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Raising the Future: An Introduction to Three Organizations Caring for Orphans and Vulnerable Children Using the Cluster Foster Care Model In Kwa-Zulu Natal

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RAISING THE FUTURE:

AN INTRODUCTION TO THREE ORGANIZATIONS CARING FOR ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN USING THE CLUSTER FOSTER CARE MODEL IN KWA-ZULU NATAL

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Abstract

This study is a brief introduction to the cluster foster care model of care for orphans and abandoned children as it is implemented at three organizations in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, including God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. This study provides an over view of the histories of these three organizations, their structure and networking systems, the role of foster mothers and volunteers working in each organization respectively, the methods of education employed, medical services offered and prevalence of HIV, histories of abuse and neglect amongst the children being cared for, inclusion of Christianity and culture in the lives of the children, connections with the children's communities of origin, a discussion of funding and sustainability of the cluster foster care system, and teenage rebellion amongst the children and how they are assisted in adapting to adult life.

An evaluation of the cluster foster care system follows, based on supportive or critical statements made in reference to cluster foster care by local experts in the field of childcare. An introduction to another alternative form of childcare called the Isibindi model is included as a suggestion of one local child care expert. The main source of information for this study was provided by personal meetings with members of leadership at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village, Wylie House, and iThemba Lethu conducted by the author during the month of November, 2006. Through these interactions, it was found that the cluster foster care system is implemented in varying ways at the above three organizations and that there is some disagreement among child care experts in KwaZulu Natal as to the benefits and validity of the cluster foster care system. This study concludes that further investigation is necessary to determine the value of the cluster foster care system, but that it seems to the author that while implementation of the system may be flawed in some circumstances, the system itself is not invalid.

Introduction

The children of South Africa are growing up under the threat of AIDS, violence, and poverty.¹ Thousands of them are facing these challenges to their survival with out the love and guidance of their parents. “Children in South Africa face challenges that result from historical inequalities combined with the effects of HIV/AIDS and related factors. As of July 2002, around 700 000 people in South Africa had died of AIDS, with about 1 out of 3 of these deaths occurring in KwaZulu-Natal. A projected 5 million children will be orphaned by 2015 if treatment is not availed to their mothers on a large scale.”² In the KwaZulu Natal province alone, there are expected to be 750,000 orphans over the by the year 2015³. The causes of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and other social factors contributing to the increasing numbers of orphans in South Africa are complex, and finding a way to care for all of the vulnerable children may prove to be equally as complicated. It is the opinion of the leadership at iThemba Lethu, a transition home from children in Durban, that “the growing numbers of orphans is a well-documented, potentially explosive health and social problem. The most appropriate strategy to deal with orphans is a community-based strategy. However, the communities most affected by HIV/AIDS in South Africa, are socio-economically disadvantaged and have limited resources to cope with the growing the number of orphans, as well as care for the dying.”⁴ When faced with this enormous problem, some people might choose to turn away, or grow apathetic when they see progress is slow.

Heather Reynolds, the founder and director of God’s Golden Acre, an organization caring for orphans in KwaZulu Natal implores us all to not lose compassion for the children in need.

“With out hope, they will turn to crime, drugs, and prostitution. With out help and guidance they will not be able to take their rightful place in society.

The possibility of a feral society developing within our midst and the

¹ “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006

² “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006

³ “Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack”. iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 3.

⁴ “Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack”. iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 23.

implications of that are too awful to contemplate...Are we going to secure the future of the orphans? Future generations will hold us responsible for the world we bequeath to them. Children will look back and ask us uncomprehendingly; “Why did you not do something? How could you abandon all those children, allow so many to suffer and die?”⁵

In deed, as Heather Reynolds points out, the issue of orphaned children should not only be seen as a sentimental cause to be dealt with my soft hearted do-gooders. Quite literally, whole generations of children are being abandoned and orphaned in areas of South Africa, and this could shake the foundations of the society as a whole. Therefore, I am compelled to believe “the question is not weather we should look after orphans, but rather how we should do it.”⁶ My purpose in writing this paper is to probe into the question of how orphaned and abandoned children are being cared for currently in KwaZulu Natal. More specifically, my goal is to begin to explore the concept of cluster foster care as it is implemented by three child care organization : God’s Golden Acre Khaliyhle, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village.

The cluster foster care model was developed only ten years ago, and originated in KwaZulu Natal. “The idea of cluster foster care developed when Child Welfare [in Pietermaritzburg] noted a trebling in the number of abandoned children with HIV referred during 1996.”⁷ and according to Julie Todd, the current Director of Child Welfare in Pietermaritzburg “it was this society who originally coined the phrase “cluster foster care”⁸ that same year. The Department of Social Welfare defines cluster foster care as “a scheme where not more than 6 children are found to be in need of care and are placed by an order of children’s court in the care of foster parents who have been screened and live in close proximity. This scheme is community and family oriented in that children are cared for in the community and that siblings can be kept together. A Cluster foster care scheme can be initiated by a group of individuals, a religious or a child

⁵ LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 318.

⁶ “Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack”. iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 9.

⁷ Simon-Meyer, Janine. “HIV/AIDS BEST PRACTICE SERIES”. Children in Distress (CINDI). Funded by The Department for International Development (DFID) Southern Africa. Published by Department of Health, South Africa 2000. <http://www.cadre.org.za/pdf/pdf/Cindi.pdf>.

⁸ Email, Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare. November 15, 2006

protection organization. Foster parents participating in this model of care could be linked to a body that manages this scheme. Foster parents retain autonomy regarding decisions pertaining to the care of foster children subject to supervision by the social worker as determined by the court. There is no requirement for registration of the scheme and the Department may determine the need for such a service.”⁹

God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village all function under this system, implementing the cluster foster scheme in using differing methods. I do not claim that this study provides a comprehensive understanding of either the cluster foster care model or any childcare organization. This paper should be read as an introduction to the concept of the cluster foster care system and one person’s understanding of how that system is implemented at God’s Golden Acre near Cato Ridge, the Kenosis Community in Bishopstowe, and the SOS Children’s Village in Grange, Pietermaritzburg. While it might be preferable for some purposes to read an impartial, objective study on the cluster foster care system, I must fully admit that this paper is biased, riddled with my own opinions, and may contain errors due to my own limitations as an undergraduate researcher. I am a twenty-two year old female American university student. I am a Christian and consider myself to be a feminist. I am about to complete my Bachelor’s degree in International Relations, and for the two and half months leading up to the inception of this study I have been a part of an American study abroad program¹⁰ in Durban, South Africa, focused on issues of public health. I am not in any sense an expert on childcare, social services, or any other element of this topic.

However, I do have a vested interest in the area of orphan care as I have previously volunteered at a home for AIDS orphans in Soroti, Uganda¹¹. My main motivation for attempting this study was to educate myself on both the complexities of the orphan issue in KwaZulu Natal and the possible benefits of the cluster foster care system. In the future my personal goal is to work with, or on behalf of, orphans

⁹ “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006.

¹⁰ School For International Training (SIT). Public Health: South Africa. Durban. Fall 2006.

¹¹ Youth With A Mission, Year for God Program. 2002-2003.

elsewhere in Africa and I hope that the knowledge I have gained through this exercise will aid me in that work.

Methodologies

To learn about how the cluster foster care model is used at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village, I visited these organizations and spent roughly two hours speaking with members of the leadership therein. In order to gain more perspective of the cluster foster care system and how it differs from other forms of alternative child care, I also met with Nazli Finch, the director of Wylie House in Durban as well as Liz Holley, the house mother at iThemba Lethu. Both of these organizations work with children in Durban but neither uses the cluster foster care system. Although all of these meetings were unique, I asked similar questions at each location pertaining to the structure of the child care projects, the background of the children who were living there, the education and healthcare provided for the children, and other issues. A more complete list of these questions can be found in the appendix. The meetings were fairly casual, although I did take notes as my informants spoke, with their informed consent. Upon returning from each meeting, I typed the notes I had written and added my thoughts and impressions to compile a base of information which I have depended on heavily while writing this final product.

As much as I was able, I tried to record the exact words and phrases spoken by my informants. It is possible, however, that I may have incorrectly interpreted or recorded the some information the following people shared with me. In cases in which I did not directly note the exact words spoken during the meeting, I have sited the information as a paraphrase.

In addition to these personal interactions, I also read two books and multiple on-line sources to provide some background knowledge of the cluster foster care system, the South African government's position on child care issues, and the three organizations. I have also contacted Julie Todd of Child Welfare in Pietermaritzburg and Yvonne Spain, the current director of Children in Distress (CINDI), and information I gathered via emails with them have also been included in this paper.

Limitations of the study

This study has been limited by a number of factors. Primarily, my own shortcomings as an inexperienced researcher and a foreigner in South Africa have skewed and limited the scope and depth of this report. My lack of knowledge on the subject of the needs of children and child care models greatly restrict the depth and validity of the questions I asked during meeting with experts and the resulting information I gathered. Secondly, I have intentionally limited this study to the personal knowledge and opinions of a handful of people including my informants at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, Wylie House, and iThemba Lethu, with supporting information provided through correspondence with Julie Todd of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare and Yvonne Spain of Children in Distress (CINDI), and written literature listed in both the above literature review and following bibliography. This paper should be read as narrow view of the cluster foster care system and its implementation in the above organizations filtered through my own biases, not as an attempt as a comprehensive objective study.

I was also limited in my work by issues of time and resources at my disposal. I worked on a shared computer which limited the amount of time I had to write, and therefore may have negatively impacted the quality of my writing. Restricted transportation means and funds were also limiting factors.

In a few cases, I attempted to contact child care experts or other people who may have been helpful in guiding this study, but was unable to meet with them due to their own time restrictions or lack of interest. Their input may have caused this study to evolve quite differently than it has. Cultural and linguistic factors have also limited the information available to me. I do not speak isiZulu or any other language spoken in South Africa aside from English. That lack of skill has caused me to focus my work around English speaking people, all of whom are highly educated. My intention was never to address cluster foster care from a black person's perspective, however this decision was partly based on assumed language and cultural obstacles. Had I spoken to another demographic of people, the resulting data would no doubt have been different. The intended length of this paper has also proved to be a constraining factor. For instance I considered attempting to contact Dr. McKerrow, an individual who's name continually popped up as I researched the topic of cluster

foster care in KwaZulu Natal, but decided not to due to time constraints and the limited size of this study.

Introduction to Informants

While conducting these informal interviews, I was able to meet with a variety of people who work with children using the cluster foster care system. Each of my informants naturally speak through their own biases and experiences, and this must also influence the message of my work.

I met with Caroline Horn, the volunteer educational programs coordinator at God's Golden Acre, in her office on the site of the childcare project on November 10, 2006. God's Golden Acre is a Christian organization caring for children using the cluster foster care model, and is located near Cato Ridge in KwaZulu Natal. Caroline is an English woman in her late twenties, and at the time of our meeting she had been in South Africa for approximately two months. Caroline was trained as a schoolteacher in England, and was motivated to volunteer at God's Golden Acre by her Christian beliefs. I was put into contact with Caroline Horn by my fiancé's mother, who attended church with Caroline in England. On the day of my visit to God's Golden Acre, the director Heather Reynolds was not available to meet with me as she was in Germany on a fund-raising excursion.

On November 16, 2006, I met with Elke Carrihill at her home which is located on the grounds of the Kenosis Community in Bishopstowe, near Pietermaritzburg. Elke is the director of the childcare project at Kenosis which cares for children using the cluster foster care system. She is a white South African woman; she is married and has one young child. Elke first came to the Kenosis community as a student of Theology as the Kenosis community was not originally a childcare centre, but a women's lay ministry headed by retired professor of theology Gunther Wittenberg. Elke lived at Kenosis while studying in Pietermaritzburg. She did her practical work for her degree in Theology in Namibia and then taught for a time before going back to Kenosis to become the director after the previous head, Professor Wittenberg, retired from his position at Kenosis. She is a Lutheran pastor, but for now has decided to live out her faith through her work with the children's project rather than leading a church congregation. In her words, Elke enjoys a "quite flexible work

schedule”¹²; she generally works from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon on the average day at the Kenosis Community, mostly handling administrative tasks, fundraising, and managing projects such as the outreach programs Kenosis run in local farming communities.

I met with Saphiwe Maphanga, the director of SOS Children’s Village, Pietermaritzburg, as well as Dumile Goba, the Child and Youth Development Coordinator at the SOS Children’s Village on November 23, 2006. Saphiwe Maphanga is a Zulu man who has been headed the SOS Children’s Village for approximately two years. Saphiwe was a schoolteacher before taking up his position at the SOS Children’s Village and he loves working with children. He says it is very fulfilling for him to be involved in the lives of the children day in and day out. His family also lives with him on the site of the childcare project, and his children play with the children who are in residence at the SOS Children’s Village.

Dumile Goba, Child and Youth Development Coordinator at the SOS Children’s Village, is Zulu woman who appeared to be in her thirties. Although I did not have a meeting scheduled with her, Dumile graciously offered to speak to me for a few moments while I waited to meet with Saphiwe Maphanga.

Nazli Finch, a petite South African woman of Indian descent, is the director of Wylie House, a program which cares for abused, drug addicted, and homeless girls in Durban. I met with Nazli at her office at Wylie House on November 21, 2006, and she provided me with her opinions of the failings of the cluster foster care system.

I met with Liz Holley, the house mother at iThemba Lethu on November 22, 2006. Liz is a middle-aged white South African woman who provided me with her insights into the adoption process which is in operation at iThemba Lethu, a small transition home for children.

¹² Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe KwaZulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

Literature Review

Two books in particular provided me with background information for God's Golden Acre as well as more general information about orphans and vulnerable children in KwaZulu Natal. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds" by Dale leVack, published in 2005 gives a detailed and in-depth account of Heather Reynolds's life as well as the interworking of God's Golden Acre. This book is largely based on interviews with Heather Reynolds and supplied me with all of the quotes I have from her in this paper.

"Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis" by Emma Guest, published in 2001, gives the stories of orphans and vulnerable children living in a variety of care situations in South Africa, Uganda, and Zambia. Chapter five "Hope in the Hills: Cluster Fostering in Rural KwaZulu Natal, South Africa" is about God's Golden Acre and provided me with a different perspective of the organization as well as her analysis and a few quotes from local experts.

Julie Todd, the director of Child Welfare in Pietermaritzburg, sent me the "KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy, Final Draft" via email on November 17, 2006. This document is an official draft policy produced by the South African government, but I have been unable to find the date or compilation, names of specific authors, or other citations for this document. Nazli Finch also referred to this draft policy during my meeting with her on November 21, 2006, and I have drawn useful information from it regarding the government's position on the cluster foster care model.

