each child who has orphan status**, as one or both parents is dead
 - **Each child with an orphan spirit**, such as those suffering from hopelessness and loneliness, which is common for those who have experienced sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, bullying, or exploitation (online or face-to-face)³

¹ *But we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons and daughters. Rom 8:23*

² *If two of you agree on anything whatever they shall ask, it will come to pass and be done for them by My Father in Heaven. Matt 18:19*

³ In 2019, the best estimates show there are from 2 to 8 million children living in orphanages, more than 150 million children who have lost one or both parents, and more than 1 billion children — one of every two — who experience serious abuse each and every year.

Therefore, we commit to:

1. Reminding our Christian community of the Biblical mandate to care for orphaned and vulnerable children and families. ^{4,5}
2. Calling on the church to pray for vulnerable children and families.
3. Encouraging local churches worldwide to help strengthen families, empowering and supporting parents to provide safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments and spiritual leadership, so that each child can be helped to reach their God-given potential and purpose. ⁶
4. Focusing our collective efforts on these priorities:
 1. Addressing and preventing root causes of orphanhood and vulnerability for children and families, including abuse, violence and poverty
 2. Strengthening families so they can care well for their children
 3. Ensuring that children are not unnecessarily separated from their families
 4. Safely reuniting children with their families of origin when possible
 5. Striving to ensure quality family care alternatives, such as kinship care, foster care and adoption, are accessible to children who need them. Institutional care should only be considered as the very last resort, and the goal is to help move every child closer to safe and loving family-based care
5. Making ourselves mutually accountable to use of evidence-based best practices and to the highest ethical and legal standards.
6. Dedicating ourselves to broadscale collaboration regarding care for children across churches, organizations and individuals, in cooperation with and respect for relevant government bodies.
7. Using our gifts, skills, and resources to contribute to a world where all children live in nurturing, permanent families.

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Signature - name - country

⁴ *Whoever welcomes a child like this in my name welcomes Me. Mk 9:37*

⁵ *Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for you were foreigners in Egypt. Do not take advantage of the widow or the fatherless. If you do and they cry out to me, I will certainly hear their cry. Ex 22:21-22*

⁶ *Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Dt 6:7*