

Compassion International

Compassion International Today

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Compassion International



Compassion International was founded in 1952 by a Chicago preacher named Everett Swanson (photo) to care for Korean War orphans after he saw them dying from starvation and hypothermia during his visit to Korea. Today, Compassion International lets people sponsor poor children in Africa, Asia and Latin America to receive clean water, nutrition, health care, education, Christian teaching, and vocational training.

Strength

Compassion International is big. In 2023, Compassion International raised and spent \$1.2 billion to serve 2 million children in 25 countries, including through 8,000 local churches.

Weaknesses

1. Compassion International is inefficient

As shown below, Compassion International **reported** spending \$411 million in overhead to deliver \$785 million to the field in 2023. Compassion International insiders report that the amount reported as "Program Grants" actually includes other overhead expenses to

mask the degree of its inefficiency, and that the proportion reaching the field is about 60%, not the reported 65.6%:

Expenses	2023	Of Total
Personnel	\$181,102,000	15.1%
Fundraising	\$147,043,000	12.3%
Travel	\$18,169,000	1.5%
IT	\$21,670,000	1.8%
Other	\$43,087,000	3.6%
Total Overhead	\$411,071,000	34.4%
Program Grants	\$785,165,000	65.6%
Total Expenses	\$1,196,236,000	100%

2. Compassion International's leaders pay themselves unconscionable salaries

Name	Title	2024 Pay*	2018 Pay	2015 Pay
Santiago Mellado	CEO	\$753,372	\$476,818	\$381,073
Ken Calwell	CMO	\$639,214	\$404,566	
Paul Ackerman	CFO	\$507,921	\$321,469	
Ed Anderson	Former SVP	\$593,607	\$375,701	\$294,712
Cassandra Shepard	Senior VP	\$583,606	\$369,371	\$221,505
Mark Hanlon	Senior VP	\$497,107	\$314,625	\$252,626
Mark Yeadon	Senior VP	\$477,888	\$302,461	\$257,775
Thomas Beck	Senior VP	\$446,732	\$282,742	
James Hansen	Senior VP	\$374,932	\$237,299	
Stephen Oakley	Gen. Counsel	\$463,816	\$293,555	
James Davis	VP - USA	\$445,281	\$281,824	\$235,609
Silas Balraj	VP - Regional	\$387,397	\$245,188	
Sidney Mwavu	VP - Regional	\$384,903	\$243,610	
Raphael Lassegue	VP - Regional	\$391,192	\$247,590	

Ronald Orrick	VP - IT	\$434,177	\$274,796
Mark Fugleberg	VP - GME	\$415,590	\$263,032
Michael Johnson	Mkt. Dir. USA	\$395,355	\$250,225

* Compassion International last **disclosed** how much its leaders pay themselves in **2018**. Six of the leaders above had same titles in **2015** and their aggregate pay (salary + benefits) rose 29% from 2015 to 2018. To estimate the pay of the leaders in 2024, that 29% rise over the 3 year period from 2015 to 2018 was doubled to 58% for the 6 year period from 2018 to 2024. As shown above, their estimated pay in 2024 is exorbitant, but their actual pay is likely to be even higher for two reasons. First, the leaders of non-profit organizations tend to stop filing IRS **Form 990** when they want to stop disclosing their pay, and then give themselves hefty pay raises. Second, inflation accelerated after 2018 and is likely to have given them cover for even steeper pay hikes.

3. Compassion International has a bloated leadership structure

Compassion International's three regions - Africa, Asia and Latin America - are managed by the three Vice Presidents ("**VP - Regional**") above. Instead of having them report directly to the CEO, there is an extra layer of six overpaid Senior Vice Presidents ("Senior VP" above), including, as shown below, a woman who was paid \$396,371 for just four months of work in 2018, and a man who worked "0.00" hours but was still paid \$375,701 for being a "Former" Senior Vice President (**source**):

Form 990

Compassion International, Incorporated

36-2423707

Part VII Section A. Officers, Directors, Trustees, Key Employees, and Highest Compensated Employees (continued)

(A) Name and title	(B) Average hours per week (list any hours for related organizations below line)	(C) Position (check all that apply)						(D) Reportable compensation from the organization (W-2/1099-MISC)	(E) Reportable compensation from related organizations (W-2/1099-MISC)	(F) Estimated amount of other compensation from the organization and related organizations
		Individual trustee or director	Institutional trustee	Officer	Key employee	Highest compensated employee	Former			
(27) Cassandra Shepard until 4/2018 Senior VP	40.00					X		354,868.	0.	14,503.
(28) Ed Anderson Former SVP/CFO	0.00						X	353,829.	0.	21,872.