For information about the adoption practices and child histories at iThemba Lethu, I referred to the IThemba Lethu Resource Pack on Adoption and Fostering written by the director Glenda, and the iThemba Lethu Annual report from 2005.

Comparison of God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village

Background and Histories

God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg are unique entities; each with their own detailed histories. God's Golden Acre grew organically out of one woman's compassion for people in need, the Kenosis Community evolved out of the mission of a Lutheran church, and the SOS Children's Village, Pietermaritzburg is an application of a model of child care used by an international organization all over the world. However, these three organizations share a common cause, born out of need in the communities of Kwa-Zulu Natal, and each organization was initiated by local people who desired to meet the needs of children around them.

God's Golden Acre

My writing on God's Golden Acre must begin with introducing Heather Reynolds, the founder and director God's Golden Acre. It would be impossible to separate Heather's life story from the history of God's Golden Acre as in many ways they are one in the same. Heather was born in January 1952, the second youngest in a family of five. Parents John and Brenda McLellan who ran a trading station ten miles outside of the town of Mtubatuba in KwaZulu Natal. "Usually the families running trading stations were the only whites in the neighbourhood, so Heather's friends and contemporaries, aside from her brothers and sister, were black"¹³. This enabled Heather to be fluent in isiZulu, and later when the family moved, isiXhosa, as well as her native English. Heather was a very sensitive child who often took in stray or injured animals and nursed them back to health, and she was also very compassionate toward her older brother, Kenny, who suffered from cerebral palsy.

Heather was a lonely young person due to her father's drinking problem and violence at home as well as other factors. She was, and still is today, a very sensitive

¹³ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 63.

person, often moved to tears by the suffering of others¹⁴. Heather left school at the age of 16 even though she was a bright student who was expected to matriculate and go on to pursue higher education. Heather worked in Pietermaritzburg and Durban for a brief period after leaving school. Then she moved to Kokstad to work at a hospital in order to help care for her disabled brother, Kenny, who was a patient there.¹⁵ Heather did not stay long at the hospital however because she was too sensitive, and couldn't handle the grief of patients being sick and dying. For a while Heather worked for an insurance company, but the work was stressful and unfulfilling for Heather.¹⁶ She later took a position at a rehabilitation centre, again to be close to Kenny, and there she met her second husband, Patrick Reynolds.

Patrick is an artists who originally sculpted figures out of wood and later in bronze. In order to work as artists full time, in 1983 Heather and Patrick moved to a farmhouse in Dalton called Deep Haven. Patrick sculpted, and Heather ran a business creating ceramic vessels in which to grow bonsai trees.¹⁷

Heather began to employ local Zulu women to work with her in the ceramics studio, and from there Heather developed links to the Zulu community. One day a pregnant fourteen-year-old Zulu girl came to Heather asking for work. She had no parents, and was alone. Even though Heather knew she would be met with hostility from her family and white community for living with a black girl and her baby, Heather took the girl in ¹⁸The political situation in the area began to deteriorate, and more and more girls began to show up at Deep Haven. Soon seventeen age girls and their babies were living with the Reynolds, assisting them with the work of the ceramics business.

Heather became more and more dedicated to her Christian faith, as well as to her work at the bonsai studio and to the girls she was sheltering. She became detached from the white community around her and "most people around Dalton regarded them as eccentric. By now the white community was anticipating a bloodbath in the rural areas as the country moved through the transitional period to

¹⁴ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 80.

¹⁵ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 82.

¹⁶ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005.

¹⁷ LeVack, Dale. Chapter 16 and 17.

¹⁸ LeVack, Dale. page 131.

majority rule and a black government”¹⁹. By 1989, Heather felt she had to get involved in the struggle which was becoming increasingly violent, but mercifully neither the ANC or the IFP saw Heather and Patrick’s actions as political. The couple began to take in children who were being orphaned by violence, as well as transport injured people from the valleys to the hospital. They crossed over ANC and IFP lines in the valleys, risking their own lives to help bury the dead in proper Zulu fashion. Eventually, Heather and Patrick began to take people into their own home. “One day in 1993, in the cold weather, a group of thirty-eight destitute women and children arrived at Deep Valley, pleading for shelter and food. They had walked twenty kilometres from the Swayimane, in driving wind and rain, to find sanctuary with the Reynolds...Heather opened up a big shed, and made a base on the floor from the newspapers used from wrapping the [bonsai] pots...The stayed at Deep Valley for nearly two weeks”.²⁰

Heather decided to start a program to help the people staying with her, and others who were impoverished all around her, to be self-sufficient. She heard of a job opening with cement company who needed someone to market their products in Uganda, Kenya, Egypt, and Dubai. They were offering one million Rand, so Heather applied and was accepted for the job as away to raise funds for charity work. She flew to Uganda in 1992, and before she had begun her work trying to market the cement products, she went on a drive around the country. Near Mbale in Eastern Uganda, Heather had her first encounter with AIDS orphans. She relates “I saw a group of children. They were strangely quiet. I asked, “Who are these children?” And Tim, my guide, said, “Oh, these are the AIDS orphans.” They looked starving....I went into one of the huts, and there was a child dying on the floor, stomach out to there. I was totally unprepared for this”²¹ Heather felt God had led her to this place, and she vowed “God, from this day on, I will help every child in need, every child that needs a home, every child that needs food that crosses my path.”²²

Heather returned to South Africa with a plan to begin a program for AIDS orphans in Uganda. She had felt already that she should name the project God’s

¹⁹ LeVack, Dale. page 137.

²⁰ LeVack, Dale. page 140.

²¹ Guest, Emma. “Children of AIDS: Africa’s Orphan Crisis”. Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. Page 71.

²² Guest, Emma. page 146.

Golden Acre; she felt God had put this name into her mind. The refugees had left Deep Valley before she returned home, and had apparently found a way to help themselves.

Heather and Patrick moved to a house in the German community of Wartburg, and soon discovered that the company she had been marketing cement for had filed for bankruptcy and she was never paid for her work. One evening, Heather and Patrick saw a TV programme about AIDS, and heard the statistics that an estimated 2 million children in Southern Africa were going to be orphaned in the next decade.²³ Heather was shocked, and called the expert from the program- Dr. Neil McKerrow of the Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg. Heather told him about what she had seen in Uganda and that she wanted to help the children there. Dr. McKerrow told her that instead of relocating to Uganda, she would be better off staying where she was and helping the Zulu people in her own area because soon there would be thousands of orphans in KwaZulu Natal. Dr. McKerrow also suggested that Heather consider using the cluster-foster care model if she was going to start an orphan's project, and put her in touch with some people working with AIDS training in KwaZulu Natal. He described the cluster-foster system as "creating small family units around a foster parent and giving that small nucleus, of perhaps six or seven people, all the help and support it needs to sustain itself"²⁴. Heather met with a lot of opposition in her initial meetings with AIDS experts, NGOs and development agencies due to her religious zeal and intense personality. She did find some supporters, however, and God's Golden Acre began to take shape.

Heather continued to take in more and more sick, abused, and abandoned babies and children from the surrounding valleys near Wartburg. Heather covered her living room floor with mattresses, and at once time there were up to twenty-four babies and toddlers sleeping there, receiving round the clock attention from Heather and her Zulu employees at the ceramics studio. "By 1997, they had approximately thirty children and were feeding them, educating them, supplying nappies, medication, and bearing all living costs. Yet they had no money. The importance of their work was going largely unnoticed by the outside world."²⁵

²³ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005.

²⁴ LeVack, Dale. page 155.

²⁵ LeVack, Dale. page 166.

In 1996, Heather received the SANLAM Bridge-Builders Award from Archbishop Desmond Tutu for the work she had done during the transition years.²⁶ However, most people in the Wartburg community did not support the work that Heather was doing. Essentially, many of the Reynolds's white neighbours, with the exception of their pastor, though Heather was eccentric and did not like the idea of a white family helping and living with black children. They say the project as a waste of time, and eventually the Reynolds's were forced to move from their home in Wartburg.²⁷ Heather remembers "people would ask me why I was wasting people's money and time on these kids. One man told me to "Put the whole damn lot of them down a mine shaft, and do me a favour, seal it to make sure those things don't come out."'²⁸

After facing bankruptcy, many trials and hardships, the Reynolds's managed to buy a failing resort near Cato Ridge in August 1999 with a large donation from a Christian couple in the Netherlands. This is now the site of God's Golden Acre, on top of a hill with amazing picturesque views of the surrounding valleys. In the early days of God's Golden Acre, Heather would drive into the local valleys to assist struggling families, and upon finding orphaned or abandoned children, would bring them home with her. It is somewhat unclear to me if all of these children were legally processed or official fostered. Now, however, God's Golden Acre has reached their capacity and Heather no longer brings children in. However, volunteer educational programs coordinator Caroline Horn mentioned to me during a recent visit "if a child in need was brought to God's Golden Acre, I doubt Heather would turn them away".²⁹

In 2001, when Emma Guest was writing "Children of AIDS, Africa's Orphan Crisis", Heather described her vision for the cluster foster care system at God's Golden Acre as " a group of foster mums living in close proximity, depending on each other. They'll have semi-detached homes with connecting doors so if one foster mum is ill or needs time off, there'll be another next door who will be able to look

²⁶ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005

²⁷ LeVack, Dale. Chapters 20 and 25.

²⁸ Guest, Emma. "Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis". Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 75.

²⁹ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

after the children.”³⁰ Heather’s vision for God’s Golden Acre continues to expand, even beyond the cluster foster care programs. Programs at God’s Golden Acre now include the Young Zulu Warriors performance group which travels the world performing to raise fund for Gods’ Golden Acre, “Heather has also established an extensive rural outreach project that now cares for more than four thousand orphaned and abandoned children who were living in appalling conditions, providing a basic food parcel, education and school uniforms”³¹, Heather has also started a child sponsorship program so people can support children at GGA and in the surrounding valleys internationally, Heather has also started a project that has more than one hundred soccer teams to help keep kids busy so they wont get involved with drugs and gangs. The children are also given lessons by coaches when finances permit.³²

The mission statement of God’s Golden Acre, according to the organization’s website reads “God’s Golden Acre...is a non profit making charity involved in the care of children who have been orphaned or abandoned because of HIV/AIDS related illness and violence. The project is located in the South African province of Kwa Zulu-Natal, in the valley of a thousand hills. Rather than simply putting the children in orphanages, God’s Golden Acre primarily strives to keep children in their community setting by assisting families using various initiatives to support themselves.”³³ The objectives of God’s Golden Acre include providing children with a good education, assisting them to become well-adjusted adults, to develop the natural talents and aptitudes of each and every child, and to provide them a caring, loving, nurturing, compassionate community environment” (ibid).

Heather Reynold’s remains as the driving force behind all of the work of God’s Golden Acre, and her strong personality is seen both as the source of problems and solutions with in the organization she created. “People who meet Heather for the first time are struck by her softness of nature, good humour, and concern for other people...On the other hand, she can flare up easily, and can be so stubborn she sometimes fails to see the logic in an argument that appears to contradict her point of

³⁰ Guest, Emma. “Children of AIDS: Africa’s Orphan Crisis”. Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 78.

³¹ God’s Golden Acre. <http://www.godsgoldenacre.org.uk/>

³² God’s Golden Acre. <http://www.godsgoldenacre.org.uk/>

³³ God’s Golden Acre. <http://www.godsgoldenacre.org.uk/>

view. There is also a tough streak which some at first mistake for selfishness”.³⁴ Heather has been described as wonderful by some, but others continue to see her as an eccentric, egoistic, and even crazy. From all accounts, I gather that this has been Heather’s struggle for her entire life. “Heather is used to encountering scepticism when she lays out her grand vision...She becomes defensive if she feels someone is not with her. ‘It’s easier to explain to people who believe, because they don’t think I’m crazy’, she explains. She asks everyone if they are Christian, and it worries her if they’re not. Her evangelism puts some people off.”³⁵ Mark Loudin was the director of Children in Distress (CINDI) in the mid 1990s, an organization in which God’s Golden Acre is an active member. “Mark remembers how Heather runs her organization: “Heather kept changing her mission. One time it might be ‘we need funding for an airline ticket to go to America to sell my husband’s sculpture to get money to run our children’s home’. The next time, it might be something completely different. It became hair-raising.”³⁶

To paraphrase a comment that God’s Golden Acre volunteer Caroline Horn said in a meeting on November 10th, 2006 “When Heather wants something done, it happens”. Heather’s vision for God’s Golden Acre is expansive, and continues to grow all the time. Currently at God’s Golden Acre Khaliyhle, there are eighty children in residence. The children live in three houses on the property, Phase 4 houses girls thirteen years of age and older, Phase 5 is home to boys age thirteen and above, and the house called Jabulani is the residence of boys and girls up to age twelve. There is also a crèche on site where children up to the age of three are cared for during the day. International volunteers referred to as *mamas* and *babas*³⁷ live in the homes with the children, sleeping in separate bedrooms. At night, Zulu women the children call *Gogos*, the Zulu word meaning grandmother, sleep in one of the children’s rooms and attend to their needs. One counsellor and one social worker work at God’s Golden Acre, and others are being trained to join in the work. There are many other buildings on the property, some which remain from the resort which

³⁴ LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 213.

³⁵ Guest, Emma. “Children of AIDS: Africa’s Orphan Crisis”. Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 79.

³⁶ Guest, Emma. “Children of AIDS: Africa’s Orphan Crisis”. Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 80.

³⁷ *Baba* is the Zulu word for father, and *mama* refers to mothers. *Gogo* is the Zulu word for grandmother.

formerly operated there and others which have been built by the Reynolds over the years. Heather and Patrick live in a large, thatch roofed home near the entrance to God's Golden Acre, and on the property there is also a large dining hall and kitchen where all the children and Gogos have their meals, a theatre where the Young Zulu Warriors practice and perform, many outbuildings and various offices.

From humble beginnings, Heather and her associates have built up a veritable village centered around the care of children. As volunteer Caroline Horn told me, the multitude of people who make up God's Golden Acre feel they are "Like one big family".³⁸

Kenosis Community

The Kenosis Community, located in Bishopstowe just outside of Pietermaritzburg, was not originally a childcare centre, but a women's lay ministry program headed by retired professor of theology Gunther Wittenberg on the site of an old Lutheran church. The residential care programme at the Kenosis community was started in April of 1997 when a schoolgirl waiting for an ambulance gave birth to a baby girl on the lawn next to the church building. A few weeks later, the teen mother died of AIDS and the baby was cared for at Kenosis until being adopted by the family living next door. Due to this incident as well as the mounting number of HIV/AIDS cases in the local community, "Kenosis became sensitive to the alarming growth of the AIDS epidemic in KwaZulu Natal"³⁹ and the Kenosis AIDS Orphans Project was launched with the help of Children in Distress (CINDI) as well as "AIDS and CHILD, Swiss Foundation for Direct Assistance to Children Affected by AIDS".⁴⁰

The Kenosis community is partially funded by a retreat centre, which was built in 2003, and is comprised of log cabins and an air-conditioned meeting space. "After a quiet two-year period, the Retreat is starting to take off and soon we hope to be supporting the Kenosis Community in a big way. This is, after all, why the Retreat was started in the first place"⁴¹. Kenosis relies mainly on word of mouth to advertise

³⁸ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, KwaZulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

³⁹ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴⁰ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴¹ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

the retreat centre which is “located on the eastern side of Pietermaritzburg with magnificent views over the city” (ibid).

