



Update . . .

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Chaplan and The Kid try to run from the police.

But why do you call them orphans?

by R. David Weisskopf, chairman

Perhaps Charlie Chaplan's most meaningful film was "The Kid". An impoverished single mother tearfully abandons her newborn who winds up in the hands of Chaplan's character. Chaplan's character, who is himself impoverished, struggles very hard to raise the boy as a single father. At one point, the police take the boy away from Chaplan's character - who dramatically struggles to regain custody. The mother has gained fame and fortune by then; reunites with her son and takes in Chaplan's character.

Such performances have been so powerful that the word "orphan" brings to mind the image of an abandoned newborn baby crying in a basket. If such babies have living mothers and foster fathers like

Charlie Chaplan's character - why do we call them orphans?

I, personally, spent about half my childhood living in "orphanages" - nowadays called "children's homes". In these institutions, we kids all ate the same food, went to the same schools and slept under the same roof. I never lost contact with my parents or family - yet I lived half my childhood as an "orphan".

When I applied for financial aid to attend university, the standard application still in use today all over the United States asked me two simple questions. The first was whether I had ever been a ward of the court (or ward of the state). The second question was whether I already earned a bachelor's degree.

When my answer to the first question was “yes” and the second was “no” - I automatically received the maximum scholarships the government had to offer. It did not matter if I returned to my parents, had foster parents or was adopted. I could have even won the Lotto and still would have received the maximum financial aid. In other words, the financial aid office treated me as “an orphan” though I was in regular contact with both of my biological parents.

When biblical passages exhort us to care for “the orphans” is it only in unfortunate situations where both parents have died? Could it be that the term has a deeper and more complex meaning beyond our initial assumptions?

While most children live safely with their loving families, orphans are children who, by no fault of their own, do not live with their parents. While most children have both parents to advocate on their behalf, most orphans live at the mercy of others. Orphans are the most vulnerable people in society - therefore several biblical passages exhort us to take extra good care of them.

Perhaps artists like Charlie Chaplan and decision-makers at financial aid offices have understood the deeper significance of orphans - including those with living parents.

The Love for Israel Relief Fund applies a

broad and liberal definition to the term as we help “orphans”. We prefer to help needy Israeli youth without inadvertently turning away somebody who qualifies for the extra care which scriptures mandate for orphans. As we partner in our “orphans” projects, some of the kids are still in contact with their biological parents. While we may not all define orphans the same way, we can rest assured that these projects always bless the neediest and most vulnerable Israeli youth.

Support Our Soldiers is our project providing food for lone soldiers during the upcoming Passover season. Our first priority is to help over 150 orphans serving in the IDF and also approximately 6,000 lone new immigrants in the IDF. The number of lone soldiers we help depends upon the amount of designated funds we receive.

Special events, like weddings and bar mitzvahs, happen year round for hundreds of at-risk kids and needy young adults in Israel. Donations designated “special events” will be set aside for such use.

You can donate online at:
<http://love4israel.org/donate.html>

Send checks to:

Love for Israel Relief Fund
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Suite 190-610
Washington, DC 20004