4. Compassion International relies on fundraisers and marketers instead of God

Instead of emulating **Biblia Global** and relying on God to move the hearts of donors, Compassion International **reported** spending almost \$8 million on a Chief Marketing Officer ("CMO" above), a Marketing Director ("Mkt. Dir. USA" above), and two outsider marketers (below) in 2018:

Section B. Independent Contractors		
(A) Name and business address	(B) Description of services	(C) Compensation
Brewco Marketing Group 106 Brewer Dr, Central City, KY 42330	Marketing Services	3,664,531.
Premier Productions Inc PO Box 5971, High Point, NC 27262	Marketing Services	3,381,263.

In 2023, Compassion International spent \$147 million on fundraising (see top table). Prayers to God, who owns all of the money in the world, are free.

5. Compassion International already has more than enough cash

Compassion International's **reported** 2023 current assets of \$457,926,000, mostly in cash and investments, are 3.2 times its current liabilities of \$142,384,000. Reducing current assets to match current liabilities will free up \$315,542,000, which at \$43 per month will sponsor for 28 months all 260,000 children in its database who are currently waiting for a sponsor. It could even be said that Compassion International is withholding its mountain of cash from the children in order to create and use a backlog of children waiting for sponsors (see below) to pressure donors to donate more money.

WAITING 683 DAYS Jhordan  Bolivia  1/30/2016	WAITING 600 DAYS Enzo  Brazil  10/2/2018	WAITING 599 DAYS Ousseni  Burkina Faso  12/17/2012
WAITING 560 DAYS Maria Aparecida  Brazil  7/3/2019	WAITING 547 DAYS Valerie  Togo  11/14/2019	WAITING 546 DAYS Judith  Rwanda  4/12/2010
WAITING 544 DAYS Dougras  Tanzania  1/22/2010	WAITING 540 DAYS Heloisa  Brazil  4/12/2021	WAITING 540 DAYS Sophia  Brazil  2/14/2021
WAITING 540 DAYS Pranto  Bangladesh  1/1/2021	WAITING 540 DAYS Gael  Brazil  2/27/2020	WAITING 539 DAYS Kennet  Honduras  6/7/2019

6. Compassion International prioritizes money over children

This contract between Compassion International and Hillsong states in Paragraph 2.A., "Compassion shall be Hillsong's exclusive child sponsorship ministry partner for all events," and continues in Paragraph 3.A., "In consideration for being the exclusive child sponsorship ministry partner, Compassion shall pay to Hillsong a payment in the amount of one million dollars (US \$1,000,000) annually (the "Payment"), to be paid in quarterly payment of two-hundred fifty thousand dollars (US \$250,000)."

If caring for poor children were Compassion International's true priority, it would want its partners to promote other child sponsorship programs as well. That Compassion International annually hands over \$1,000,000 to Hillsong to block Hillsong from promoting other child sponsorship programs evinces that Compassion International

prioritizes its own revenues at the expense of more poor children receiving care and hearing **the Gospel**.

Solutions

1. Use the current cash pile to eliminate the backlog of children waiting for sponsors.
2. Eliminate the layer of Senior VPs and have the Vice Presidents report to the CEO.
3. Eliminate the CMO and Marketing Director positions, all other marketing and fundraising costs, and pray to God for funds.
4. Cap all salaries at a maximum of \$10,000 per month and restart filing IRS Form 990.
5. Don't associate with apostate groups like Hillsong.
6. Repent and truly focus on helping and evangelizing poor children, not using them to enrich yourselves.
7. If the current leaders do not repent, replace them and the board with those from the field who will serve the children, the donors, and the Lord sacrificially.

Compassion International has yet to respond to the March 2024 email below:

Dear Compassion International,

- 1. What are the names, titles and 2024 remunerations (salary + benefits) of your twenty highest-paid leaders?*
- 2. If your 2023 IRS Form 990 is available, could you please provide a weblink to it?*
- 3. Roughly what proportions of the flights taken by your CEO Santiago Mellado in 2023*

were in First Class, Business Class, Economy Class, and corporate jets?

4. Roughly what proportions of Mr. Mellado's 2023 overnight hotel stays in cities that have 5 star hotels were in 5 star hotels, 4 star hotels and 3 star hotels?

5. What is the make, year and model of the car that Compassion International currently provides to Mr. Mellado?

Thank you in advance.

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