According to the Kenosis website, “CINDI...advised Kenosis to go the route of Cluster Foster Homes”.⁴² Children in Distress (CINDI) is familiar with many different modes of orphan care, and wherever possible they prefer that children are cared for by their own extended family. Where this is not possible, they recommend that “substitute or foster care families within communities need to be identified who would care for the children”.(ibid) These foster families may then form into cluster-foster groups where foster mothers live together with the children they care for in the context of the community. Kenosis and CINDI agree “Orphanages are considered only a last resort, when all other options seem not appropriate”.⁴³ The childcare project started in 1998, with the first children arriving at Kenosis in 1999.⁴⁴ The children living at Kenosis may have first been identified as being in need of assistance either by a member of the Kenosis community or by a social worker, but all of the children were official placed in the care of Kenosis through official channels. Kenosis Community Director Elke Carrihill informed me that “[Kenosis] works closely with the local social welfare department, social workers, local schools, and the police”⁴⁵.

The Kenosis community lies in an agricultural area of KwaZulu Natal, and it is therefore fitting that they were inspired by a model of child care developed in Zimbabwe by the Farmers Orphans Support Trust (FOST).⁴⁶ FOST works to encourage farmers in Zimbabwe to care for children living on their farms. "The programme is based on the belief that orphaned children have the best opportunity for development within a family, remaining in their family groups without sibling separation, in an environment that is familiar and where they can learn their culture first hand." (Dr. Sue Perry as quoted on Kenosis website)⁴⁷.

As of February 2005, the Kenosis community has grown to a “village” or six houses. Three of the houses are foster care homes with one foster mother and six

⁴² Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴³ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴⁴ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁴⁵ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁴⁶ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴⁷ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

children living in each home. The foster mothers were assisted by relatives or friends who stay with them at Kenosis. In total, the Kenosis community is able to foster up to eighteen children at a time. In addition to the three foster homes, three other houses were built on the site to house families who work at Kenosis. From my observation during a recent visit to the Kenosis community, the utilitarian buildings which make up the village all seemed to be in good condition.

The children living at Kenosis come from a variety of home situations. Some were abandoned by their mothers at birth, leaving them with no birth certificate or links to an extended family. Some of the children come from emotionally, physically, or sexually abusive home environments, and some were orphaned by AIDS. “In other words, the children are not only 'AIDS orphans' per se. However, given the statistics of HIV / AIDS in South Africa, it is our opinion that there are hardly any children that are not affected by AIDS in one way or the other.”⁴⁸ Children who are considered to be vulnerable and in need of foster care are referred to Kenosis by the organization Child Welfare or the Welfare Department of State (ibid). Kenosis prefers to take in children who are younger than seven years of age. They feel that “this reduces initial problems of integration into the family as well as schooling” (ibid). However, Kenosis has a policy of not separating sibling groups and in this way children over the age of seven may also be taken into the Kenosis community. When possible, children cared for at Kenosis are returned to their families of origin or placed in adoptive families. Many children may never be adopted or returned home, and these children may stay at Kenosis indefinitely.⁴⁹ The children are educated at a local school in the suburb of Glenwood, and are transported by Kenosis.

The three foster mothers caring for children at Kenosis are Thandelkile Hlongwane, Nomthandazo, and Hlengiwe Dlundla. Thandelkile Hlongwane came to Kenosis in February 2000, and was the first foster mother at Kenosis. She was trained as a childcare provider at Pietermaritzburg Children’s Home and gained practical skills while working with orphaned children at Thandanandi, an organization affiliated with Grey’s Hospital. Nomthandazo joined Kenosis in September 2003, taking the place of her sister who was a foster mother at Kenosis until her death. Nomthandazo had previously assisted her sister in the care of the children at

⁴⁸ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁴⁹ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

Kenosis, and “it seemed to all the best solution [for Nomthandazo to become the foster mother], as the children had already built up a relationship with her, to leave them in her care after their foster mother had passed away”.⁵⁰ Hlengiwe Dlodla was orphaned herself, and at the age of seventeen took on the responsibility of raising her four younger siblings. “This experience gave her the necessary qualification to take on the responsibility of fostering orphaned children at Kenosis”.⁵¹

The leaders of the Kenosis community recognise the growing numbers of orphans in the area, and see that housing just eighteen children will not solve the larger problem. According to Kenosis Community Director Elke Carrihill, over the years, the leadership at Kenosis have considered expanding and building more foster homes on the site. They have plenty of space on the property and they see that there is a big need in the community. However, they have decided to not expand because they thought that might degrade the quality of care the children receive. Elke says their focus is on “qualitative, not quantitative [care]”.⁵² The small numbers help them to keep the focus on the individual children; they didn’t want to lose sight of the unique needs and personality of each child. EC feels that if they took on more kids, the community might feel too “institutional”. Like God’s Golden Acre, Elke says that Kenosis really feels like “one big family”⁵³, and she wouldn’t want to jeopardize that. Logistically, taking on more than eighteen children poses problems with transportation and other daily needs. With eighteen children in residential care, Kenosis can function with one “kombi”⁵⁴ for example. Elke explains “If they had more kids they would need more drivers, more vehicles, more staff, and more funding; it would all get too huge”⁵⁵. To address the larger needs of the community around Bishopstowe, Kenosis operates an Early Childhood Development Centre and a crèche, as well as supporting the farm labourer families and communities in the area.

Kenosis states on their website that they seek to provide “Quality Care for Vulnerable Children”. Their objectives are “to provide a home for vulnerable

⁵⁰ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁵¹ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁵² Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁵³ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁵⁴ Multiple passenger vehicle.

⁵⁵ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

children and children orphaned by HIV / AIDS; to install in them an Identity and Christian Values which include: respect for self, other and the environment; acceptance, love, compassion; and to further the educational development of these children” .⁵⁶

Currently, Kenosis is operating at capacity, housing eighteen children in the three residential care homes, with one foster mother in each home. The children at Kenosis currently ranging in ages from ages two to thirteen years, and unlike God’s Golden Acre, they live in mixed gender and age groups like a natural family. The staff also have children on site who live with their parents in staff houses directly opposite the foster homes, so in total there are 28 kids at Kenosis.⁵⁷ This cluster of six homes adjacent to the crèche, which cares for kids from the surrounding area as well as the younger kids who live at Kenosis, gives Kenosis the feeling of a tiny village. The staff and caregivers at Kenosis try to treat all the children equally, not favouring the “orphans” over the staff children. If donations or gifts are sent to the community they are distributed equally, Kenosis Coordinator Elke Carrihill motto is “either everyone gets something or no-one gets anything”.⁵⁸ There are three foster houses in the Kenosis village and three staff houses, plus the house for volunteers and the Carrihills home, which are slightly removed from the other houses (ibid).

During a recent visit to the Kenosis Community, I was struck by the feeling that over all, Kenosis seemed extremely homey, quiet, and peaceful. Although it may be true that any children’s project of size includes some element of chaos, Kenosis seemed rather orderly and comforting.

SOS Children’s Villages

The SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg is from its inception quite different from God’s Golden Acre or the Kenosis Community because it is a part of an international organization of children’s care centres. The history of the SOS Children’s Villages spans half a century and almost every part of the world. Hermann Gmeiner, founder of SOS Children’s Villages International, was born to a

⁵⁶ ⁵⁶ Kenosis Community. <http://www.kenosis.org.za/residentialcare.html>

⁵⁷ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁵⁸ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

large farming family in Vorarlzburg, Austria on June 23rd, 1919. His mother died when he was a young boy, leaving his older sister Elsa to care for her younger brothers and sisters. After serving as a soldier in Russia during World War II, Gmeiner worked as a child welfare worker. Through these experiences, Gmeiner was “confronted with the isolation and suffering of the many war orphans and homeless children”⁵⁹, and this compelled him to establish the SOS Children’s Village Association in 1949 and the first SOS Children’s Village in Imst, Austria. It was Gmeiner’s “conviction that help can never be effective as long as the children have to grow up without a home of their own” (ibid). SOS Children’s Villages are founded on Gmeiner’s “commitment to a family-centred child-care concept based on the four pillars of a mother, a house, brothers and sisters, and a village”.

The cluster foster care model is inherent in the SOS system. Small groups of children live in individual homes with one foster mother, and these homes are arranged in villages of varying sizes under the leadership of a director. SOS Children’s Villages now operate in “1,799 facilities and programmes in 132 countries and territories”⁶⁰, and for his groundbreaking work on the behalf of orphans and vulnerable children, Gmeiner was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize multiple times. SOS International has also expanded in scope. In addition to caring for children using the village model, “438 SOS Children's Villages and 346

SOS Youth Facilities provide more than 60,000 children and youths in need with a new home. More than 131,000 children/youths attend SOS Kindergartens, SOS Hermann Gmeiner Schools and SOS Vocational Training Centres. Around 397,000 people benefit from the services provided by SOS Medical Centres, 115,000 people from services provided by SOS Social Centres. SOS Children's Villages also helps in situations of crisis and disaster through emergency relief programmes.”⁶¹

The need for a Village in Pietermaritzburg began in 1991, when 300 abandoned children could be found living within the hospitals of KwaZulu Natal. Approximately 5 % of these children were adopted or placed in existing child

⁵⁹ “Hermann Gmeiner”. From Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedic.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Gmeiner

⁶⁰ SOS Children’s Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

⁶¹ “Hermann Gmeiner”. From Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedic.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Gmeiner.

welfare institutions annually. The remaining 95 % lived in hospital wards.⁶² In the words of SOS Children's Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga, "Families were taking their children to the Edendale Hospital in Pietermaritzburg during the violence and dumped them there."⁶³ Dr McKerrow, a well known paediatrician who was also influential in the formation of God's Golden Acre and Children in Distress (CINDI), asked SOS Children's Villages Association, South Africa for assistance. "Due to the urgency of the situation, an emergency phase was set up - three houses were rented in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg which accommodated twenty-four children and three mothers. However, due to an ever increasing demand the building of an SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg became a necessity".⁶⁴ According to Saphiwe Maphanga, the current Director of the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, initially the children who came to the SOS village in the 1990's were being displaced or orphaned by the civil war and violence between the IFP and ANC. The construction of this Village began in 1994 on land donated by the municipality.⁶⁵ The Village was officially opened on 28th March 1998 by the honourable Archbishop Desmond Tutu.⁶⁶

"April 1996 saw the completion of 15 family houses, 2 youth houses, a Kindergarten, administration block, workshop, community centre and 2 staff houses. The Village has a capacity to be a home to 130 children, 10 in each family house and 10 boys and 10 girls in each of the youth houses" (ibid). The SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg is located in the suburb of Grange, an area that is surrounded by impoverished black townships where "only 22 % of this population is employed".⁶⁷ The children who live at the SOS Village today are generally orphaned or abandoned due to AIDS or other social issues. Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga explains that "some of them have grannies or other relatives, but they often can't afford to take

⁶² SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

⁶³ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

⁶⁴ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

⁶⁵ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

⁶⁶ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

⁶⁶ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

⁶⁷ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

care of the children themselves”.⁶⁸ Children are referred to SOS through social workers and the social development department. Before coming to live at the SOS Village, children’s cases go through court procedures and children may be placed in places of safety for a short time. Regretfully, Mr. Maphanga related to me that the SOS Villages is not equipped to have children who have physical disabilities such as blindness, deafness, mental retardation, or anything that requires them to be in wheelchairs. This is due to the fact that they have no staff that are qualified to work with such children nor the facilities needed for them. However some children come to SOS at young ages having never been diagnosed with a disability and are found to be disabled in some form later on. Those children are not removed from SOS; they keep them “just as a family would do in normal life”.⁶⁹

Outreach Projects

In situations where children have an adult care giver in their lives, programs which support children within the context of their communities and families of origin are, in my opinion, preferable to programs which isolate children from their social and cultural roots. This was also an opinion I heard in various forms from all five of the people I met with for the purposes of writing this paper.⁷⁰ God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg all operate community outreach projects as well as the residential care for orphaned and vulnerable children.

Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community related to me that she is aware of the immense need of the people beyond the borders of the children’s residential care village, but rather than expanding to accommodate more children, Kenosis uses the skills, resources, and people they have to support the community through outreach

⁶⁸ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

⁶⁹ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

⁷⁰ Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community told me that at Kenosis “We believe the best place for a child is with their family or community of origin”

Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

programs. She explained, “We didn’t want to be an island”⁷¹ of wealth amidst poverty and need. One way that Kenosis out into the community is through their farms project in Maqongqo, near a place called Table Mountain not far from Pietermaritzburg. From what I gathered, the farms function similarly to a system of sharecropping in the American south. Wealthy, presumably white, farmers employ black labourers who work and live on the farm grounds, a small community of their own. Elke says often the living conditions on these farms amongst the labourers are often deplorable, with alcoholism and other social problems negatively impacting the lives of the children. Instead of taking the labourer’s children to the Kenosis community, Kenosis community members assist farm residence in the care of the orphans they are raising by helping them to attain government documents such as birth certificates, applying for foster care or childcare grants, and psychosocial support in the form of counselling.⁷² Kenosis originally went out into the community with the plan of helping children, but once they began to offer their aid, people with all kinds of issues started to ask the for assistance. They have especially seen a need for people to help the elderly, and they encounter many older people who are neglected by their families. Elke mentioned one grandmother who expressed her pain over being robbed and used by her grandchildren for money.⁷³ Kenosis tries to help whenever they can. Local volunteers work with them in the communities and farms and funds are collected separately from German donors for these outreach projects.

In addition to the five preschools that God’s Golden Acre supports in the valley’s surrounding their property, the also operate a farm in Inchanga just across the N3 motorway from the site of the residential children’s project. On the farm, God’s Golden Acre grows food which is distributed monthly to children in the Sankontshe area who have international sponsors, many of whom live in child-headed households. Unlike God’s Golden Acre, Kenosis does not give out food parcels because Elke and the other members of the Kenosis leadership do not want people to become dependent on them. Elke acknowledges that she struggles with

⁷¹ Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community told me that at Kenosis “We believe the best place for a child is with their family or community of origin”

⁷² Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁷³ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

this decision though, because she knows there are kids out there who may not have enough to eat. ⁷⁴

The SOS Village in Grange currently offers long-term care for children in two forms. Child and Youth Development Village cares for children who can no longer live in their homes or communities of origin for a variety of reasons, and the Family Strengthening Programmes care for children and their families in the community. These include many child headed households in which the parents have died of AIDS or have left their children for any number of reasons, or children who are living with terminally ill or elderly parents or relatives. Caregivers, healthcare Community Based Organizations (CBOs) and social workers coordinate these projects (ibid).

Networking

God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg are all members of Children in Distress (CINDI) which is based in Pietermaritzburg. "Children in Distress (CINDI) is a network of concerned organisations seeking to effectively respond to the growing numbers of children affected by HIV/AIDS in the city [of Pietermaritzburg] and its surrounds. CINDI's vision is to be a multi-sectoral well-resourced network of civil society and government agencies, capable of implementing diverse, effective, sustainable care and preventative programmes for children affected or orphaned by HIV/AIDS. The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund has funded co-ordination of the network, whose mission is to foster among partners a spirit of Ubuntu, the principal of caring for each other's well being with an attitude of mutual support."⁷⁵ Children in Distress was formed when organizations caring for children in the area came to the realization that the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in KwaZulu Natal would soon "overwhelm existing methods of coping" (ibid). "That realisation came with groundbreaking local research into models of care and town planning. Pietermaritzburg paediatrician, Dr. Neil McKerrow, began investigating how best to

⁷⁴ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

⁷⁵ Simon-Meyer, Janine. "HIV/AIDS BEST PRACTICE SERIES". Children in Distress (CINDI). Funded by The Department for International Development (DFID) Southern Africa. Published by Department of Health, South Africa 2000. <http://www.cadre.org.za/pdf/pdf/Cindi.pdf>.

deal with children abandoned in state hospitals in the early 1990s, at a time when AIDS was not seen as a priority” (ibid). Dr. Neil McKerrow was influential in the formation of CINDI and also subsequently in the establishment of God’s Golden Acre as a cluster foster care centre and the founding of the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg.⁷⁶

Organizations belonging to CINDI are organized into clusters according to the type of work they are involved in. God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children’s Village are all in the Child Care cluster and the Social Work Cluster. These clusters meet once per month, and larger network meetings also occur on a regular basis.⁷⁷

Role of Foster Mother; Role of Volunteers

The cluster foster care model is theoretically arranged such that small groups of children are cared for by a foster parent or parents, simulating a nuclear family pattern. I assumed, before embarking on this project, that this style of care would enable children to be nurtured by a single, stable, individual and that this would provide the child with a predictable, consistent environment in which to grow up to be a confident and trusting person. After meeting with members of leadership at three organizations caring for children using the cluster foster care system, I have seen that the cluster foster care model is implemented in very different ways from one organization to the next, and stability is not always guaranteed.

At God’s Golden Acre, each child is officially “fostered” by a Zulu women referred to as a Gogo or an Auntie. Each Gogo is legally allowed to care for six children at a time. One Gogo sleeps in each of the children’s houses at God’s Golden Acre, sharing a bedroom with some of the children. However, I gathered during my brief visit to God’s Golden Acre on November 10th, 2006 that the Gogos may not be the main source of parental or emotional support for the children. Caroline Horn mentioned during our meeting on November 10th, 2006 “I don’t know how much the

⁷⁶ LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. and similar information was given to be by: Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁷⁷ Elke Carrhill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

Gogos interact with the children”.⁷⁸ Rather, non-South African volunteers are the house parents, referred to as mothers and fathers or Mamas and Babas. These international volunteers spend the most time personally relating with the children.⁷⁹ Volunteers work with the kids until 9 o’clock in the evening, at which time the Gogos and Aunties take over and sleep in the children’s rooms. Mama and Babas also sleep in the houses with the children, but in separate quarters. Where as the children and Gogos eat in the central dining hall, the volunteer Mamas and Babas have separate kitchen facilities and may choose instead to eat together rather than with the children (ibid).

Gogos and aunties are hired from the local area, and their position in the organization is paid employment. They return home to their own families and communities on their days off. They are given one day off per week as well as holidays such as Christmas. Some of the Gogos have their own children which live with them at God’s Golden Acre (ibid).

Volunteers are required to stay for a minimum of six months. According to Caroline Horn, many volunteers choose to stay for a full year, and some volunteers chose to return to God’s Golden Acre multiple times. “Some volunteers hate the place and want to leave right away, some love it and come back again and again”.⁸⁰ Currently, there are forty international volunteers working at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle in a variety of positions. Right now most of the volunteers are German; Caroline Horn mentioned that in the past some volunteers have been Dutch and English (ibid). In Caroline Horn’s view, most the emotional support for the children comes from this periodically rotating supply of volunteers. She thinks the inherent problem with this system is that children naturally form attachments to the volunteers who are working and living with them, and these attachments are broken time and time again when the volunteers leave (ibid).

In contrast, Elke Carrihill, the director of the Kenosis Community, emphasised to me that “the foster moms are the main source of emotional care and

⁷⁸ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

⁷⁹ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

⁸⁰ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

support for the children.”⁸¹ Although German volunteers regularly stay at the Kenosis Community for a minimum of six months at a time to help the children with their homework and play with them after school, Elke stresses “the main relationship needs to be built with the foster mothers- that’s the important one”.⁸² The Kenosis Community is the smallest of the three organizations operating under the cluster foster care model that I have visited for the purposes of writing this paper. There are only three foster mothers living at Kenosis, and Elke Carrihill feels she has a fairly close personal relationship with them (ibid). All three of the foster mothers at Kenosis have all done parenting training with the National Association for Child Care Workers in order to be better equipped for working with children in need. The foster mothers hail from the KwaZulu Natal province and speak isiZulu in their homes, while the children speak English at school and with the volunteers.

Elke recalls that initially she didn’t think much about the problems of having international volunteers working with the kids. She said during my meeting with her on November 16th, 2006 that “volunteers are always so enthusiastic about the kids, and cuddle them and all of that”⁸³. However, as Elke started to listen more to the debates among child care experts about who should provide care for orphans, and she began to see the importance of having the foster moms be the constant support for the children. “Volunteers are very valuable, but they come and go, even if there is a steady stream of volunteers, they are not constant”.⁸⁴ Elke herself also tries to keep some distance from the children even though she is involved with them all the time in one way or another, because she wants to support the foster mothers as the primary source of care and emotional attachment.

One person who greatly influenced her in these ideas was Linda Richter⁸⁵, the Executive Director of the Child, Youth and Family Development Human Sciences

⁸¹ Paraphrase. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

⁸² Direct Quote. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

⁸³ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁸⁴ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

⁸⁵ “Linda Richter is executive director of Child, Youth and Family Development at the Human Sciences Research Council in Durban, South Africa. She has conducted both basic and policy research in the fields of child and youth development as applied to health, education, welfare and social

Research Council in Durban, who does a lot of research on methods of care for orphans and vulnerable children. Linda Richter's ideas helped Elke, in her words to "keep focused" and she says she thinks it is very important "to ask oneself 'What are you doing?' and critically reflect on your work".⁸⁶

Elke also emphasized that through her actions and managing of the Kenosis Community, she wants to avoid "disempowering the foster mothers at all cost".⁸⁷ Elke related to me that she has seen other cluster foster care scenarios in which "the moms watch TV all day and other people do the shopping, cooking, cleaning, and what not"⁸⁸. She thinks this type of management could cause a foster mother to "seem useless, or perhaps to feel she is useless" (ibid). She expressed her feeling that by removing a woman's decision making responsibilities, an organization could be stripping them of their individual sense of power or identity. For this reason, Elke feels "Its very important not to dictate how they shop or spend their money" (ibid).

At Kenosis, the foster mothers cook for their families; they decide what to make and how. Every month, the foster mothers are given money from the state foster grants and Kenosis allowance, and are taken into town to shop, but they shop for themselves. In this way, Elke says the children are living in Zulu culture in their foster homes, because Zulu woman are caring for them and making the decision over what they eat and other household issues. Elke reasons that eating Zulu food

development, and has published more than 150 papers in the fields of child adolescent and family development, infant and child assessment, protein-energy malnutrition, street and working children, and the effects of HIV/AIDS on children and families, including HIV prevention in young people. Professor Richter is also the principal investigator of Birth to Twenty, a longitudinal study of the maturation and development of more than two thousand young people, born in Soweto-Johannesburg in 1990, that are being followed up prospectively for twenty years. This study was the basis for the book *Mandela's Children*, on which she collaborated with Dr. Barbarin. Throughout her career, Professor Richter has devised several innovative intervention programs and has advised other agencies on the design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions for children and families. These include malnourished children and their caregivers, street children, children in situations of conflict and war, psychosocial aspects of the health care of children, promoting men's care and protection of children, and palliative care for sick children in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. She obtained a Ph.D. from the University of Natal and completed a post-doctoral fellowship at the Universities of London, Edinburgh, and Nottingham, United Kingdom." This information was found in the document entitled "Early Childhood Development: Improving Linkages between Research, Practice and Policy" at this internet site:

http://www.salzburgseminar.org/2005faculty.cfm?IDEvent=824&IDBBS_People=116347.

⁸⁶ Direct Quote. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

⁸⁷ Direct quote. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

⁸⁸ Paraphrase. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

and living in Zulu culture at Kenosis makes it easier for kids to go home for holidays or to be replaced into their families when and if a reunification is possible (ibid).

During my meeting with Elke, she stressed her belief that it is important for the foster mothers to be responsible for themselves, their own actions and decisions, and for the children under their care. To paraphrase, Elke said “I tell the mothers that they can choose to be here or not, but while they are here the children are their responsibility. The foster mothers are the ones who take responsibility for the children by law, and that relationship needs to be upheld”.⁸⁹In this way, the foster mothers have ownership of the program, they are the backbone of the whole operation.

I asked Elke if the mothers feel burnt out, or have enough support. Her response was that the foster mothers are busy, but not burnt out. She admitted “but if you asked them, they might say they are” (ibid). Elke explained that because they function as a big family, the mothers are supported by staff and other people including the volunteers who make life a bit easier for them by helping the kids with their homework and keeping them entertained. Elke related that the foster mothers do want time off, they are not given scheduled free days the way the Gogos at God’s Golden Acre are. Elke said that “this isn’t their job, it is their life. It is exactly like being a mother” (ibid). Foster mothers have suggested in the past that volunteers can take care of the kids, but Elke doesn’t support that idea. She says it was their choice to be foster mothers, and they can always choose to leave if they think they don’t want to be there anymore. Despite the difficulties of their position, through our meeting I got the impression that the mothers are quiet dedicated to the kids and have no intention of leaving.

As a part of her position as the community director, Elke supports the mothers, giving them guidance and helping them with discipline and especially difficult cases. From information I gathered on the SOS Children’s Villages website, and through my interactions with the current director of the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg, it is intended that the directors of the SOS villages provides a father figure to the children. In comparison, Elke admits there are not many men around Kenosis, but she doesn’t think that this is significantly impacting the children especially because in her view many of the children grew up in female-headed

⁸⁹ Elke Carrhill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

households in their communities of origin.⁹⁰ At Kenosis, there are a handful of male staff members, and in the that way the children do have contact with men. The staff at Kenosis do maintenance, gardening, and other necessary work on the premises.

As in the Kenosis Community, the house mothers at the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg have had professional parenting training. According to the SOS Children's Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga, the house mothers are qualified child care workers. Some have been trained by the National Association for Child Care Workers, others are pursuing qualifications through the University of South Africa (UNISA). A few of the mothers have not yet passed the matric, and they are encouraged to do so. The goal of the leadership of the SOS Children's Village is to have all of the mothers qualified with Child Care Workers certificates and registered with the Child Care Worker Council by 2012.⁹¹ SOS Children's Villages South Africa also run a training centre in the country where employees attend training seminars and workshops on child care issues and management skills (ibid).

Like the foster mothers at Kenosis and God's Golden Acre, the house mothers at the SOS Children's Village come from around KwaZulu Natal. Unlike the foster mothers at Kenosis, the women who care for the children in the SOS Children's Village were recruited through newspaper advertisements and were hired. Although this is a life-long posting for them, the mothers refer to their position at SOS as a job. Saphiwe Maphanga explained that all of the mothers are Zulu, and most are Christians. The SOS system provides the children with continuous, stable care. Children stay with the same house mother from the time they enter into the SOS system until they are ready to leave- either at age eighteen, twenty, or twenty-one years of age. Children stay under the care of SOS while they are in school, even into tertiary levels or technical training. After the children leave school, they may disengage from SOS, but the Director and House Mother from the SOS Children's Village will stay in contact with them and assist them in setting up an independent life. This may include helping them find a job, a house, or other practical and emotional needs. Saphiwe Mapanga expressed his belief that children need this

⁹⁰ Paraphrase. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

⁹¹ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

stability in their lives, “Children need to bond with one mother, and not move around in shifts”.⁹²

In keeping with the concept that the house mother’s role is a form of employment, they are officially given time off. In the homes, there are also “trainee house mothers” who are referred to as aunties, who relieve the mothers by looking after the children while the mom take time off. Every month, house mothers and aunties have four free days, and they are also given an additional twenty-nine days off per year, a total of seventy-eight days per year. Saphiwe Maphanga clarified that the purpose of this time off is “to compensate them for all the time they spend with the children” (ibid). Mr. Maphanga said that the mothers work essentially twenty-four hours per day, because even when they are sleeping they are on call; the children are never alone. This time off is more than is necessary according to the Employee Equity Act.⁹³

As with the Gogos at God’s Golden Acre, some of the mothers employed at the SOS Children’s Village have their own children and spouses at home. However, they are encouraged not to bring them to the SOS village because in Saphiwe Maphanga’s words “We wouldn’t want the mothers to show preferential treatment to their biological children”⁹⁴. Some of the mothers also have spouses, who are allowed to visit them at the SOS village but are not encouraged to stay there. It is intended that the house mothers visit their families on their days off. Although I see the purpose behind this structure, I can’t help but wonder if perhaps this separation of a woman from her families causes some children to be neglected while their mothers care for other children, thus recreating the problem they seek to solve.

At the SOS Children’s Village, house mothers make their own rules and chores for their children, also just like a normal family. In this way, the house mothers are supported and encouraged to be responsible and independent in a similar way to the foster mothers in the Kenosis Community.

Saphiwe Maphanga told me that at the SOS Children’s Village, volunteers are not encouraged. He added that some people do come and volunteer for a month or

⁹² Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁹³ According to Mr. Maphanga, I have not substantiated this by any other source. Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁹⁴ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

so, though, for the specific purpose of assisting children with homework or other skill development activities (ibid). Saphiwe says he is wary of taking on “desperate people” as volunteers because they could work of a while and then “scam SOS by taking them to court, saying ‘I worked for SOS for this many hours and I wasn’t even paid 200 Rand”⁹⁵. He adds “if I take in volunteers, it is at my own risk” (ibid). Mr. Maphanga says academics, however, are always welcome to come and help the children with their maths skills or other academic areas. Dumile Goba, the Child and Youth Development Coordinator at the SOS Children’s Village told me something slightly different. She said that local volunteers come and go, and go “we always wish we had more volunteers” to help the children with their school work.⁹⁶

I expressed to Mr. Maphanga that I had noticed in other organizations that their may be some emotional attachment issues with volunteers. He assured me that there are no such problems with volunteers at the SOS Children’s Village, because “they are considered aunties not mothers and they are never left alone with the children, a full time SOS employee must always be present”⁹⁷. The reason for this, he explained, is that “We are the ones accountable for the children’s’ lives if anything goes wrong”. He added that the volunteers never have full authority and they can leave at any time (ibid).

As the director of the village, Saphiwe visits with the families after hours and on holidays, on an informal basis. He also helps the mothers with discipline and counsels the families in times of trouble. In this way, he fulfils the model of the SOS village scheme by providing some sort of father-like role in the lives of the children.⁹⁸

Christianity, Culture, and Communities of Origin

In South Africa, a multi-ethnic country with a history of racial discord, the issue of who should care for the burgeoning numbers of primarily black orphans and vulnerable children eventually comes around to issues of race and culture. Although

⁹⁵ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁹⁶ Dumile Goba, Child and Youth Development Coordinator. In her office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁹⁷ Paraphrase. Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

⁹⁸ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

it is agreed by all of the individuals that I have spoken to while conducting this project that it is of the utmost importance for children to be loved and nurtured, there is some debate over how children who are removed from their families of origin should be culturally socialised. The main areas of debate on this subject are to what degree Christianity and other religious beliefs should be imparted to children in alternative care situations, how and to what degree children should be encouraged to maintain contact with their families and communities of origin, and how their perceived Zulu culture should be upheld

The goal of iThemba Lethu, a Christian transition home for young orphaned and abandoned children in Durban, is to see children permanently placed in adoptive families. Almost all of the children who have been cared for at iThemba Lethu are black, while the most of the women who care for them at iThemba Lethu, and most, but not all, of the families who eventually adopt them are white. During my meeting with Liz Holley, the house mother at iThemba Lethu who lives with the children and is their primary care giver before they are adopted, I asked what her thoughts were on the subject of inter-racial adoption. She related to me that this was somewhat of a non-issue in her mind. She said that most black people whom she came in contact with during the course of her work with the children do not seem to object to her presence in their lives in any way.⁹⁹ In fact, Liz told me that the only comment she hears from most black people on the subject of her work is “God bless you” (ibid).

Liz thinks it would be best if black children could be raised by black parents, but in her opinion “the Zulu culture is disappearing anyway”¹⁰⁰ meaning that culture may not be the most valid qualifier for a prospective adoptive family. Liz said “it is better for a [black] child to be raised by a white family than to end up in an institution”.(ibid)

The literature distributed by iThemba Lethu to prospective adoptive parents does address concerns relating to inter-racial adoption. While they acknowledge that race relations are an issue for these adoptive families, they assure the reader that these barriers are not insurmountable. When asked by the iThemba Lethu staff for her opinion about white families adopting black children, one Zulu woman named

⁹⁹ Liz Holley. House Mother at iThemba Lethu. In the dining room of the iThemba Lethu house, Durban. November 22, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Direct Quote. Liz Holley. House Mother at iThemba Lethu. In the dining room of the iThemba Lethu house, Durban. November 22, 2006.

Zandile who had adopted an abandoned Zulu child remarked “there must be some business going in Hillcrest [where Zandile lives] so many people are doing it”.¹⁰¹ The article continued to state that Zandile “feels that language is important but that love and being looked after is more important” (ibid).

The literature also includes information about scientifically conducted study by Francesca Ledderborge of Durban Children’s Society on the issue of how adopted black children in South Africa have adjusted to being raised by white families. “The first follow-up study of “transracial placements...revealed that the children greatly benefited from being part of a family”.¹⁰² This information may also be applicable to child care situations other than adoption.

The leadership at God’s Golden Acre also consider the issue of cultural connection and families of origin among the children they care for. One way that the leadership at God’s Golden Acre attempt to maintain the Zulu culture in the lives of the children is through their diet. According to Caroline Horn, the children are fed five meals a day, including breakfast, two snacks, lunch, and dinner.¹⁰³ Caroline explained that they are given traditional Zulu food, which she considers to be imbalanced. She noted that the food was “very high in carbohydrates; not too good for them”¹⁰⁴. She listed rice, puthu, porridge, samp and beans, and beans in curry as being typical items the children were served, as well as chicken three times per week and the occasional beef curry.¹⁰⁵ As a departure from traditional Zulu food, the children are also give bread and peanut butter often as a snack (ibid). Caroline explained that the reason the children are fed what is considered a traditional Zulu diet is that some of the children return to their families and communities of origin on week ends and holidays, and the leadership at God’s Golden Acre want the kids to have stability in their eating patterns, and not become accustomed to eating foreign foods (ibid).

¹⁰¹ “Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack”. iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 11.

¹⁰² “Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack”. iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 23.

¹⁰³ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Direct Quote. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁰⁵ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

While on the subject of maintaining connection with the children's families of origin, Caroline told me that eighteen of the eighty children currently under the care of God's Golden Acre were soon to be forcibly returned to their communities of origin by the Department Social Welfare because they claimed that God's Golden Acre was over their legal capacity. Any children who had connections to any relatives were to move home.¹⁰⁶ In Caroline's opinion, this forced move had the potential to be very traumatic for the children. From the time the children had been brought to God's Golden Acre, they were told that this would be their permanent home. Caroline related that the move would also be quite difficult for the care givers and other members of the God's Golden Acre community because of the family-like feeling of the organization (ibid). Caroline admitted that in her view it was good in general for children to be connected with their families of origin, however some of the children had come from abusive environments and returning them to those potentially dangerous situations seemed irresponsible (ibid).

In addition to serving the children traditional Zulu foods, the language of isiZulu is also a part of the children's lives at God's Golden Acre. The Zulu Gogos and Aunties speak isiZulu to the children, and director Heather Reynolds speaks isiZulu as well.¹⁰⁷ Traditional Zulu music and dance are also practiced and performed by the Youth Zulu Warriors groups at God's Golden Acre. The proceeds from the ticket sales for their domestic and international shows raise funds for God's Golden Acre, and a connection to their Zulu culture is also preserved through the performance of this art (ibid).

Like iThemba Lethu, God's Golden Acre is a Christian organization, and the children do participate in Christian worship services and other activities. It is difficult to judge whether this religious involvement is counter to the children's traditions of origin or not, and therefore I am unable to comment on whether encouraging children to participate in Christian religious practices removes them from their culture. I asked Caroline if any ancestor worship was involved in these services, and she said that she was not sure as the services are conducted in isiZulu,

¹⁰⁶ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁰⁷ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

which she does not speak. She added “but I hope not”.¹⁰⁸ Caroline Horn informed that the children at God’s Golden Acre attend Sunday Morning Church services on the organization grounds, lead by a Zulu pastor named Baba Elliot who lives in the local area. During these services, the children share their experiences with the group, listen to Bible stories, and hear a message delivered by the pastor in isZulu. Alter calls are also a usual element of the services, meaning that children may be invited to kneel at the front of the congregation and devote their lives to Christ.¹⁰⁹

Caroline is a Christian, as is God’s Golden Acre director Heather Reynolds, but it is not required of staff or volunteers to be Christians in order to work there. Caroline mused “maybe that is a good thing because sometimes Christians come with baggage”.¹¹⁰ Caroline guessed that there were around five born again Christians living at God’s Golden Acre. She herself prays every morning with one of the other Christians working there. In Caroline’s view, the children are given some spiritual support, but she wishes they had more¹¹¹. Caroline had recently begun attending a Church called the Pietermaritzburg Christian Fellowship, a small New Frontiers Church which meets in an old prison building. On the night of our meeting, she was planning to take a group of fifteen teen-agers from God’s Golden Acre with her to a youth group meeting. She was enthusiastic about this church, especially because the congregation was multi-ethnic, which in her view is a rarity in South Africa (ibid).

The Kenosis Community is also a Christian organization with roots in the Lutheran church. There is a church building on the premises which used to be a German congregation’s church but now it is only used by the care providers and volunteers of Kenosis on Thursday and Sunday evenings for worship times and bible studies. The children at Kenosis go to church on Sundays at a Zulu speaking church in Imbali, a township on the other side of Pietermaritzburg. Elke Carrhill shared

¹⁰⁸ Direct Quote. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹¹⁰ Direct Quote. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹¹¹ Paraphrase. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

with me during our meeting on November 16th, 2006 that “We [at Kenosis] believe the best place for a child is with their family or community of origin”¹¹². According to Elke, the children at Kenosis are not actually removed from their culture of origin, but continue to grow up in Zulu culture while living at Kenosis. Elke said “the children do not live in my culture” even though she lives just a few meters from them. The foster mothers who are the central parental figure in the children’s lives are Zulu. The foster mothers serve the children the food that they choose, which is usually traditional Zulu food and observe Zulu holidays, festivals, and funerals. In this way, Elke illustrates how “the children live in a Zulu context”.¹¹³

When asked, Elke added that the foster mothers do not take the children to see traditional healers, as far as she was aware. However the foster children and the children of staff members spend lots of their time together and it is possible that the staff take their own children to traditional healer. In this way, the fostered children at Kenosis may come into contact with ideas of Zulu traditional medicine. From my perspective, the use of traditional healing practices is not a necessary qualifier to determine the authenticity of Zulu culture among the children at Kenosis. I have personally met Zulu people who were raised by Zulu families who did not visit traditional healers, and in no way did this cause me to believe they were any less Zulu than people who did.¹¹⁴

Elke and the other members of the Kenosis community try to help the children in their care stay connected to their families and communities of origin by encouraging the children to go home to visit relatives at week ends and holidays wherever possible. They also encourage family members to visit their children at Kenosis. In many cases, Elke assured me that this fosters continued positive relationships.¹¹⁵ During our conversation, Elke recalled one family in which the parents were deceased and the youngest child had been taken into care at Kenosis while the older siblings lived independently near Pietermaritzburg. Initially, Elke was worried that the close proximity older siblings would cause problems, but in fact they visit regularly and have a very strong positive influence on their younger sibling (ibid).

¹¹² Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹¹³ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹¹⁴ Thandi Msimela, resident of Wangu, Nyoni. Zanele Nkomo, resident of Cato Manor, Durban.

¹¹⁵ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

Regrettably, not all children at Kenosis have a positive home to return to. Once, a child at Kenosis was nearly kidnapped by their grandmother, and sadly the leadership at Kenosis felt they had to file for a court order to keep the grandmother away for the sake of the child's safety.¹¹⁶ Elke explained that some of the children's families are not told where their children live as a means of ensuring the children's safety. In those cases, Social Welfare works as a go-between and family members can have visits with the children at the Social Welfare offices. (ibid) Elke also remembers one instance in which two children were returned by social welfare to their mother whom in Elke's opinion did not seem capable of raising them adequately or providing them safety. In another case, a child was returned to his grandmother and Elke felt this was the right decision. Although the child's mother was not capable of caring for her child, the grandmother seemed to Elke to "have it all together".¹¹⁷

Upholding the relationships between the children and their families and communities of origin is especially important to the leadership at Kenosis because in fact their ultimate goal is not to take children permanently, although in some cases that does happen, but to eventually return kids to their families and communities of origin, or to see them placed in adoptive homes or with extended family members.¹¹⁸ In fact, relatively few children from Kenosis have actually returned to their mothers or into adoptive homes. At least six of the eighteen children that are living in the Kenosis community are expected to be there indefinitely (ibid). Kenosis is not directly responsible for the placement of the children who are either returning to their families of origin or being adopted; social workers do the re-integration work.

It is clear to me from reading the literature given on their website and through my interactions with the village director, that the SOS Children's Village philosophy stresses the importance of retaining a connection between the children and their families and communities of origin. At the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, director Saphiwe Maphanga told me that children attend local schools as a means of being integrated into the larger community, and that children are also encouraged to bring school friends home with them just as a child might in a

¹¹⁶ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹¹⁷ Direct quote. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹¹⁸ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

more normal home situation.¹¹⁹Saphiwe said he remembers being a young boy and bringing friends home from school with him who would stay until it was late, just spending time together. He says he wants the children at SOS to have that same opportunity to bond with their peers. The children's friendship are monitored by their house mothers to make sure that the children are not forming relationships "for the wrong reasons" or getting to drugs or other negative influences (ibid).

In addition, children with known relatives are encouraged to maintain contact with them and form familial bonds (ibid). To ensure that the child is safe at all times, a social worker meets with the families at their home to assess whether or not it would be safe for the children to visit. If the situation is deemed acceptable, the children may visit on weekends or during school holidays. The children are given money to visit, and transportation is provided by the SOS Village. The children are equipped with phone numbers for their house mother and other staff members at their SOS village and told that if there is any problem at their relatives home, they can call and someone from SOS will pick them up – just like in a loving family.¹²⁰ In my opinion, the SOS Children's Village dedication to maintaining the bonds between children and their communities of origin is exemplified by their host family program for children who do not have any known relatives. Children who are completely abandoned or have no living relatives are linked with families in the community so that they can also enjoy relationships outside of the SOS organization. Host families are usually people who are interested in the work of SOS and want to help the children, or in some cases they may be the families of the children's friend from school. In these cases just as in cases of visits to blood relatives, the social worker visits the family to assess the situation before the child is allowed to stay with them (ibid).

The SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg is the only one of the three cluster foster care centres I visited which is not officially affiliated with any religion or denomination.¹²¹ Children are encouraged to attend any religious services they choose. Children often go to church services in groups either with their own house mothers or with children from other houses. Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga

¹¹⁹ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹²⁰ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹²¹ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

said they children go by choice, and are never forced, but he also mentioned that most of the house mothers are Christians and the children often like to attend services with their mothers.¹²²

Histories of Abuse and Neglect in the lives of Children

All of the organizations that I visited in the process of gathering information for this project, including God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, the SOS Children's Village, iThemba Lethu Transition Home, and Wylie House, related to me that they have observed abuse in the lives of the children they care for. In light of the following information, I conclude that the prevalence of child abuse witnessed at the above organizations is no coincidence. According to The Department of Social Welfare Draft Alternative Policy:

“Over the past decade, South Africa has seen an increase in the reporting of child abuse, exploitation and neglect. The latest South African Police Services Annual Report (released in September 2005) reveals that in the 2004/2005 financial year, more than 360,000 women and children were murdered, raped, assaulted, sexually molested or abused. 40% (22,486) of the 55,114 rapes were against children, while children accounted for 47.7% (4,829) of all indecent assault cases reported. Further figures show that 31,607 children were victims of common assault and that 24,189 were victims of assault to commit grievous bodily harm. While there could be increased reporting of abuse, it is estimated that as much as two thirds of all rapes may not be reported due to the victim's economic dependence on the perpetrator. The Police report indicates that at least 61 children under the age of 18 are sexually abused and raped every day. Childline states that over the past decade, sexual abuse committed by children themselves has become a serious problem, with an increase of 400% in the number of children reported for abuse, exploitation and neglect.”¹²³

I feel this information is relevant in my study of the cluster foster care system

¹²² Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹²³ “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006.

because it is important to note that many children being cared for outside of their families of origin come with emotional and psychological scars. It would be irresponsible, in my opinion, for any organization working with this demographic of vulnerable, abandoned, and orphaned children to ignore their unique needs for emotional and psychological care especially if they have a history of abuse.

As I stated previously, Caroline Horn and other volunteers at God's Golden Acre are not aware of the details of the home situations the children they care for. However, she did mention that it was her observation that "Africans are very sexual- even little kids age three are doing things they shouldn't." ¹²⁴ She sees some kids who come to GGA who act very sexual and she says " it is clear they have been sexually abused" (ibid). Caroline also mentioned that she has observed alcoholism and the use of cannabis is common in the area around God's Golden Acre (ibid). Even though I was unable to gather this information from first hand sources, the collection of stories of abuse among children at God's Golden Acre are disturbingly abundant. Dale leVack recorded in her book about God's Golden Acre that during an argument, one young boy pulled a knife on another child and an Australian volunteer. The volunteer recalls "I was literally speechless, and could not work out what had happened. Then I thought to myself- often these children have grown up in situations where all they have known is abuse, and sexual abuse, daily, sometimes for years. Violence is a natural response to threat". ¹²⁵

Author Emma Guest visited God's Golden Acre in 2000, and observed in her book "Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis" that "God's Golden Acre is a beautiful, chaotic place, full of love and care but also some awfully traumatised children. The younger ones seem happy enough playing on climbing frames. But one or two lie pathetically, terminally sick and the older children like Nonhlanhla just look terribly sad. Everything pivots on Heather". ¹²⁶ Heather Reynolds explained to her:

"When Nonhlanhla came, she was a wild street child. She was only eleven but everyone was terrified of her. All the other kids were from the valleys,

¹²⁴ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹²⁵ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 265.

¹²⁶ Guest, Emma. "Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis". Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 83.

you know, just little orphaned kids, but she was a tough girl from the township, and she'd been raped. One time, she stabbed another child, Peter, through the chest, and nearly killed him."¹²⁷

Also included in Emma Guest's book were accounts of one young girl who had been shot through the spine by her father and subsequently endured an operation which took place on a kitchen table at God's Golden Acre, and the story of a feral infant been left in a room until her began to act like a wild animal.¹²⁸

During my discussion with Kenosis Community Director Elke Carrihill on November 16, 2006, I was saddened, but not surprised to hear that some of the children living at Kenosis have also been victims of abuse. The children come from all over the greater Pietermaritzburg area, and they have come to Kenosis for a variety of reasons. According to Elke, "There are generally abused, neglected, or orphaned."¹²⁹ The children at Kenosis now range in ages from two to thirteen years. I heard from Elke that a few of the children at Kenosis now have been sexually abused in the past. I asked if they seemed to be coping, and Elke said she doesn't think anyone ever really recovers from being raped. (ibid)She has a number of adult female friends who have been raped, and she said none of them will ever really heal. The Kenosis Community cares for children in the surrounding areas as well as those how live within their perimeters. Elke shared the story of one thirteen-year-old girl who lives in the local area who Kenosis met through their outreach program. She had been raped, and her family filed a case against the perpetrator. Later the family dropped the case, but the state took in on. Elke said it was a long a belaboured court case and she isn't sure in the end if the perpetrator was found guilty or received any punishment.(ibid)

The state provided counselling for the young victim, but the counselling centre was located thirty kilometres away from her home, making it a sixty kilometre round trip journey for each counselling session. Due to economic restraints, this service would have been out of he reach if Kenosis had not intervened. Kenosis provided transportation for her to go to counselling for ten weeks but the stopped because according to Elke it was such a drain on their transportation resources, and although

¹²⁷ Guest, Emma. "Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis". Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 82.

¹²⁸ Guest, Emma. "Children of AIDS: Africa's Orphan Crisis". Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003.page 76

¹²⁹ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

Elke hoped that the counselling was helpful, it was unclear if the therapy was having much effect. Elke bemoaned the inadequacies of the mental health care system “That was 600km of driving just for one girl to get counselling, and when you think of the numbers of children and women being raped, you can see it wont work”.¹³⁰

According to Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga, many children also come to the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg with psychological scars and are traumatized by their past experiences. These children might actually be the lucky ones comparatively, because although SOS does not employ a psychologist, they have a budget which enables them to offer the children mental health services from psychologist and social workers in the local area.¹³¹ Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga says it is very fulfilling for him to observe children in the village improve. He said that he sees children come to SOS abused, traumatized, shy and withdrawn and over time he sees “their smiles start to come up, they socialise and play, laugh, and run around. And then I remember the fist days when they were afraid” (ibid).

A number of children who have been cared for at iThemba Lethu, a transitional home for orphans and vulnerable children ages birth through three years in Durban, also come with histories of abuse and neglect despite their young ages.¹³² Liz, the house mother at iThemba Lethu listed abuses such as over feeding, underfeeding, cigarette burns, one girl who had burns on her private parts, one child who had had their foot and lower leg submerged in boiling water and the skin had burned away, and one boy who had injuries the doctor said were consistent with being thrown from a moving motor vehicle.(ibid)

None of the individuals I met with at the afore mentioned organizations seemed to think that caring for abused children was a hopeless cause. However, they did acknowledge that certain elements were required in a care regimen to enable an abused child to heal. Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community sees improvement in most of the children at Kenosis, and she attributes this to being in a stable environment and living by a predictable routine.¹³³ Nazli Finch, the director of Wylie

¹³⁰ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹³¹ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹³² Liz Holley. House Mother at iThemba Lethu. In the dining room of the iThemba Lethu house, Durban. November 22, 2006.

¹³³ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

House, a centre for abused or drug addicted girls, told me “The therapeutic ethos at Wylie house centres on the routine in the living space”.¹³⁴ She agreed with Elke Carrihill that stability and a predictable routine were key to the rehabilitation of abused or traumatised children. She added that encouraging relationships with the child’s family or community or origin, predictability, and the opportunity to work through the pain of their past experiences was also important (ibid). Nazli emphasized “restorative conferencing”¹³⁵ between children and their families as a way to reunify them and heal past hurts. She says this process is used at Wylie House to rehabilitate children who are criminals and children who have been abused. I did not hear that any set process such as this one were in operation at God’s Golden Acre, Kenosis, or the SOS Children’s Village, although each of these organizations did try to maintain connections between the children and their families and communities of origin to some degree.

Medical Services and HIV

While it is true that many of the children who live at God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children’s Village have been affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic in some way, through meeting with members of staff at these organizations, I learned that the majority of the children under their care are HIV infected themselves.¹³⁶ These organizations all strive to provide adequate medical attention for the children under their care, and all three of them rely on local public health services (ibid).

At God’s Golden Acre, the health or illness of children is at the forefront of the Director Heather Reynolds’s mind. “Many children came riddled with serious illnesses like tuberculosis, malnutrition, or problems with their lymph nodes, or

¹³⁴ Paraphrase. Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹³⁵ Exact phrase. Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹³⁶ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

spleens. It took 24-hour supervision and intervention to save them. We cared, prayed for, comforted, and nurtured them all. God called many of the infants to heaven. That was how we saw it in our faith”¹³⁷. However, from the time God’s Golden Acre began to take in children in 1995 until “God’s Golden Acre: A biography of Heather Reynolds” was written by Dale leVack in 2005, Heather relates that “we have only lost 12 children in our residential care to HIV/AIDS. God has been good to us and we pray daily for his hand upon all of the children he has entrusted to our care.”¹³⁸

During my meeting with volunteer Caroline Horn, I was unable to note how many children currently living at God’s Golden Acre are infected with HIV or if any of them are receiving anti-retroviral medications. This is because, according to Caroline Horn, the volunteers who are the main emotional support for the children do not know about their HIV status or their personal histories.¹³⁹ There is currently a small room used as a first aid clinic at God’s Golden Acre Khaliyhle which is staffed by two volunteer nurses and provides basic services such as bandaging, creams, and distributing medications for chronic diseases. More serious medical needs are attended to at hospitals in Pietermaritzburg, about a half an hour away (ibid).

The health care situation is similar at the Kenosis Community, although I was able to obtain more specific information there about the prevalence of HIV among the children. Only one child out of the eighteen currently living at Kenosis is HIV positive, although according to Director Elke Carrihill they don’t test the children for HIV unless they show signs of constant illness and repeated infections. All the kids are quite healthy and most are older, which signals to Elke that they are not HIV positive as she assumes that a child who contracts HIV from birth or as an infant would show signs of illness rather early on in life.¹⁴⁰ The child who is HIV positive is receiving antiretroviral therapy (ARVs). She has experienced no side effects and is quite healthy. Her foster mother administers the her ARVs and other medicines, and there is a volunteer nurse at Kenosis who helps with basic medical needs as well. Elke Carrihill told me that the child who is HIV positive was quite ill before they began ARV treatment and “it was touch and go” at points, but her condition has

¹³⁷ LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 170.

¹³⁸ LeVack, Dale. page 176.

¹³⁹ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God’s Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God’s Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁴⁰ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

turned around since starting ARVs. Elke said with a smile “She has just blossomed”.¹⁴¹

Serious medical issues are handled at local hospitals and clinics, which are about twenty minutes away in Pietermaritzburg, and Kenosis can easily transport a child there if the need arises. Elke also mentioned that a mobile clinic also visits Kenosis once a month to serve the children at Kenosis as well as the local area. No foster children under the care of Kenosis have died, although Elke did say that the children of Kenosis staff members had passed away while living at Kenosis. (ibid)

The SOS Children’s Villages model for health care is similar to their policy on education. The children at the SOS villages are serviced by local hospitals and clinics except in places where there are none available, in which case SOS will build a health facility.¹⁴² In Pietermaritzburg, the children are seen at local health care facilities . According to Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga, children are not screened for HIV before they are admitted to SOS, but they are tested once they are placed there.¹⁴³ Mr. Maphanga expressed that HIV/AIDS is a major concern to him, even though at present not many of the children living in the SOS village are infected. In the next few years, they plan to reduce the number of children in each home from ten to six. Part of the reason for this is that currently very few of the children in the village are HIV positive, but they anticipate many more HIV positive children in the future. Mr. Maphanga related to me “for now it [HIV] is not a threat, but we have the feeling that in three to four years time it will be a problem. Can you imagine a mother have four children sick with HIV in her house? That would be too much” . Mr. Maphanga said that reducing the number of children in each house might require the building of more houses in the site.¹⁴⁴

Education

The children at God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg may live in a slightly different setting from

¹⁴¹ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹⁴² SOS Children’s Villages, Pietermaritzburg.
<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

¹⁴³ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁴⁴ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

other children their age in their communities of origin, but they receive very similar educations. The children from all three of these organizations attend local schools with children from more conventional family situations, and this enables them to grow up in a normal environment despite being raised outside of their birth families.

Volunteer Educational Programs Coordinator Caroline Horn explained to me that the children at God's Golden Acre attend a variety of local schools. She listed George Cato School in Cato Ridge, a boarding high school in Pietermaritzburg, a technical college, a Christian School which uses a curriculum of "Accelerated Christian Education", and a special needs school for Albino children who have impaired sight as some of the schools that children attend.¹⁴⁵ It was not made clear to me why some students went to one school and others to another, but I assume that the children are sent to the institutions where it is believed they will receive the best education based on their unique needs and background.

In addition to attending school, the children at God's Golden Acre are given isiZulu lessons (ibid). Part of the community outreach work at God's Golden Acre includes assisting and supporting five preschools in the valleys near to them, and some of the younger children who reside at God's Golden Acre attend those preschool classes. Caroline Horn expressed to me that it was very rewarding for her and other members of the God's Golden Acre community to watch the children in the preschools grow and learn. She said that through the support of God's Golden Acre, she could see real improvement in the lives of the children who attend the preschools.¹⁴⁶

The education programs at God's Golden Acre will soon be expanding. Caroline Horn is now involved in establishing a "Life Skills Library" on site which will provide the community with resources about HIV/AIDS, abuse issues, domestic violence, drugs and alcohol, and other social issues.¹⁴⁷ She is also set to begin teaching English language classes to some of the children and staff at God's Golden Acre (ibid).

¹⁴⁵ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁴⁶ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. November 10, 2006.

¹⁴⁷ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. November 10, 2006.

Likewise, the children at the Kenosis Community attend local public schools. Due to the much smaller number of children living at Kenosis as compared to God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis children all attend the same school. In Community Director Elke Carrihill's opinion "the schools are good, but they could be better".¹⁴⁸ Through our conversation on November 16th 2006, I gathered that the school the Kenosis children attend employ the system of outcomes based education. Elke says the outcomes-based education (OBE) is a European model, and in her opinion, "OBE might work very well in a European setting which is resource rich, where mothers have time and resources to help their kids do projects, cutting paper and pasting shapes, and so forth. But here, she doesn't think it works that well"¹⁴⁹. She is somewhat dubious over the quality of education the children are receiving, especially when she compares it to the education her sister's children receive at a different school. Luckily, the children living in the Kenosis Community have German volunteers to help them with their homework (ibid).

Like God's Golden Acre and the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, the Kenosis Community also runs a crèche on the premises which cares for kids from the surrounding area as well as the younger kids who live at Kenosis. The SOS Children's Village runs both a crèche and kindergarten on their site in Grange, while all of the older children attend local schools in Pietermaritzburg. Other SOS villages in different locations in the world may establish schools if there are none available in the area.¹⁵⁰ For example, Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga mentioned that the SOS Children's Village in Umtata, South Africa, operates both a school and a technical education centre on their site due to the lack of local resources. (ibid)

SOS Children's Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga was careful to point out that the children were not sent to local schools merely for convenience sake, but for their own developmental benefit. He explained that the children go to local schools to try to prevent them from being "isolated" from the rest of the community.¹⁵¹ Dumile Goba, Child and Youth Development Coordinator is very much involved with the

¹⁴⁸ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹⁴⁹ Paraphrase. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006

¹⁵⁰ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁵¹ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006

educational programs at the SOS Children's Village. She works with youth leaders, social workers, and the youth education programs, and explained to me that there is a homework help program as well as a "master maths" program running at the SOS Children's Village. She also mentioned that children are also taken on field trips to places like factories and other places where children can observe people working in the field they think they would like to work in when they grow up. In addition, she invites speakers to come in and speak to the children about a variety of issues pertaining to education and future occupations.¹⁵²

Ms. Goba stated that there is a mix of students, at the SOS Children's Village some who are doing well in school, and some who are really struggling. From my discussion with her, I gathered that a notable percentage of the children at the SOS village don't do well in the main stream school system, and Dumile Goba expressed her desire to see more of the children enter the mainstream system.¹⁵³ Ms. Goba told me that one child who grew up in the SOS Village is now attending a university, and she also explained that children who are not going on to university may receive technical training or be assisted to find jobs when they leave school.(ibid)

Teenage Rebellion and Adaptation to Adult Life

Caring for young children is said by the child care providers I met with to be challenging on many levels, but living with teenagers can be even more stressful. One of the most important reasons I believe child care systems need to be in place to care for children who have been orphaned, abandoned, or removed from their families of origin is that eventually all children grow up and become the decision makers and workforce of a society. Although I can not evaluate the ability of cluster foster care centres to raise children into capable, well-adjusted adults, I have gathered a few examples of young people who have been raised in the SOS Children's Village and at God's Golden Acre who seem to be adjusting well to adult life with the help of the organizations which helped to raise them.

In SOS Children's Villages around the world, children live with host mothers in a family-like setting until they are roughly fourteen years of age. "From the age of 14

¹⁵² Dumile Goba, Child and Youth Development Coordinator. In her office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁵³ Dumile Goba, Child and Youth Development Coordinator. In her office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

our young boys and girls under the guidance of Youth Leaders move into separate youth houses. It is here the boys and girls learn responsibilities - there is no longer a mother to cook and clean for them. Our first youth house [in the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village] opened on 01st March 2002 with five boys, at the moment it accommodates ten boys. The girls Youth House opened on 01 March 2003 with five girls as well."¹⁵⁴

According to Village Director Saphiwe Maphanga, at sixteen or seventeen years of age, "some children begin to act up".¹⁵⁵ Occasionally teen-age children want to leave the structure of the SOS village, but most have no good family situations to return to so they are encouraged to stay at the SOS Village and finish their education. If they insist on leaving, they are allowed to go and SOS will continue to support them by paying their school fees and give them a monthly allowance. (ibid)

Similarly, Nazli Finch from Wylie House in Durban explained to me that "Wylie house sometimes receives children from foster families where the situation has "broken down". Usually the child has reached the age of 16 or 17 and wants to find their "real" mother and they act up, steal, and so forth as it they are trying to be rejected."¹⁵⁶

However, this pattern of teenage rebellion may not be unique to children living in cluster foster care. iThemba Lethu, a transition house for orphans and abandoned babies reports in it's annual report from 2005 that children who are placed into permanent adoptive homes also struggle with identity issues in their teen years and may feel the desire to seek out their family of origin. They suggest that "open communication and a willingness to share information on the early life of the child is important from an early age. Role models and friends from the same cultural background and friendships with multi-racial families could certainly be very helpful".¹⁵⁷

Despite the hardships of the teen age years, a few children who have reach adulthood under the care of the SOS village structure have grown up to be confident and capable adults. One girl from the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg is

¹⁵⁴ SOS Children's Villages, Pietermaritzburg.

<http://www.sosvillages.org.za/childrensvillages/maritzburg.htm>

¹⁵⁵ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁵⁶ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ "Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack". iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 39.

currently studying to be a social worker at a university in the Transkei. Some time in her later teen years, the village director and her house mother and others from the SOS community sat down with her to decide where she wanted to go after she matriculated. The girl decided to go to the Transkei because that is where she is originally from and she still has aunts living there. According to Saphiwe Maphanga, she has bonded well with them and is coping well in her adult life. She maintains contact with the SOS village and sometimes returns there for holidays.¹⁵⁸

There is also a boy from the SOS village who has attended a technical training program. He is now certified and works and lives independently in the community near Pietermaritzburg. The SOS Children's Village bought him a house and he is coping well with adult life. Recently, he called Saphiwe for a request. "He said, dad, when I moved here there was no electricity. But now there is electricity here and I was wondering if you could buy me a second hand fridge" (ibid). SOS bought him a fridge, they continue to care about him and want to assist him in all of his needs. He still has three siblings living in the SOS village, two sisters and one brother, but he moved out because Saphiwe explains "he was twenty-four years old and it was time to move on" (ibid). His sister has passed her matric and is now taking courses in hotel management.

According to Caroline Horn, there is also one young person who grew up at God's Golden Acre who now attends university. Caroline Horn explained to me during my meeting with her on November 10th, 2006 that when they have finished secondary school no children are ever forced to leave. Some of the children at God's Golden Acre continue to live there, but they are expected to either work in the organization, or go on to pursue degrees at a university or technical program. Currently five grown children are now employed as maintenance workers at God's Golden Acre.¹⁵⁹ The story of one woman who grew up at God's Golden Acre is documented in Dale leVack's book "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds".¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁶⁰ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005.

“Zanele Jila is among the oldest from the first generation at God’s Golden Acre whose arrival there was more due to poverty caused by civil war than the later AIDS epidemic. Now, having grown up, she worked at God’s Golden Acre as a caregiver, cleaner, and teacher of Zulu song and dance, before going to college to train as a lecturer.”¹⁶¹ Zanele reflects on her life:

“I was eleven years old when I came to God’s Golden Acre at Wartburg. If it were not for Heather, I would not have survived because life was really difficult. We came from a very poor family. My mother had seven children and three died. Sometimes there was not enough to eat and we went to bed hungry. I would probably have got a boyfriend sometime in my early teen years and then have become HIV positive. Heather took me in, became a mother to me, and always warned me about the dangers that I have faced. That’s why I feel good about God’s Golden Acre- it gave me my childhood back and I was happy growing up.”¹⁶²

Zanele plans to attend university in the future and later to work in the valley she was born in to work as a teacher. As of 2005, Zanele was still living at God’s Golden Acre and mentoring younger girls (ibid).

Funding and Sustainability

One of my initial objectives for this project was to assess the financial sustainability of cluster foster care organizations within the context of economically challenged societies. However, this objective proved to be beyond my limited capacities. I was able to discuss financial matters with the representatives of the organizations that I met with, and my findings at all of these organizations essentially suggest that cluster foster care programs are not completely self-sustaining and at least in the cases of these three organizations, require some donor funding.

God’s Golden Acre is funded in a variety of ways, locally and internationally. The Young Zulu Warriors group which performs traditional Zulu dance shows around South Africa and also in Europe provides some source of funding, however

¹⁶¹ LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 266.

¹⁶² LeVack, Dale. “God’s Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds”. Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005. page 266-267.

the exact percentage of their contribution to the budget is unclear to me. Patrick Reynolds, Heather Reynolds' husband is an artist and the sales of his sculptures have been a source of income for God's Golden Acre since the beginning. According to God's Golden Acre website, "God's Golden Acre Khayelihle is a non profit making charity" ¹⁶³ and international financial support is gained through "God's Golden Acre UK, a registered charity that fundraises to support the work of God's Golden Acre Khayelihle in South Africa. Along with similar organisations in USA, Netherlands and Norway, we form a network of "Friends of God's Golden Acre Khayelihle" that enable God's Golden Acre Khayelihle to continue with their valuable work." (ibid)

God's Golden Acre rests on land that was previously used as a resort, and parts of the original resort remain intact and are rented out to school groups in order to raise funds. GGA owns the high lands resort but it is kept slightly separate from the children's programming, but on same piece of land. School groups stay at highlands resort, which also helps to fund God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle.¹⁶⁴ Individual children are supported through an international sponsorship program by God's Golden Acre outreach projects in the surrounding valleys.¹⁶⁵ American talk show tycoon Oprah Winfrey has also helped to support God's Golden Acre in the past, and Heather has actually been a guest on the Oprah show.¹⁶⁶ However, since meeting Oprah in 2002, the relationship between Heather Reynolds and Oprah is "now strained, possibly broken down" and this is "possibly due to tension with Friends of GGA America" according to Caroline Horn. (ibid)

The Kenosis Community is also partially funded by a retreat centre, but it is unclear to me to what extent these funds support the work they do with children. In addition, three Christian organizations in Germany fund Kenosis, and they also receive foster care grants from the South African government.¹⁶⁷ Director Elke

¹⁶³ God's Golden Acre. <http://www.godsgoldenacre.org.uk/>

¹⁶⁴ LeVack, Dale. "God's Golden Acre: A Biography of Heather Reynolds". Monarch Books, Oxford. 2005.

¹⁶⁵ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁶⁶ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁶⁷ Elke Carrhill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

Carrihill informed me that one year ago she calculated that the care for each child at Kenosis costs about R1560 per month. R560 of that is from foster care grants, and R1000 is from other fundraising at Kenosis. (ibid)

Elke disclosed to me that many people ask her about the sustainability of the program. She readily admits that Kenosis is not self-sustaining, and she asked rhetorically “How can we be self sustaining? We work with children and the elderly, how can they sustain us?”¹⁶⁸. I think it is more to the point to say that the people Kenosis works with are dependent; children are always dependent. That is the reason why children are vulnerable and in need of their help. Kenosis makes some moves to be self-sustaining through the retreat centre, but it seems the bulk of the funding comes from the German donors.

The SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg is funded internationally but also has many sponsors and donors from South Africa. Village director Saphiwe Maphanga believes that in terms of funding, “South Africa is better than the other African countries where all of the funding comes from the outside”. He said by 2012, SOS South Africa hopes to be self-sufficient, meaning that all funds and donations would come from within South Africa.¹⁶⁹

Evaluation of the Cluster Foster Care System

Cluster foster care is just one model among many in the world of child care. No one I have spoken to while gathering data for this project definitively said that they believed the cluster foster care system was the best model of child care, nor did anyone say they would recommend that the cluster foster care system be implemented on a larger scale in order to care for the growing numbers of orphans in Africa as a whole. Even so, the leadership of God’s Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children’s Village expressed to me that they are proud of the work that they do and feel the children under their care have benefited from the services of their respective organizations.

Support for the Cluster Foster Care System

¹⁶⁸ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹⁶⁹ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

Caroline Horn of God's Golden Acre is of the opinion that the cluster foster care system seems to help children stay connected with their culture of origin. In her observations at God's Golden Acre, "Zulus are in charge of Zulus".¹⁷⁰ In general, Caroline Horn feels that God's Golden Acre is a "chaotic, not especially clean place, but homey". She has observed that "the children are cared for and loved here" and said that she wasn't sure if the cluster foster care model would work on a larger scale, but "it seems to be working here" (ibid).

Using almost the exact same words, Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community said to me that she felt the cluster foster model was working well so far with the children they had there, but she wouldn't go so far as to recommend other people use the cluster foster system.¹⁷¹ Elke explained that she thinks it is very easy for a child care organization to slip from a family-oriented way of doing things into more of an institutional setting and she is constantly checking herself so that doesn't happen at Kenosis. She was politely self-effacing on this matter, saying "In 20 years, who knows, they might say we were doing it all wrong" (ibid).

Saphiwe Maphanga of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village was much more supportive and enthusiastic about the use of the cluster foster care model. SOS South Africa officially continues to support the cluster foster care model, and Saphiwe also personally supports it as well. Mr. Maphanga defends the cluster foster care model, noting that "according to SOS, taking children into the villages is seen as a last resort. First they try to keep children in their original families or place them with foster families in the community. Only when those possibilities are exhausted are children placed into the village system."¹⁷²

However, while supporting the cluster foster care model, SOS Kinderdorf International continues to re-evaluate the systems of care with an eye toward improvements. I learned from Saphiwe Maphanga that SOS is now piloting a new

¹⁷⁰ Direct quote. Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁷¹ Interview paraphrase. Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹⁷² Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children's Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

system of Cluster Foster Care called the Simple Integrated Model¹⁷³ in which children are placed with a house mother into homes scattered around a regular neighbourhood. In this way the children grow up in a more normal situation and can be integrated into a community more fully. The project is called “simple” because the houses are just like the other houses in the area, they do not build especially nice or fancy facilities for the SOS families- they simply live like everyone else around them. Up to eight children live in each SMI house, as opposed to up to ten children living in each of the houses currently in the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg .In looking toward the future in light of the AIDS epidemic, Saphiwe says “looking at the statistics, it would be wise to build more SOS villages, but not this model, but moving toward the SMI model” (ibid).

Even though iThemba Lethu is not an organization which employs the cluster foster care system, I asked house mother Liz Holley for her opinion on the model. She replied “There are so many children [needing care], all methods have a place”.¹⁷⁴ However, Liz continued to say “children’s homes are not a place to grow up” because once they child has grown up and is out in the world as an adult, she doesn’t feel they would have developed normal, healthy familial and social skills. She said that even people she has encountered who operate children’s home admit that they are not ideal. In her opinion, smaller systems of childcare are preferable to large institutional style care facilities (ibid).

*Criticism of the Cluster Foster Care System and an Introduction to the Isibindi
Circles of Care Model of Child Care*

¹⁷³ Saphiwe Maphanga, Director of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children’s Village. In his office on the grounds of the SOS Children’s Village, Grange, Pietermaritzburg. November 23, 2006.

¹⁷⁴ Liz Holley. House Mother at iThemba Lethu. In the dining room of the iThemba Lethu house, Durban. November 22, 2006.

I was informed by multiple sources that the cluster foster system is not highly regarded by the South African government. Caroline Horn suggested that it was conceivable that the government not especially supportive of God's Golden Acre because a white woman is caring for black children, or because children are sponsored from foreign donors through their outreach programs.¹⁷⁵

Elke Carrihill of the Kenosis Community said that one reason why the government and other bodies might not support cluster foster care in South Africa is due to suspected misuse of foster care grants. According to Elke, some child care organizations absorb the foster care grants into their main budget and pay the foster mothers out of it, as a salary for an employee. In her understanding, this is not the government's intended use of a foster care grant. Rather, the foster care grants should go directly to the parents caring for the children. She informed me that she was aware of organizations that ran this way that were closed down or changed to officially be "places of safety" and not foster care homes.¹⁷⁶

Elke continued to add that another problem in these organizations is that children might be shifted from one foster mother to another to suit the personalities of the child or the mother. Again, in her view, this is not the intention of fostering. "Children should be placed in a home and cared for regardless of their personalities just as children who are born into a family would be" (ibid). In addition, in Elke's understanding foster parents are supposed to have other means of employment so that the foster care grant is not seen as a source of income but only as a supplement to help care for the children. Elke warned that "there is a strong voice out there that is not for children's homes" and she admitted that "this place [Kenosis] feels like a home, families work as individual units and the foster moms cook for their own families, but even here there is an institutional feel"¹⁷⁷. In conclusion, Elke Carrihill said she thinks "Cluster foster care can only be thought of as second best" and she couldn't say that it was the method that should be used widely.

Nazli Finch, the director of Wylie House, a transition home for addicted and abused girls in Durban, started right off with all the reasons she thinks cluster foster

¹⁷⁵ Caroline Horn, Volunteer Educational Programs Director at God's Golden Acre, Khaliyhle. In her office and on the grounds of God's Golden Acre, Cato Ridge, Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 10, 2006.

¹⁷⁶ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

¹⁷⁷ Elke Carrihill, Director/Administrator of the Kenosis Community. At her home at Kenosis, Bishopstowe Kwa-Zulu Natal. November 16, 2006.

care is a bad model when I met with her on November 21, 2006. She considers the cluster foster care model to be mini-residential centres that are typically run by people who are not trained or skilled in caring for children with special needs. In her opinion, it is not suitable even for a child psychologist to be in charge, the head should be trained as a social worker or child care worker. In Nazli Finch's words, the term cluster foster care is merely "calling a rose by another name"¹⁷⁸ meaning that it is simply another form of institutional child care, like small children's homes; which she certainly seems to object to. She also disagrees with the concept of so-called foster parents being paid as employees for a child care organization. Her reasoning is that if foster parents are treated as employees and see their position in the organization as a job, they can choose to leave at any time. This disjointedness causes instability in the lives of the children, which in her opinion is the one thing vulnerable children don't need (ibid).

Nazli Finch was willing to go into some detail with me over her concerns surrounding the use of the cluster foster care system. She spoke as though she knew the intimate details of many cluster foster organizations enough to criticize them, but when I asked which cluster foster facilities she had visited or knew about, she only mentioned one- Durban Children's Home. According to Nazli Finch, Durban Children's home runs cluster foster in Chesterville, and the foster parents working there are paid as if it were a job to take care of the children, not a parental obligation. She said that this leads to a high rate of overturn and therefore the children do not receive stable, predictable care.¹⁷⁹

Nazli is concerned that cluster foster programs do not uphold the minimum standards of care as outlined by the government and are unregistered. She specifically mentioned that for an organization to force children to engage in religious services or activities which are not of their own beliefs is a violation of their rights as children. Fundamentally, Nazli says her reservations involve "issues of roots, identity, maintaining culture, reunification, connection to remaining

¹⁷⁸ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹⁷⁹ I did not visit Durban Children's Home and therefore I can not confirm or disclaim this message. Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

family”¹⁸⁰. She maintains that all children are connected to some members of family, somewhere, even if they are referred to as being abandoned or orphaned. From the way she spoke I got the impression that she doesn’t believe a large percentage of children are ever totally orphaned.

Nazli stressed that she is concerned about a lack of accountability in regards to cluster foster care, and she considers herself to be an advocate against this system. Toward the end of our discussion, Nazli said while looking at the list of organizations I have visited, “SOS and other organizations work in isolation” meaning they are not connected to the community around them. She believes it is of paramount importance for childcare organizations to focus more on reunification with the children’s families. Nazli claimed that Cluster Foster Care hasn’t been researched or proven to work, but she suggests that another model of care called “Isibindi Circles” have been.¹⁸¹

Mixed criticism for the cluster foster care model can also be found in Emma Guest’s book “AIDS Children: the African Orphan Crisis” published in 2001. Guest writes “Mr. Loudin [previous director of Children in Distress (CINDI)] doesn’t believe that God’s Golden Acre is something that could be scaled up to meet the magnitude of the coming AIDS orphan crisis in South Africa. ‘Heather’s doing a great job, but lets not fool ourselves that is replicable. It’s not. It’s entirely run on her spirit, guts, and energy. And it’s great. But its important that we don’t attach a greater significance to it, believe it’s how we should run our response to the orphan crisis. A project like that can fail just as easily as succeed. There’s no idea so good that it can survive bad management. And in her case, she’s got some fairly shocking ideas. But they work. Because she’s behind them.”¹⁸²

The current director of CINDI, Yvonne Spain wrote to me in an email on Tuesday November 14th, 2006. “Also please be aware that this [cluster foster care] is not favoured by the Department of Social Development, who would prefer to see houses in separate areas of the community so that children are integrated as ordinary

¹⁸⁰ Direct quote. Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹⁸¹ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹⁸² Guest, Emma. “Children of AIDS: Africa’s Orphan Crisis”. Pluto Press, London. Second Edition, 2003. page 80.

children in the community”¹⁸³. This excerpt from the Department of Social Welfare’s KZN Provincial Draft Alternative Care Policy of 2006 may support Nazli Finch’s assertion that the cluster foster care model has not been researched or proven to be effective:

“The Department has been receiving numerous requests from communities and prospective service providers for assistance with establishment of structures for children’s homes as well as cluster foster care services. In most cases a needs analysis is never conducted before hand to determine the need for such services. These services have budget implications for the Department and sustainability cannot be guaranteed.”¹⁸⁴

The Draft Alternative Care Policy of 2006 does not necessarily call for the discontinuation of the cluster foster care system, but does call for further investigation. “The alternative care policy document needs to review the current legislation and evaluate the following... cluster foster care scheme”¹⁸⁵. The document also states that The Department of Social Welfare has already developed guidelines for cluster foster care scheme which are intended to: “regulate the placement of children in existing cluster foster care models; ensure effective management of children placed in cluster foster care and; provide a standardized framework for the Province” (ibid). As this document is a draft and not a law or official policy, therefore I do not believe it effects the management of God’s Golden Acre, the SOS Children’s Village in Pietermaritzburg, or the Kenosis Community.

While Nazli Finch of Wylie House is quite unsupportive of the cluster foster care model, she regards the Isibindi “Circles of Care” system as a promising new mode of childcare.¹⁸⁶ The Isibindi model is at the time of writing being piloted in Kimberly and the Northern Cape by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). Nazli believes this is a model which can and should be replicated, in her opinion it is sustainable and cost effective. In the Isibeni model, child headed households are kept together in their communities of origin and monitored daily by

¹⁸³ Email, Yvonne Spain, Director of Children in Distress (CINDI). November __, 2006.

¹⁸⁴ “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006.

¹⁸⁵ “KZN Provincial Alternative Care Policy Final Draft”. Emailed to me by Julie Todd, Director of Pietermaritzburg Child Welfare on November 17, 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

a trained professional Child and Youth Care Worker.¹⁸⁷ Each Child and Youth Care Worker oversees six or seven child headed households in a given area of a community near where they live themselves¹⁸⁸. In the Isibindi system, the Child and Youth Care Workers are also supported by social workers because they themselves may have social and familiar problems (ibid). According to the website of the De Beers Group, who are financial partners in the pilot Isibindi project, “Sadly child headed households are a reality in South Africa (older children looking after younger siblings in their parental homes.) Many organizations are starting to work in this arena, but none have the depth of experience and knowledge in the field that the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) has. The NACCW have developed an approach called the Isibindi Model, which has been piloted in a number of sites across South Africa”¹⁸⁹.

Nazli Finch favours this model of care in part because the Child and Youth Workers are trained professionals, and she seems to think that one of the major problems with other models of child care, including the cluster foster care system, is that the child care givers are often untrained.¹⁹⁰ I am not yet convinced that this is an appropriate model of care. Of course I recognise the fact that Nazli Finch is a professional woman who has been working with children in Durban for a number of years, while I am not in anyway an expert on child care, but I personally feel the Isibindi model is inadequate. From my perspective, the Isibindi model simply addresses the problem of child headed households by removing the label of problem and replacing it with solution. Essentially, they are saying the solution to child headed households- is child headed households. Nazli Finch assured me during our meeting on November 21, 2006 that she has read multiple stories of children who are prospering under the Isibindi model, and that the children are receiving enough emotional and parental support even though they are not living with a full time adult care giver (ibid). I remain sceptical.

¹⁸⁷ DeBeers, “Isibindi Circles of Care”.

<http://www.debeersgroup.com/debeersweb/Investing+in+the+Future/Communities/Health/Circles+of+Care.htm>

¹⁸⁸ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

¹⁸⁹ DeBeers, “Isibindi Circles of Care”.

<http://www.debeersgroup.com/debeersweb/Investing+in+the+Future/Communities/Health/Circles+of+Care.htm>

¹⁹⁰ Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

In economic terms, I suppose that the Isibindi system of child care is more feasible as one trained professional cares for six to seven families of children as a time. However, I feel this comes with a much higher price tag of failing to provide orphaned and vulnerable children with full time care.

Conclusion

Future predictions of the impact of the AIDS virus in South Africa are frightening, and in deed, the impact is already taking its toll. An entire generation of children are being orphaned; within the next eight years there are expected to be 750,000 orphans in KwaZulu Natal alone.¹⁹¹ In my opinion, the urgency of this situation cannot be stressed enough. I believe it is of paramount importance that systems of care which provide adequate, long term, comprehensive care for orphans and vulnerable children be found immediately. The cluster foster care system may be one model of childcare which could be useful in combating the destructive force of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South African society.

Critics, such as Nazli Finch and the South African government may argue that the cluster foster care system divorces children from their families and communities of origin, robs them of a stable and contiguous form of parental support, and fails to provide them with quality professional childcare.¹⁹² Cluster foster care centres have been criticised as being economically unsustainable, financially irresponsible, poorly managed and not held accountable to any minimum standards (ibid).

However, through interactions with leaders at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village, I have seen evidence that seems to dispel these claims. These three organizations educate children in local schools, enabling them to develop normal peer relationships. Under the guidance of their foster mothers, the leadership at the Kenosis Community and the SOS Children's Village attempt to integrate the children into the wider community and enable them to grow up in their culture of origin. In addition, all three of the organizations I have profiled in this study have established ways for the children in their care to maintain contact with their families of origin wherever this is feasible and safe. Both the directors of the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg and the Kenosis Community assured me that the foster mothers caring for children at their respective organizations have undergone parental skills training at a reputable institution.

¹⁹¹ "Thinking about adopting or fostering: A resource pack". iThemba Lethu, April 2002. page 3.

¹⁹² Nazli Finch, Director of Wylie House, Durban. In her office at Wylie House, 202 Ridge Road, Durban. November 21, 2006.

In addition, although I can not determine the effectiveness of these processes, traumatized or abuse children at the SOS Children's Village and the Kenosis Community receive professional psychological counselling in the city of Pietermaritzburg, and social workers work closely with all three of these organizations. Children are provided with adequate health care, and it as indicated to me that children who have grown up in these organizations have successfully adapted to adult life.

Both Nazli Finch and the KZN Provincial Draft Alternative Care Policy suggest that further investigations into the cluster foster care system are warranted. I agree that a comprehensive study of the cluster foster care system and its implementations, conducted by an impartial official third party, would be helpful in determining the success or failure of the system or individual organizations which operate therein. If such a study was conducted, based on my observations at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, I hypothesize that the reputation of the cluster foster system would be redeemed to some degree. I concede that the cluster foster care system as it is implemented at God's Golden Acre, the Kenosis Community, and the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village are not financially self-sustaining and therefore it may not be feasible to replicate these types of organizations on a large scale around South Africa. The Simple Integrated Model, suggested by Saphiwe Maphanga of the Pietermaritzburg SOS Children's Village may be a more economically sustainable version of the cluster foster care system.

I also agree with Nazli Finch that some variations or implementations of the cluster foster care system may fail to provide stable, contiguous parental support. In the case of God's Golden Acre, from the information I gathered from Caroline Horn, international volunteers provide the main source of emotional support for the children. As international volunteers come and go, the emotional connections the children have formed are repeatedly broken which I can only assume has negative implications for the emotional and psychological development of children particularly those who have been traumatised or abused in their past. This is not a reflection of the failing of the cluster foster care system *per se*, but a perceived flaw in the management or implementation of that system.

In closing, I suggest that to improve the care provided for orphaned or abandoned children in KwaZulu Natal, an in depth study into the validity of the

cluster foster care system and an assessment of its implementation might be necessary. I would also be in support of enforced guidelines and standards pertaining to the methods of childcare at all alternative care centres. I am of the opinion that although management of cluster foster care centres may need some improvement in certain instances, the cluster foster care model as a whole has many favourable attributes and should not be disregarded.

Recommendations for Further Study

If someone were to continue this study of the cluster foster care system and its implementations, I would suggest they visit more organizations using the cluster foster care model including Durban Children's Home in Durban, Beautiful Gates near Cape Town, the SOS Children's Villages in Umtata and other sites in South Africa. I would also propose that in order to probe deeper into the subject, a researcher involve the ideas and opinions of social workers, child care policy makers, child psychologists, and children or families who had been served by a cluster foster care program to gain their personal perspective. I think it would be especially interesting to speak with Dr. Neil McKerrow who was influential in the establishment of Children in Distress (CINDI), the SOS Children's Village in Pietermaritzburg, and God's Golden Acre to find out why he advocated for the cluster foster care system and if he continues to support the model.

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Appendix

Although I took hand-written notes during all of the meetings I had with members of the God's Golden Acre, Kenosis, and SOS communities, I did not record the questions I asked *verbatim*. Neither did I record every word of their responses to my questions. Below is a list of typical questions I asked in one form or another as our conversations unfolded.

- Could you describe the structure of this organization, including how the children are educated, given medical attention, fed, and housed?
- Why did the leadership of this organization choose to arrange the child care projects into the cluster foster care model, and how did that decision come about?
- Where do the house mothers or foster mothers come from and how are they recruited? How are they supported emotionally and financially?
- What is the role of volunteers here?
- How many children are cared for here and what are their ages?
- Where do the children that are cared for here come from? Do you observe abusive situations in their families or communities of origin?
- In your estimation, how many of the children cared for here are HIV positive? How are the HIV positive children cared for?
- How do you try to maintain the children's connection to their cultures of origin?
- Is this organization affiliated with any religion? Are the children encouraged to participate in religious activities?
- What do you consider to be the greatest success of this organization, and if there are any flaws that you see in the system, what are they?
- What futures do you envision for the children under your care?
- Would you recommend the cluster foster care system be used more widely within KwaZulu Natal to meet the needs of the growing numbers of orphans?
- Do you think the cluster foster care system is economically sustainable?